SHISHMAREF EROSION AND RELOCATION COALITION
Serving the Community for a Better Future

Relocation and Erosion Concerns
Shishmaref, AK
2006

Subsistence in Shishmaref, a way of life
Shishmaref has organized the Coalition from our three local governing entities

- Native Village of Shishmaref
- City of Shishmaref
- Shishmaref Native Corporation
- Kawerak, Inc the Regional Non-Profit facilitates the coalition and provides staff support.

http://www.kawerak.org/tribalHomePages/shiscoal/index.html
http://www.kawerak.org/
Shishmaref is located on a barrier Island
Communities within the Bering Straits Region

Wales, Diomede, Brevig Mission, Teller, Mary’s Igloo, Nome Eskimo, Solomon, King Island, Council, White Mountain, Golovin, Elim, Koyuk, Shaktoolik, Unalakleet, St. Michael, Stebbins, Gambell, Savoonga, Shishmaref
Subsistence

The community is highly dependant on its’ Cultural And Traditional Heritage. Subsisting off the land and sea is a vital component to the daily consumption of natural foods harvested in Shishmaref and passed on from generation to generation, which is continued today. The preservation of our unique culture is vital to the continued existence of our community as one family.
For the past 50 years, Shishmaref has pondered upon its’ problem with the continuing shoreline beach erosion, the future and well being of its’ community and residents continues to be its’ number 1 concern. Requests for full construction of shoreline beach protection have been made in the early 1970’s and here we are- **50 years later- no full beach front protection.**
Shishmaref is not alone; other Alaska Native Villages are facing a significant threat from ongoing global climate changes. Areas that have in the past been protected by our durable permafrost are now at risk. According to the GAO, 186 other communities are being affected by flooding and erosion in Alaska.
Land along the coast of St. Michael and Stebbins are being lost to the environmental warming, flooding and erosion.
The Shishmaref Erosion and Relocation Coalition has developed a Strategic Plan to help plan and coordinate its effort to protect and relocate the community. This plan developed in 2002 is currently being revised.
Public meetings are held in the community to help the Coalition move forward with the relocation project. Involvement and concerns of the community are a vital to our decision making and requests.
Video footage

November 2003 storm - Shishmaref
November 21, 2003 Storm

Road between town and the landfill.

(The lights on the right are the airstrip.)
Erosion rate: These 2 photos were taken 2 hours apart, note the ATV tracks in the road (note the 55 gallon barrel). This road no longer exists.
Without the early buildup of shoreline pack ice, Shishmaref is more vulnerable to erosion caused by fall storms in late October-December of each year.
Flooding near tannery – November 2003
The community has voted to relocate to the mainland, the preferred site is Tin Creek
Coalition Accomplishments since 2001

- **2001** Strategic relocation plan developed by the Coalition, formation of the Erosion and Relocation Coalition $50,000.00 - ADES funding
- **2001** Kawerak funded the Nayokpuk Stores’ beach front protection project - 101’ gabion project. KTP- $36,000.00
2001 A storm prompted Governor Tony Knowles to appropriate $110,000 to complete placing sand-filled gabions along the worst hit shoreline.

2002 AVEC/Denali Commission constructed replacement bulk fuel tanks for the Nayokpuk General store

2002 Relocation vote held by the City of Shishmaref-167yes to move, 20 no to move
2001 USDA-NRCS started evaluation of 11 potential relocation sites identified by the Coalition

2003 five sites researched by USDA-NRCS narrowed down to two sites- Tin Creek and West Tin Creek.

2004 Kawerak seawall constructed along the west end of town funded through the BIA/IRR roads program. $2.2m
2005 Construction of seawall by the City, Bering Straits School District (BSSD) and the Corps of Engineers Section 14 program. $1.85m total

2005 Legislative funding $2m, $400,000.00 used to match BSSD Section 14 project

2005 HUD $500,000.00 appropriated for the City for construction of barriers

2005 USDA-NRCS completed depth sounding of port and gravel fill needs for Tin Creek.
2005 Funding received by the Corps of Engineers for design of shoreline protection for the entire community. $2M of the estimated $16M project to be constructed in 2006. Source for remaining $14m in need yet to be identified.

2005 Funding received in the Transportation bill to start construction of the relocation road. $4.25m appropriated in SAFETEA-LU.

2006 ADOT-planning a two-stage Airport Master Plan in 2006. Wind study will be done at the same time $150,000.00.
Agencies Providing or Offering Assistance (list not inclusive)

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- AK Division of Emergency Services
- FEMA
- AK Community and Economic Development
- Innovative Readiness Training
- Housing Authority – HUD
- Denali Commission
- Bureau of Indian Affairs - Roads
Kawerak’s Board supports Shishmaref’s efforts to relocate its' community. Funding is provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs compact with Kawerak of the Indian Reservation Roads Program (IRR) for this effort.
Support for Shishmaref

Access to Kawerak Transportation Program (KTP) Staff in Nome
- Director
- Engineers
- Planners
- Administrative Support

Shishmaref Project Staff
- Village Transportation Planner

Seawall rock and equipment
Work being performed by KTP

- Coordination and sharing information on: seawall project, relocation project and transportation planning
- Development of long-range transportation plan
- Documentation of storm events
- Support and coordination of public meetings
- Project planning, survey and design, archaeological and environmental evaluations, perfection of rights-of-ways, and development of plans and specification
- Construction of seawall - rock and equipment has been mobilized to the island, construction completed in 2004
- Staff support to Coalition
- Development of agreements
FHWA Reauthorization Priority Projects

- Road to Ear Mountain – primary rock and gravel source
- Community streets

Support to Coalition and/or Kauerak to provide for ongoing funding for staff support
- Coordination
- Plan development
- Engineering
Shishmaref’s problems have drawn National and International media interest.

Film crew from Japan
Community efforts during storm:
- evacuating threatened homes
- pulling back boats
Update meetings

• For the past four years, the Coalition has partnered with the State of Alaska’s Department of Community and Economic Development to provide updates of Shishmaref’s progress in addressing our efforts to find a viable solution.
• We have broadened our updates to include other communities who are experiencing similar problems as Shishmaref.
• Agency representatives are welcome to attend these meetings. These meetings are usually held during the week of the AFN convention in October.
The need for state and federal multi-agency coordination

The process of relocating an entire community requires extensive interagency cooperation and coordination. There is currently no one agency stepping forward to take the lead.

We have reviewed the GAO report (GAO-045142) completed in December 2003 and encourage you to consider their recommendations.
The no action option for Shishmaref is the annihilation of our community by dissemination. We are unique, and need to be valued as a national treasure by the people of the United States. We deserve the attention and help of the American people and the federal government.
Shishmaref, we are worth saving
Final Request

That Shishmaref be used as a federal demonstration project with maximum flexibility to determine what changes need to be made to lower the cost and impact of relocation, identify a Federal champion, and to facilitate agency coordination.