



PARK ARCHEOLOGY INFORMATION SHEET

The National Park Service is the steward for many cultural resources that are important to our nation. Archeological resources are found in most all units of the park system and are evidence of past human activity. Both prehistoric and historic time periods are represented in the archeological record. Management of these cultural resources is mandated by law and policy.

Kenai Fjords National Park is comprised of federal, state, Native corporation and private lands. The park has the authority to manage only federal park lands. Consequently, of the 91 identified archeological and historic sites in the fjords and adjacent islands, only 33 are NPS managed. These include park lands for which English Bay Corporation retain cultural rights. The remaining 58 sites are “local sites”, meaning they have not been relocated, they have been destroyed, or they are owned and managed by other entities.

When a site is identified, specific information such as location, site description and condition are recorded. This data is submitted to the **Alaska Office of History and Archaeology** (OHA) and the site is added to the **Alaska Heritage Resources Survey** (ARHS).

Listed sites are assigned a State identification number which begins with a three letter code representing the USGS topographic quadrangle in which the site is located; for example SEW (Seward), SEL (Seldovia) or XBS (Blying Sound). Numbers are assigned consecutively; SEW-175 is within the Seward quadrangle and is the 175th resource assigned a number within it.



Ball Mill at hard rock gold mine site in Nuka Bay. NPS Photo.

Archeological sites within the park are described as **prehistoric**, **protohistoric** and historic. Visual indicators of pre and proto-historic sites consist of scatterings of worked stones in the intertidal zone, ground depressions, **middens**, charcoal, ash or unnatural looking elements eroding out of shoreline banks and **culturally modified trees** (CMT). The historic sites usually consist of structure ruins, mining features and equipment, and trails. Five park sites are a combination prehistoric, proto-historic and historic elements.



Which tree is a CMT (culturally modified tree) and which is a BMT (bear modified tree)? CMT scars are typically wider at the bottom and taper up towards the top. A BMT scar may be irregular in shape like the image on the right.

Site Protection:

The **Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979** requires federal land managers treat specific site information as confidential. For this reason sensitive site locations are excluded from all public documents.

Permits are required for non-NPS researchers working on projects such as surveys and site testing. Collections and final project reports are accessioned into the park's museum and archive.

Terms to know:

Alaska Heritage Resources Survey: Inventory of all reported prehistoric and historic sites within the State of Alaska which is maintained by the Office of History and Archeology.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979: An act to secure the protection of archaeological sites on public and Indian lands.

Cultural compliance: Process to ensure projects consider all possible impacts to cultural resources.

Culturally modified trees (CMT): Trees that show signs of being altered by humans; for example, bark stripped tree trunks.

Midden: A mound or heap containing bones, shells and other refuse which indicates human use.

Prehistoric: Culture before recorded history.

Proto-historic: Culture immediately prior to its first recorded history.

Office of History and Archaeology (OHA): Created after the passage of the 1970 Alaska Historic Preservation Act, OHA "works to preserve sites and buildings that reflect Alaska's heritage".

If you have questions concerning archeological sites in KEFJ, please contact Shannon Kovac, Cultural Resource Program Manager, 907-422-0541.