

# Our Coast, Our Stories: Protecting Our Home in a Changing Climate

**A workshop series on coastal  
erosion and community action**

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# Background



Point Hope and Kivalina, Alaska, are experiencing **coastal erosion** due to rising sea levels and climate change.



Growing up, I knew that my hometown, Point Hope, had relocated to its current site in the 1970s. However, I did not know the impacts of this on my people.

I want to **educate youth** and spread awareness about the harm coastal erosion does to villages and the Iñupiaq culture. I want them to know that **their voices matter** when it comes to environmental stewardship and climate action.





# Methodology

## **Interviews with community members**

First, I developed interview questions with slight differences between the two villages. Since Point Hope has already relocated, there are questions about the old town site specifically. Kivalina is currently in the relocation process, so I included questions relating to challenges the community faces in relocation. I asked all individuals questions on how their hometowns deal with coastal erosion, and if coastal erosion has always been an issue for the villages.

## **Developing workshops**

The workshops that I have created are directed toward middle school students. The first workshop is an introduction to coastal erosion and how our lands protect us. The second highlights what elders and community members say based on the interviews I have conducted. The last is a workshop on environmental stewardship and action, with letter writing to students' elected representatives.

# Key Outcomes

My workshops highlight the pressing issue of coastal erosion and the negative impacts on the Alaskan Native villages of Kivalina and Point Hope, Alaska. The goal is to strengthen Indigenous youth awareness and advocacy for issues facing their communities.

## Results

While it was too busy in both communities for me to present, the workshops are complete and ready to present. In total, 6 community members, 3 from each, were interviewed.

## Relevance of the Study

Understanding coastal erosion and its impact on Iñupiaq culture is largely overlooked. Hearing from traditional knowledge holders ensures our ways of life continue on.

## Next Steps

Contact schools in the North Slope Borough School District to present the workshops during their summer programs and summer camps.





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