
Belkofski Tribal Council Local Economic Development Plan

Presented to the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association



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Location



Figure 1: Location of Belkofski Alaska.
Source: Alaska Fish and Game

Belkofski is a small, remote village located 12 miles southeast of King Cove along the Alaska Peninsula. The area is now uninhabited but has previously existed as a village area before the 1980s. The area covers only 2.4 square miles of land and 0.9 square miles of water. The village is primarily used as a summer fishing camp by anglers and boatmen who come down from the larger town of King Cove, as well as other Unangan. Belkofski falls in the maritime climate zone with temperatures ranging from -13 to 78 throughout the year. There is an average snowfall of 56 inches and an average precipitation of 33 inches per year.

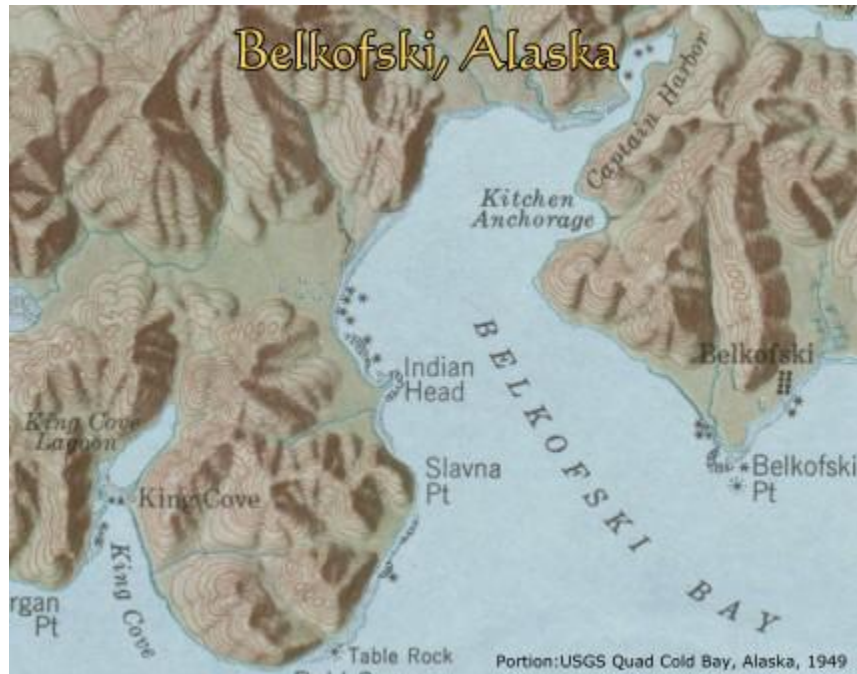


Figure 2: Close up of Belkofski and surrounding geography, to include King Cove.
Source: <http://unimak.us/belkofski.shtml>

History and Culture

Belkofski was initially settled by Russians who moved natives in around 1832 for harvesting sea otters who were abundant in the area's reefs. During its height of production, it was one of the most affluent villages in the King Cove area. There were stores in the village during this time, but after the otter industry hit a decline, the population of the village dwindled. Better employment opportunities in other areas of King Cove and Sand Point pushed the remaining residents out of the town and into more populated areas that had more economic opportunity. The last of the residents moved away in the early 1980s and took parts of the Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church when they left to keep part of their history with them.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities Summary

The Belkofski Tribe of King Cove historically resided in Belkofski, but after a loss of local infrastructure and the decline of the sea otter harvest the tribe moved, primarily to King Cove and secondarily to Sand Point.

The village of Belkofski is currently almost wholly lacking in infrastructure. Belkofski is only accessible by boat or seaplane as there is no road access or airstrip. There are no stores or businesses, and there are only four homes in the area, all of which are currently unoccupied. Two of the houses have well water, and there is no power distribution network. Belkofski is unoccupied for much of the year except when it becomes a fish camp during the salmon run.

Village of Belkofski			
Asset	Present	Description	Ownership
Airstrip	No		
Marine Highway Service	No		
Community Hall	No		
Water/Sewer	No		
Electricity	No		
Fuel Storage	No		
Medical Services	No		
Dock/Harbor	No		
Public Safety	No		
Fire Protection	No		
Telephone and Internet	No		
Post Office	No		
School	No		

Table 1: Infrastructure in the village of Belkofski, Alaska

King Cove, the current primary location of the tribe, is a relatively well-developed rural Alaska city but still has many of the hardships associated with rural Alaska. The airstrip is not safe under most winter conditions. It not unusual for weather hazards to make King Cove inaccessible by air throughout the year.

City of King Cove			
Asset	Present	Description	Ownership
Airstrip	Yes	3,360-foot gravel. Not safe under many conditions.	State
Marine Highway Service	Yes	Every other week from May through September.	State
Water/Sewer	Yes	Water comes from Ram Creek with a sheet pile dam, which stores roughly 980,000 gallons of unfiltered water. A piped sewage collection system connects to central septic tanks.	City
Electricity	Yes	Diesel generator, Hydropower. \$3.07 per gallon for diesel.	City
Fuel Storage	Yes	The dock has a pipeline that runs from 5 fuel steel storage tanks to bring fuel into the city	City
Medical Services	Yes	King Cove Medical Clinic, and public health nursing	Tribal
Dock/Harbor	Yes	King Cove has a deepwater port	City
Public Safety	Yes	King Cove has a city police station	City
Fire Protection	Yes	King Cove Fire and Rescue	City
Telephone and Internet	Yes	Broadband internet and regular phone service is available; broadband phone service is not	Private

Post Office	Yes	One Post Office	Federal
School	Yes	Aleutians East Borough School District	State

Table 2: Infrastructure of King Cove, Alaska.

Demographics and Economy

The following information is from the Census Bureau’s American FactFinder database. Due to the small population in these areas, the most current information for many of these indicators is 2016, and these represent the 5-year averages from the American Community Survey. If these areas had larger populations, then the Census Bureau would have presented a 1-year average. The year of 2010 was selected as a benchmark year because the data is as authoritative as the Census Bureau can produce as the data comes during the decennial census.

Indicator	2010	2016	Percent Change
Population	938	1080	15%
Tribal Members	361	467	29%
Housing Units	229	295	29%
Median Household Income	\$50,500	\$72,679	44%
Unemployment Rate	0.2	2.4	1100%

Table 3: Demographic and Economic Indicators for the City of King Cove
Source: American FactFinder

Additionally, there is 31 active business licensed with physical addresses in King Cove. The number of commercial fishing permits dropped from 125 in 2010 to 62 in 2018, a decline of 34%.

Community Development Quota (CDQ) Groups

Western Alaska groundfish fisheries are managed under several federal programs. The Community Development Quota program reserves 10% of the catch for groundfish, pollock, and crab within a region to qualified Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) communities within 50 miles from shore. King Cove is not an eligible CDQ community.



Figure 3: Map of CDQ Communities in the Aleutians Islands
Source: North Pacific Management Council

Existing Community Projects

For a generation, King Cove has been attempting to have a road built to Cold Bay. There are a variety of reasons to connect these two cities, primarily the health and safety concerns for residents of King Cove when travel to and from King Cove is not possible. They are primarily going through the legislative process to achieve this goal. A deal was signed in early 2018 with the purpose of advancing construction of the road.

Existing Workforce Competencies

The city ownership and operation of regional assets such as a deepwater port and airport lead to a high amount of Local Government employment within King Cove, as well as jobs in trade, transportation, and utilities. Food manufacturing also contributes to trade jobs and is responsible for the concentration in manufacturing.

Industry	Number of workers	Percent of total employed
Local Government	86	43%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	34	17%
Manufacturing	30	15%
Educational and Health Services	27	13%
Construction	5	2%
Financial Activities	4	2%
Leisure and Hospitality	3	1%
Natural Resources and Mining	2	1%
Professional and Business Services	2	1%
State Government	2	1%
Other	1	0%

Table 4: Number of King Cove Workers by Industry in 2014

Source: Alaska Regional and Local Information

The workforce of King Cove has experience in trade, transportation, and utilities with a lesser emphasis on healthcare and manufacturing.

Number of Resident Workers with Industry Experience between 2012 and 2017	
Trade	73
Health care and social assistance	46
Manufacturing	36
Accommodation and food services	26
Construction	22
State government	19
Transportation and warehousing	17
Real estate and rental and leasing	14
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	12
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	11
All Others	24

Table 5: Number of workers with Industry Experience from 2012 to 2016

Source: Alaska Regional and Local Information

Local Government/Community Stakeholders

Borough Government

The Aleutians East Borough is responsible for regional taxation, education, planning, and land use regulation. The borough seat of the Aleutians Islands is Sand Point, on Popof Island in the Shumagin Islands group.

Municipality/Village

The City of King Cove first incorporated as a 2nd Class City in 1947 and gained 1st Class City status in 1974.

Native and Village Corporations

- **Tribal Governments (*Belkofski Tribe*):** Tribal governments have the status of federally recognized tribes. They have responsibility for specific local health and social service programs and have access to sources of federal funding.
- **ANCSA Village Corporations (*King Cove Village Corporation*):** Village corporations are the major surface landowners in Sand Point and the entire Popof Island, and many residents are shareholders in these corporations.
- **ANCSA Regional Corporation (*Aleut Corporation*):** Regional corporations are the major subsurface landowner in the area and are a significant partner in land and economic development.

Identification of Barriers to Community and Economic Development

The region's economy tightly tied to the fishing industry. The barriers to economic development are:

- Shortening fishing seasons
- Changes in the types of fish being caught
- The rise of farmed seafood internationally
- Aging fishing fleet

These put the existing economic base of the region at risk. Management of fish stocks, revitalizing the fleet and seeking efficiencies in fishing and food manufacturing is essential to ensuring the economic support of the region.

Natural hazards and isolation provide a continuous barrier to economic development. Weather-related hazards, such as cyclonic storms, can make transportation by land and air unreliable and unsafe. Volcanic and seismic activity pose a probable risk of property damage. The remote location and lack of agricultural land cause a high cost of living for all supplies, including food insecurity for some members of the community.

SWOT Analysis



Figure 4: SWOT Analysis

Tribal Council Goals

The Belkofski tribe would like to see many of these goals funded through the development of other revenue sources, such as the hydroponics unit described below.

Creation of Trails

They are interested in creating trails in Belkofski. A trail creation project could provide part-time work for a tribal or a community member. This work could be supported through TTP grant funds. All of the supplies have already been purchased. However, after purchasing the supplies, it was discovered that in order to use grant funding for this project, additional administrative steps need to be taken before work could begin. However, given the relatively small size of the project, it has a high administrative burden to procure the necessary funds. This has meant that work on the trails has stopped for the time being.

Additional obstacles include that the tribe does not own the land, the Belkofski Corporation owns it. Also, the window to travel to the island, in between fishing and subsistence activities is small, mainly due to weather.

Use of the Tribal Assets

The tribe owns the garage, and they would like to see it be more heavily utilized. One idea was to have a hydroponics unit in the garage. This could result in the creation of full-time work for a tribal member, as well as fresh produce for the tribe and the city. There are numerous potential customers for fresh produce in King Cove including the school, the senior center, and the local stores. Selling of the produce would generate revenue, which could then be used to fund other projects and goals of the tribe. Running the hydroponics unit would require specialized training, much of which is similar to training for process technology. This presents an opportunity to host process technical training for tribal members.

Potential funding sources for the hydroponics unit include the following:

- USDA grant
 - Rural economic development
- Department of Education
 - Team nutrition grant
- Foundation grants
 - Such as Walmart, Kauffman, Health Foundations, etc.
- USDA healthier schools program
 - "Farm to school network."

Resource Center for Tribal Members

There used to be a resource center in King Cove where community members could do online classes and apply for jobs, using computers and internet provided by the center. It was staffed by a community member who would assist with job searches and things of that nature. Unfortunately, the resource center closed a few years ago.

There is a need for a new resource center for tribal members, but also for the community at large. The center could provide job assistance, and also function as a remote or satellite campus for the University of Alaska system. There is a demand for distance education and training. However, there are little to no resources (consistent internet, new computers, printers, etc.) currently available in the community to support this.

Growing the Recycling Center

There are currently no options for citywide recycling in King Cove; although a building where recycling can take place is in the works. There is a demand for recycling for sustainability reasons, and to extend the life of the landfill. The tribe could potentially assist with the operations of the recycling center, by procuring I-gap grant funding for the project. However, the city should be leading the charge on this as

they own and operate the landfill. The tribe would be open to collaborating on this project, but there is a need for more direction from the city.

Growing Revenue Sources

The tribe would like to grow and diversify their revenue streams so that they can fund other activities and services for tribal members. They would like to focus on sustainable revenue streams such as selling produce from a hydroponic unit, that will provide jobs for tribal members, and not be based on the availability of grants.

Developing/Growing a Local Workforce

The tribe is interested in helping the community develop its workforce. APIA used to have a program that did this, but it is not currently funded. As more young people look at staying in King Cove, they have two options, receive on the job training locally, or travel to another community or state for education and training. Community members have gone to AVTEC in Seward to get training and fishing certifications. In addition, the Aleut Foundation has provided training to corporation members in the following: QuickBooks, grant writing, hazard waste training, and certifications on construction flagging and commercial driving (CDL).

Early engagement with the future workforce is essential so tribal, and community members will return to work in King Cove after their respective education or training. This can be done by providing more training, internships, and career counseling. Potential opportunities for workforce training include:

- Educators:
 - There is a robust Head Start program, a preschool and a school in King Cove.
- Police Officers
- Medical staff:
 - Currently, at the clinic, the Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants at the local clinic are from out of town. However, the Health Aides are often local.