



Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Hosts Alaġum Kanuuġ Public Roundtable Discussion

St. Paul, Alaska; January 30, 2023 – The [Aleut Community of St. Paul Island](#) (ACSPI), the federally recognized tribe for St. Paul Island, today hosted a Public Roundtable Discussion of Alaġum Kanuuġ, ACSPI’s marine sanctuary nomination. The Roundtable provided an opportunity to share information, answer questions, and understand Alaskan perspectives on the nomination. Alaġum Kanuuġ is part of ACSPI’s broader Pribilof Islands Marine Ecosystem ([PRIME](#)) Initiative, which is designed to develop the local economy, provide continued fishing opportunities, and ensure the community’s ability to adapt to climate changes.

At the meeting, ACSPI leaders shared information about the sanctuary nomination and designation process, listened to and discussed issues with the roundtable participants, and answered questions about their approach and work. ACSPI had invited all interested communities and parties to participate and share their perspectives during this session, which was held on Zoom from 10am to 12pm Alaska Standard Time (AKST).

Reflecting on the proceedings, Amos Philemonoff, president of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government, commented, “We are pleased to have brought together a large group representing Tribes, government agencies, communities and stakeholders from the Bering Sea and beyond to discuss and answer questions about Alaġum Kanuuġ. Our nomination envisions a designated, co-managed marine area supporting local and regional economic growth and conservation. We seek a meaningful, co-equal governance role in managing the ocean waters around our islands.

“It is time for proactive change for the better. As tribal leaders, and good stewards and good neighbors, we see Alaġum Kanuuġ as an opportunity. In the spirit of partnership, collaboration, and shared prosperity, we will pursue inclusive management policies, including working through the established commercial fishery management system. We will work with fishing industry partners, our local communities, businesses, and state and federal agencies and representatives in advancing our nomination. To that end, we look forward to more open dialogue like we had today, in forums like this one and in one-on-one conversations with all interested parties.”

ACSPI intends to hold future listening sessions and engage in the ongoing process to gather public input. In addition, NOAA will host a roundtable about Alaġum Kanuuġ on April 6, 2023, in connection with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting taking place in Anchorage from April 3-11. NOAA will provide more information about this event in February.

About the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) is the federally recognized tribe for St. Paul Island, giving voice to more than 1,800 enrolled tribal members. The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal

Government is the governmental venue through which the Unangan (or Aleut) of St. Paul Island can fulfill the intrinsic rights and responsibilities and support, recollect, practice, and pass on Unangan culture. The Tribal Government leads efforts to ensure and strengthen political sovereignty, economic self-sufficiency, continued cultural practices, tribal self-determination and self-governance, and the overall health, welfare, and safety of tribal members. To learn more about the ACSPI and the tribe's culture, services, and activities, visit aleut.com.

Background on Alaġum Kanuuġ

In June 2022, Alaġum Kanuuġ (Heart of the Ocean) was accepted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for consideration as a national marine sanctuary. After extensive technical review and interagency consultation, Alaġum Kanuuġ was placed in the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' (ONMS) Inventory of Successful Nominations.

Inclusion in the ONMS inventory is the final step in the national marine sanctuary nomination process prior to a potential designation. Next steps in the process include extensive public participation, including the gathering of input from residents, stakeholders, and others, as well as a full environmental review. Prior to designation consideration, ACSPI will enter into a co-management agreement with the federal government to establish co-equal governance and decision making, an historic first for ocean policy in the United States.

ACSPI nominated Alaġum Kanuuġ in December 2021, recognizing that a more comprehensive economic development strategy was needed because the Pribilof marine ecosystem is experiencing dramatic changes, including alarming declines of fur seals, sea lions, seabirds, fish, crab, and other invertebrates. These changes have resulted in severe consequences for local economies, culture, wildlife, and human and ecosystem health. Coupled with innovative approaches to ecosystem conservation, ACSPI is proposing a new model for tribal co-management and sustainable economic development, including Indigenous-led research, with national implications for Tribal self-determination, justice, and equity.

Visit aleut.com/prime/ and watch [here](#) to learn more about the PRIME Initiative and how to support it.

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