



HERITAGE

Monthly news update from the Office of History and Archaeology

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

December 2025

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Staff Updates: The State of Alaska currently has a hiring freeze in place and as of August 29, OHA has five vacancies. Until hiring waivers are approved and positions are backfilled, current OHA staff are in acting status: Sarah Meitl, Acting Chief and Amy Hellmich, Acting Review and Compliance Coordinator.

Please join our office in welcoming Nick Schmuck to his new official role as State Archaeologist, effective November 24, 2025.

On Friday, November 28, Governor Dunleavy named John Crowther, the current Acting DNR Commissioner, as the new commissioner-designee and his name will be submitted to the Alaska Legislature for confirmation during the 2026 session. On June 30, 2025, Governor Dunleavy appointed the DNR Commissioner to serve as Alaska's Interim State Historic Preservation Officer.

Alaska Historic Commission Meeting – December 19, 2025: The AHC will meet on December 19, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm AKST via MS Teams. The session will include an update on the America250 Program and OHA's operations for Commission members.

Contact Information: OHA encourages sending inquiries and requests to the email addresses listed below.

To send by email:

Section 106: oha.revcomp@alaska.gov

State Permits: oha.permits@alaska.gov

AHRS: oha.ibs@alaska.gov

Grants: ohagrants@alaska.gov

Surveys and Research: adam.brinkman@alaska.gov

General Inquiries: dnr.oha@alaska.gov

To send by USPS or other courier:

Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
c/o Office of History and Archaeology
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1310
Anchorage, AK 99501

America250 Program: The America250-Alaska planning team has accomplished the following tasks to encourage broad, statewide participation:

- Launched Website: <https://america250.alaska.gov/>, from which all Alaskans can submit organization activities to the [online calendar](#);
- Spotlight state and national activities via Facebook: [America250Alaska](#); Instagram: [alaskaamerica250](#); and YouTube: (coming soon);
- Set up Email: america250@alaska.gov

America250 Traveling Exhibit: The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology has created a traveling exhibit, *Alaska's Fields of Dreams: America's Pastime in the 49th State*, for the America250 Alaska project. The exhibit consists of nine free-standing, 80" x 33.5" banners. The banners tell the history of Alaska Baseball, from the Indigenous version of the game to the Alaska Baseball League. Reserving the exhibit is free, except for shipping. To learn more, contact OHA's exhibit coordinator, Rachel Carraway, at rachel.carraway@alaska.gov.

The America250-Alaska coalition is growing. If you have questions, would like to learn more, or are interested in getting involved, please contact Katie Ringsmuth at katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov.

Community Impact

Grant Success Story: City of Kodiak Historic Preservation

In 2023, the City of Kodiak became Alaska's newest Certified Local Government (CLG) – a milestone that marked the beginning of a transformative journey into historic preservation. With support from a National Park Service CLG grant, Kodiak launched its first-ever Historic Preservation Plan, laying a strong foundation for protecting and celebrating the community's rich cultural heritage. It identifies preservation goals, outlines strategies for nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and emphasizes the importance of public education and engagement. Recognizing that historic places matter deeply to residents across Kodiak Island, the plan also includes the creation of a resource inventory compatible with the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS), ensuring long-term stewardship and accessibility. The project was aligned with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, ensuring a thoughtful and nationally recognized approach to identifying, evaluating, and treating historic properties. Public involvement was a major part of the planning process, done through a dedicated

planning website, in-person workshops, online surveys, and maintained open lines of community with the community. This inclusive approach ensured that the plan reflected local values and priorities. The Historic Preservation Commission played a key leadership role, culminating in a formal recommendation to the City Council, which unanimously approved the plan on September 25, 2022. Through this process, Kodiak established a clear historic context, creating a framework that highlights the significance of its historic buildings, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes. The final plan sets actionable goals that will guide future preservation efforts, ensuring that Kodiak's unique heritage is honored, protected, and integrated into the city's growth and development. With this plan in place, Kodiak has taken a bold step toward shaping a future that respects and celebrates its past.

Federal Legislation

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of the Army published a joint notice in the Federal Register regarding a proposed rule to revise regulations defining the scope of water federally covered under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, also known as the Clean Water Act, in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 decision in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. This proposed rule is intended to clarify the definition of "waters of the United States" and provide greater regulatory certainty for agencies. More information can be found here: [Federal Register :: Updated Definition of "Waters of the United States"](#)

On Wednesday, December 12, the National Trust for Historic Preservation filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to immediately halt construction on the proposed White House ballroom: [National Trust for Historic Preservation Files Suit to Immediately Stop White House Ballroom Construction | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#).

The first hearing was held on Tuesday, December 16: [NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES v. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, 1:25-cv-04316 – CourtListener.com](#).

A separate suit involving the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) was also filed on Wednesday, December 12. This suit was also filed against the General Services Administration GSA in the U.S. District Court of DC concerning potential impacts to the EEOB and the GSA has agreed to pause all planning activities until the Court holds a hearing early next year: [Protecting the EEOB - Cultural Heritage Partners](#)

Beyond these regulatory proposals and lawsuits, Congress is continuing their work on FY26 congressional appropriations ahead of the January 30th, 2026 deadline. Currently, the Senate Interior-Environment appropriations bill is eyed to be bundled into a "minibus" bill along with the Labor-HHS, Defense, Transportation-HUD, and Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bills. Senator

Lee, the chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has also proposed an amendment for inclusion, seeking to strike section 130. More information about the current Senate Interior-Environment appropriations bill draft and section 130 can be found here: [Congressional Record | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#).

National Register

With the reopening of the federal government, the National Register of Historic Places is pleased to resume operations. For updates on the adjusted 45-day review period, revised received dates, and historic tax credit-associated nominations, please reach out to Katie Ringsmuth at katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov. For additional information about the National Register program, visit [National Register of Historic Places \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#).

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Votes to Propose to Rescind NEPA and UDAG Regulations

On Wednesday, December 17th, the ACHP published a news release stating that they recently voted unanimously to propose two rulemakings to rescind outdated and obsolete regulations, in response to Executive Order 14192 and Executive Order 14154. The proposed actions will make their way through the rulemaking process soon. More information can be found here: [ACHP Votes to Propose to Rescind NEPA and UDAG Regulations | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#).

eLearning

ACHP announces that three of their eLearning courses are now back online! These include “What is Section 106?”, “What Now? Protecting Historic Properties During Disaster Response”; and “Section 304 and Confidentiality”. Visit the eLearning course webpage ([e-Learning Courses | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)) to check out these updated courses.

Public Project Alerts

Section 106 large project consultation in progress:

- Graphite One Mine near Nome, USACE
- Safer Seward Highway, MP 98.5-118, DOT&PF
- Seward to Glenn Connection PEL, DOT&PF

- Chilkoot National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan, NPS
- Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan Revision, BLM
- Cook Inlet LNG, FERC
- AK LNG, FERC
- Ambler Mining District Access Road, AIDEA
- West Susitna Access Road, USACE

Review and compliance agreement development for large projects in progress:

- West Susitna Access Road, DOT&PF
 - Programmatic Agreement
- USFS Heritage Program
 - Programmatic Agreement Amendment
- USFS Sustainable Cabins
 - Programmatic Agreement
- NPS Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail
 - Programmatic Agreement

For information on how to participate in the process, or on how to review and comment on the above projects, contact Amy Hellmich, amy.hellmich@alaska.gov.

Heritage subscription information

Heritage is produced by the Office of History and Archaeology, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Please send your comments, suggestions, and information by e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov, mail to 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565, or telephone 907.269.8700.

All issues are posted to our web site at dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/ and distributed to subscribers by e-mail. A paper copy can be sent to individuals and organizations that specifically request it.

To be added to the subscription list, please send an e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov with "Heritage, subscribe" in the subject line.

If you do not wish to continue to subscribe to *Heritage*, please send an e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov with "Heritage, unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Much like the OHA office, the Heritage Newsletter is entering a stage of transition. We are working on updating our mailing list and delivery system. We will have more information on the future of the newsletter and its delivery soon.

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Preservation calendar

2025

2026

March 2-5 – 2026 National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week: [National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week 2026](#)

March 25-28 – Joint Conference: Alaska Anthropological Association and Northwest Anthropological Conference, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

July – Alaska's Field of Dreams Game at Growden Memorial Park, Fairbanks.

2027

March 3- 7 – Sharing Our Knowledge conference, Ketchikan. For more information and volunteer opportunities, contact Joaqlin Estus at jmestus50@gmail.com



Happy Holidays from OHA!!