



## Qupałuk Flyway Network Site Outreach to Alaska Native People

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Introduction to the Case Study

During summer 2016, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented the EAAFP Flyway Network Site (FNS) concept at five different events around the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, four of which were all or primarily attended by representatives of Alaska Native communities. The aim was to solicit input, increase understanding, and gain support for the nomination of an FNS. The feedback received was useful in determining if and how to proceed with the proposed FNS.

What was done and when and where did you do it?

We would not have proceeded with the nomination of a FNS without the general support from the local communities, which are primarily Alaska native. Through five outreach events, we communicated the data supporting the high value of the habitat in the general area, shared info on EAAFP and the FNS system, asked for input on where the best location for a FNS would be, emphasized the maintenance of traditional use of the site and the wildlife, and discussed the benefits of holistic management of migratory birds. We were sure to give people time to ask questions, share experiences, and time to think about what was presented and follow up with us.



**Aerial photo of the Qupałuk Flyway Network Site with the site boundary and previous dunlin survey data.**



**Field surveys in Qupałuk Flyway Network Site, June 2018**  
*Photo: Martin Robards, WCS*

If relevant, identify your main target group for your activity

Local Alaska Native people and organizations and other local residents and user groups. (Note that “local” is a relative term in this situation, since there are no villages within 50 miles of the site.)

What was the result of the action?

A vote was taken by the BLM-convened Subsistence Advisory Panel, with seven representatives voting in favour of proceeding with the FNS nomination and one voting against. Between this vote and the general positive feedback from other outreach events, we felt comfortable the FNS was generally supported and that we would proceed to submit the nomination to EAAFP. The name we chose for the site, Qupałuk (“*coo-pa-luke*”), is the Iñupiat word for small shorebird. The acceptance of the FNS into the EAAFP system has opened channels of communication between managers and biologists in Alaska and other along the flyway. The site is now attracting more bird monitoring attention, with a proposal

to establish a long-term field camp. Monitoring information is being shared with local communities.



**BLM Subsistence Advisory Panel.** Photo: BLM

What was the key to success?	Listening, allowing time for dialogue, and being realistic and honest.
What was your biggest challenge in achieving success?	Diversity in opinions, historical distrust of the federal government, and misconceptions on what a FNS would mean to an area.
If the result was not completely successful, what went wrong?	The project was successful because we got overwhelming support in the end for the site nomination. The support was not unanimous, but you shouldn't expect unanimous support due to diversity in people and opinions.
If relevant, identify your key sponsors/partners for your activity	US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geologic Survey, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, BLM Subsistence Advisory Panel.
How is the Case Study useful for other Partners?	This case study can be used by others as an example on how to do outreach to local native communities for an EAAFP FNS.
Useful links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Qupaluk Site Information Sheet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bureau of Land Management, Alaska</a></li> </ul>
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Lessons Learned: 1 – Native people, like any other group, have a wide variety of priorities and values and cannot necessarily be lumped into one group with one perspective. 2 – Historical events may color perspectives for current interactions, and may have nothing to do with you or your proposal. 3 – You must be prepared to listen more than you talk. 4 – You need to give people adequate time to consider a proposal, discuss it with others, and come back with more questions before you can move forward. Don't expect to show up, introduce something new, and get immediate support. 5 – When you request input, you must be prepared to take the input and use it as much as possible or risk not getting input or support the next time. 6 – You must be prepared to offer thoughts on why this matters to them, and the reasons may be different from why it matters to you or to the conservation community. Conversely, you need to understand the full ramifications of your proposal and be sure that their stated concerns (restrictions on hunting) will not be affected. 7 – You need to be prepared to share information on the topic quickly and in a conversational manner with people when opportunities arise