

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Alaska Fellows Program

2022-2023





2022-2023 ALASKA FELLOWS



At the closing convening in Juneau, the fellows celebrated the end of the program. We shared meals, stories, and time in the muskeg.

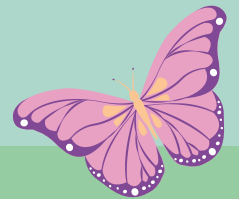
Seven months of fellowship.

The fellows spent time together in Juneau at Folk Fest after the retreat, catching up on all that had happened in their programs across Alaska. Fellows sang at karaoke nights, listened and danced to local bands and put their art skills to the test with the Pop-Up Fellows Art Show. It was a week full of fun and reminiscing.



Karaoke at Folk Fest

Alaskan SPRING



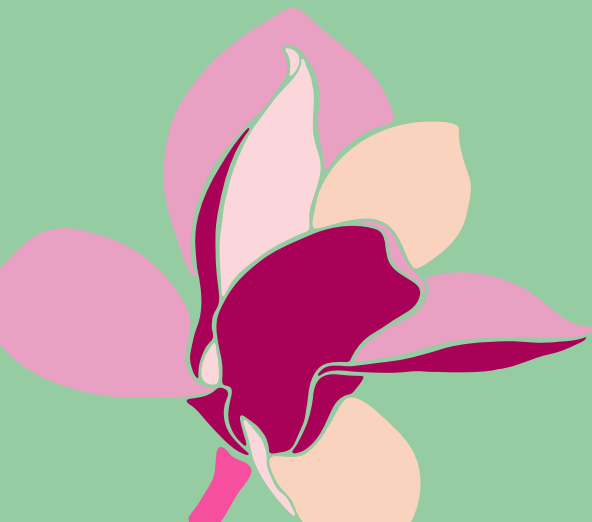
It feels like a reward to make it through the winter and end the fellowship in spring – a time of new beginnings and growth. The view outside our windows is changing from gray and blue hues to green and warm yellows. We are all looking toward the future, while appreciating the experience that the Fellows Program granted us. Many are staying in Alaska for a while longer, but the rest of us will cherish this time spent in intense community, the unbelievably beautiful nature of Alaska, and the professional support our hosts provided.



At Arctic Encounter



Juneau dinner with coordinators



THE LAGOON by Sarah McKinnis

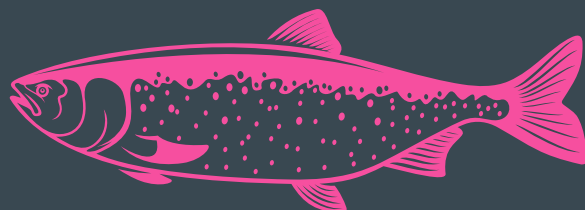
I imagine that goodbye goes something like this:

The snow has been melted from the Lagoon for awhile now, but I can still nearly feel it under my boots, the way they sunk in slightly, rolling and squeaking with each step. A few ducks float towards the edge of the shore near the trail, and it's hard to believe that months ago the whole thing had been solid, that we'd all skated over it, that the city had drove pickup trucks rigged with hot water and a big rectangle sheet mop over it to smooth things out.

I'll think of all the funny, small reasons I love this place so much. The Wild Scoops reward stamps collected from buying ice cream when it was below freezing. Regularly wearing hiking boots into Fred's. Seeing the plethora of customized license plates.

I'll take another deep breath, pulling the fresh air into my lungs and asking it to stay there, even as the plane takes off in the evening and brings me back to the lower 48. As I leave behind the mountains, the ones that tugged at the corners of my mouth on the way to work in the morning, even when they had only been dark outlines framed by a cerulean blue dawn, the same mountains I'd spent the last weeks hiking.

I'll jog away from the Lagoon and towards the part of the trail that runs along the coast, South towards Kincaid Park and the airport. The tide in the inlet will be out, exposing the mud flats, the dark clay we'd shaped decorative fish from. I'll smile at the dogs and humans I pass, creatures who will be here tomorrow—who will keep going on the trail long after I leave.



Superlatives

Most likely to be seen on the slopes...
Lauren

Couple that never was...
Sarah B & Savannah



Most likely to stay in Alaska forever...
Ashley

Most likely to become a site coordinator...
Natalie & Carly



Most likely to disappear for months on a fishing boat...
Selena

Most likely to become Governor of Alaska...
Brian

Biggest homebody...
Nuzhah

Best artists at the Alaska Fellows Art Pop-up...



Nakeshia

Angelica

Zeba

Fafa



Write-in Superlatives

Most likely to rewrite trans-pacific mining history...
 Most likely to quote the Social Network...
 Most likely to try every restaurant in Anchorage...

Yu

Annie

Sarah M



Best baker...
Asma

Best earrings...
Kristi

Separately, "gremlin" and "best bog dweller"...
Sara L

Best graphic designer, photographer, and most likely to become a millionaire...

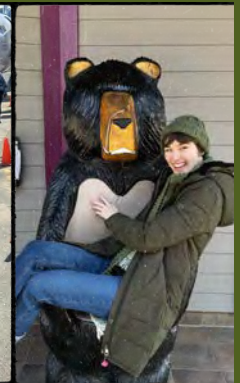
Austin

Biggest guns #flex #gymbro...

Maxine

Most likely to hike from Prudhoe Bay to Ketchikan...

Gracie



Biggest jock...
Yuki

Most likely to be found reading an academic text on retreat...
Gabby

Best boys run coach...
Riley

Most likely to tear up the soccer field and then tell you to watch Wong Kar Wai...
Jack



WHAT'S NEXT?



Juneau

Austin Bernales...

I'll be staying in Juneau following the Fellows Program! For how long is a question that currently stumps me- My role with Sealaska has been extended and I will be working with an agency to create a new website by the end of the year!

Sara Little...

I will continue to work at Sealaska Heritage Institute for summer, and then I will be teaching English in Spain!

Natalie Troy...

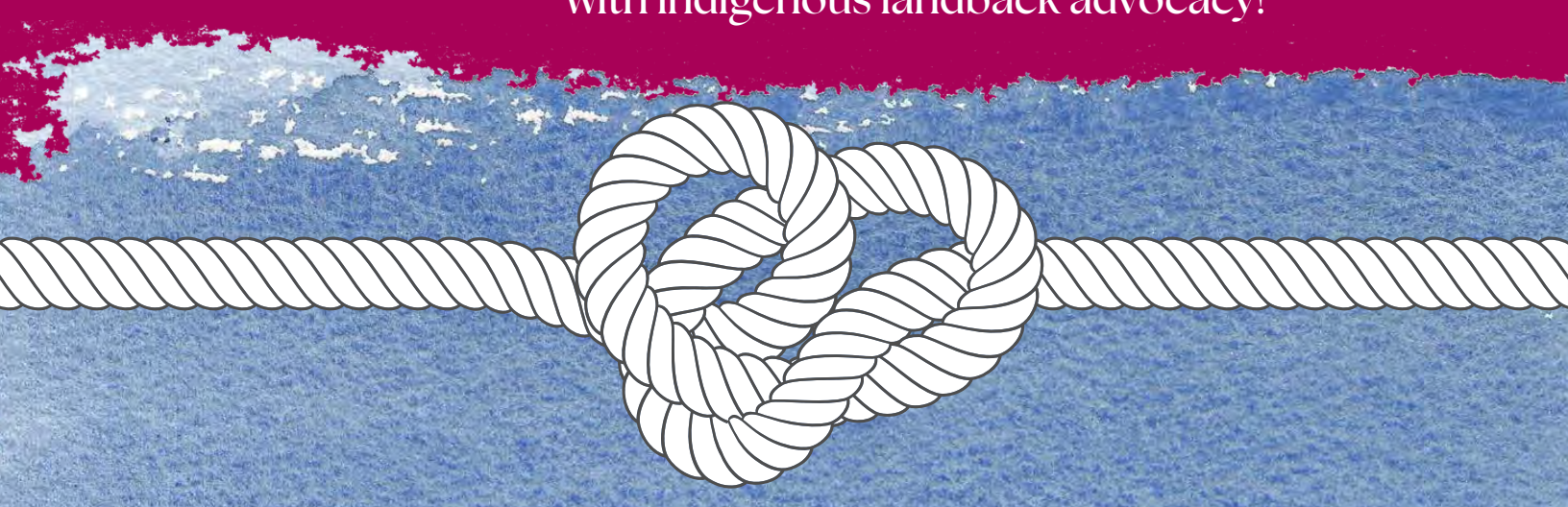
I will be staying in Juneau and working for Sealaska Heritage Institute!

Angelica Casey...

I've decided to stay in Alaska and keep working for AML as a Community Infrastructure Navigator and I'm really excited to be creating connections all over the state!

Lauren Tanel...

I will be staying in Juneau and working for TrailMix, while also continuing to do work with indigenous landback advocacy!



WHAT'S NEXT?

Sitka

Brian Conwell... Moving to San Francisco and then going to law school!

Selena Zhao... I'm staying in Sitka over the summer and working with the Forest Service!

Annie Matea... I will be moving back to the Midwest and taking some time to travel before hopefully moving to Minneapolis!

Jack Boland... Working at DE Shaw in NYC as a Compliance Analyst!

Yuki Nagaoka... I'll be staying on with Outer Coast in Sitka and transitioning to a long term position as the Operations Lead!

Zeba Kokan... I will be headed to England to study at Oxford!.



WHAT'S NEXT?



Fairbanks

Maxine LaBerge ... I'm excited to be staying in Fairbanks for the summer! I will be working at REI and going on a handful of exciting trips!

Savannah Crichton ...After AFP, I will continue to work with the Alaska Center for Energy and Power on solar agrivoltaics research to support clean energy production and sustainable food production in northern and rural North America. I'm transferring to ACEP's Anchorage office, and although I'll miss Fairbanks' charms, I'm excited to be close to the mountains!

Gabby Sevillano.. Moving to Boston!

Gracie Farnham... I'll be in Fairbanks for the summer, doing research with the Alaska Center for Energy and Power. I plan on moving to Anchorage in the fall!

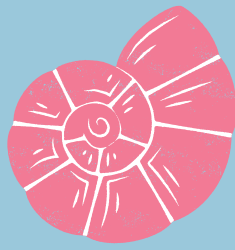
Sarah Burch.. Moving back to New York!

Asma Alomari ... Working with Inspiring Girls* over the summer and moving to Anchorage for the next year!

Ashley Guernsey ... I will staying on working with Center ICE here in Fairbanks!

Fafa Van Ha ...I will be doing a two-year fellowship at the Yale Sustainable Food Program. In Fairbanks, I learned a lot more about food sovereignty, food security, and the entanglements of those concepts with cultural identity. I'm excited and eager to explore those in a more urban environment.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Anchorage

Sarah McKinnis... I'm spending time this summer both in Anchorage and traveling within Alaska - hopefully meeting up with other fellows, getting to hike, backpack, and see more of the state! Afterwards, I'll move to D.C. to work in federal public policy!

Carly Dennis... I'm staying in AK working on a farm in Palmer!

Yu Cao...I will work at ACEP as a post doc in Anchorage!

Nakeshia Diop... The day after the program ends, I am taking a road trip with Carly to Haines. There, I will start working at the local paper Chilkat Valley News, as a journalist. I'm excited to move from Anchorage to SE Alaska, and explore a different part of this vast, beautiful state.

Nuzah Tarsoo.. continuing my education in Brisbane!

Kristi Nguyen... I'll be sticking around Anchorage for June, with plans to travel in and around Southcentral and Southeast. After June, I'll be spending July traveling abroad in Europe. In August, I'll be starting my first year of medical school back in the lower 48!





First ever AFP Art Show!





LIVING IN ALASKA HAS...



Taught me that life is just as meaningful when lived at a less breakneck pace and that ravens have big personalities. - Natalie

Living in Alaska has significantly impacted me. I came here to see if I wanted my future career to be related to Native issues, and I confirmed that! Previously, I couldn't see myself living in a smaller community permanently, but being in Sitka has shown me that I could. As I go back to the Lower 48, I'm hoping to pick up financial and legal skills through my work and graduate school, and then I would love to either work for my tribe, a Native nonprofit or corporation afterwards. I can totally see myself coming back to Alaska! - Jack

Alaska has given me an opportunity to slow down, integrate, and learn about indigenous cultures and community. I have found a lot of peace and fresh air that has changed my perspective on things relating to personal health, relationships, and the ebbs and flows of life. - Austin

I have loved being back in Alaska, my home state. I have been able to get outside and enjoy nature. I have also greatly enjoyed the group of people in Sitka who I have been able to share this experience back in Alaska with. - Brian



HOW HAS LIVING IN ALASKA IMPACTED YOU?

I love these lands! Trying to grow my roots as deep as I can.
Makes me feel the importance of family, too. - Carly

Living in Alaska has impacted me in lots of different ways that I can't do justice in only a few sentences. For starters, my sense of community is heightened both socially and in the work place. In the work place, it has been a pleasure to collaborate with Alaskans all over the state with a common goal to support and enrich Alaska communities. On a different note, Alaska has totally spoiled me with the most beautiful views and landscapes that I've seen in my entire life. I'll definitely miss having the Chugach mountains in my backyard. - Kristi

I have grown a lot in the eight or nine or so months since I've moved to Dena'ina land, to Anchorage. My time in Alaska so far has introduced me to new experiences, ideas, and people. I feel lucky to have become part of a unique community and have learned so much – at my job with the Alaska Children's Trust, spending time with other fellows, conferences like AFN and Arctic Encounter, outdoors on walks and hikes and learning how to cross country ski, and from the people I've met around Anchorage and on trips to other places in the state. While I'm not planning to live here next year, I will be back and hope to stay connected to Alaska throughout my life. - Sarah M





ANCHORAGE

KRISTI NGUYEN

Arctic Encounter, North America's largest Arctic convening
(and also where I did my fellowship!)

Northern lights that danced outside Virginia Court in
February

Chugach mountains from my work window, a view I already
miss so much

Honda CRV, one of our trusty program cars that has taken us
on so many AK roadtrips

Organizing public use cabin camping trips for the spring
Rage, as sung by Anchorage's own Medium Build

All the vanity plates that Sarah and I have documented over
the past year

Girdwood, a short drive from Anchorage along one of the
most beautiful highways in the world

Eating Wild Scoops year round





Juneau Closing Convening



Sitka's Spring Favorites

Songs

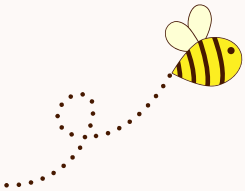
- I'm Good by David Guetta & Bebe Rexha
- The Road to Nowhere by Talking Heads
 - Shadow by the Chromatics
 - Cherry by the Chromatics
- Soundtrack 2 My Life by Kid Cudi
 - Electric Love by BØRNS

Movies

- Princess Mononoke
- Om Shanti Om
- The Umbrellas of Cherbourg
 - Surf's Up
 - Pride & Prejudice

TV Shows

- Demon Slayer
- The Amazing Race
- Chimp Empire
- Survivor
- Anne with an E





Eid Mubarak with Sitka and Fairbanks





a song about wet feet / sharpie x cedar

by Natalie

boardwalk

def: a sidewalk of planks suspended above treacherous grounds. sand or water.

she told me dan moller was a boardwalk. through the muskeg.

when i first dashed up i expected dry feet.

maybe a little sand. maybe a few bites

boom.

i ascend – trail or creek?

asics slosh into cold bog

boardwalk

def: a single file path of boards sinking into soggy ground

she told me the flume was a boardwalk

armed with yesterday's experience i laced up my hiking boots and trekked up gold street

crossed a little stream

felt vindicated in my choice of footwear. i was figuring this place out

but boom

what did i see

on the side of a mountain?

a good old north carolina boardwalk

hokas scamper by

a long haired man with wired white earbuds (vintage!) sports tevas

now you know:

hiking boots won't hurt on the flume

but you might stick out