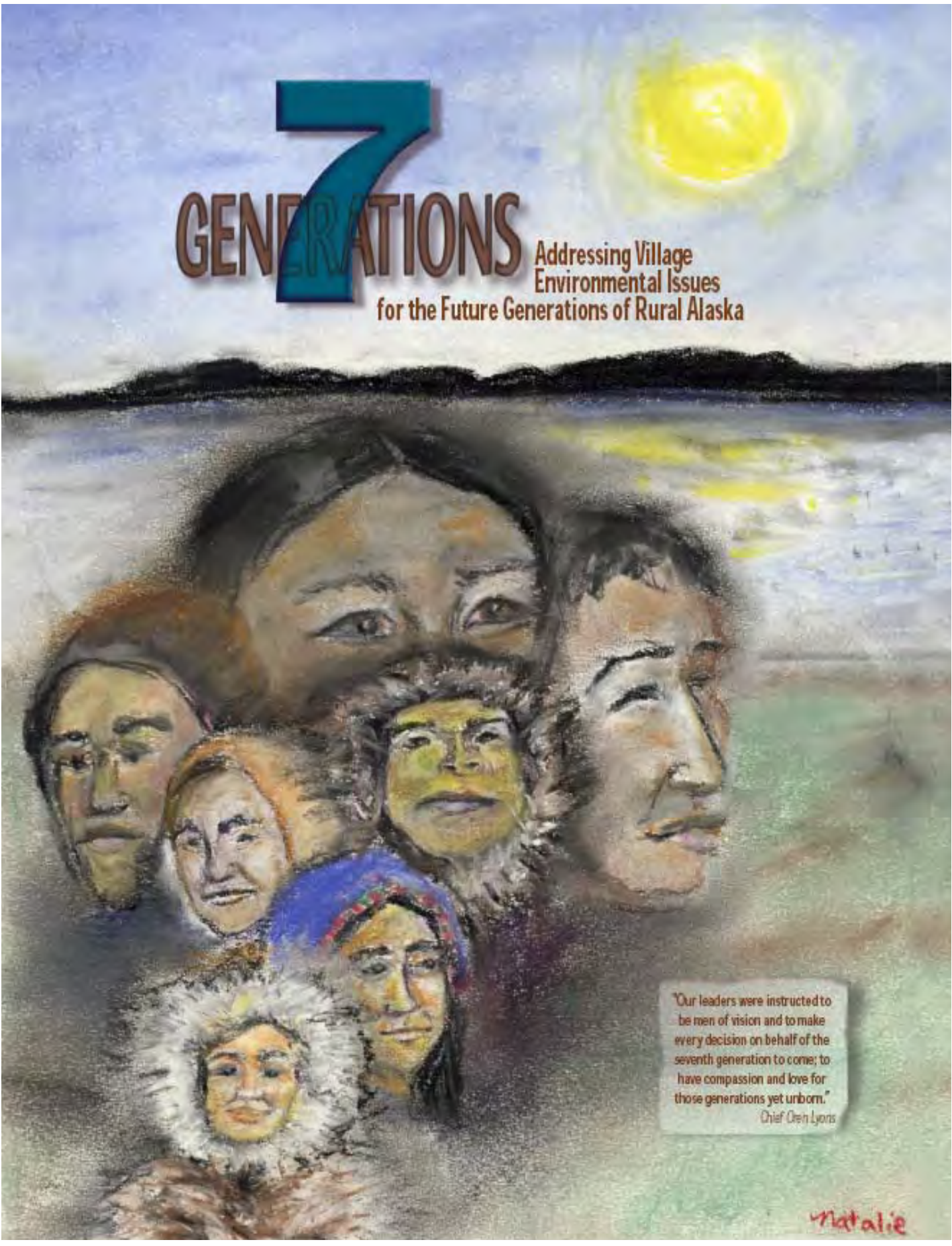




7 GENERATIONS

Addressing Village
Environmental Issues
for the Future Generations of Rural Alaska



"Our leaders were instructed to
be men of vision and to make
every decision on behalf of the
seventh generation to come; to
have compassion and love for
those generations yet unborn."
Chief Oen Lyons

natalie

7 GENERATIONS Addressing Village Environmental Issues for the Future Generations of Rural Alaska.

Updated March 2012

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Community Environment and Safety

This manual is dedicated to all of the people in rural Alaska who have committed time and energy to improving the environmental health conditions of their communities.



Environmental Change is about Commitment



“There were two or three times that my boat battery didn’t start up my boat motor and my boyfriend and I used poles and paddles to move our aluminum boat. He said ‘Sarah is an environmentalist and we save on gasoline.’ So, we worked hard to get our boat around, we spent lots of time and effort. Then we really worked to get the driftwood and the fish, not to mention the body muscles that complain after we made many, many extra body movements to get our boat home again.”
Sarah Weisner, Shungnak, AK

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ADEC—Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
AEA—Alaska Energy Authority
ANTHC—Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
APIA—Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

CDC—Center for Disease Control
USGS—United States Geological Survey
USEPA—United States Environmental Protection Agency

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About this manual

Communities in rural Alaska are faced with many unique and complex environmental issues. The presence of honey buckets, permafrost, landfills, remote access, and extreme winter conditions are examples of issues that make rural Alaska unique from other parts of the United States. This manual has been produced in order to address these unique environmental issues using a simple approach that promotes and encourages community-driven environmental change. The approach to environmental planning outlined in this manual can be described as “community-based.” A “community-based” approach to any type of planning is essential in order for communities to develop a greater sense of ownership to problems and solutions. **Environmental planning is most successful when the community is involved in the entire process from identifying problems to solving them.** Although many environmental planning guides focus on community-based efforts, this manual is specific to rural Alaskan issues and provides many examples from rural communities throughout Alaska. This manual describes one approach to village environmental planning. It also describes how to use surveys in village environmental planning.



The Technical Environmental Survey and the Village Environmental planning Survey in this manual are used to identify community environmental priorities and to identify environmental issues. Both of the surveys are described in detail and examples from rural Alaska are included.



Why do you need this manual?

7 *GENERATIONS* *Addressing Village Environmental Issues for the Future Generations of Alaska* is a manual designed for people in rural Alaska who want to accomplish environmental planning and management by using a community-based approach. The manual contains valuable tools that enable a community to identify and prioritize environmental issues of concern within their community. This manual was written to assist communities to be more self-reliant and to take responsibility for their own environmental issues. As communities take more responsibility for their own environmental concerns and issues, they will rely less on others to solve problems.

Clarence Alexander, former Chairman of the Board for the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments, described this issue at the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Summit:

“You know we always had our hands out. We were hoping that some miracle would happen that would help us survive in our land. And, today we are finding out that we are the ones who have to take the lead. We have to be the ones to initiate. We are the ones who have to do something in our community. We are the ones who have to teach in order for those younger ones to know.” ~ Clarence Alexander

Building community strength to identify and solve problems is a powerful process that can lead to a healthier and more sustainable community. A community that is driven by the interests of its members rather than by outside interests will have a



Photo Courtesy Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

greater sense of ownership and pride in its accomplishments. A self-governing community also will have a greater influence over the goals and future direction of the community in the environmental realm or other domains. Although this manual focuses solely on selected environmental issues, the people driven initiatives discussed are an effective way for a community to take its inherent right to self-govern in all areas by influencing and taking responsibility for educational, social, judicial and health efforts within a community.

Why are you here?

Quotations from Rural Alaska

7G Environmental assessment workshops have been held all over the State of Alaska to train local residents on how to use the tools in this manual to identify and assess environmental concerns in their communities.

At the start of each workshop, participants are asked to answer the question “Why are you here?” The following responses reflect the range of knowledge, technical tools and insights gained by the participants as well as the ownership and responsibility for applying what was learned when they return home. Moreover, they reaffirm the importance of developing a sustainable community-based approach to addressing environmental issues and problems that currently face rural Alaska villages.

“To make sure my grandchildren’s great grandchildren can live in the same Sand Point I do.”

Tiffany Jackson - Sand Point

“I enjoy living a subsistence lifestyle, hunter/gatherer. I know our animals, plants and birds are the healthiest food we can eat. I want my children to also enjoy.”

Lonnie Tebbits - Noorvik

“To make it a happier, healthier, safer community. Learn all I can to share with the community. We have beautiful surroundings and our community should match.”

Dan Schouten - Goodnews Bay

“To do what I can, now, knowing that my thoughts, words and actions may affect 7 generations from now.”

Fr. Michael Fredericks - Chuathbaluk

“To learn how to help everyone in the village learn how to live healthy and safe life styles that consider the environmental impact we have on our Earth.”

Bob Absher - Gakona

“Make a difference in the environment that lasts for generations to come.”

Leilani Knight-McQueen - Juneau

“To learn to help teach environmental concerns that are in our community and how we affect other communities as far as how we use our land and share it with the others around.”

Sylvia Sheldon - Kiana



Sand Point 2011



Goodnews Bay 2011



Gakona 2011

“For my children and their children that will come, so they also can experience what I have experienced. I am also here for my community and their future.”

Alma Kanriliak - Tununak

“My reason for being here is to learn how to Prevent damage to my hometown environment. To have healthy children and families and a community as a whole.”

Josh Melton - Noorvik



Kiana 2011

“Our children need to learn to take care of the environment in order to sustain our culture and traditional harvesting of foods. We need to teach them and give them the tools to do what is best for the environment. That is my passion, which made me decide to learn and teach others about the environment.”

Dorinda Sanderson - Hydaburg

“I want to be the generation to make a change.”

Megan Russell - Sand Point

“I care about where I live. People, economy, environment. See so many things that we can do to improve the lives of people, economy and the environment.”

Annabelle Alvite - Kotzebue



Klawock 2011

“I am here because I want the best for our community. So our children will have the best memories about this place... Our community.”

Ryder Westlake - Kiana

“To ensure our ancestors past efforts to secure the land and resources are realized by my grandchildren. To make sure natives continue to be the priority and there are enough resources to sustain our people in the future. That future development and expansion respect our relationship to the land and sea.”

Anthony Christianson - Hydaburg

“I am here to learn more on improving health and lifestyles. to improve our village and preserve our hunting and Camping areas for our future generations.”

-Kirk Sampson - Noorvik

“I’m here because I want to learn how stuff that we use destroys our environment so I can try to stop it and I want to change the way we live.”

PJ Hamilton - King Cove



Anchorage 2011

“To gain more information on ways to adapt to the lifestyles and ideas of either correcting or adapting to change.”

Ursula Prince—St. Mary’s