BERING SEA ELDERS GROUP

Strategic Plan (2012-2016)
*Working Together – One Voice, One Mind*
Approved by the Executive Committee, January 30, 2012

OUR MISSION

Bring together elders as one voice to protect our traditional ways of life and the Bering Sea web of life that supports the resources we rely on, and our children’s future.

OUR CORE VALUES

Elders as Messengers | Youth as our Future | Many Tribes, One Voice, One Mind

OUR OUTCOMES

The 2012-2016 Strategic Plan focuses on three key outcomes:
- Strengthening the Elders Group organization
- Improving youth engagement
- Pursuing programs that protect our food security and traditional way of life

SHORT-TERM GOALS (2012 - 2013)

*Strengthening the Elders Group Organization*
1. Diversify the executive committee to include balanced representation from the Yukon-Kuskokwim and Bering Strait regions.
2. Establish a process to ensure effective communication and a working relationship between the Elders Group and Bering Sea tribal governments.
   - Develop a Communications Plan for sharing the activities of the Elders Group with tribal organizations, local and regional governments, state and federal agencies, elected officials, CDQ groups, regional and village Native corporations and religious organizations.
   - Complete a description of what elders are expected to do as part of the Bering Sea Elders Group, including the role of reporting back to their respective tribes.
3. Seek Resolutions of support and participation from Kawerak and AVCP and invite the same from marine mammal commissions and other Native institutions engaged in similar concerns.
Engaging Youth

1. Establish an elder-based Training, Education and Awareness Program.
   • Explore existing elder/youth programs (culture camps, village schools, rural university campuses, regional programs) and identify opportunities for partnerships with Bering Sea Elders Group.
   • Consider traditional ways that youth learn and possible ways for the Bering Sea Elders Group to support this in our villages.

2. Establish youth participation in the activities of the Bering Sea Elders Group.
   • Work with youth leaders to incorporate Facebook and other social media to energize young people in the Elders Group work.
   • Formalize youth participation in the activities of the Bering Sea Elders Group by selecting at least five youth seats (Kuskokwim, Yukon, Norton Sound, Bering Strait, St. Lawrence Island).

Pursuing Programs that Protect Our Food Security and Way of Life

1. Conclude negotiation and/or North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process on Nunivak Island/Kuskokwim Bay bottom trawl boundary.

2. Convene discussions between Alaska Native organizations to develop a unified approach to defining the terms of a “Northern Bering Sea Reserve,” and develop and pursue a strategy to achieve it.

3. Establish the means of providing perspective of the Elders on three specific priority items related to ensuring food security needs are balanced with economic development: 1) Traditional use areas and the ecosystem, 2) Threats to our salmon culture, and 3) Climate change.
   • The Elders Group will circulate educational information on topics of high region-wide interest (such as ocean conditions, seal sickness, etc.).
   • The Elders perspective on issues may be presented in different ways depending on the circumstances and need. We will focus on documenting short stories or testimonies from the Elders that delivers traditional perspective on these issues.

MID-TERM GOALS (2014)

1. Work with and through tribal governments and organizations to create a “Bering Sea Fishery Management Council” that includes representation of the traditional values and knowledge of the elders. The purpose of this forum would be to coordinate
across our regions in bringing concerns before the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and federal agencies.

2. Promote amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that are necessary to provide for greater protection for our marine resources and ecosystem, and to ensure a greater role for our tribes in fisheries management. This includes establishing tribal representation on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

**LONG-TERM GOALS (2016)**

1. Bring together tribal organizations, CDQ organizations, Native corporations, and regional Native nonprofits to create a “Bering Sea management plan” expressing a common view and guidance on the protection of traditional resources, the ecosystem as a whole, and hunting and fishing opportunity for our people.

2. Achieve collaborations with government resource managers for the practical application of traditional knowledge in real decisions.
   - Work with experts to help us work with government to apply traditional knowledge and account for traditional practices in specific decisions or fisheries management decision-making documents (such as environmental impact statements or development of management alternatives).
   - Pursue collaboration with other organizations or Native institutions that are already working with indigenous peoples of the Russian side of the Bering Sea; identify issues and effective means of sharing common concerns with decision-makers.