

# ALASKA FELLOWS PROGRAM FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

Salutations from the 49th State!

After a few months of learning and exploration, the eighth cohort of Alaska Fellows has settled into the rhythm of daily life at our respective sites in time to prepare for the long winter that stretches ahead.



On the way to Seward from Anchorage.



The Alaska Fellows Program places dynamic recent college graduates with non-profit and public-sector organizations. Fellows live communally in program-organized housing while they work full-time and contribute to the local community. This year, there are Fellows at four different sites: Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, and—our newest addition—Fairbanks.

The Northern Lights in Fairbanks.

This newsletter will provide periodic updates into our experiences in our communities. We are very excited to welcome Tina Buxbaum as AFP's Executive Director, and express our gratitude to Meredith Redick for all that she has done to support the program.



This newsletter is brought to you by Editor-in-Chief Tiana Wang and Site Editors Kate Herrmann, Kevin Huo, Lina Kapp, Megan Pittas, Patrick O'Connor, Shannon Miller, and Tommy Martin.

# Anchorage



*Andrew Hinton* is a recent graduate of Columbia University with a major in Economics and Political Science. Some of his interests include basketball, hiking, and keeping up with current public affairs. During his time as a Fellow, he hopes to hike the many trails and mountains in the Anchorage area. Originally hailing from Sacramento, CA, Andrew is excited to explore Anchorage, learn more about the city's history, and immerse himself in the community while working with the Cook Inlet Housing Authority as a Community Development Fellow.

*Bridget Smith* is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan with a B.A. in Political Science and Spanish, with a focus on American constitutional politics and social movements. A native Michigander, Bridget is excited to live in the snowy mountain climate of Anchorage, where she will be the Government Accountability Fellow for the Alaska Public Interest Research Group. In this role, she will serve as a watching presence in high-stakes decisions made by those in power and an advocate for public and consumer interests. As an undergraduate, she enjoyed performing in the Women's Glee Club, the RC Players, and Shakespeare in the Arb. Bridget loves to hike, camp, and explore new places, and cannot wait to get involved in the thriving and diverse community in Anchorage.



*Eliza Posner* is the Community Resilience Fellow at the Alaska Children's Trust. There, she works towards the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect through the Alaska Resilience Initiative. Originally from Connecticut, Eliza graduated from Northwestern University in 2021 with a BA in Middle East and North African Studies and Political Science. As an undergraduate, she combined her interests in research and data-driven policy through a research assistantship studying the Black Lives Matter movement and internships at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the Arab Studies Institute, and Lockwood Strategy, a progressive political consultancy. Since arriving in Alaska, she's enjoyed visiting every coffee hut in Anchorage, cross country skiing, and knitting as many socks and hats as possible.

*Emma Siegel* is a recent graduate from Rice University College with a major in History and minors in Global Health Technology and Jewish Studies. Hailing from Chicago, Emma is excited to experience her first Alaska winter! She is joining the Institute of the North as a Northern Research Fellow, where she hopes to expand upon her prior work in community engagement, international development, and research. Prior to joining the Alaska Fellows Program cohort, Emma most recently worked with the Alaska Humanities Forum as a Loewenstern Fellow focusing on increasing accessibility both internally at the Forum and in their external community work. She looks forward to joining this engaged and passionate community.





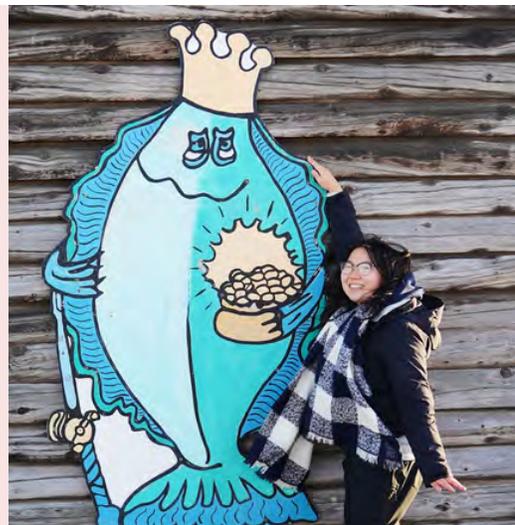
*Gabe Canfield* is the Protecting Our Lands and Waters Fellow at Native People's Action. She is an Iñupiaq woman from Ketchikan, Alaska, who graduated in Spring of 2021 from Dartmouth College with a double major in Native American studies and Environmental Studies. She is passionate about traditional ecological knowledge and working with Tribal policy issues in Alaska, specifically focusing on the issues of ANCSA and transboundary disputes over environmental resources on tribal lands. In Alaska, Gabe is a senior member of the Arctic Youth Ambassadors 2020-21 cohort, contributes to the Fireweed Action Collective, mentors youth in the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action program, and serves on the board of Ketchikan Youth Initiatives. Gabe loves being outdoors, and you can find her hiking, fishing, tide-pooling or exercising on the daily.

*Haleigh Reed* is the Climate Technology Fellow at Launch Alaska in Anchorage. She supports the Tech Deployment Track program, helping connect entrepreneurs with projects in Alaska that accelerate the transition to renewable resources. She graduated from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business in 2021 with a degree in Sustainable Business, Marketing, and Ethics. Haleigh loves being able to support the decarbonization of Alaska at her day job so she can enjoy the beauty of the Alaskan wilderness after work, whether through hiking, cross-country skiing, ice skating, backpacking, or trail running. She also likes beekeeping, photography, and videography.



A Chicago, Illinois native, *Matthew Robinson* is a highly motivated business professional with diverse private and public sector experience. He is currently working at the 49th State Angel Fund and the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development. He's passionate about building equitable solutions across all communities and feels it is his life mission to help create opportunities in and outside of his community. Matthew graduated from the University of Chicago in 2020 with a degree in Public Policy and is currently a master of public policy candidate at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. He enjoys golfing, cooking new dishes, and live music events.

*Tiana Wang* is the Entrepreneurship Fellow at the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development. She graduated from Yale in 2020 with a B.A. in English and sociology, and spent last year in Santa Monica on a writing fellowship. At UA CED, Tiana organizes statewide programming for entrepreneurs and aids founders through the university-based accelerator. In her free time, Tiana enjoys photography, weaving, and managing her Etsy shop. She hopes to attend law school so that she can better help artists and entrepreneurs realize their visions.



# Fairbanks



*Rebecca Marks* grew up in New York and formed a connection with nature at a young age at her grandparents' home in the Catskills. Throughout college she spent time leading students of all skill levels on backpacking trips throughout the Northeast, volunteering on stewardship projects and working for trail crews which provided a catalyst for her decision to major in public policy and environmental studies. She worked as a paralegal in real estate law right after graduating, but is now shifting towards direct environmental work. Rebecca's passions lie in the intersection between climate change and food security, native agriculture practices and wilderness land protection. She is excited to be the OneHealth Fellow at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

*Megan Pittas* was born and raised in Mount Airy, MD. She is a recent graduate of the University of Maryland where she studied International Relations and Psychology. This year she's working as the Alaska Tribal Resilience Learning Network Fellow for the Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center (AK CASC) hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks International Arctic Research Center. In her free time, she loves meeting new people, spending time outside, learning to cross-country ski, exploring small coffee shops, and wandering around used bookstores. In the future she hopes to go to graduate school to study the intersections of conflict, gender, and the changing climate in international relations, and to continue hiking every mountain she sees.



*Shannon Miller* grew up in Rochester, NY and studied Mechanical Engineering in Boston before moving to Seattle for a product design role. After two years of exploring the incredible wilderness of the PNW and working in industry, she is very excited to move to Fairbanks and take on a new challenge as the Climate Makerspace Innovation Fellow. During university, she participated in STEM education and mentorships programs which inspired her to share her passion for using design thinking to develop creative solutions to problems. She has worked in many makerspaces and loves the creative, collaborative environment that they create. Shannon is looking forward to working closely with community partners to build climate resiliency solutions with college and high school students.



*Annalise Klein* is a science educator and learning experience designer. She is passionate about building place-based STEAM experiences that are grounded in culturally resonant ways of knowing and thinking. She holds a BA in chemistry and English from Hope College and an MS in Secondary Science Education from Johns Hopkins University. As a public school educator in Hawai'i and California, Annalise taught chemistry, AP Chemistry, geometry, current events, and earth science. She was a 2019 Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching recipient and traveled to eastern Uganda to collaborate with teachers at Serere Township Secondary School, where they developed the Greening Serere Project to address the community's struggle with soil erosion during the rainy season through agriculture experiments and community outreach. In 2020, she launched her own consulting service providing instructional coaching, curriculum development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion support for schools in Alaska, Washington, and Colorado. She is continuing her work as the Alaska Center for Energy and Power (ACEP) Fellow.

*Jamie Murphy Soika* is from Chadds Ford, PA and is a recent graduate of Temple University, graduating with a dual degree in Painting and English with a concentration in creative writing. While at Temple University, she studied abroad in Rome and fell in love with traveling and exploring new places. She is working with One Tree Alaska as their STEAM Education Fellow to create an environment that places an emphasis on education, observation, and research. An avid reader from a young age, she has always loved telling stories through her writing and art, and she cannot wait to marry that love with her love of nature. When not writing or painting, she can most likely be found swimming or drinking a cup of tea. In Fairbanks, she has rekindled her love of ice skating, loves petting every dog she sees, and enjoys taking an abundance of sky photos.



*Kevin Huo* graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2021 with a major in Anthropology and Political Science. Kevin has attended the Model Arctic Council in Finland (2018), the Arctic Futures 2050 Conference (2019), an exchange at Universität Heidelberg (2020) and has continued his interest in Anthropology and Political Science today through his experiences in Alaska and around the world. Kevin values community building, culture exchange, and fostering a genuine passion for the world as a central focus of his studies. Kevin is fluent in both English and Chinese and practicing German and Russian. On-campus Kevin served as the KSUA Radio 91.5FM Production Director, a formal virtual intern for the U.S. State Department Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs focused on 'Arctic Youth Engagement', was a former Undergraduate Research Fellow studying Gaps in Care for Students on Campus related to Medical Anthropology, involved as a BLaST (Biomedical Learning and Science Training) Undergraduate Researcher, and the President of the Anthropology Society. Currently Kevin is working with the Alaska Center ICE as an Innovation Fellow.

# Juneau



*Catherine Kaach Kooldeix' Pool* is this year's Education Fellow at Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI). She grew up in Conroe, Texas, north of Houston, and is Tlingit from the Raven/Sockeye Clan of Haines. She graduated from Texas A&M with a BA in Anthropology, and also holds a certificate in Museum Studies from the Institute of American Indian Arts. She interned with SHI remotely this past summer. After visiting for two weeks during the internship, she was hooked on Juneau. She is beyond thankful to be in Juneau and be involved in Indigenous-focused research and education. When she's not missing her two kitties at home, you can find her working on art projects, including learning traditional formline, and catching up on TV shows.

*Patrick O'Connor* is the current Public Education Fellow at the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA). Originally from Cincinnati, he studied history at The Ohio State University, focusing on post-colonial conflict resolution. He also served as a Global Ambassador for the University. In college, he interned with the Ohio Statehouse, the FBI, the State Department at US Embassy Singapore, and Congresswoman Joyce Beatty. He participated in a seven-week study abroad throughout Europe learning about World War II, in addition to the summer in Singapore. Before moving to Alaska, he worked on foreign policy as a government contractor for two years in Washington, DC. He is absolutely delighted to explore Juneau and get involved in ACSA's legislative advocacy for education statewide. In his free time, you can find him learning to paint, singing way too loudly, and spending quality time with friends.



# Sitka



*Lina Kapp* grew up in Chicago and graduated from Yale University in 2020, where they earned a B.A. in Classics. They spent last year working as a literacy tutor for Pre-K students in a Baltimore public school, and they are thrilled to be joining the Alaska Fellows Program as the Student Success Fellow at Mt. Edgecumbe High School! So far, Lina has worked with students one-on-one to help them build healthy habits, collaborated with Ellie at Sitka Counseling to run a substance abuse prevention group, led a weekly improv comedy workshop after school, and begun planning a new program to foster cultural connections among students, families, and Mt. Edgecumbe alumni. Every day, Lina is awestruck by the mere existence of mountains, and they have really come to love their rain pants.

*Max Yates* grew up in Bozeman, Montana and graduated from Montana State University with a degree in biochemistry. In Sitka, Max is the College and Career Guide at Mount Edgecumbe High School and works with students in the classroom and in advising settings to help them pursue their interests post-graduation. Down the line, he hopes to attend medical school and work as a primary care physician in rural communities alongside studying health access and policy to improve health outcomes for underserved communities. In Sitka, Max was a member of the 2021 Firefighter 1 Class and actively volunteers as a firefighter with the Sitka Fire Department. He also recently received his Advanced Dive certificate and has enjoyed exploring the Sitka Sound.



Growing up in a small Alaskan town instilled *Brook Cinocco* with a deep love of the state and the people that inhabit it. After a long road to obtain a Bachelors in Environmental Science from the University of Alaska Anchorage, she was able to spread her wings and explore Sitka as the Program Design and Recruitment Fellow for Outer Coast. Her interests include knitting, snowboarding, and slowly working her way towards a step above beginner Spanish. You can find her at some of her happiest walking the beaches in her hometown of Haines with her dog Pinto Bean.

*Kate Herrmann* was born and raised in St. Louis, MO and attended Southeast Missouri State University, where she studied Communication Studies and Integrated Marketing Communications. She is currently working on a degree in Social Media and Digital Content Strategy at Lindenwood University. Kate is spending her fellowship year working at Visit Sitka as the Social Media Strategist Fellow. At Visit Sitka, she has turned her love of documenting her life through photographs and video into chronicling her experience of living in Alaska into a social media platform Visit Sitka has yet to venture into, TikTok. Sharing the story of Sitka, and aiming to increase tourism specifically in millennials. If you are interested in visiting Sitka, please feel free to reach out to Kate!



*Liz Leonard* grew up just outside of Detroit, Michigan and has a lot of love for Michigan and for the midwest in general. She graduated from Yale in 2021 with a major in political science, and she is especially interested in health equity, environmental justice, and food systems. While at school, Liz worked at the Yale Farm, served on the student Title IX Advisory Board, and worked as a college advisor for Matriculate, an organization that provides college admissions advising to high achieving high school students from low-income backgrounds. In Sitka, Liz is working as a Legal and Policy Fellow for the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Liz loves to write, read, draw and paint. She also loves standup comedy and outdoors activities such as hiking, kayaking, camping, and gardening.

*Anna Cheng* grew up in Chandler, Arizona and graduated from the University of Richmond with a degree in philosophy. She moved to Alaska to continue interrogating the ideas she encountered in the classroom. Anna has managed fundraisers and interacted with stakeholders as the Development and Communications Fellow for Outer Coast. In Sitka, Anna has enjoyed dipping in the ocean, practicing yoga, learning aerial silks — and on sunny days, tennis!





*Ellie Lo Re* grew up right outside of Washington, DC in Chevy Chase, Maryland where she enjoyed hiking and camping in the summer and skiing in the winter. She chose to trade the humidity and hills for sunshine and mountains when she moved to LA to study neuroscience and religion at the University of Southern California. While at USC, Ellie spent her time outside of the classroom connecting with her community as a high school tutor and working at various homeless shelters as a patient advocate. Ellie has married her passion for working with kids and her interest in psychology as the Youth Outreach Fellow at Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services, Inc. In Sitka, Ellie leads a substance abuse prevention group for students at Mt. Edgecumbe High School (with fellow Fellow Lina!) and teaches 3-5th grade girls healthy social and emotional learning skills as a Girls on the Run coach at Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary school.

Having grown up mostly in Tacoma, Washington, *Tommy Martin* is excited to return to the Pacific Northwest and begin work in Sitka. He studied biology at Yale University, where he also captained one of the club soccer teams, led extracurricular academic enrichment activities for local middle schoolers, and served as co-coordinator for FOOT, Yale's outdoor orientation program. Tommy is excited to work with the students of Mt. Edgecumbe High School as the Internship and Work Fellow and to get to know the broader Sitka community. In his free time, he loves going on walks, runs, and bike rides and embarking on baking adventures that don't require an expert skill level.



# Animals and Wildlife



## Anchorage

As in previous years, moose have been abundant in Anchorage. Andrew, Tiana, and Eliza saw a moose at a local park one night. Meanwhile, miles away on the same evening, Haleigh contemplated the best way to politely encourage the moose who had settled down in the Virginia Court driveway to move aside. During a trip to Whittier, some of the fellows had a close encounter with a black bear. Many eagles have also been spotted!



## Fairbanks

In early September, the Fellows had a moose about 15 feet from the two Fairbanks houses, Spruce and Tamarack. After much google research and consultation with the neighbors, they learned that September is the month where Moose are most volatile and aggressive! Thankfully, they only came away with a healthy fear of moose. They also have seen a few red foxes, and are making sure to get lots of cuddles from the neighbors' dogs, including one named Merle who loves attention and cheese.



## Juneau

Patrick learned very quickly that bears do roam downtown in Juneau. He came within 10 feet of one on his first night and saw three more in the first month and a half. Cat and Pat have been spotting many many ravens, a few bald eagles, and so many nice canines. They have seen a number of (inanimate) whales as well; supposedly the real ones come in the summer.

## Sitka

Despite Tommy's continued skepticism, bears do in fact exist in Sitka! The Fellows visited some of them at the Fortress of the Bear. Additionally, Sitka is home to a plethora of excellent dogs. The Fellows' favorites include Pinto Bean, Roger, Oscar, Beili, Georgia, Wally, and the mysterious black labs they encountered at Harbor Mountain.



# Hobbies

After completing the Firefighter 1 class, Max has become an official member of the Sitka Fire Department. Max joined the class shortly after arriving in Sitka and has learned about a variety of approaches to emergency response scenarios.



Liz has been taking some amazing Northern Lights photos during the Sitka crews outdoor adventures. Kate bought an inflatable paddleboard in the first month of the fellowship and has generously brought along several other fellows for rides around the water.



The Fairbanks Fellows have been practicing hygge by cultivating warm and cozy indoor hobbies, including knitting, caramel making, thrift-shopping, reading, baking, and hosting their own radio show! Listen to Thai and Taylor at KSUA 91.5 on Tuesdays at 7 pm AKT, where they discuss Thai Food restaurants, Taylor Swift, and more.

The Juneautes been learning visual arts to get through the winter; Pat is painting and Cat is drawing. Cat also took a formline class at the University of Alaska - Southeast, and has made some amazing designs (left)!



Tiana took a wood-carving class at the Anchorage Museum and made two spoons!

Haleigh is in the progress of creating a 4-foot tall collage of Alaska-inspired materials. So far she's included newspaper clippings from the day of their arrival, moose and bear safety tips, lots of salmon, and other local items from maps, magazines, brochures, and newspapers the cohort has accumulated.



The Anchorage cohort went on many hikes before winter settled in. Gabe, who had been in Anchorage since the summer, took them on some of her favorites! On their hike at Mt. Baldy (above) it started to rain and snow—in mid-September!

# Food and Social

Tommy and Lina made sourdough using a starter gifted by Kurt (husband to Mt. Edgecumbe's Superintendent, Janelle, and chef extraordinaire). Now they have some shred of understanding of what it means to be parents.



A spooky friend gifted to the Anchorage cohort.



Tina joined in on a Mediterranean feast with the Fairbanks cohort. We connected over homemade pita and shared war stories surrounding icy roads and negative 40 degree days.



Having collectively discovered the joys of hot pot, the Anchorage Fellows hosted a hot pot game night with the Americorps VISTAs and friends.



The fellows put on a Taylor Swift-themed 22nd birthday party for Megan, complete with a pavlova, RED on vinyl, and exactly 22 candles (which in hindsight may have been too many candles).



The Fairbanks Fellows enjoy world-renowned Spinach Creek carrots at Roaming Root Cellar.

# Holidays Across the Sites

Sitka Fellows (and friends!) dressed as the Fellowship of the Ring for Halloween!



Anchorage Fellows at Halloween! Tiana (dressed as boba) won second place in the costume contest.



For a short Halloween jaunt, Pat and Cat dressed up last-minute as a North Face advertisement.



The Sitka Fellows hosted the Sitka Jesuit Volunteers for a Friendsgiving meal!



The Anchorage Fellows at Friendsgiving with the VISTAs.



Brook and Maike help make dumplings for Mid-Autumn Festival!

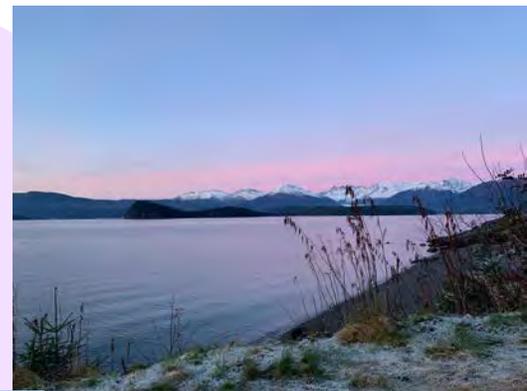
# Trips



The Fairbanks cohort spent one weekend backpacking to Stiles Creek Cabin in the Chena River Recreation Area (above). A few of the fellows took a short day trip and hike to Denali National Park, where we spent most of the time pointing at various hills going “is THAT Denali?” only to discover that it in fact was very clear which mountain was Denali (left).



The Juneau cohort, with a couple of former Jesuit Volunteers, took a trip up to Basin Road between Mount Juneau and Mount Roberts. While the roots hidden in the snow proved to trip everyone at least once, the night hike was a beautiful and interesting take on Juneau (left).



The Juneau Fellows have been lighting bonfires at False Outer Point on Douglas Island. The spot has great views of the Mendenhall Glacier, Auke Bay, Lynn Canal, and the Chilkat Mountains.

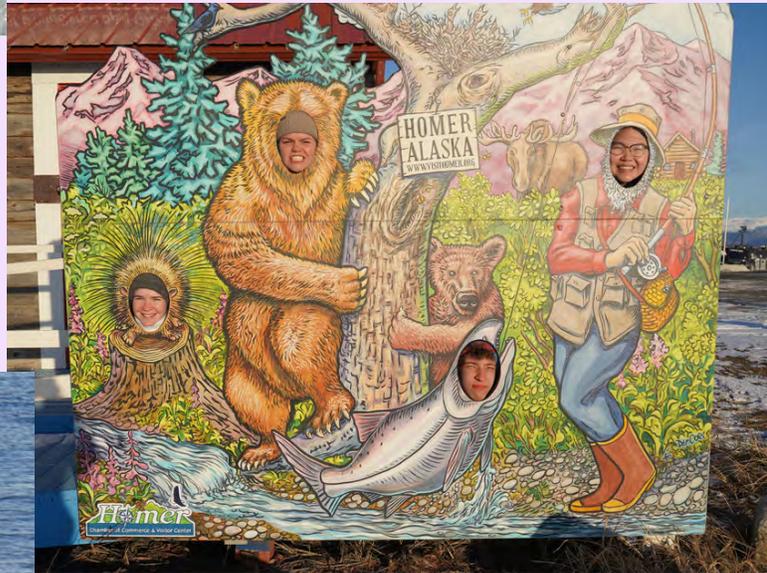


The Anchorage Fellows drove to Seward and explored Kenai Fjords National Park, where some of them saw their first glacier (above)!

The Fellows went down to Homer for a gorgeous (albeit very chilly) weekend. They hiked down to the beach to meet a seal (below).



A bonfire on Kenai Beach!



Six of the Sitka Fellows (and one Sitka Dog, Pinto Bean) planned a spur-of-the-moment backpacking trip up Harbor Mountain! They hiked up during the day, spent several hours marveling at the snow and late afternoon glow, and spent a very chilly (but very fun!) night in the shelter (below).



Stacey and Bart, two Sitka locals and friends to the Fellows, invited this year's cohort to join them on an adventure! They took a boat south to Jamboree Bay, where they hiked along animal trails, learned all about the muskeg, and ate lunch atop a peak!

