



2022 ATIA LAND MANAGERS FORUM

Tuesday, June 14
Fairbanks, Alaska



ATTENDEES

Sarah Creachbaum, Regional Director, National Park Service - Alaska Region

Peter Christian, Chief, Public and Legislative Affairs, National Park Service - Alaska Region

Maija Lukin, Alaska Native Relations Program Manager, National Park Service - Alaska Region

Brooke Merrell, Acting Superintendent, Denali National Park

James King, Recreation, Lands and Minerals Director, US Forest Service - Alaska Region

Zach Million, Program Lead for Recreation, Travel Management and National Conservation Lands, Bureau of Land Management- Alaska Region

Dr. Brian Glaspell, Assistant Regional Director, National Wildlife Refuge System, US Fish & Wildlife Service - Alaska Region

Jodi Jendry, Tribal Resource Stewardship Coordinator, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Debra Lynne, Natural Cultural Resources Specialist, Tanana Chiefs Conference

April Woolery, Planner, Alaska Department of Transportation - Northern Region

Sam Braband, Chief Ranger, Alaska State Parks - Northern Region

Will Brown, Senior Director Government Relations, US Travel Association

Reggie Chapple, Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships & Civic Engagement, National Park Service

Lee Hart, Executive Director, Alaska Outdoor Alliance

Ralph Wolfe, Program Director, Sustainable Southeast Partnership

Vide Kroto, Executive Director, Tebughna Foundation

Marie Francis, Administrative Assistant, Tebughna Foundation

Sharon McConnell, Executive Director, Denakkanaaga, Inc.

Scott McCrea, President & CEO, Explore Fairbanks

Sarah Leonard, President & CEO, ATIA

Jeff Samuels, Director of Policy & Communications, ATIA

Dontae McFalls, Program Manager, ATIA

Julie Jessen, Facilitator

AGENDA

Question for the Day: How can ATIA support land managers, business operators, and other partners in advocating for the land stewardship and infrastructure projects our industry relies on?

- 9:00 AM** Welcome and Introductions: Sarah, Leonard, Scott McCrea
Land Acknowledgment: Sharon McConnell, Denakkanaaga, Inc.
Recap Previous Meetings - How did we get here? Julie Jessen
- 9:30 AM** Comments by Will Brown, Senior Director Government Relations, US Travel Association
- 9:45 AM** Comments by Reggie Chapple, Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships & Civic Engagement, National Park Service

MORNING THEME: RESPECT FOR THE LAND AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 10:00 AM** Land Stewardship and Partnerships: Tebughna Foundation / Tyonek Cultural Experience
- 11:00 AM** Tanana Chiefs Conference overview
Partnerships: National Park Service, Glacier Bay National Park / Village of Hoonah
- 12:00 PM** Lunch
National Park Service video about relationship between Hoonah and Glacier Bay NP:
<https://youtu.be/ONUBof0wlw8>

AFTERNOON THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1:00 PM** Denali Park Road Construction Update
- 1:30 PM** Climate change impacts to land management and infrastructure: How can the tourism sector help land managers in addressing these impacts?
- 3:00 PM** Sustainable Southeast Partnership overview: Ralph Wolfe
- 3:30 PM** Final Thoughts and Action Items
- 4:00 PM** Adjourn

MORNING SESSION NOTES

US TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Will Brown | Senior Director, Government Relations

- National and Alaska travel statistics updates, foreign worker visas and ongoing delays at our foreign embassies.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Reggie Chapple | Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships & Civic Engagement, National Park Service

- Highlighted importance of industry, partnerships, and the relation to commerce.
- Provide update on efforts to create a national tourism office, much like other destinations.

TEBUGHNA FOUNDATION

- Overview on efforts to create a Cultural Experience Center in the village of Tyonek. The facility will be powered by solar and wind energy and will house a gathering place, kitchen, office space, shared business space, training room for cultural awareness, all around community center. The building will become a hub for small scale day trip tourism into the village from Anchorage to explore what was once Alaska's largest town. Funding remains a hurdle.
- The Foundation is looking for more grant funding assistance if/when anyone has advice.

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

- Overview of services available through this organization. Most residents live a subsistence lifestyle, and the loss of fish and game resources has had a significant impact on communities and residents in recent years. How do they move forward? Cultural awareness? Regenerative tourism? Federal grants? Climate change is changing things that have always been available.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

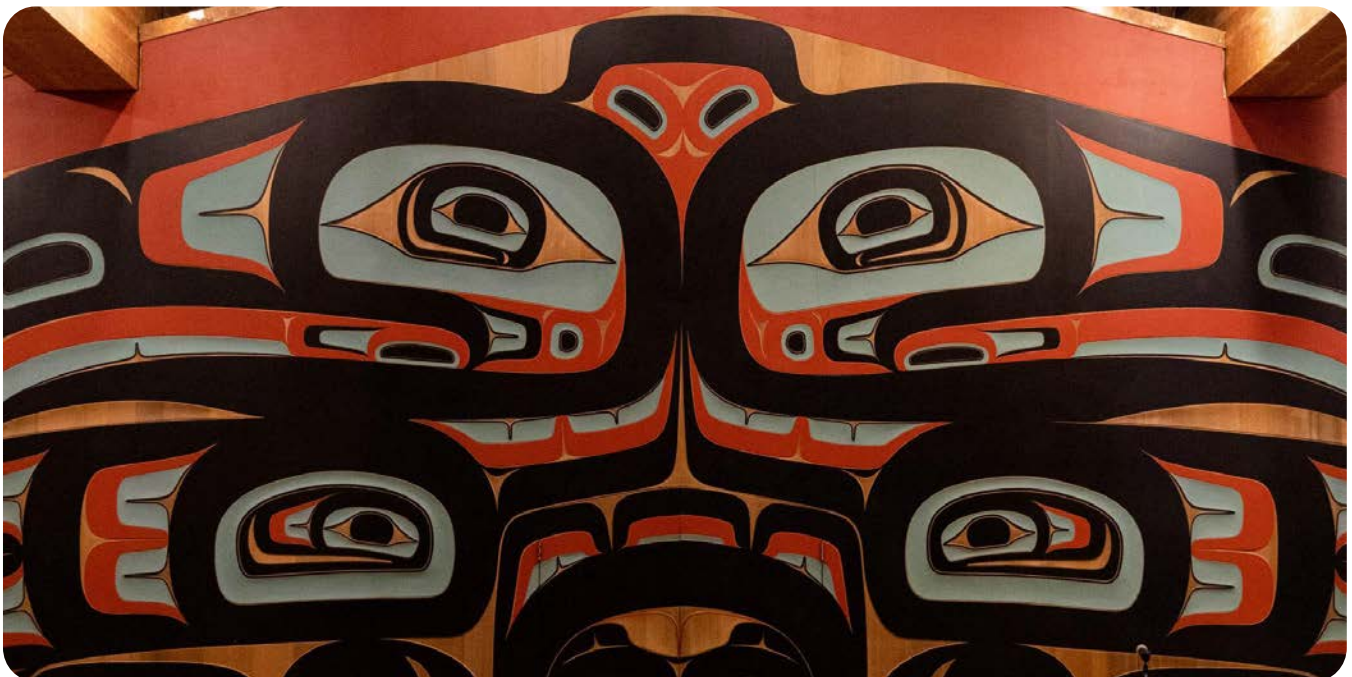
- Overview of various tribal partnerships the NPS has in Alaska. Almost every park has a relationship with neighboring Indigenous residents and are collectively working on projects that incorporate culture camps, cultural interpretation, and food resources.

Group discussion around interest in support of education, job creation, tourism as a mechanism to bring money and economic development into communities. Tribal consultation is improving, as evidenced by the interest in restoring traditional place names around the state.

LUNCH TOPIC NOTES

HOW CAN ATIA HELP BE A CATALYST FOR OUR ALASKA NATIVE COMMUNITIES TO HELP CONNECT PEOPLE TO PROJECTS AND PLACES?

- Conservation financing and private philanthropy to fund land management projects and potentially new small scale tribal tourism efforts.
- AIANTA is a great resource for Alaska Native communities to tap in to for technical assistance around developing tourism plans and available grants or funding available.
- Planning is one thing but carrying out plans is another, and land management agencies are short-staffed. Agencies need people, partners, and infrastructure to implement these plans.
- ATIA can help communities undertake a "visioning" process to determine what scale of tourism they want to participate in, how to fund it, what successful outcomes would look like. It's important to get community support and buy-in for new projects. Ideas should come from within and have advocates in the community.
- Tourism businesses can reach out to local tribal agencies to seek partnerships. Alaska CulturalHost training is being revamped for broad distribution in coming months and years.
- NPS video about repaired relationship between Glacier Bay National Park and the Village of Hoonah was viewed over lunch break. <https://youtu.be/ONUBof0wlw8>



AFTERNOON SESSION NOTES

DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Brooke Merrell, Acting Park Superintendent

- Provided a geologic and contracting update on the Denali Park Road. The contract will likely be signed in September for a groundbreaking in May of 2023. Project is scheduled to be completed by spring of 2025.
 - o Surrounding conversation: How can land managers adapt to changing climate?
 - o Limited funding available to address infrastructure, decisions may include potential future impacts from climate change. "If we throw an amount towards this project now, what will happen in 5-10 years? What will go unfunded as a result of funding this project?"
 - o Better communication between land managers, businesses, and communities will build trust and ensure large projects have broad support. Land managers can start having regular conversations with the tourism industry at large regarding policy decisions, marketing, and messaging around environment and future policy planning. Communication is key.
 - o Recognize the things we can and cannot control, acknowledge them, and make plans to get ahead of the challenge.
 - o ATIA can serve as an advocate and voice for land management agencies, conveying messages that agencies have a harder time delivering directly. ATIA's Board of Directors can ask managers what their infrastructure needs are, which offers an opportunity for them to address and create that priority list. Agencies are often too focused on immediate needs.

PREVAILING THEMES:

- Seek common ground in partnerships.
- Be open to knowing there are things beyond our control.
- Embrace or at least accept the changing landscape.
- Reach out in communication to non-traditional partners. Start with identifying common ground.
- In the face of dramatic landscape changes, land managers should consider where to spend time and funds with a pragmatic approach: if we address this now, what will happen in 5-10 years? Should this not be funded?
- Be creative in new partnerships and new opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation businesses.
- The collective voice can advocate for issues/ funding/ legislation more effectively than individual agencies.
- How can ATIA elevate issues that land managers cannot?

WHAT CAN ATIA CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS?

- A statewide tourism plan: Incorporate projects/ needs/ communities/ visitors.
- Continue to focus on workforce and housing as statewide key issues.
- Create a quarterly or monthly check-in among land management agency communications team members.
- Host a two-day annual land managers meeting, one day with ATIA and another day with agencies within the state.
- Consider supporting more smaller scale tourism enterprises which generate revenue for communities and disperse visitation away from hubs.
- Help identify creative funding streams such as private philanthropy/ conservation financing/ low interest loans or grants.
- Encourage independent operators to work with local communities to ask what needs they have. How can tourism businesses partner with and advocate for local communities?
- Deepen cultural tourism connections. Invite visitors to participate in cultural tourism, including off the road system. Continue guide training which includes cultural and natural resource knowledge. Tap into land management agency resources for this training.
- Advocate for infrastructure development in rural Alaska as part of the IJJA. Tell the story of a changing landscape and the impact on people and culture.
- Send letters to regional land managers to identify projects or efforts which ATIA supports. Continue educating our members, land managers, and other partners of the significance of all public and private lands.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ATIA wishes to thank the attendees who participated in the day's forum, Scott McCrea and Explore Fairbanks, Sharon McConnell of Denakkanaaga, Incorporated, and Julie Jessen.

