RC #27

# Alaska Dispatch News and voices from the Last Frontier

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Home > Seldom spoken truth in subsistence battle: How unproductive Alaska lands really are

Craig Medred [1]
September 24, 2013
Main Image:
Quinhagak 2 [2]
Main Image Caption:
Fish strips drying in Quinhagak.

Alaska's long, bitter subsistence battle is back in the news again. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, last week called a hearing to discuss how to resolve an issue that has divided Alaskans for decades.

"One area of agreement is that <u>things aren't working as promised," she said [3].</u> What she failed to note, however, is that it now appears things are never going to work, short of some dramatic recession that depopulates the 49th state.

Nor is this bitter battle likely to end any time soon, as those testifying last week before the U.S. Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee illustrated. Native leaders suggested a takeover of management or co-management by Native organizations would solve the problem. Craig Fleener, himself an Alaska Native but speaking as a representative of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, pitched the idea that the state could produce its way out of the subsistence morass.

What is needed, he argued, is large-scale manipulation of ecosystems to grow more moose and caribou. The state, he said, has been handicapped in its efforts to kill wolves and bears in efforts to eliminate predators and increase the survival of prey.

One thing the two sides seem to share is a misunderstanding, or willful disregard, of the productivity of the north. Both appear willing to overlook one big, fundamental reality: Aside from salmon, which thrive because they spend their lives at sea, Alaska is a land poor in living resources. The population of the state at the time of the white invasion was, according to the respected Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage [4], near 60,000 people.

This is what one might consider the human carrying capacity of Alaska. The population in the "good old days," the now fondly-remembered 1950s when the federal government was trying to eliminate wolves and bears in line with what had been done in the Lower 48 states, was only about twice the prehistoric number.

**Growing Alaska population** 

One can make an argument that if the state were to now eliminate wolves and bears, the ecosystem might -- MIGHT -- be able to support 130,000 or 140,000 people. And if the state were to eliminate commercial fisheries, which have been managed to produce yields never before seen in Alaska history, the wild resources of the state would clearly support at least that many people.

The Alaska Native population in the state is now near 130,000. So, if all hunting and fishing by non-Natives was banned, the wild resources might support the Native population a decade or two. The Native population was sadly devastated after white contact, primarily due to disease and starvation during gold-mining days as wild resources declined due to overfishing and overhunting.

There were only about 25,000 Natives reported to be living in Alaska in 1910. There were 32,000 in 1940. In fact, it was not until 1970, according to ISER, that the Native population of the state returned to its pre-contact level, but the population of Alaska Natives has fared well since the arrival of federal assistance in the form of <u>President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society."</u> [5]

The Native population skyrocketed from the 1970s into the 2000s and continues to grow. In some places, as was seen along the Kuskokwim River in Western Alaska in 2012, the local population has already outgrown what some local resources can support [6]. This problem is not going away. It is only going to get worse.

Given the population realities and the predictable reluctance of the non-Native population, some of whom were born here, to abandon their desires to hunt and fish, Alaskans can likely expect the political struggle over subsistence to go on and on. But maybe it's time to look at the bright side.

It could be a whole lot worse.

At least Alaskans aren't killing each other as they did in what anthropologists have dubbed <u>"The Bow and Arrow War Days.</u> [7]" It is unclear, they say, how long these wars raged on the Yukon-Kuskowim Delta, but they appear to have been <u>Alaska's version of "The Hundred Years War"</u> [8] of Europe.

"The Bow and Arrow War Days imperiled lives and made legends of great men and women in the Yup'ik world prior to the arrival of Russians in the mid-1800s AD," wrote Caroline Funk in the journal Ethnohistory. "The Yup'ik conflicts, ranging from deadly to merely threatening, comprised one portion of a nearly pan-Alaska period of violence.

"During the hundreds of years of these wars, regional Yup'ik social and political organizations formed fluid alliances against equally mutable enemy cohorts. The full range of the conflicts extended far to the north and south to encompass the entire Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and most Yupiit."

Alaska, according to Funk, was something short of Eden before the arrival of the Russians who are historically portrayed as bloodthirsty. Funk has joined anthropologist Anne Fienup-Riordan in suggesting the "Smiling Eskimo" stereotype, so skillfully deployed by Alaska Airlines as a marketing image in modern times, is not particularly accurate.

"The Bow and Arrow War Days are little known outside Alaska," according to Funk. "This may be due to the erroneous notion held among Westerners that Eskimos in general, and Yupiit in particular, are peaceful, loving individuals. According to Fienup-Riordan, this 'pernicious pacifism' was initially fostered by the typically nonviolent historical interactions between Yupiit and white traders and missionaries. She suggests that since the west coast of Alaska was not subjected to the intense Manifest Destiny process, Yupiit did not respond violently to Westerners. Hence, people tend to think of Yupiit as peaceful -- or emphasize the harmonizing aspects of Yup'ik cosmology while ignoring the levels of violence within the culture. In fact, it is only in the suppressed notes of John Kilbuck, an early Moravian missionary to the area, that Fienup-Riordan found evidence for violence during the historical era."

Funk, who studied more than 1,000 oral histories recorded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs between 1978 and 1991, said she found plenty to support Kilbuck's observation.

The Bow and Arrow Wars, according to Funk, could have run for as long as 1,000 years with villages regularly being annihilated and children and women being regularly stolen, but it is unclear what exactly started the conflict.

One hypothesis, she said, focuses on disruptions in trade between the Chukotkans on the western side of the Bering Strait and the Yupiit on the eastern shore as Russian traders moved into the Russian Far East.

"If interruption of established trade patterns and the presence of a new colonial entity caused war, then the Bow and Arrow Wars could have started about three centuries ago," she writes. "A related hypothesis links the start of war to the migration of a violent Yup'ik nation through the area. At some point in the past 500 years, the Aglurmiut moved through western Alaska after being forced from their homeland farther to the north and east in the Norton Sound area."

#### **Competition for resources**

Another theory ties the wars to the pre-White invasion of another group of aboriginal peoples.

"Since massive cultural change occurred with the arrival of Thule cultural practices about a 1,000 years ago, it is logical to suppose that this could mark the start of the Bow and Arrow War Days," Funk writes. "The past thousand years have been violent throughout North American indigenous cultures in general.

"(But) whenever the precise beginnings, war began for the (Yukon-Kuskowim) Triangle Yupiit deep enough in the past that it is considered a constant way of life in the oral histories. Occasionally, the ANCSA (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) oral histories contain vague hints of a lifestyle that existed before the wars, but it is difficult to determine whether the hints are about times before any war or times before the most recent series of raids and revenge killings. As far as the elders of the 1980s are concerned, war in the Triangle area was a continuous factor in the lives of their nameable ancestors."

Why? No one knows for sure, but competition for resources is a likely reason.

Earlier research "suggests that it was control over such coastal resources as seals that led to the conflict ... indicating their high significance in Yup'ik life and war," Funk writes. "Some of the Triangle oral histories suggest that resources were under stress or access to resources was curtailed during the Bow and Arrow War Days.

"For example, one states that more people resulted in more deaths: war would happen and escalate the death rate, but when there were fewer people, there was no war and less death. Were the initial high death rates caused by resource stress?"

Alaska was a tough land in which to survive only a few centuries back. There was war. There was famine. And there were regular conflicts over resources.

Maybe instead of constantly feuding over the latter these days, Alaskans of all stripes should take a moment now and then to give thanks to the reality that they've now agreed to try settle disputes with words instead of the weapons of death, and no one starves anymore.

And maybe if everyone recognizes that, a reasonable discussion about subsistence can begin. The issue is really no longer about living off the land. The land cannot support the current population.

What it is all about today is finding a way to use the resources available to support the hunter-gatherer cultures being buried beneath a tidal wave of technology.

This problem sometimes seems to have been lost on both sides of the argument. They fight over who should have a priority to kill what while the youth of both rural and urban Alaska -- Native, white, black, Asian and other -- peer at the screens of their smart phones and contemplate everything but a cultural connection to the land that is Alaska.

Contact Craig Medred at <a href="mailto:craig(at)alaskadispatch.com">craig(at)alaskadispatch.com</a>

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#### Links:

- [1] http://www.alaskadispatch.com/authors/677842
- [2] http://www.alaskadispatch.com/image/quinhagak-2
- [3] http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/20130919/ghosts-subsistence-past-raised-us-senate-natives-alaska-scuffle-congress
- [4] http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/Alaska2020.pdf
- [5] http://www.ushistory.org/us/56e.asp
- [6] http://www.alaskadispatch.com/slideshow/photos-bethel-fish-trials-pit-salmon-science-against-native-religion
- [7] http://ethnohistory.dukejournals.org/content/57/4/523.full.pdf+html
- [8] http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/archive/hundredyearswar.cfm?
- CFID=39635850&CFTOKEN=86826996&jsessionid=4630847a58fefe2299a04a54185a6f4d1e4a0
- [9] mailto:craig@alaskadispatch.com

http://www.alaskadispatch.com/print/article/20130924/seldom-spoken-trut... 10/11/2013

## · Alaska Income and Tax List Frank Woods

Frank Woods	
Ranked by Average Income and	Average
Zip Code	Income
1. Anchorage, AK <u>99516</u>	\$99,385
2. Anchorage, AK <u>99519</u>	\$89,714
3. Prudhoe Bay, AK <u>99734</u>	\$79,492
4. Anchorage, AK <u>99515</u>	\$77,728
5. Anchorage, AK <u>99511</u>	\$76,453
6. Anchorage, AK 99524	\$74,969
7. Fairbanks, AK <u>99706</u>	\$74,135
8. Anchorage, AK <u>99510</u>	\$72,498
9. Anchorage, AK <u>99517</u>	\$66,177
10. Auke Bay, AK <u>99821</u>	\$66,132
11. Eagle River, AK <u>99577</u>	\$64,809
12. Fairbanks, AK <u>99708</u>	\$63,868
13. Anchorage, AK <u>99502</u>	\$63,548
14. Anchorage, AK <u>99522</u>	\$61,888
15. Fairbanks, AK <u>99707</u>	\$60,821
16. Anchorage, AK <u>99501</u>	\$60,760
17. Anchorage, AK <u>99520</u>	\$60,275
18. Chugiak, AK <u>99567</u>	\$59,924
19. Clear, AK <u>99704</u>	\$59,802
20. Fairbanks, AK <u>99712</u>	\$59,583
21. Anchorage, AK <u>99507</u>	\$59,327
22. Valdez, AK <u>99686</u>	\$57,898
23. Douglas, AK <u>99824</u>	\$57,858
24. Juneau, AK <u>99803</u>	\$57,439
25. Juneau, AK <u>99802</u>	\$57,135
26. Fairbanks, AK <u>99709</u>	\$56,580
27. Anchorage, AK <u>99523</u>	\$55,235
28. Fairbanks, AK <u>99710</u>	\$55,207
29. Juneau, AK <u>99801</u>	\$54,270
30. Unalaska, AK <u>99685</u>	\$54,142
31. Soldotna, AK <u>99669</u>	\$53,736
32. Anchorage, AK <u>99521</u>	\$53,568
33. Anchorage, AK <u>99509</u>	\$53,284

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34. Palmer, AK 99645	\$53,220
35. Fairbanks, AK <u>99711</u>	\$53,165
36. Wasilla, AK <u>99687</u>	\$53,056
37. Girdwood, AK <u>99587</u>	\$52,922
38. Healy, AK <u>99743</u>	\$51,906
39. Anchorage, AK <u>99518</u>	\$51,763
40. Anchorage, AK <u>99503</u>	\$51,737
41. Petersburg, AK <u>99833</u>	\$51,069
42. King Salmon, AK <u>99613</u>	\$51,053
43. Sitka, AK <u>99835</u>	\$50,441
44. Wasilla, AK <u>99654</u>	\$50,349
45. Ester, AK <u>99725</u>	\$50,199
46. 99731, AK <u>99731</u>	\$49,716
47. North Pole, AK <u>99705</u>	\$49,616
48. Kenai, AK <u>99611</u>	\$49,464
49. Ketchikan, AK <u>99901</u>	\$49,443
50. Ward Cove, AK <u>99928</u>	\$49,323
51. Barrow, AK <u>99723</u>	\$48,718
52. Nikiski, AK <u>99635</u>	\$48,453
53. Sterling, AK <u>99672</u>	\$47,758
54. Cooper Landing, AK 99572	\$47,653
55. Big Lake, AK <u>99652</u>	\$47,633
56. Denali National	\$47,589
Park, AK <u>99755</u>	
57. Anchorage, AK <u>99504</u>	\$47,506
58. Anchorage, AK <u>99508</u>	\$46,809
59. Skagway, AK <u>99840</u>	\$46,554
60. Nome, AK <u>99762</u>	\$46,520
61. Port Lions, AK <u>99550</u>	\$46,495
62. Kotzebue, AK <u>99752</u>	\$46,257
63. Two Rivers, AK <u>99716</u>	\$45,969
64. Homer, AK <u>99603</u>	\$45,892
65. Kodiak, AK <u>99615</u>	\$45,854
66. Delta Junction, AK <u>99737</u>	\$45,844
67. Fairbanks, AK <u>99701</u>	\$45,337
68. Bethel, AK <u>99559</u>	\$44,516
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69. Seward, AK <u>99664</u>	\$44,315
70. Indian, AK <u>99540</u>	\$44,148
71. Ninilchik, AK <u>99639</u>	\$43,968
72. Anderson, AK <u>99744</u>	\$43,922
73. Mc Grath, AK <u>99627</u>	\$43,801
74. False Pass, AK <u>99583</u>	\$43,500
75. Salcha, AK <u>99714</u>	\$43,423
76. Willow, AK <u>99688</u>	\$43,368
77. Port Alsworth, AK <u>99653</u>	\$43,241
78. Haines, AK <u>99827</u>	\$43,093
79. Glennallen, AK <u>99588</u>	\$43,092
80. Dillingham, AK <u>99576</u>	\$43,081
81. Naknek, AK <u>99633</u>	\$42,659
82. Kasilof, AK <u>99610</u>	\$42,565
83. Dutch Harbor, AK <u>99692</u>	\$42,008
84. Craig, AK <u>99921</u>	\$41,958
85. Anchorage, AK <u>99514</u>	\$41,337
86. Cantwell, AK <u>99729</u>	\$40,461
87. Clam Gulch, AK <u>99568</u>	\$39,808
88. Sand Point, AK <u>99661</u>	\$39,781
89. Sutton, AK <u>99674</u>	\$39,739
90. Cordova, AK <u>99574</u>	\$39,652
91. Galena, AK <u>99741</u>	\$39,608
92. Talkeetna, AK <u>99676</u>	\$39,501
93. Houston, AK <u>99694</u>	\$39,348
94. Wrangell, AK <u>99929</u>	\$38,578
95. Yakutat, AK <u>99689</u>	\$38,299
96. Nuiqsut, AK <u>99789</u>	\$38,243
97. Anchor Point, AK <u>99556</u>	\$38,101
98. Cold Bay, AK <u>99571</u>	\$38,095
99. Chignik, AK <u>99564</u>	\$37,833
100.Seldovia, AK <u>99663</u>	\$37,457
101.99629, AK <u>99629</u>	\$37,226
102.Gustavus, AK <u>99826</u>	\$37,088
103.Gakona, AK <u>99586</u>	\$36,963
104.Nenana, AK <u>99760</u>	\$36,873
105.Hope, AK <u>99605</u>	\$36,794

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106.Saint Paul Island, AK 99660	\$36,530
107.Tok, AK <u>99780</u>	\$36,476
108. Whittier, AK <u>99693</u>	\$36,400
109.Adak, AK <u>99546</u>	\$36,
110.Copper Center, AK 99573	\$36,137
111.Bettles Field, AK <u>99726</u>	\$35,938
112.Manley Hot	\$35,744
Springs, AK <u>99756</u>	
113.Saint George	\$35,137
Island, AK <u>99591</u>	
114.Moose Pass, AK <u>99631</u>	\$34,821
115.Elfin Cove, AK <u>99825</u>	\$34,686
116.Aniak, AK <u>99557</u>	\$34,490
117.Akutan, AK <u>99553</u>	\$34,449
118.Klawock, AK <u>99925</u>	\$34,233
119.Iliamna, AK <u>99606</u>	\$34,140
120.Elmendorf Afb, AK <u>99506</u>	\$34,006
121.Trapper Creek, AK <u>99683</u>	\$33,395
122.Hoonah, AK 99829	\$33,16
123.Buckland, AK <u>99727</u>	\$32,8
124.Unalakleet, AK <u>99684</u>	\$32,833
125.King Cove, AK <u>99612</u>	\$32,819
126.Kiana, AK <u>99749</u>	\$32,555
127.Eielson Afb, AK <u>99702</u>	\$32,528
128.Ekwok, AK <u>99580</u>	\$32,296
129.Thorne Bay, AK <u>99919</u>	\$32,207
130.Pelican, AK <u>99832</u>	\$31,086
131.Ambler, AK <u>99786</u>	\$30,763
132.Metlakatla, AK <u>99926</u>	\$30,633
133.Noatak, AK <u>99761</u>	\$30,602
134.Kivalina, AK <u>99750</u>	\$30,548
135.Kaktovik, AK <u>99747</u>	\$29,761
136.Coffman Cove, AK <u>99918</u>	\$29,479
137.Tenakee Springs, AK 99841	\$29,433
138.Ruby, AK <u>99768</u>	\$29,7
139.Noorvik, AK <u>99763</u>	\$29,100
140.Central, AK <u>99730</u>	\$29,091

3	141.Fort Yukon, AK <u>99740</u>	\$28,444
_	142. Anaktuvuk Pass, AK 99721	\$28,291
	143.Shungnak, AK <u>99773</u>	\$28,056
U	144. Aleknagik, AK <u>99555</u>	\$27,825
	145.Hydaburg, AK <u>99922</u>	\$27,380
	146. Wainwright, AK 99782	\$27,315
	147.Northway, AK <u>99764</u>	\$26,930
	148.Fort Richardson, AK 99505	\$26,867
	149.Point Hope, AK <u>99766</u>	\$26,832
	150.Tanana, AK <u>99777</u>	\$26,687
	151.Port Heiden, AK <u>99549</u>	\$26,524
	152. South Naknek, AK <u>99670</u>	\$26,270
	153.Kake, AK <u>99830</u>	\$25,955
	154.Skwentna, AK <u>99667</u>	\$25,435
	155.Pilot Point, AK <u>99649</u>	\$25,160
	156.Shaktoolik, AK <u>99771</u>	\$24,986
	157.Kodiak, AK <u>99619</u>	\$24,952
	158.Atqasuk, AK <u>99791</u>	\$24,759
	159.Mekoryuk, AK <u>99630</u>	\$24,731
	160. Selawik, AK 99770	\$24,607
	161.Tyonek, AK <u>99682</u>	\$24,540
	162.Kaltag, AK 99748	\$24,480
	163.Hyder, AK <u>99923</u>	\$24,244
	164. Deering, AK 99736	\$24,170
	165. White Mountain, AK 99784	\$24,163
	166.Larsen Bay, AK <u>99624</u>	\$24,100
	167. Clarks Point, AK <u>99569</u>	\$24,050
	168.Kobuk, AK 99751	\$23,791
	169.Eagle, AK 99738	\$23,759
	170.Ketchikan, AK <u>99950</u>	\$23,681
	171.Saint Michael, AK <u>99659</u>	\$23,549
	172.Toksook Bay, AK 99637	\$23,094
	173.Saint Marys, AK <u>99658</u>	\$23,050
Silve.	174.Angoon, AK 99820	\$22,832
U	175.Grayling, AK 99590	\$22,700
	176.Kalskag, AK 99607	\$22,581
	177.Fairbanks, AK <u>99775</u>	\$22,409
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178.Port Alexander, AK <u>99836</u>	\$22,297
179.Russian Mission, AK <u>99657</u>	\$22,257
180.Point Lay, AK <u>99759</u>	\$22,238
181.Emmonak, AK 99581	\$22,231
182.Atka, AK <u>99547</u>	\$22,115
183.Chignik Lagoon, AK <u>99565</u>	\$22,030
184.Anchorage, AK <u>99695</u>	\$21,692
185.Tuntutuliak, AK <u>99680</u>	\$21,661
186.Egegik, AK <u>99579</u>	\$21,536
187.Stevens Village, AK 99774	\$21,433
188.Shishmaref, AK <u>99772</u>	\$21,307
189.Fort Wainwright, AK 99703	\$21,123
190.Kasigluk, AK 99609	\$21,055
191.Akiachak, AK <u>99551</u>	\$21,021
192.Brevig Mission, AK 99785	\$20,922
193.Marshall, AK 99585	\$20,869
194.Eek, AK 99578	\$20,861
195.Alakanuk, AK 99554	\$20,822
196.Kwigillingok, AK <u>99622</u>	\$20,672
197.Hooper Bay, AK <u>99604</u>	\$20,522
198.Lower Kalskag, AK <u>99626</u>	\$20,352
199.Kotlik, AK <u>99620</u>	\$20,249
200.Mountain	\$20,247
Village, AK <u>99632</u>	
201.Tatitlek, AK 99677	\$20,200
202.Nikolai, AK 99691	\$20,056
203.Wales, AK <u>99783</u>	\$19,931
204.Koyuk, AK 99753	\$19,918
205.Perryville, AK <u>99648</u>	\$19,776
206.Gambell, AK <u>99742</u>	\$19,759
207.Scammon Bay, AK 99662	\$19,716
208.Chitina, AK <u>99566</u>	\$19,667
209.Huslia, AK <u>99746</u>	\$19,583
210.Goodnews Bay, AK <u>99589</u>	\$19,489
211.Savoonga, AK 99769	\$19,439
212.Chignik Lake, AK <u>99548</u>	\$19,349
213.Quinhagak, AK <u>99655</u>	\$19,226

214. Teller, AK <u>99778</u>	\$19,185
215.Allakaket, AK <u>99720</u>	\$19,161
216.Chefornak, AK <u>99561</u>	\$19,045
217.Nulato, AK <u>99765</u>	\$18,888
218.Stebbins, AK <u>99671</u>	\$18,740
219.Elim, AK <u>99739</u>	\$18,716
220.Karluk, AK <u>99608</u>	\$18,692
221.Crooked Creek, AK 99575	\$18,659
222.Ouzinkie, AK <u>99644</u>	\$18,643
223.Chevak, AK <u>99563</u>	\$18,602
224.Togiak, AK <u>99678</u>	\$18,593
225.Anvik, AK <u>99558</u>	\$18,539
226.Tanacross, AK <u>99776</u>	\$18,532
227.Pedro Bay, AK <u>99647</u>	\$18,393
228.Nunapitchuk, AK <u>99641</u>	\$18,301
229.New Stuyahok, AK <u>99636</u>	\$18,292
230.Kwethluk, AK <u>99621</u>	\$18,274
231.Pilot Station, AK <u>99650</u>	\$18,116
232.Circle, AK <u>99733</u>	\$18,035
233.Beaver, AK <u>99724</u>	\$17,769
234.Minto, AK <u>99758</u>	\$17,500
235.Old Harbor, AK <u>99643</u>	\$17,489
236.Manokotak, AK <u>99628</u>	\$17,406
237.Levelock, AK <u>99625</u>	\$17,263
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238. Venetie, AK <u>99781</u>	\$16,949
239.Tununak, AK 99681	\$16,736
240.Koyukuk, AK <u>99754</u>	\$16,356
241.Nondalton, AK <u>99640</u>	\$16,2
242.Hughes, AK <u>99745</u>	\$16,184
243.Kipnuk, AK <u>99614</u>	\$15,897
244.Napakiak, AK <u>99634</u>	\$15,612
245.99545, AK <u>99545</u>	\$15,588
246.Shageluk, AK <u>99665</u>	\$15,513
247.Sleetmute, AK <u>99668</u>	\$15,486
248.Holy Cross, AK <u>99602</u>	\$15,247
249.Akiak, AK <u>99552</u>	\$15,070
250.Tuluksak, AK <u>99679</u>	\$14,903
251.Chalkyitsik, AK 99788	\$14,526
252.Nightmute, AK <u>99690</u>	\$13,965
253.Sheldon Point, AK 99666	\$13,746
254.Takotna, AK <u>99675</u>	\$13,741
255.Point Baker, AK <u>99927</u>	\$13,556
256.Kodiak, AK <u>99697</u>	\$13,25
257.Arctic Village, AK 99722	\$11,53
258.Platinum, AK <u>99651</u>	\$10,790
259.Red Devil, AK <u>99656</u>	\$10,636
260.Juneau, AK 99811	\$8,432