

Ecotrust

Briefing #3 Transcript

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impact on Alaska Native Communities

Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands Briefing Series

Organized by the Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program

February 16, 2022 at 11 am

Speakers:

Nicole Borrromeo (Athabaskan), Executive Vice President and General Council, Alaska Federation of Natives, and Joe Nelson (Tlingit), Board Chair, Sealaska Corporation and Co-Chair, Alaska Federation of Natives

Blessing: Mr. Nelson Angapak, Sr. (Yup'ik)

Lisa Watt 00:01

Good morning, everyone. On behalf of the board and staff of Ecotrust, I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural Indigenous Leadership Briefing Series and to the third briefing, The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impacts on Alaska Native Communities. We'd like to open our time together with an invocation by Mr. Nelson Angapak, Sr.. Mr. Angapak is a Yup'ik elder and a military veteran having served in the U.S. Army between 1969 and 1971 when he was honorably discharged. Mr. Angapak is also a former Alaska Federation of Natives vice president and an effective advocate for Alaska Native veterans. Welcome.

Nelson Angapak, Sr. 00:48

Thank you very much. I want to thank you for reaching out to me and having a conference on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. I'll say the opening prayer in the common language, language that we all speak. That's the English language. Let us pray. *Speaking Indigenous language* Jesus, we thank you, Father, for this opportunity - a conference regarding impacts of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. We ask that you guide us and lead us in such a way that what is presented will be beneficial for all the parties that are involved. We ask that you provide us with an understanding audience, we ask that you will bless the presentation. And thank you, Ecotrust, for hosting this program. We thank you. We ask for safety from COVID and other illnesses for all. We thank you. God bless, in Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Lisa Watt 02:27

Thank you, Mr. Angapak, for bringing good spirits into this space this morning. It's the perfect way to get started. We greatly appreciate you and your presence. My name is Lisa Watt and I am the director of the Indigenous Leadership Program here at Ecotrust. I am also a citizen of the Seneca Nation, Six Nations, from the Allegany

Reservation in western New York State. I am joined today by three Ecotrust colleagues: Miakah Nix, who is Haida/Tsimshian and the previous coordinator of the Keex' Kwaan Community Forest Partnership. She will be my co-host today. She is joining us from Kake, a 600-person, predominantly Native Village in southeast Alaska. Also, Indigenous storytelling fellow and citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Jessica Douglas and administrative associate Marissa Correa are driving our tech support.

Miakah Nix 03:34

At this point in a program a land acknowledgement is usually recited but not here at Ecotrust. While land acknowledgments are intended to be respectful, they oversimplify complex tribal histories and fail to recognize the ongoing impacts of colonization that tribal communities continue to live with to this day. In place of a land acknowledgement. Ecotrust staff, especially the Native staff, are asking you to support Indigenous communities by taking action. We ask that you:

- 1) Give land back to tribes.
- 2) Protect the environment and salmon. Tribal cultures depend on them.
- 3) Insist that the United States respect tribal sovereignty and uphold its trust responsibility to tribes, which includes appropriate levels of federal funding to support tribal needs. Many promises to tribes still need to be kept.
- 4) Elect officials and judges who understand tribal governments, relationships, and law.
- 5) Invest in tribal economies.
- 6) Challenge and reject all stereotypes about Indigenous people.
- 7) Insist your children and grandchildren are taught accurate information about the histories, cultures, and contemporary lives of Indigenous peoples in your school system. And,
- 8) Inform yourself about issues impacting Indigenous communities and speak up.

The sovereignty, well-being, cultures, and languages of Indigenous peoples are born of their homelands and that makes these lands and waters precious to Native communities. All of us have the responsibility to treat them with the respect and care they deserve and to steward them carefully for the next generations. We need to do more. Please do your part. Thank you.

We have received considerable interest in this Call to Action for Indigenous Communities which is now posted in the chat. Please feel free to share it or use it as inspiration for your own statements. There is no need to cite the Indigenous Leadership Program or Ecotrust. We'll be posting a blog that provides our rationale for moving away from a land acknowledgement. Thank you for your interest.

Lisa Watt 05:52

Thank you, Miakah, and our thanks to everyone for joining us today. So, what is Ecotrust? Ecotrust is a 31-year old, triple-bottom-line nonprofit organization located here in Portland that works to advance social equity, economic opportunity, and environmental wellbeing for all. Few people know that Ecotrust was founded among Indigenous peoples, specifically the Haisla First Nation and the protection of the Kitlope Heritage Conservancy which is located on the central coast of British Columbia. If you would like to learn more about our founding and how we approach

our work, we encourage you to watch Ecotrust founder Spencer Beebe's TEDx Portland 2011 video on YouTube. We put the link in the chat.

The Indigenous Leadership Briefing Series is the lead-up to the Indigenous Leadership Awards, or the ILA's as we know them, which will be relaunched this coming spring. The ILA's is a celebration of the determination, wisdom, and continuum of Indigenous leadership across our region. In essence, the ILA is about Indigenous survival. Today, 56 Indigenous leaders throughout our region have been recognized. They represent many different landscapes, cultures, and languages. This relaunch gives us the opportunity to once again recognize the outstanding work of tribal leaders and their unwavering dedication to uplifting the environmental, cultural, economic, and social conditions of their communities and homelands.

This series highlights the achievements of Indigenous leaders and communities by looking at moments in American history and showing how Indigenous leaders responded. We are asking an important question: when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, when the odds were against them, how did tribal leaders respond? The events described in this four-part series are stories of vision, courage, and determination. The goals are to present accurate information from Indigenous perspectives and voices, dispel stereotypes, and demonstrate the power and influence of Indigenous leadership. We believe Indigenous leadership and knowledge are around all of us every day. We just need to look

Miakah Nix 08:12

Instead of two presentations, our two speakers today will hold the space together for 45 to 50 minutes. A Q&A will follow. Please be sure to drop your questions in the Q&A section, which is at the bottom of your screen. There is a chance that we'll go over the one-hour mark and if we do so, the recording of the session will be posted next Monday, February 21st, on the briefing website.

In today's briefing, we are going to explore the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and its impacts on Alaska Native communities and contemporary issues. Of all Indigenous affairs in the United States, the relationship between Alaska Native villages and the federal government is one of the least understood by residents in the Lower 48. The passage of ANCSA in 1971 created a unique structure and relationships distinct from the reservation system of the Lower 48.

We are deeply honored to have with us today two prominent Alaska Native leaders, Mr. Joe Nelson and Nicole Borromeo. Joe, who is Tlingit, is the current board chair of Sealaska, a for-profit Alaska Native corporation owned by more than 23,000 Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian shareholders, [and is] a former commercial fisherman and an attorney by profession. Mr. Nelson works with Sealaska's leadership and stakeholders to strengthen Alaska Native communities, culture, and land. Mr. Nelson also serves as the co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), the largest statewide Native organization working to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the Alaska Native community.

Nicole, who is Athabaskan, is the executive vice president and general counsel of the Alaska Federation of Natives. AFN's membership includes 168 federally recognized tribes, 166 village corporations, eight regional corporations,

and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. Ms. Borrromeo received her law degree from the University of Washington School of Law and is a Doyon shareholder.

We welcome you both.

Joe Nelson 10:27

Gunalchéesh. Gunalchéesh. Thank you, Miakah. Thank you, Lisa. Quyana, Nelson Angapak, who gave our opening there. We are very thankful for his leadership over so many years on many, many levels. I can easily go into listening mode because that's just how we naturally are with our elders. And I know he's comfortable being referred to as an elder now. He's a vet and former vice president of AFN and I especially love it when he does his invocations in Yup'ik, in his language, so we'll do that again on another time. He used English today for the benefit of the audience. We appreciate that.

My home is Yakutat. My Tlingit name is *speaking Indigenous language*. I am a brown bear and I am a child of the Kwaashk'i Kwáan. Kwaashk'i Kwáan, my father's clan is the humpback salmon. I want to thank Ecotrust for the opening here. The Call to Action right out of the gate is powerful. In a day when people are being awakened to this idea of land acknowledgments, Ecotrust is on the front end here, helping people to keep moving to something a little more meaningful.

Today, I am streaming from Áak'w Kwáan, Tlingit Country, our capital city in Juneau, and thankful to our Tlingit Country leadership here and Áak'w Kwáan for allowing the capital city to happen in Juneau, Alaska.

The flow for today is, I'm going to cover the front end of the presentation. Nicole is going to cover the heart of it and then I'll wrap it up. Maybe I'll have Nicole do a little more of an introduction here and then we'll start sliding through the slide deck. Go ahead, Nicole.

Nicole Borrromeo 12:38

Quyana, Joe, and thank you so much to Lisa and everyone at Ecotrust for the invitation to present today. We just wrapped a board meeting yesterday. At one point when we were preparing, I was joking with Joe that I can't believe we decided to agree to this, the day after our big AFN board meeting. But on the larger scale, this is an important topic. We want to be able to explain with the challenge that Lisa presented in the email, which is 'be as direct as we want, make sure the audience is left with our voice on ANCSA and the impacts that it has had on our Native community'.

So, I'm happy to spend the next few minutes with you here. I do have a hard stop at 11. I serve on Alaska's redistricting board and a very important case was decided. So, I'm going to have to transition to there and I want to apologize in advance. We should just jump right into it.

Joe Nelson 13:38

Perfect. Let's go ahead and advance to the next slide there. Today, February 16th is Elizabeth Peratrovichs Day in Alaska. Our offices are actually closed at Sealaska today because of Elizabeth Peratrovich Day. This [slide] is so

on-point in the sense of our conversation right now. One hundred years ago, for all the Indigenous folks that are on the zoom or connected to the video here, our grandparents were not citizens. [Alaska Natives] were not citizens just 100 years ago. Alaska is the 49th state. We lag a little bit behind the rest of the country but the one spot where we haven't -- we've actually been leaders in this -- is the civil rights movements.

One hundred years ago, Alaska was a territory, although we were not citizens of the United States. Still, we had a pathway to voting before the Citizenship Act of 1924 passed and that was due to the activism of our ancestors pushing, pushing hard for equal rights.

The celebration today isn't about citizenship and voting rights necessarily. That happened around 1920 or in the 19 teens [thereabouts]. This was 1945, I believe, that the territorial government passed an anti-discrimination law. Elizabeth Peratrovich was a key leader of the Alaska Native Sisterhood. A lot of our foundation here in the legal context really does go back to fighting for our rights prior to citizenship, which came from a lot of the leaders that were in the Alaska Native Brotherhood [and the] Alaska Native Sisterhood, one of the oldest civil rights organizations in the country that was founded in 1912. And in 1929, at their convention in Haines, the body passed a resolution agreeing to fight for our lands.

If there is one takeaway from this presentation today, and I've shared this over the years, ANCSA, in one word, is about land. The reality is, though, 50 years after the passage of ANCSA, we've been modifying our little presentation to make it really a two-word summary. ANCSA is about **Native land**.

We really appreciate the [ideas in the Ecotrust Call to Action] because it's really reframing the discussion about public lands. All public lands in this country are Native lands. That's our current paradigm and conversations like this are really helping shape and set the foundation. It's how we make a big leap beyond these land acknowledgments. It is to acknowledge the fact that public lands are Native lands. We are still here.

Just 100 years ago, we didn't have the right to vote. We weren't citizens and today, we have our own general counsel at AFN, Nicole Borrromeo, who is sitting on that redistricting board, wrestling with the powers-that-be to ensure the right to vote for our communities. So today is a different day, it's a day to celebrate. We're really honored and thankful for generations of our Native leaders.

This Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is actually a formal thing in Alaska. The U.S. Mint this past year, during the pandemic, actually started minting coins with her on the coin, so we encourage folks to do the research and maybe even order some of those coins and share them. I got a bag of them myself when they first came out and I share them with my nieces and nephews and other champions.

We have the slides here to keep me on track. We know we're on a [schedule] here. I said this is about land. There is a map that we like to share of Alaska and that's the map of Alaska laid over the continental U.S.. We are here in Alaska, we know how vast it is. The map of Alaska really reaches from the west coast up to the top of Minnesota and down to the east coast. It's a huge state. I'm in southeast.

This [map – [Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska](#)] is a quick visual that does cover a little bit of history. We have 20+ languages that are distinct Indigenous languages. They're unique. For the most part, they are challenged right now and in revitalization mode. In my own household (I'm from southeast), my grandparents on my dad's side were both Eyak and my grandmother didn't speak any English. Her first two languages were Eyak and Tlingit, similar with my dad. Unfortunately, they both passed before I was 10. So, the Eyak language is no longer spoken by a first-language Indigenous speaker. There are folks that are [trying to keep] it alive and champion languages. But you see how the map [shows] the land and the languages so interconnected. Our languages did stem from the lands and they covered the whole state of Alaska. With good work, they'll continue to live on the lands in perpetuity here.

The other map in the middle there [[map – The Twelve Regions – ANCSA Regional Association](#)] shows the regional corporations and how ANCSA carved up the state. If I were to dive into a deeper history lesson, I would have showed more of the colonizer map and the missionary map. Early on, the missionaries divvied up the state of Alaska and set up their missions and churches and boarding schools. There's a long history there that continues to this day. But today, we're focused on ANCSA. The middle one is our 12 regions that roughly mirror the language groups.

The final map here [[map – Land Ownership in Alaska](#)] is a stark contrast to the Native languages covering the state and in stark contrast to the corporations in the region. [The map shows] the current fee simple land ownership. Alaska really is, I believe, 60% federal lands. And again, like the core message here, these are Native lands but if you actually look up the title, it is federal ownership. The state is a decent sized player [in terms of acreage]. Although we settled the land claim, we retained just a tiny fraction of our original land base. We'll get into the weeds lot more in all of this.

I want to really honor Nicole's time. She prepared the heart of this presentation that's coming in the slide deck here. She is our general counsel at AFN. We have to continually be doing this education. So, thank you again to everybody for tuning in. We're going to run through a quick history of ANCSA. I'm going to chime in when I need to but the heart of the rest here is Nicole.

Nicole Borromeo 22:15

Quyana, Joe. Can we advance the slide deck, please? Thank you.

So, in addition to ANCSA being about Natives specifically, it's also a historical underpinning here that we need to talk about to really set the stage for how we came to settle our Aboriginal land claims. Alaska and the Lower 48 Indian tribes have several common eras. One of them is the treaty era. This stretched from 1778 to 1871. It's important to recognize here that the treaties were negotiated under the authority of the President but then they were ratified by Congress.

So, the President would send envoys out to negotiate with tribes about their territories. The model generally resulted in a reservation for the treaty-making tribe. The tribe would receive assets retained which was their traditional lands as well as assets gained, most likely money, food, and other provisions. Contact during this time

between the Lower 48 tribes and the United States government was very high and it resulted in a lot of treaties being negotiated and a lot of reservations being established.

Consequently, in Alaska, contact was low. We didn't have 747's that federal officials could take from Washington, DC, up to Alaska. In addition, Alaska was not a U.S. territory, it was a Russian territory. It wasn't sold to the United States until 1867. So, it would have been impractical for the United States to be having contact during this time with Alaska Natives in the same manner that it did with Lower 48 tribes. As a result, there are 334 reservations in the continental Lower 48 but there's only one reservation here in Alaska. (Next slide, please.)

Following the treaty era, we entered the post-treaty era and that is 1871 until the present. 1871 is a distinctive moment in time because this is when Congress removed the federal tribal treaty-making power from itself. This was done because of a power struggle between the two houses of Congress. The House of Representatives resented the amount of power that the Senate had over Indian Affairs. So, the House added a rider to the appropriations bill that restricted the Senate's ability to enter into these treaties to ratification.

As a result of this, Congress did not extinguish Alaska Native Aboriginal title through a treaty because it wasn't allowed to. Even if it wanted to, it couldn't. This is important because when our first major oil discovery was made in Alaska in 1957, which was two years before we even achieved statehood, Congress had to think of a new way to deal with Aboriginal land claims. (Next slide.)

Prior to the discovery of oil and after the purchase of Alaska from Russia, the United States really didn't know what to do with the territory. It was so large and far away. A lot of federal officials and folks inside what we now refer to as the Beltway referred to Alaska as Seward's Folly because William Seward, on behalf of the United States, had negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia. At the time, it cost \$7+ million. It was an astronomical amount of money. Today, though, it's less than a penny per acre.

So, the United States didn't know what to do with Alaska. Again, it was very far away, it was very big. And there was a relative lack of any effort by non-Natives to remove Alaska Natives to more traditional homelands. So, the United States just took a hands-off approach and they did this for the better part of a century.

There was conflict during this time, for sure, but it was limited to high population densities where there was a big mix of Natives and non-Natives. Most of the Alaska Natives, though, throughout the state were relatively undisposed and unbothered during this time. This was no longer possible after the discovery of oil in 1968 in Prudhoe Bay. Prudhoe Bay remains the United States' largest oil field to this day. (Next slide, please.)

And that brings us to ANCSA. So again, because the United States could not extinguish our Aboriginal title through a treaty, Congress needed to use other mechanisms at its disposal, being legislation. In Alaska, we often refer to ANCSA as being our modern-day federal tribal treaty. There are three C's that we want to leave you with today, with a very high level of what ANCSA did. (Conveyed, charged, clarified.)

Above all, as Joe mentioned before, this is a land bill, So, the Act conveyed federal settlement funds owed to Alaska Natives as well as the lands we retained. Retention is the important word here. The federal government didn't give us any land. These were the lands that we negotiated to retain through the process. It also created 200 new regional and village corporations. These corporations are 100% owned by us as Alaska Natives and operated. The Act also charged our corporations with not only focusing on economics but our corporations are charged with bettering the social position of Alaska Natives. We are unique in the corporate structure that way.

And finally, we want to make sure that everyone today in our presentation understands that even though we have legislation as opposed to a federal treaty, Congress made crystal clear in ANCSA that our unique tribal corporate system, as opposed to the reservation model in the Lower 48, doesn't take anything away from us as Alaska Native people in terms of the federal government's relationship and the benefits that we receive because of our inherent sovereignty and status as Indigenous folks.

Joe, do you have anything to add before we move?

Joe Nelson 29:10

Just a little bit of southeast context. I bring it up because Tlingit and Haida in southeast and the ANB (Alaska Native Brotherhood) sued the federal government. In the 30s, [the federal government] said 'okay, you can sue us but the ANB couldn't take the claim forward because there was non-Natives within the ANB.' So, they organized the Tlingit and Haida by statute to pursue it. Tlingit and Haida did have a monetary settlement in the 50's. That money didn't go through for a while.

So, there was a settlement in southeast, which is a key thing in ANCSA. Southeast [Alaska] almost didn't get included in ANCSA at all. The AFN board, fortunately, the gentleman sitting in my chair at that time, cast the tie-breaking vote in the state, The debate was whether or not to include southeast Alaska because they already had a financial settlement. The community was split but he voted to include southeast. If it wasn't for his vote, I don't know where southeast would be in this whole scheme right now. So, the key point there is, the Native community, as [ANCSA] was coming together, was very engaged. Although there were compromises on many, many sides of this, we were very engaged.

Nicole Borromeo 30:37

Absolutely. (Next slide, please.)

So, digging in a little bit deeper into the Act, what ANCSA did was, it looked at Alaska -- which again, as Joe mentioned, stretches from Florida to California, all the way up into Montana -- and divided the state into 12 geographic regions based on, as much as possible, common language, culture, and traditions. Congress then established one regional corporation for each of the 12 regions.

Additionally, there is a 13th regional corporation for Alaska Natives who were domiciled outside of Alaska at the time, those who were not living here. They did receive a financial settlement but no lands. So, when we think about our regional corporations, we've narrowed it down to just the 12 land-owning regional corporations.

It then created a village corporation for every single existing tribal community at that point throughout rural Alaska and then nested those corporations under their respective regional corporations. For example, I'm from the interior. Doyon is my regional corporation and then we have 36 village corporations that are associated and nested under Doyon. One of them is MTNT. I happen to chair that board at the village level. I know Joe was very active in his Native corporation at one time but then he moved up to the regional corporation and now chairs his board at Sealaska in southeast.

So, we have 12 regional corporations. We have a corporate structure. The settlement here, similar to a treaty, is the United States did have to pay to extinguish our Aboriginal title and then we retained and received some assets. The assets that we retained is upwards of 45 million acres of land. I know when Joe was talking earlier about how our land is divided, the federal government is the largest landowner in the state. And even though we retained about 10% of the land holdings in the entire state, it's still upwards of 45 million acres.

Congress also transferred about a billion dollars of funds to our corporations for a settlement but we did not receive all of those funds in a big lump sum payment. And we were told to hit the ground running and form these corporations. This came over almost a decade, piecemeal by piecemeal, through Congress until all those funds were paid.

And then finally, the Act invited Alaska Natives who were born before December 18, 1971, to enroll in one regional corporation, as well as in one village corporation. Enrollment could be done based on wherever the individual was residing at the time or his or her place of origin. In Alaska, we refer to Alaska Natives who were born after this date as 'afterborns'.

So I'm an afterborn but I did inherit original stock in Doyon from my grandmother when she passed away. And then the corporation has also created another class of stock for all of us afterborns so we have some buy-in into the corporation. So, in time, we will be able to step into those leadership positions that Joe and others hold in the corporation.

Joe, maybe you want to talk about original enrollee insights here. I think you barely made the deadline.

Joe Nelson 34:18

I think you're politely calling me out here. I was born when this happened and thankful to be an original shareholder. That's a unique feature of ANCSA in the sense that when it passed, there was no pathway for descendants to come in necessarily. The original thinking had some issues. My sister, for example, who was born after 1971, didn't have shares and my nieces and nephews didn't have shares so a lot of folks had to wait to inherit shares or be gifted shares. That's really a western model, to accumulate wealth and wait until someone dies to pass the estate on.

As we know, that is not our Native world. The wealthiest folks, from an outward appearance, are not necessarily that wealthy because they actually give everything away.

ANCSA has been amended many, many, many times. And we've been finetuning it since the day it was passed.

One key thing that I don't think is a core feature in this presentation -- that's going to come in next few slides -- is Section 7-I (eye) which was a key part of the bill. These regional corporations to this day all share across the whole state 70% of the revenue from natural resources. In the early phase of ANCSA, Sealaska was the one that was paying because we had timber and paying out 70% of our timber revenue, and that went out to the rest of the state. So natural resources [revenue], wherever the developments happening, get distributed across all the regions.

That's really an anti-corporate type of thinking, to distribute that kind of money [compared to] other corporations across the state. It continues to be a key feature that really has helped all these corporations, though. They all receive income from resource development in the state. That said, we have a very social mission to take care of our communities. I think that's what I'll offer for now.

Nicole, I am a member of Yakutat Kwaan and spent a lot of years on my village corp. Our villages also have the tribes. We have 229 federally recognized tribes. I am a member of Yakutat Tlingit Tribe as well as the regional Tlingit Haida Tribe. So, [we have] extra layers of cards to pack around in your pocket, if you're up here in Alaska.

Nicole Borromeo 37:22

Absolutely. We could honestly do an entire hour on ANCSA stock and how it works as well as the revenue sharing. The easiest way to think about this is, if you're the Seminole Nation in Florida and you're operating the Hard Rock Casino, 70% of those revenues would be then shared with the other tribes throughout the country. That's how Congress structured our settlement. So, Alaska Natives are tied together through this legislation in ways that Lower 48 tribes are not necessarily. (Next slide, please.)

We're also so proud of ANCSA, especially on a day like today where we celebrate Elizabeth Peratrovich, because it really did mark the beginning of the country's self-determination era. If you look at President Nixon, he's speaking and boldly declaring that quote, "The time has come to create a new era in which Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions." That came a full year after ANCSA had already been adopted and we were figuring out the new lay of the land, so to speak, up here in Alaska.

ANCSA was also adopted a full four years before the 1975 passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDA). So, while we may have a leg behind in current fashion trends or music, when it comes to certain acts of Congress as it relates to federal Indian policy, we are on the cutting edge. (Next slide, please.)

The other seminal act that we constantly refer to and wrestle with on a daily basis up here in Alaska is ISDA. As I mentioned on the previous slide, ISDA really sought to recognize Native self-determination in different ways by allowing tribes in the Lower 48 and Alaska to either contract or compact, whichever vehicle the tribe chose, with federal agencies to administer programs that had traditionally been provided by the federal government ourselves, and in ways that differed from each other. So, the McGrath Tribe could do something different than the Yakutat Tribe.

Alaska has really been, I think, on the forefront of pushing Native self-determination through the ISDA. But again, because we are organized differently based on the time and manner in which we settled our land claims with the federal government, Congress has had to become creative through different legislation and how it defines 'Indian tribe' to accomplish whatever the goal of the federal Indian policy is at the time.

There is no one uniform definition of tribe in federal legislation and that's important to note here because there are times when our ANCs (Alaska Native corporations) are included under that definition and times when they are not. Again, [it depends] on whatever Congress is trying to accomplish.

Joe?

Joe Nelson 40:27

Yeah, just stating the obvious, I guess, in the sense of the contrast [between] the Lower 48 tribes and reservations. You think of the reservations and the land. In Alaska, we have all our tribes and we have all our land, and we're very active on the land but the tribes are holding up the title to the land. We retained a tiny bit but the corporations hold title there.

Nicole Borromeo 40:57

(Thank you. Next slide.)

So again, in addition to the traditional or maybe Lower 48 notions of a tribe and nation, or other group or community, Congress has specifically included our village and regional corporations as they're defined in ANCSA into the definition of tribe for Indian tribe for ISDA purposes. (Next slide.)

More than our regional and village corporations, we [and the Lower 48 tribes as well] have been able to bring in tribal organizations generally to the definition of Indian tribe, in certain instances through ISDA. (Next slide, please.)

Can we advance the slide deck? Am I frozen? Okay, there we are.

So, again, as a result, and I'm going to say this often of the time and manner in which our land claims were settled, Alaska has grown up a little bit differently compared to Lower 48 tribes when it comes to organization. Our legal rights and responsibilities are still the same in terms of what is owed to us by the federal government but we have different structures.

One of them is a very robust, regional tribal organization nonprofit world. Our regional nonprofits tend to administer programs such as public safety, education, child welfare, those types of programs, if the tribes in their region authorize them to do so. Our tribal organizations just don't crop up and start taking over ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) cases for their region, for example. Permission has to be provided. It's usually provided in the form of a resolution from the tribal council and that resolution will be very specific in terms of what programs, services, and functions the regional nonprofit will administer on behalf of the tribe.

And most of the services that the regional nonprofit tribal organizations are providing are those services that the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) has traditionally provided for Alaska Natives. Again, our nonprofits operate under delegated tribal authority and they're 100%, Alaska Native-owned and operated. (Next slide.)

Our regional village corporations are another unique form of ANCSA. We've touched on this through the slide deck already, so we're going to be brief here. More than just providing economic returns to Alaska Natives, our ANC's (Alaska Native corporations) are charged under federal law for providing for Alaska Native shareholders in a socially responsible manner. This is a directive that a regular corporation does not have. It's unique to Alaska Native corporations.

Because of this, Congress will frequently include our regional and village corporations in legislation, depending on what it's trying to accomplish. Our corporations are also 100% owned and operated by more than 130,000, Alaska Native shareholders. We think it's important to point out at this point, though, that Congress will include our Native corporations in the definition of Indian tribe 99.9% of the time if it's trying to accomplish economic goals.

It's inappropriate for our corporations to be, for example, adjudicating child welfare matters. They don't do that. That's left to the tribes, but if Congress is trying to accomplish something financially or economically, they will bring in our ANCs because this is really the economic engine and driver of our Alaska Native tribes up here in Alaska and Alaska Native community on a whole based on the way that ANCSA is structured.

Joe?

Joe Nelson 45:12

Yeah, just to reinforce the connection here to the corporations and the land and the federal government. The Department of Interior, the BLM, the Department of Agriculture, they all have programs that benefit a lot of different landowners, public and private. Clearly, in Alaska, it's the Alaska Native corporations that hold title to the land. So, we have those relationships, especially when those programs are tied to the land and historic sites and resource management.

Nicole Borromeo 45:48

Thank you. (Next slide.)

The other big difference up here in Alaska, maybe compared to the Lower 48, is our establishment of Native health corporations. Our Native health corporations operate at the regional level and then we have a statewide tribal health care system as well. They will administer health care services on behalf of federally recognized tribes and individual Indian beneficiaries if the tribes authorize them to do so. Again, this is done through a resolution. The programs, functions, and services that the health corporations take on are those primarily related to the Indian Health Service. Our health corporations operate similarly under tribal authority that's delegated and they're 100% Native-owned and operated.

Joe is going to talk a little bit about our Alaska Tribal Health Consortium (ATHC) and the model that it provides for the rest of the country.

Joe Nelson 46:50

I'll try to keep this very brief and maybe with a little story. Since we're engaged in Indian Country here, we've got a lot of things that connect us and one of those is basketball. (Miakah Nix was on the zoom, she's with Ecotrust, she's in Kake Keex' Kwaan right now and I grew up competing for Yakutat and traveling to Kake.) There was a high school [basketball] game years ago. I was on a break, stole the ball, and got pushed into the stands. They had new gym bleachers where I ended up slicing my kneecap open and was bleeding all over the court. They kept saying 'keep playing'. It took forever to get me out of the village with my kneecap sliced open. So, the EMT's treated it and then they shipped me to Sitka where the Mount Edgecombe Hospital, the IHS hospital, was at the time. They had to call my mother back in Yakutat because they wanted to do surgery and they needed the parental permission. My mother declined. She's like, 'no, send him to the other hospital. You're trying to just get off the hook by sending him to the Native hospital.'

A couple days later, I finally made it to the other hospital [in Juneau]. The doctors in Juneau said, 'let's just keep you here and make sure you're not getting sick.' They actually did a pretty good job, the EMT. And I didn't have the surgery.

The point there was, today, [there's] a contrast. We all love IHS and Indian Health Service. Jumping forward, I went to UCLA and I ended up dealing with Cedar Sinai in LA. When I finished law school and moved back, I much preferred our ANTHC (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium) in Anchorage. Our Indian Health or Native Health Consortium, it's actually come to the forefront during this pandemic because we leapt out as far as addressing the pandemic.

It's so well run and so well organized. We were very efficient in getting the vaccines out across the whole state and servicing really the whole state. So, the non-Native world is a lot more aware of Tribal Health now because they walked in our doors to get the jab and came back for their boosters. And we're happily taking care of the whole community through our Tribal Health.

Nicole Borromeo 49:41

Yeah, that was a little bit of a trip, sitting in the waiting room and they have all the individual desks spaced six feet across from each other. There were [fewer] Natives than non-Natives at that point in Alaska, getting their COVID vaccines in our health care system. Also, I will say ANTHC in Anchorage is the state's only level three trauma hospital. We treat all Alaskans and non-Alaskans too that are visiting that have head trauma. They will be flown into our hospital now versus going to one of the other big hospitals throughout the state. (Next slide.)

I think I got a slide out of order. Can we do one more slide? Go back to the Chehalis one.

So, there was a slide at one point that talked about our federally recognized tribes because we don't want to leave the impression that our tribes are dormant up here and the corporate system has taken over. That is far from the

case. We do have [nearly] half of all tribes that are federally recognized in Alaska, 229 of them. They're active, they have their own tribal courts. Some of them are moving to put land into trust. Through the pandemic, they have really stepped up into a leadership role and would restrict access to the tribal communities. The state didn't even challenge them on that.

It's also worth mentioning in this presentation that we have a bill working its way through the Alaska state legislature right now where the state is moving to formally recognize all 229 federally recognized tribes. Our tribes are coming to the forefront as well as becoming dominant players on the political and economic scene as well.

We did have an unfortunate misunderstanding, if you will, in Indian Country, about the status of Alaska Natives and our corporations, that led to some litigation around the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) and that first big federal recovery push that was passed by Congress in response to the COVID-19 health pandemic. Again, due to the time and manner that we settled our land claims with the United States, our tribal self-governance model, and our Native self-determination model looks differently than it does for American Indians. And we're comfortable with that in Alaska.

But because our corporations have such economic responsibility for our people, Congress included our ANC's (Alaska Native corporations) in the definition of Indian tribe because our ANC's would be then helping Native people recover from the pandemic. Since Congress decided to spread the responsibility for the betterment of Alaska Natives over multiple entities, it made sense to include our Native corporations in an economic relief package, which is what CARES was.

Legislation that has been passed by Congress after CARES isn't tied so much to economics and, therefore, Congress has not fallen back on the definition of Indian tribe that it frequently uses in ISDA. But, to us in Alaska, this is what Native self-determination looks like -- all of us working together. We often say we wear different hats. I'm a tribal member, I chair my village corporation, I'm active at my regional level in terms of input and whatnot. The same is true for Joe. Although this was an unfortunate play-out on the national level, in Alaska, we really hope that this chapter is closed and we will move forward together as one Indigenous people.

Joe?

Joe Nelson 53:35

I'm good on this. I know you're pushing up against your other meeting here.

Nicole Borromeo 53:41

All right. So, let's get to the next slide, please. Joe is going to wrap up the presentation. Go ahead. Joe.

Joe Nelson 53:47

Before you go, did you have anything else, Nicole?

Nicole Borromeo 53:53

No, I'll hang out for as long as possible. I'll start my other zoom and do a little bit of tag teaming until all the board gavels in and then I'll jump off.

Joe Nelson 54:01

Okay. We cannot close without noting this. Although it did add a layer of complications and we've been refining it ever since, something very fundamental happened in the Act that is unfinished business. It's our hunting and fishing rights. It's still a core part of our lifestyle in all our communities. There are a lot of folks that take issue with the term "subsistence" because that might connotate one thing to certain groups but, really, our way of life is so integrated with the land and the resources.

ANCSA was somewhat explicit in the preamble that it was extinguishing those rights but it was very clear in the legislative history that the state and the feds were expected to sort this out and preserve our Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights. There was effort on the federal side through ANILCA (the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) in 1980 to put in place a rural preference. So, when the group's commercial and sport and subsistence users, when the resources are limited or diminished and they have to prioritize on the federal [side], we have laws, and this was a compromise, to call it a rural preference. That got crosswise with the state government because the state has the equal rights/ equal access to resources for Alaskans in the state constitution.

So, it's just sitting at this loggerhead -- the federal rural priority versus the state constitution which says you can't prioritize that way. We're still stuck. So, management of this vast state and the resources as we get out there to hunt and fish, it's a dual management regime with one set of rules on federal lands and another set on state lands. Our Native corporation lands are actually dictated to follow the state land. So, we are in the middle of this fight, still.

Although we settled on one level, the fee simple and these corporations 50 years later (our corporations are celebrating their 50-year anniversary this year), we are really still wrapped around the axle on something that is so fundamental to us as a people, and that's access to land and waters and managing our own fish and deer and all the hunting that we do.

Think of history. The first wave of non-Natives, the Russians, were chasing sea otter pelts. Later, another wave came for the salmon. After that, gold and, after that, which really set up the powers-that-be to align around ANCSA, was oil. That made it urgent to come together to say we really need to align to get oil flowing, get that pipeline built across our Native lands. More recently, in the last 50 years, it's the tree huggers. And I say that with love. It's just another form of colonization.

We are trying to avoid picking sides because we've always been here. We're going to continue to be here forever. There's a real common-sense middle between all the polarization that's happening in the world and in the country. And those are the Indigenous common sense values that are going to take care of our lands forever are the things that we're leaning into. So, we're happy to zoom with you today.

I'll pause and yield back the floor to the team. Maybe we can drop the slide deck and look to Miakah and Lisa to help close us out.

Miakah Nix 58:38

Thank you, Joe and Nicole. At this point in time, we'll start the Q&A portion of today's briefing. If you have any questions or comments at this time, please put them in the Q&A section.

And first, I'd like to start out with a question to acknowledge, "Thank you, Joe, for acknowledging some of the issues that have arisen with the ANCSA process. I just wanted to dig a little deeper and mention that in the Lower 48, many tribes have continued to experience broken treaties and a failure to uphold federal trust responsibility. Has this been the case with ANCSA? Are there other shortcomings that have impacted Alaska Natives that you'd like to speak to?"

Joe Nelson 59:16

Yes, the most fundamental one that was acknowledged pretty early on was the deadline for enrollment and the definitions there. Like I said, you had to be alive on December 18, 1971, to receive shares. If you were born after [that date], you weren't able to get shares until one of your parents or grandparents passed away or gifted shares. As a community, we had to lobby Congress to open up an avenue to issue stock to descendants or those born after. About half of the regional corporations have done it. But without enrollment and ownership, and that forward thinking was not embedded right away, we had to amend it there.

Region by region, there are all kinds of little things here and there that have happened and continue to happen. In southeast, specifically, where my home is and will continue to be, we have five communities that were left out. They were left out of ANCSA and not for any clear good reason. So, we're continuing to advocate for what we characterize or call 'Natives without land or the landless population'.

So, there's just a couple there. We don't have a lot of time here but they're there. There are unique things in all regions where we continue to have to look at ANCSA and when we need to make a change, we do. There was one many years ago. I think it was Section R, possibly, that made it clear that these are unique Native corporations and it's okay to do things that are not on a per capita basis.

For example, in the southeast, we set up an elder fund early on where the elders get extra stock and dividends. In a normal corporation, when you start differentiating based on [categories], you're going to get lawsuits from the average Joe Schmoe shareholder, saying that's an unequal distribution. Well, we amended ANCSA to say 'no, if we want to take care of our elders, we can do that'. And Joe Schmoe shareholder can't sue us and get that elder benefit because he's 35 and say that's an unequal distribution. So, we take care of our elders. We have memorial death benefits, we have all kinds of different programs that are unique. And we've had to tighten up the Act.

Miakah Nix 1:01:49

Thank you. "Was there any significance to choosing the date of December 18, 1971?"

Nicole Borromeo 1:01:58

Hey Miakah. Can I just jump in really quick and say, thank you so much for allowing me to participate, I have to switch over to the Alaska redistricting board. One thing that I was going to add is -- maybe Joe can touch on this after I go -- is the contaminated lands that were transferred to us throughout the process as well. That was a big black eye, I think, on the federal government's part and we're still working to clean those up.

But again, thank you so much for the opportunity. And I look forward to working with Ecotrust in the future. And I'll turn it over to Joe. You guys are in excellent hands with him for the Q&A. Thank you.

Miakah Nix 1:02:35

Thank you, Nicole

Joe Nelson 1:02:40

I'll be brief on that one. I don't think this issue is unique to Alaska. As we know, our Indian lands in general haven't been treated with the type of respect that we would like to treat them with. It's been a theme throughout history here, that there's contamination on our lands, and we weren't carved out of that in Alaska. Some have this idea that Alaska is pristine and untouched and that kind of thing. Since day one, there's [been a] heavy military presence, as all of you know. As you also know, as a country, the Environmental Protection Agency and our federal laws around environmental cleanup were coming to be a thing right around the same time as ANCSA. So, we had plenty of years of a government that was spoiling a lot of our land.

No, we didn't escape that. A lot of lands are contaminated from military activity. To this day, there's a backlog that we are working hard to get funding for cleanup. There are real impacts for us in Yakutat. I grew up on the land and water, eating the fish and food. Now that tribes have their own environmental departments, we're realizing that the things we're eating are contaminated. The clams, the shellfish, the seals, all our food is wrestling with that contamination from the federal government.

Miakah Nix 1:04:27

We have a question from Margaret. "What is the process for amending ANCSA? Is it difficult to make amendments?"

Joe Nelson 1:04:36

Yes, it definitely is. We've witnessed Congress get to a spot where actually the idea of working together hasn't been a [priority], so you're either with the majority or the minority. That actually can work in our favor in the sense that as a Native community, I don't think we're all on the left or right. We're always going to be here. We just make the best of it and have relationships with folks in both parties.

It's a multi-year [process] to amend the ANCSA since it's a federal statute. We have a great relationship with our [Congressional reps]. We only have three folks in DC, two senators and only one representative, Congressman [Don] Young. He's been there for quite a while. Depending on the committee assignments, and those sorts of things with administrations and the swings of the balance there, he's in a good, influential spot. Having great relationships with our delegation in DC is critical. And that's what AFN is here to do, to continue to help play that role.

Miakah Nix 1:05:58

Thank you. We have a question from Spencer. "It sounds as though there's a financial incentive to develop natural resources for revenue. How do the corporations balance needs for revenue against conservation and ecological preservation?"

Joe Nelson 1:06:13

Yes, that's right on point. As far as a key issue here, the whole state of Alaska wrestles with this issue. This issue is not unique to Alaska Native corporations in Alaska here. The entirety of our [state] budget depends on oil revenue. So, we're working on this balancing act and the shift, and addressing climate change, being conscious of all these things, being mindful. It's our sense that if there's to be balanced land management and resource development, it's the people that actually live and depend on the land who are the best positioned to help find that balance, because as Native people, we've been doing that for 10,000 years here.

There are other definite risks as far as the tension points on the priorities but embedded in ANCSA is a social mission. We're not looking at quarterly financial statements like other public entities. We're here for the long haul. And in southeast, we're happy -- and Miakah is was very involved in this effort here -- to be working on a triple bottom line, "quadruple bottom line", just working better together and partnering with conservation entities to put Indigenous people at the forefront of balanced land management and pushing on Indigenous stewardship. So, a lot of exciting things are happening there. It is a balancing act but we're in a position to help manage that because we've been here for a long time. And with every decision we make, we're thinking about our grandkids.

Miakah Nix 1:08:29

I'm jumping around a little bit on the kind of timeline of your presentation. "Could you speak to what the formation of ANCSA looked like from the inception of the idea, how the communities or leaders were engaged, and how they felt about that?"

Joe Nelson 1:08:55

Yeah, this is an interesting one. It's been a little over 50 years since ANCSA passed and the alignment of all the different forces and a different time in history. We were coming out of the activism of the 1960s, television was becoming a thing, the Vietnam War was happening, and in most of our communities, we weren't on that sort of cutting edge in the sense of technology. We're still not. A large part of our community really is living like they always had. That means they weren't looking at their phones because we didn't have phones. They weren't looking at TV because we didn't have TV's.

I remember, in Yakutat, we didn't have TVs back then. TV became a thing when I was in elementary school in Yakutat. It was one station that came through and the high school actually ran it. So, communication was a challenge. It was mostly by paper. There was communication by newspapers. We depended on existing leadership to be very engaged.

Fortunately, they were very engaged. So, there was a group of leaders, [some of whom are still here today and others are not], that came together and AFN was [formed]. In 1968, it was formed to help marshal this. The AFN board members had the wisdom to reach around the whole state, in each region [where they] elected people to send to AFN. We had delegated a lot of trust to that group to advocate for us and there were a lot of efforts to raise money and send them back to DC. But really, thinking back to communications back in the 70's, especially in Alaska, it was pretty limited. But we had leaders that, through AFN, were right there, walking the halls, helping negotiate this thing.

Miakah Nix 1:11:18

Great. Thank you. We have a question from Dave. "What do you wish all Alaskans knew about ANCSA?"

Joe Nelson 1:11:26

All Alaskans about ANCSA? I think it's my closing comment. It's about land but it's unfinished business still, because what good is the land if we can't hunt and fish and live our traditional way of life? There are avenues to do it, in many realms, but we've got competing regimes between the feds and the state. Actually, in Kake, during the pandemic, the governor sued the tribe in Kake because the federal subsistence board authorized an emergency hunt during the pandemic. The state government said 'no, you're overreaching'. Well, fortunately, we all came to the table and paid for that litigation to happen. It worked its way through the courts and came out saying the feds were actually okay there in allowing the tribe to go ahead and do a community hunt.

Another component, I guess, is just our communities. We've got this Build Back Better effort that's happening in the Biden administration. So many of our communities weren't built out in the first place, as far as the type of infrastructure that a lot of people are accustomed to. Our communities don't have roads, don't have common plumbing. And broadband is the big one. Even today, we can't communicate that effectively with our communities.

But we're here, and these public lands are our Native lands so we need to have Native people at the table on all of these fish and game advisory boards to really take care of the land appropriately. There are avenues to doing it.

Miakah Nix 1:13:33

"Can you speak to Sealaska's transition away from timber? What are you excited about for the future of ANCSA corporations?"

Joe Nelson 1:13:42

Yes, I'm hugely excited. I will confess that I grew up in a village and these corporations were not part of me. They're still not part of my identity, necessarily. They're just a tool. But when you're using that tool with your traditional values or traditional knowledge, and you're doing that on a daily basis, we can make some good things happen here.

At Sealaska, by necessity, the first couple of generations were fairly heavy in timber harvest. We've got to be clear on that harvesting. We retained less than 2% of our land base. The Tongass was the stealing, the theft that

happened over 100 years ago. Through our settlement in southeast, we only retained a tiny, tiny fraction of our land.

Sure, a portion of it went into timber harvest. This last year we wound down our timber operation. We've really made the full shift and we're still making this shift but our theme, our guiding theme that is organizing all our businesses right now, is around ocean health. We're in the seafood business, we're in hydro sciences. Up and down the coast of California we know that there are oil rigs out there that are aging out. We're in a position to help put those to bed. We need healthy seas, healthy fish.

And we all know healthy it is if people did live just on fish. It's common sense. What a powerful superfood source it is in the sense of the carbon footprint and all that. We're excited.

Most recently, we did put a \$10 million dollar challenge out there to find a partner to help grow a large fund similar to Coast Funds in BC. The Nature Conservancy stepped up and matched that with \$7 million and Edgerton and Rasmussen [helped to meet the total goal of \$20 million]. We're going to grow this fund. The idea is to support in perpetuity Indigenous land stewardship, economic development with the triple-bottom-line [lens].

That investment was acknowledging that we did lose jobs coming out of timber. We need to find a way to move forward and keep going for the long-term, though. So, we are building this fund through the Sustainable Southeast Partnership and Spruce Root, one of our nonprofits, to really stay connected to the community for the long haul. This is a time where the rest of the world is waking up to Indigenous stewardship. It is an exciting time. I'm very, very thankful to be just a small part of all of it.

Miakah Nix 1:17:08

So on the winds of that wake-up call to Indigenous stewardship, I have one last question for you. "We have a number of folks in attendance from nonprofits that are interested in developing relationships with Indigenous communities. What recommendations would you have for them when engaging with Alaska Native villages? is this different from building relationships with tribes in the Lower 48?"

Joe Nelson 1:17:31

At the most fundamental level, I would say 'no' because there are more things that connect us and that we're alike in the sense of humanity. When you go back pre-Western, pre-contact, which wasn't that long ago, actually, we were all more in touch and collectivist. Western industrialization here in the last couple hundred years has really taken a toll on the planet.

I would say the things that do engage and bring us together and help in the trust building pretty quickly is listening and having food involved, and really just appreciating the sense of community and relationships. As Indigenous people, we are more relationship-based or collectivist, which stands in contrast to being very individualistic and very transactional, which is the western model of education and thinking.

We are very comfortable at our own pace, which we don't think is a slow pace. It's just more in touch with everything. So, I would encourage people to have patience and take the advice of Ecotrust here and think beyond the land acknowledgments. That would be huge. Share some salmon. Those are my immediate thoughts, but not hugely different than the Lower 48. We are all connected.

Miakah Nix 1:19:27

Sorry, I lied. I have one more question. There are a number of folks wondering where they can find the Elizabeth Peratrovich coins.

Joe Nelson

Yeah, I wish I could drop the link quickly. Just google the U.S. Mint and Elizabeth Peratrovich. That's how I got mine and I was so thrilled that it actually showed up because this government doesn't engender trust. I was skeptical when they took my credit card payment, whether or not I'd get it, but it showed up. So, I ordered directly from the U.S. Mint.

Miakah Nix 1:20:05

Great. Thank you.

Lisa Watt 1:20:06

Thank you very much Joe, Nicole, and Miakah. That was very enlightening. I also want to thank everybody who stayed with us beyond the 12 noon hour. I just wanted to mention that in some of the feedback that we received in the earlier briefings, folks told us to stop watching the clock and take our foot off the pedal. 'Just relax.' So, that's what we did here. Again, for the folks that could not stay with us, this briefing will be posted on our website, on the briefing page, starting this Monday.

Thanks again, Joe. We greatly appreciate it. And also, [our] thanks to Nelson. We are going to have Joe and Nicole back for a future briefing. As we were doing the preparation for this one, as we were talking about all the issues and topics, Alaska is a huge, huge topic and we could dive in in any number of places. So, thank you very much for your offer to come back and share more with us. We greatly appreciate it.

Before we close, we'd like to offer a few more remarks. There are a number of excellent nonprofit organizations in Alaska serving Alaska Native communities that we would like to bring to your attention. We hope you will consider learning more about each of them and contributing to their important mission. We will put all the organizations' links in the chat.

The first one is the Alaska Federation of Natives where Nicole works and where Joe is the co-chair. As we mentioned before, it is the largest statewide Native organization working to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the Alaska Native community.

We'd also like you to consider supporting the First Alaskans Institute which is working to advance Alaska Natives through community engagement, information and research, collaboration, and leadership development.

In southeast [Alaska] specifically, please consider supporting the Sealaska Heritage Institute which is dedicated to perpetuating and enhancing southeast Alaska Native cultures, specifically the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian.

There is also Spruce Root. Spruce Root is an organization Joe mentioned previously. It promotes economic development and job creation in southeast Alaska to empower business owners through increased self-sufficiency.

And the Seacoast Trust, also an organization Joe mentioned, whose goal is to support southeast Alaska communities and achieving their goals for collective wellbeing, sustainable economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and natural resource development using a range of programs that weave Indigenous values into new approaches to resource management. I'd really like to call attention to the Seacoast Trust because there's some really exciting things going on up there with that one.

Miakah Nix 1:23:12

Thanks, Lisa. As always, we would appreciate your feedback about this briefing today. You already know the drill. There will be a five-minute survey sent to you immediately following this gathering. Please take a moment to complete it. Even if you provided feedback the last two times, please do so again.

To follow Ecotrust's work with Indigenous communities, please consider signing up for our biweekly newsletter. You can find the link in the chat. As we mentioned last time, we have an upcoming three-part interview series about the impacts of climate change on trees and plants important to tribes. And, we will be announcing the newest Indigenous Leadership Award recipients soon so you won't want to miss out.

And finally, the fourth and final briefing of the series will be held on Wednesday, March 16, 2022, entitled "Breaking the Chains: Transformative Federal Legislation and Tribal Peoples." Federal legislation passed in the 1970s and 1980s transformed the relationship between Native American tribes and the U.S. government, shifting from a colonialist, paternalistic approach to one that recognizes the sovereignty of tribal nations. The registration link is in the chat.

Lisa Watt 1:24:21

We thank you for sharing your time with us today. And we hope that you're walking away with new understandings and insights into the world of Alaska Native communities and Indigenous leadership. We hope to see you all on March 16th at 11am Thank you. Be safe, everyone.

CITATIONS:

Borromeo, Nicole. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impacts on Alaska Native Communities. Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program, December 15, 2021. Webinar series: Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands.

Nelson, Joseph. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impacts on Alaska Native Communities. Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program, December 15, 2021. Webinar series: Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands.

Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impacts on Alaska Native Communities. Ecotrust, December 15, 2021. Webinar series: Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands.