

TRADITIONAL SHELTERS: SMOKE HOUSES OF THE CHUGACH GR: 6-12 (2 LESSONS)

Elder Quote/Belief:



“Across the sound, in different places, there used to be steam baths. You knew where they were.... As long as the Forest Service didn’t find them first and burn them down.”

Tom Anderson, Cordova, Alaska

Grade Level: 6-12

Overview: The Chugach smokehouse was an important traditional temporary structure built throughout Prince William Sound. The name “smokehouse” had various meanings depending on the needs of the time of year and needs of the person. These shelters offered an overnight location to get out of the weather. These were also used as steam baths or *banyas*. In the early 1970’s, the United States Forest Service deemed these structures irrelevant and not culturally significant so disposed of the “smokehouses” by setting them a blaze to make way for recreational cabins and campsites throughout the sound. It was not until interviews with local native Elders that the importance of these structures was acknowledged.

Standards:

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
E (4) Culturally-knowledgeable students demonstrate and awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.	E (3) A student should understand the relationships among science, technology and society.	Survival S (3) Students should know how to start a fire, prepare signals, and make temporary shelters.

Lesson Goal:

To learn about the significance of the Chugach smokehouse’s many uses in Prince William Sound.

Lesson Objective(s): Students will:

- Develop a list of uses of the Chugach smokehouses.
- Interview an Elder on emergency shelters near surrounding community.
- Map smokehouse described by Elders.
- Hypothesize and map additional locations where shelters would be established with reasons why. (i.e., Access to freshwater, fishing, safety, etc.)

Vocabulary Words: Sugt'stun Dialects

English:	PWS:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
House		enak	yahd
Spruce		napak	AdAlis
Hemlock		allceq	tl'eeyu'

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert
- [Traditional Housing and Shelters Interview Questions](#)
- Sim Table and [Sim Table Prompts](#)
- Computers
- Maps of Chugach Region, specifically to location of community.

Book:

- *Chasing the Dark; Perspectives on Place History and Alaska Native Land Claims*
 - Article: "The Chugach Smokehouse: A Case of Mistaken Identity" by Rita Miraglia, Page 250.

Websites:

- [Google Earth](#): To view specific areas of the region on computers or smartboard.
- Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) <https://portal.aos.org/gulf-of-alaska.php>
 - [Cook Inlet ShoreZone Imagery](#)
 - [Prince William Sound](#)

Teacher Preparations:

- Request to borrow the Traditional Housing and Shelters kit and SimTable, if desired, in advance of lesson.
- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert to share TEK regarding any emergency shelters/smokehouses they know (or knew) of, location and possibly traditional place name.
- Review with students the ways to show respect to the guest in classroom.
- Locate materials needed and review the book, websites and SimTable (if borrowed from Chugachmiut Cultural Heritage Department).
- Have a map of the region available for Elder guest to point out the locations and when students are presenting.
- Double check to see if school has the internet capability for Google Earth.

Opening: The Chugach smokehouse has been described by Elders as a place of safety, a place to take a banya, and a place to gather subsistence foods. In the article, *The Chugach Smokehouses* these structures were misunderstood of what they were traditionally used for and the length of time the shelters had been established throughout Prince William Sound. The shelters were placed strategically for a one day's paddle apart to be used by water travelers. As the qayaq was used less and motor boats were adopted, these shelters were not needed as often or

as close together. Regardless of this change these shelters were still used by Sugpiaq fishermen, and for subsistence activities in the Chugach Region.

Learning about these shelters provides a unique insight to survival and travel through Prince William Sound and the Chugach Region. Our Elders hold this knowledge of place and safety. Learn about the various styles of shelter, and their uses according to what the Elders recall.

Activities:

Class I:

1. Introduce Elder/Recognized Expert and invite them to recall learning about smokehouses/emergency shelters in the Chugach Region.
2. Read and Research: *Chasing the Dark; Perspectives on Place History and Alaska Native Land Claims* (page 250)
3. If possible organize a field trip to visit an area in which a smokehouse was located; evaluate the surroundings, resources, and locate a place where the smokehouse would have been built.

Class II:

1. Divide class into small groups and assign sections of the Prince William Sound or the Southern Kenai Peninsula.
2. One resource students can utilize is [AOOS](#).
 - a. Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) <https://portal.aos.org/gulf-of-alaska.php>
 - i. [Cook Inlet ShoreZone Imagery](#)
 - ii. [Prince William Sound](#)
3. Each group will be tasked to measure, evaluate and provide detailed information on places where a “smokehouse” was or could be located.
4. Inform students they will need to locate and document a minimum of four sites in assigned sections.
5. The details should include:
 - a. Traditional place names in English and Sugt’stun/Eyak if possible.
 - b. Freshwater and food resources.
 - c. Safety from weather.
 - d. Each site should be placed a distance of a day long trip of qayaqing between.
 - e. Document all research and findings and turn in.
6. Each group will map their findings for their section with the use of Google Earth.
7. Groups will transfer their findings to a combined group map (use SimTable if available).

Assessment:

- Students can give an oral report on the reading of *Chasing the Dark*.
- Students groups complete and document their map section of at minimum four potential or actual smokehouse locations including: why, available resources, safety, and measured distance between locations.
- Students correctly incorporated traditional place names on their maps.

Sealers' Camp—Yakutat Bay

