

Walakpa Archaeological Salvage Project (WASP) 2016



Hunter College archaeology M.A. students Barry Gordon and Erina Perez

Walakpa, Alaska



The Arctic Coastline of Alaska is experiencing some of the most rapid and severe impacts of climate change in the nation. The rich archaeological heritage of the Inupiat people at Barrow is being destroyed by marine erosion of their ancestral village at Walakpa.

Slumping stratified archaeological deposits including over 3000 years of well-preserved structures and features collapsing into the sea at the **Walakpa** site N Alaska. Over 11 m of rich stratified deposits on a several hundred meter front were lost in a single storm.
(Photo Anne Jensen)



Read the *Hakai Magazine's* - History Is Melting article.



Walakpa Archaeological Salvage Project (WASP) 2016

In the summer of 2016 an international rescue response was mounted, led by Anne Jensen (Barrow archaeologist) with the support of the Society for American Archaeology's *Climate Change Impacts and Archaeological Resources Committee* (T.H.McGovern chair)



The fieldwork was carried out with a volunteer crew of 27, made up of professional archaeologists, graduate students, advanced undergraduates, and local interns with Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation (UIC) Science. They came from as far away as France, and as close as Barrow. HUNTER COLLEGE Anthropology MA Students Erina Perez and Barry Gordon were among the volunteers.

Crew

- 27 members—field & lab
- 16 students
- 3 interns
- 9 institutions
- 2 continents
- Mostly volunteers, short and long term

Field Season

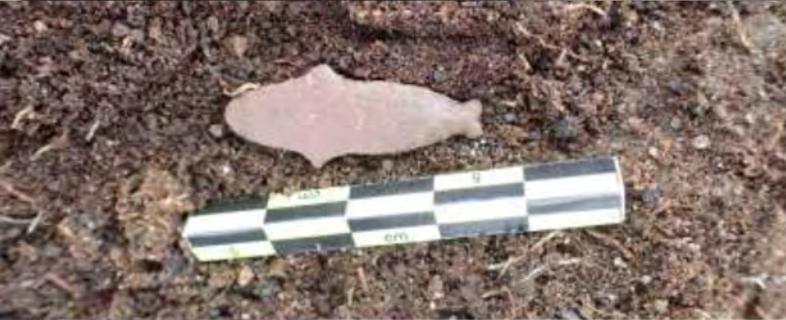
- 3 weeks camping
- Below freezing many nights

Support

- UIC (Barrow Alaska Native corporation)
—logistics & fund
- Local Iñupiat community—site monitoring,
eroded artifact
- Retrieval and in-kind
- Volunteers—time, gear, travel
- Home institutions—gear & travel
- NSF—Support for Erina and Barry's
travel to Alaska



2016/07/17



WASP 2016

- Excavated 33.7m³
- Recorded 46m of profiles
- Recovered:
 - 181 artifacts
 - 451 faunal samples
 - 113 bulk samples
 - 115 flotation samples
 - 10 ceramic samples
 - 19 C14 samples
 - 11 OSL samples
 - 1 house tunnel
 - an entire mummified ring seal nicknamed Patou

UIC Alaska

Ice and Time.Net

Polar Field - Anne Jensen

Walakpa Archaeological
Salvage Project (WASP) 2016

Entire mummified ring seal
nicknamed Patou (right).



Figure 8: Mummified ring seal "Patou" in a meat cache.



Erosion at Walakpa, facing north with the Chukchi Sea to the west.



Erosion front and fallen block



Anne Jensen leads a site tour at the slump crevice.



Fighting the wind to shoot in a house feature in the northern area of the crevice.



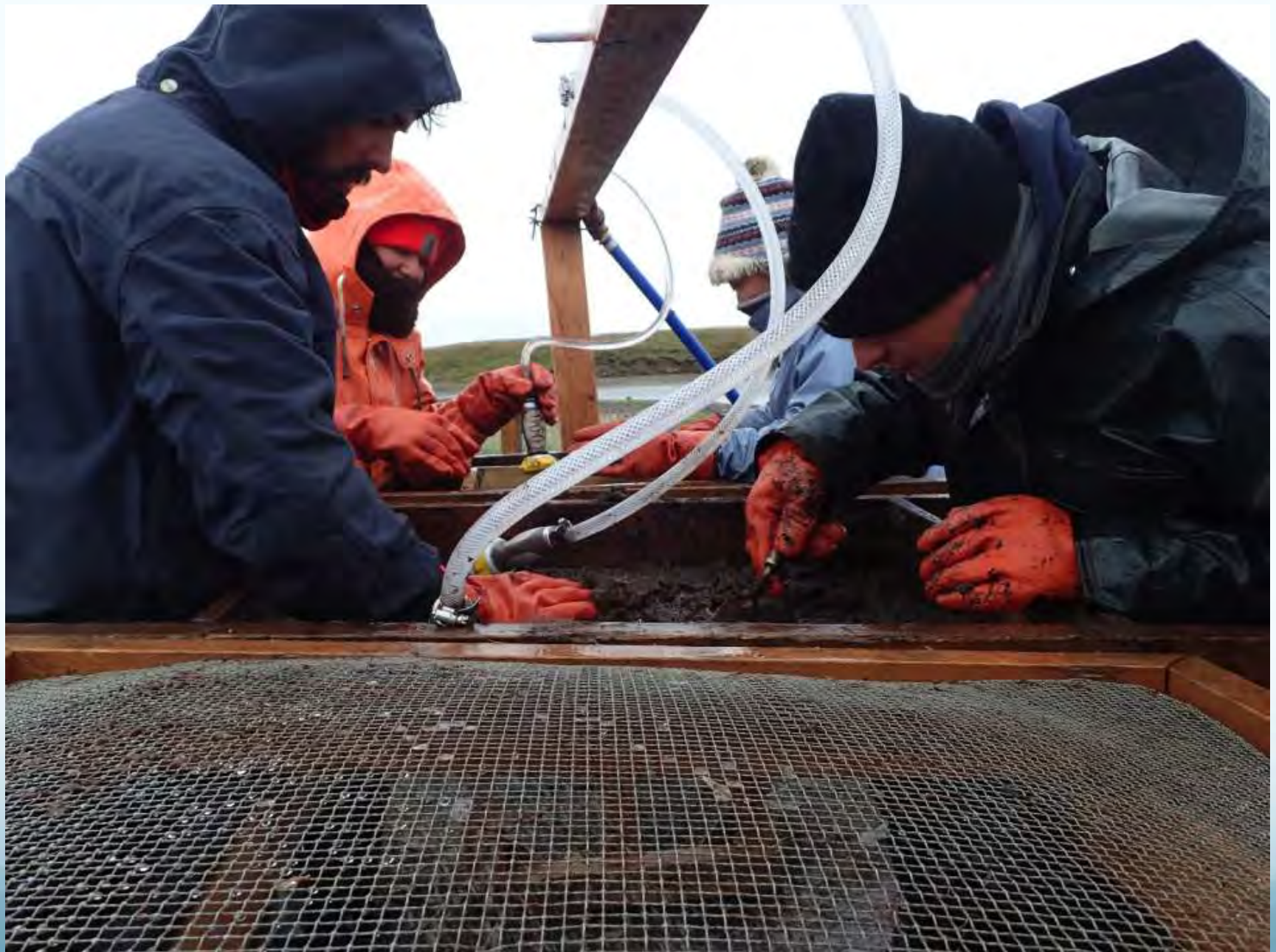
Excavating Area BE with Laurine, Camille, Barry, Glenys, Ashley, Caelie, Jessie, and Dave



Wooden house, timbers and frozen ringed seal carcass.



Area C Erosion face and step trench with preserved Inupiat house timbers



Barry and Erina recovering small finds from a wet sieve (and yes it was cold).



Area C worked walrus tusk with cut marks



Area C whale effigy made of red chert

Prehistoric harpoon point with stone side blade still inset.





Area C erosion face - wood and baleen frame
in situ

Area C erosion face - proximal arrow shaft with fletching



View from the site of camp tents, kitchen, lab, and mess tents facing the lagoon and the sea.



Ice coming in on the Chukchi Sea



**Good friends and a
great adventure!**

Thank you

