

Archaeological Discoveries at the Tuktu-Naiyuk Site, 2004

Introduction

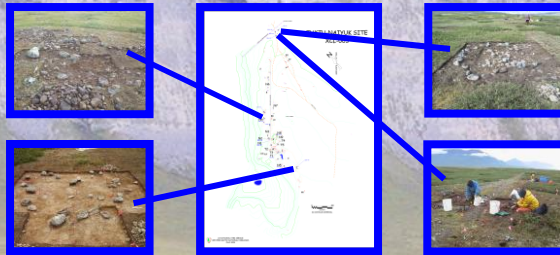
The Tuktu-Naiyuk site was discovered and excavated in 1959 by Jack Campbell. The National Park Service, along with university students and high school students from Anaktuvuk Pass revisited the site during the summer of 2004. The purpose of the 2004 investigations was to identify artifact clusters and associated hearths to help reconstruct the middle Holocene cultural history of the Brooks Range (4000-8000 years BP).



Campbell visiting the site in 2004.

Sites

Four main areas at the Tuktu-Naiyuk site were excavated during the summer of 2004. L-2 was an Arctic Small Tool tradition-age tent ring (4000-2000 years old) with small points made on microblades. Uyagaluk was a scatter of flakes and tools and was characterized by the resharpening of notched and lanceolate-shaped points. At the Napaagtualuit tent ring, we discovered black chert notched points. Finally, in two other scatters at Napaagtualuit, prehistoric people were making notched points out of obsidian and quartz crystal.



Artifacts

Stone and bone remains of tools and meals left by people over thousands of years were discovered at the Tuktu-Naiyuk site this summer. The most common artifacts were notched spear or dart tips made from obsidian, quartz crystal, and chert. Other artifacts from the site include scraping and chopping tools, knives, and bone fragments. The artifacts indicate activities such as hunting, butchering, skin working and repairing tools.



Methods

Students involved in the Tuktu-Naiyuk excavations were taught how to recognize prehistoric artifacts, make maps, excavate, and record notes. Surveys identified over fifty different artifact clusters. Test excavations and detailed mapping were conducted at eight of these clusters. Excavations occurred in one meter squares. Precise locations were recorded for tools, while flakes and bones were bagged by quarter squares. Sediments were screened through 1/8 inch mesh in order to find small artifacts. The artifacts are currently being studied in Fairbanks.



Dating

Charcoal samples were taken from hearth features in order to radiocarbon date artifact assemblages. Dates that have been analyzed thus far suggest that people have used this site for several millennia. Ages listed here are in radiocarbon years before present.

- 2120±40 - L-2 Tent ring
- 8240±50 - Napaagtualuit obsidian point area
- 5070±40 - Napaagtualuit quartz point area
- 1750±40 - Uyagaluk



Participants

Members of the crew included: National Park Service archaeologists Bob Gal, Steve Klingler, Jeff Rasic, Chris Young, Becky Saleeby, Susan Bender and Terrence Booshu; Anaktuvuk Pass students Billy Ahgook, Diane Sikvayugak, Aminilla Hugo, and Brandon Rummer; Noatak Village students Millie Booth, Masaak Penn, and Deron Smith; and University students from Brown (Julie Esdale), University of Alaska Fairbanks (Jay Flaming, Jennie Flaming, and Andy Tremayne), and University of Alaska Anchorage (Natascha Slobodina, Aaron Wilson, Cindy Williams, and Christina Jensen). Special thanks to Mr. Hart's science classes at the Nunamiut School for help with preparation of this poster.

