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STATE OF ALASKA

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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State and ANTHC Join to Address Erosion Threat to Communities

(Anchorage, AK) – State agencies are joining with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to plan a comprehensive response to the erosion and flooding that threatens rural Alaska Native communities.

“Building Capacity and Conducting Coastal Risk Assessments in Remote Alaska Native Communities” is a partnership among the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA), the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys (DGGs), and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities (ANTHC CETC).

The project recently received \$1.36 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s National Coastal Resilience Fund, which will support the partners in conducting urgently needed coastal risk assessments for flooding and erosion in 44 remote Alaska Native communities, and assisting with the development of informed local resilience strategies, mitigation solutions, and design of future restoration projects.

A recent Statewide Threat Assessment prepared for the Denali Commission found 144 remote Alaska Native communities are experiencing some degree of infrastructure damage from the environmental threats of erosion, flooding, and permafrost thaw. That report is available at: <https://www.denali.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Statewide-Threat-Assessment-Final-Report-November-2019-1-2.pdf>. Completing site-specific data collection, risk assessments, and planning is critical to informing local decisions about reducing risk from erosion and flooding.

Cooperation among all partners will ensure the work will be innovative, comprehensive, efficient, culturally sensitive, and forward-looking. The project work will cover coastal and Western Alaska Native communities which the Statewide Threat Assessment showed face the greatest risk and are most likely to benefit. The work will include:

- Collecting baseline data to support flood modeling in 20 communities
- Leveraging a [coastal erosion project](#) to map historical erosion rates and project future shorelines on infrastructure in 44 communities
- Developing coastal storm inundation records, risk assessment maps, reports, and an online tool to inform community plans and mitigation solutions for 33 communities
- Conducting storm surge and sea level change modeling at two communities

- Conducting additional storm surge modeling, developing community resilience strategies, identifying near-term project development, and acquiring funding for imminent actions in 14 communities
- Developing and planning for long-term flood and erosion mitigation projects that leverage the project flood and erosion studies, resulting in mitigation strategies and a pipeline of fundable projects

For more information and project updates visit: <https://dggs.alaska.gov/hazards/coastal/coastal-resilience.html> or contact specific agency staff below.

The Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) is an agency housed within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), tasked with promoting strong communities and health economies. For additional information about DCRA, visit <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra>. For information about DCCED and its other agencies, visit <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov>.

The Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) is an agency housed within the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), tasked with efforts to stimulate the economy and protect Alaskan residents. For additional information about DGGS, visit <https://dggs.alaska.gov>. For information about DNR and its other divisions, visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov>.

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