

2019 Ekuk Going Home Celebration

Funded by Bristol Bay Native Corporation Education Foundation

EPA IGAP

Ekuk Village Council

Ekuk Fisheries

Presented by Sabrina Savo and Jennifer Quluqarmiu

Ekuk

- Ekuk is located 17 miles Southwest from Dillingham and about a mile from Clarks Point on the mouth of Nushagak Bay.
- This was a major Village. During the late 1880's, canneries opening around Bristol Bay by drew people away from Ekuk.
- In 1903 a cannery was built in Ekuk and attracted a diversity of people for seasonal work, while Natives of Ekuk lived there year round.
- A school opened in 1958 and closed in 1974
- Closing the school displaced the year round residents, most moved to Dillingham



Salmon, Hunting, Greens, and Berries

- There are a hand full of Tribal members that go back to Ekuk every summer for gathering greens, fishing, hunting, and berry picking.
- Our Tribal members have a strong social, subsistence and relationship to this environment, but travel to and from Ekuk is becoming more expensive and therefore more difficult for our Tribal Members to enjoy and re-connect to each other and Home.



A Changing Environment

- Around 40 percent of all beach caught sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay are harvested from Ekuk beach.
- This location has attracted more than Ekuk tribal members for commercial fishing.
- In the past decade Ekuk has seen a lot of economic growth, including larger fish camps being built and a new fish processor that stays open for later for Silver salmon season.



A Changing Environment continued

- Ekuk is experiencing shore and bluff erosion and more frequent flooding.
- Storm flooding is occurring at irregular times, even during fishing season in 2018.
- Usually the coast is protected in the spring from storms with ice, but there isn't much ice anymore





WINGSCAPES®  TIMELAPSECAM 26 FEB 2018 05:00 pm



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Conflicting Values

- Many of the other commercial fisherman have an Individualistic and competitive values that, at times, conflict with our traditional native values
- In the past Decade with economic growth, those who hold contradictory values are building new buildings and trying to make homemade erosion and flood protection by extracting large amounts of beach gravel.



Ekuk Native Values

- Values include connections with family, land and water, and to our future.
- With many different people in Ekuk, not everyone share the same values, this wasn't an issue until people started putting an increased burden on the beach environment.
- Tons of gravel have been removed from the beach by people for personal gain who do not share our values.





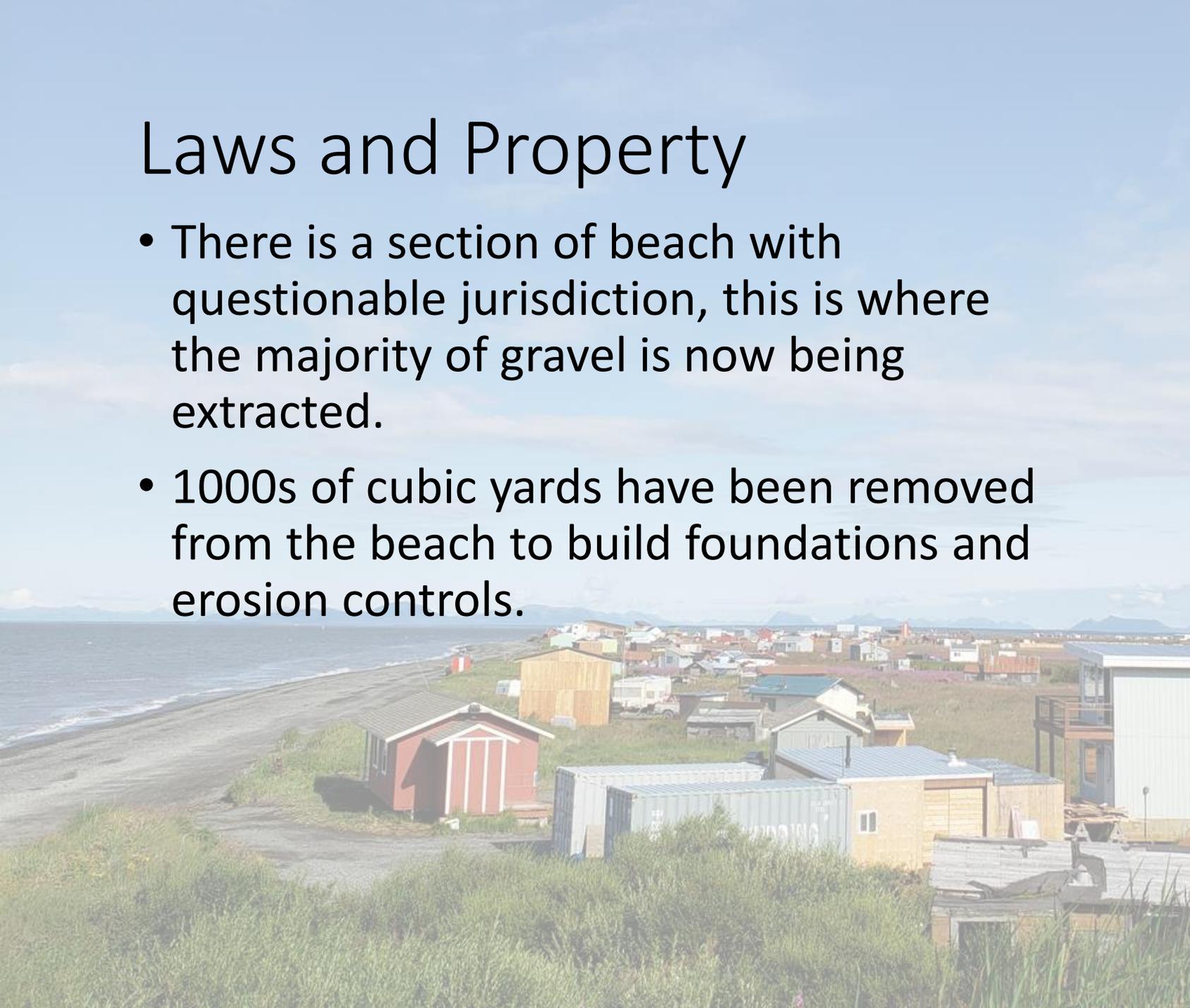
Solving problems through Agencies

- Fortunately, the removal of beach gravel has slowed down since we started getting State and Federal Agencies involved.
- US Army Corps of Engineers has written letters to the two violators, but without photographic evidence, the perpetrators can't be charged.
- Ekuk Village Council and Army Corps of Engineers had Government to Government Consultation on this issue in June 2019.



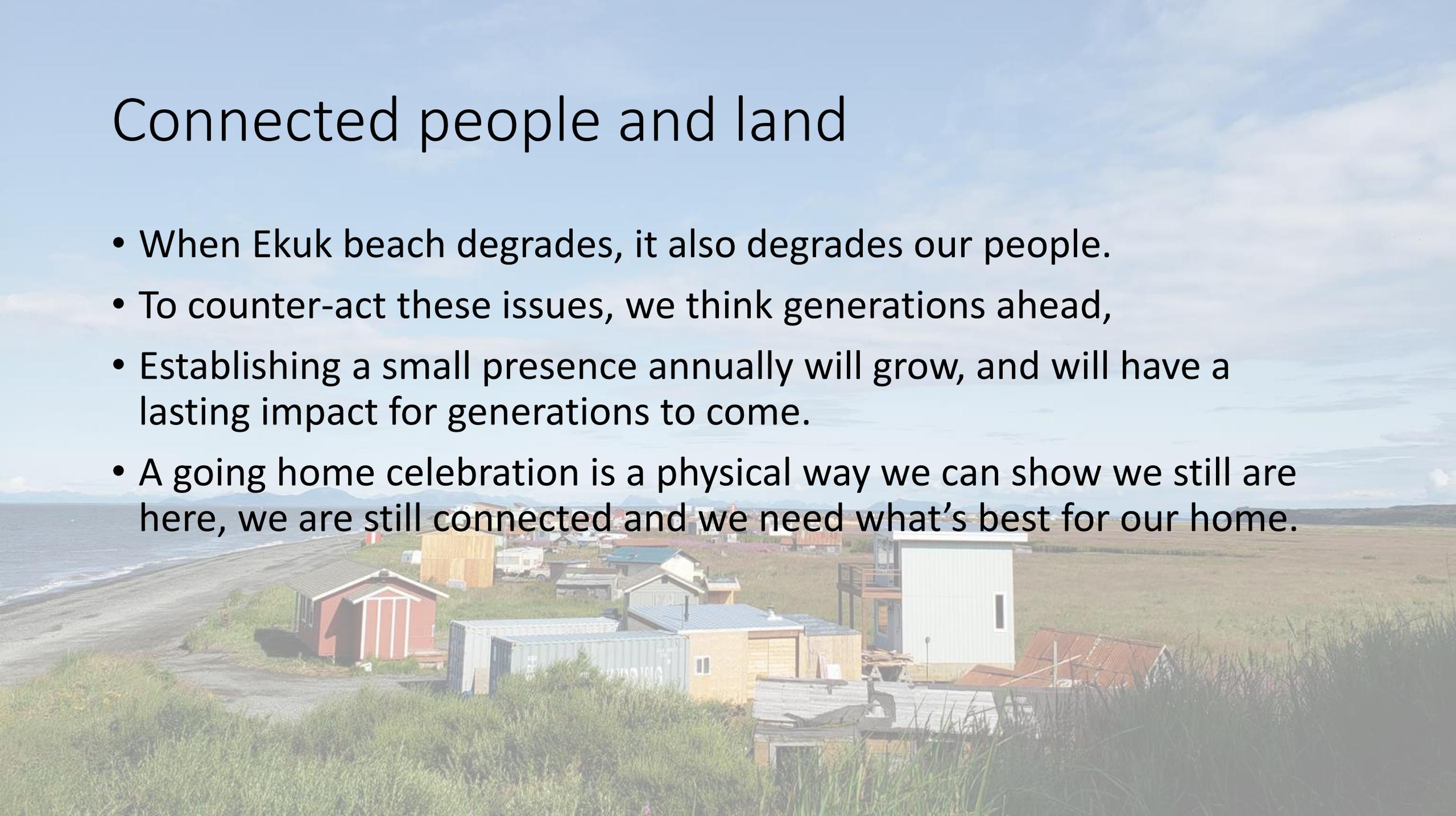
Laws and Property

- There is a section of beach with questionable jurisdiction, this is where the majority of gravel is now being extracted.
- 1000s of cubic yards have been removed from the beach to build foundations and erosion controls.



Connected people and land

- When Ekuk beach degrades, it also degrades our people.
- To counter-act these issues, we think generations ahead,
- Establishing a small presence annually will grow, and will have a lasting impact for generations to come.
- A going home celebration is a physical way we can show we still are here, we are still connected and we need what's best for our home.



Going Home Celebration

- On July 27, 2019 6 skiffs and operators took 21 tribal members from Kanakanak Beach to Ekuk Beach. 17 non-tribal members who are residents of Ekuk.
- We met at the community well for coffee and visiting.
- Others walked the beach taking note of the changes and mostly enjoying home.



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- Later we were served a lunch by Ekuk Fisheries where Elders told stories about when we were year round residents
- Ruby Murphy talked about Community gatherings like movies and dances.
- Joe Hiratsuka talked about when Ekuk was only 4 buildings and has grown to 50 plus.





Since we don't have a year round presence we needed to haul tent and coffee pots ahead of time for our celebration.















Ruby Murphy sharing her experience growing up in Ekok.

