nuiqsut heritage

a cultural plan

Prepared for the Village of Nuiqsut and the North Slope Borough Planning Commission and Commission on History and Culture, February 1979.

The village of Nuiqsut overlooks the west channel of the Colville River near the head of its delta, some 25 miles from the Arctic Ocean. The villagers chose to live where the great river links land and sea because it is a place rich in animals to hunt and fish.

The Eskimo people of Nuiqsut call themselves Inupiat, the Real People of the Arctic. Numbering about 150 persons, their way of life combines hunting, fishing, and trapping with some wage employment and the benefits of permanent village location. They strive for balance between old and new, between tradition and innovation.

Continued abundance of land and sea animals and the people's access to them are the essentials of village life. Until about a century ago, natural dynamics determined the health of arctic environments. If climate changed, some animals moved out, others moved in. Each natural cycle produced its own adjustments and compensations, and the Inupiat through thousands of years learned to roll with the cycles and take advantage of the compensations. Nor were places to hunt and fish blocked off. The land was large and open, and small groups of Inupiat—each one occupying a large territory—moved from harvest area to harvest area as season or cycle dictated.

Today, both the health of arctic environments and the people's access to them are in jeopardy. More than a century of accelerating change—ushered in by American whalemen, carried on by the current rush for oil and gas—has shaken the natural and social systems of the Far North. Changing patterns of land use and ownership could fragment the open-range commons of an earlier day.

Rapid change continues, and the forces of change converge at Nuiqsut. Governments and private interests plan many ventures in the Nuiqsut area. Whether benevolent, exploitative, or combinations of the two, these ventures will add to the dynamics of change affecting the cultural landscape valued and used by the Nuiqsut heritage community. It is timely, therefore, that a cultural plan be integrated at both planning and political levels to help the Nuiqsut people protect their traditional land-use area and perpetuate their subsistence way of life.

On April 13, 1973 a small caravan began a historic 150-mile trek from Barrow to the Colville River. This was the first wave of a 27-family migration that would formally reoccupy the homeland of the Kukpikmiut, the People of the lower Colville River. The 14 adults and children of this first group of pioneers comprised a cross section of modern Eskimo life: elders who had never really left the homeland, young adults who wanted to return, and children who had lived all their lives in Barrow and had experienced only interludes of life on the land at family hunting and fishing camps.

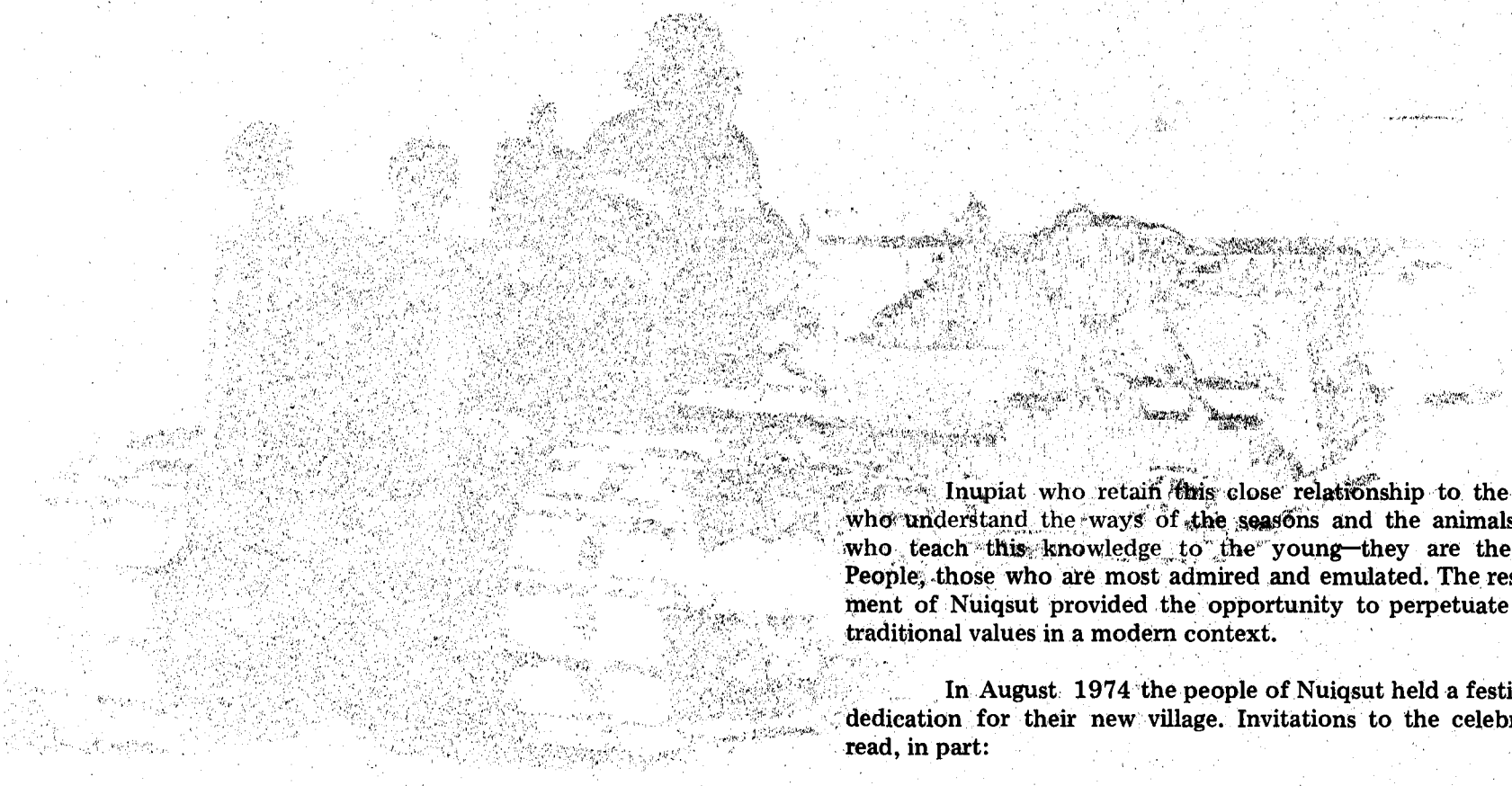
They would retain the village name Nuiqsut, for it recalled earlier camps and settlements on the main channel of the Colville. Until the late 1940's, the lower Colville River and nearby coastal areas supported many families. Then the Bureau of Indian Affairs required that children attend school forcing most families to relocate to Barrow.

Many events and motivations made the move back to Nuiqsut possible. Some families had a history of continuous use of the lower Colville for hunting, fishing, trapping, and trading. A number of them lived there permanently. This heritage qualified them for selection of village lands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA). The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (the Native regional corporation created by ANCSA) offered to build a school and houses for the resettled village.

These practical encouragements fueled deeper fires. They turned the frustrations of living in Barrow into a desire to return to a life in which hunting and fishing would be mainstays, not sidelines. This revival of traditional values allied older people who wanted to return to their homeland and younger people who wanted to experience Inupiat social and cultural life for themselves and their children.

In this context the word "traditional" confuses some people. The settlers of modern Nuiqsut had no idea of returning to some ancient time of stone and bone tools. Too many changes have occurred since Europeans first came to their land to allow this, even were it desired. Schooling, health services, economic necessities, and a host of other imposed or adopted patterns of permanent village life have replaced the old times of nomadism and skin tents. Despite all of this, core traditional values persist: the old history is still true, the land is still primary and sacred in the Inupiat world view, names and songs still identify the land. Home is still the ancestral homeland.

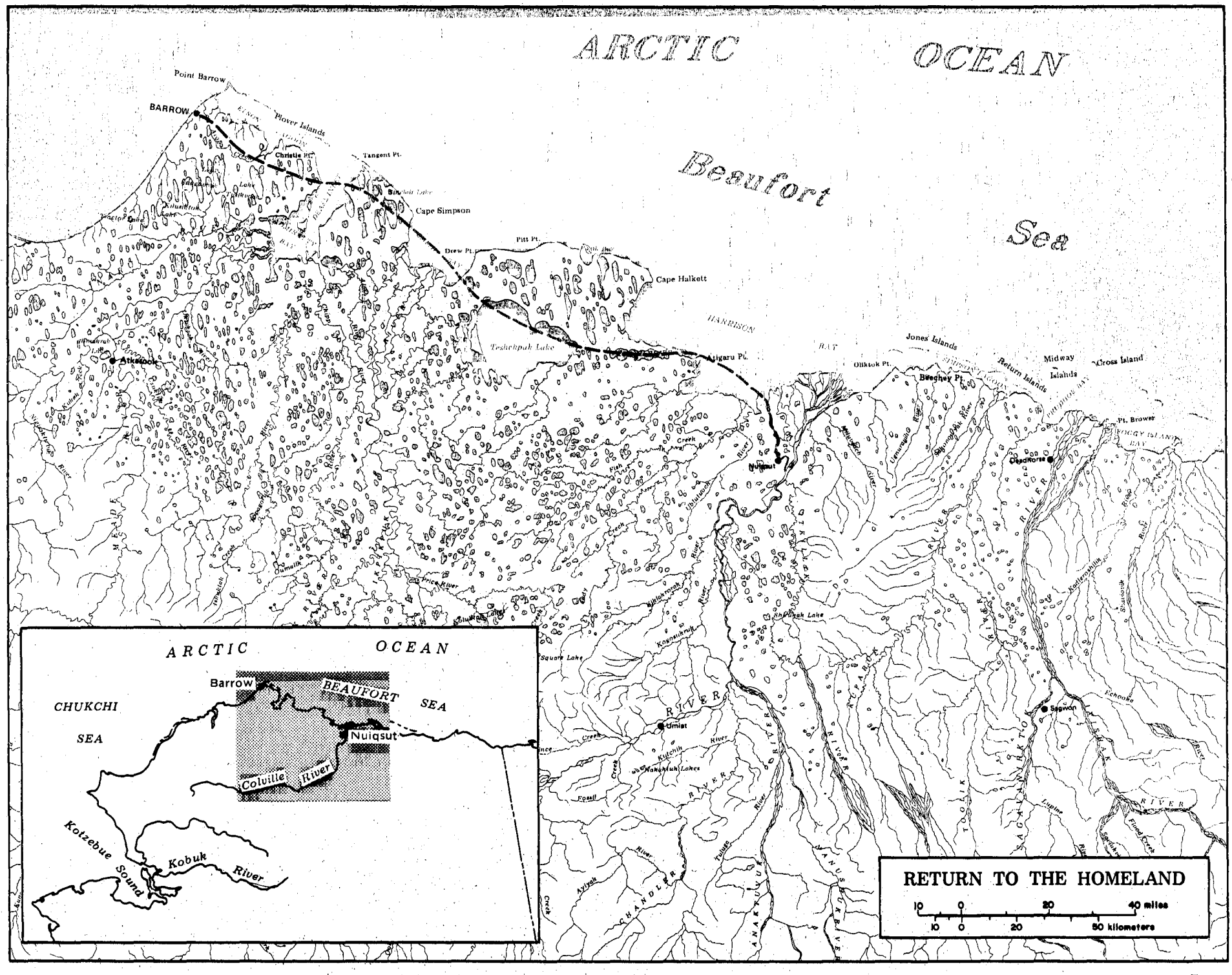
Leading the way was a small Cat pulling two freight sleds. Following in the trail broken by the Cat came three snow machines pulling smaller sleds piled high with personal and camp gear.



Inupiat who retain this close relationship to the land, who understand the ways of the seasons and the animals, and who teach this knowledge to the young—they are the Real People, those who are most admired and emulated. The resettlement of Nuiqsut provided the opportunity to perpetuate these traditional values in a modern context.

In August 1974 the people of Nuiqsut held a festival of dedication for their new village. Invitations to the celebration read, in part:

> If you are familiar with the ancient and recent history of the Alaskan Arctic, you already know the great significance of the re-establishment and success of the Nuiqsut village. It is a remarkable and practical tribute to the concept of self-development and independent enterprise.


ARCTIC OCEAN
Beaufort Sea
Point Barrow
BARROW
Plover Islands
Christie Pt.
Tangent Pt.
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
HARRISON BAY
Teshekpuk Lake
Atigaru Pt.
Olktok Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Atqasuk
Nuiqsut
Deadhorse
Umiat
Sagwon
Square Lake
Price River
Kuparuk River
Sagavanirktok River
Echooka
Lupine
Flood Creek
Kotzebue Sound
Kobuk River
Colville River
CHUKCHI SEA
BEAUFORT SEA
RETURN TO THE HOMELAND
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 50 kilometers

A friend of the Eskimo summarized the ties between homeland and culture:

> In the course of many years of moving up and down the river, from campsite to campsite, from one fishing place to another, the countryside . . . had become to its inhabitants as grooved with association as a familiar face.

This familiarity with the land, living in the world "as a member rather than as an alien," resulted from a life of complete dependence on the near environment, its weather, and its living resources. Consider the binding nature of Inupiat dependence on homeland resources only a few generations ago. Except for limited trade with other Native groups, locally harvested foods and materials provided all nourishment, clothes, tools, and shelter. Recovery from natural disaster or human miscalculation rested solely with the Inupiat, using the succor at hand. The Arctic constantly tested the Inupiat, whose experience, knowledge, and ingenuity—passed down from generation to generation—allowed the people to flourish in good times and survive the bad.

Horace Ahsogeak was 76 years old when he described traveling with his parents and grandparents:

> [They] . . . stayed at Niglik . . . waiting for the summer trading. They acquired whale oil, seal oil, and ugeruk before heading up inland during the last part of August. Some people headed for the mouth of the Anaktuvuk River, some for the mouth of the Killik River to hunt caribou. They walked up inland. When they got caribou before freezeup, they hung them on willows away from the foxes. After freezeup, they went to get them—good eating. Then they went up to the mountains, sometimes before November. When they got there, the sheep were fat and they were able to hook lots of fish at Killik River; sometimes they used fish spears. They were hunting all they could before December, January, and February (the cold months) for wolf, wolverine, and sheep.

The rigors of a world of unforgiving extremes encouraged development of both material and social techniques for survival. The Inupiat "tool kit" included special hunting devices and skills, ingenious food storage methods, dietary adaptability, and mobility to go where the animals and fish could be found. Their culture promoted strong kinship ties, cooperative efforts, and patterns of sharing. Spiritual beliefs linked the Inupiat to the life-giving land. Though somewhat modified today, these traits persist and continue to shape the history of northern Alaska.

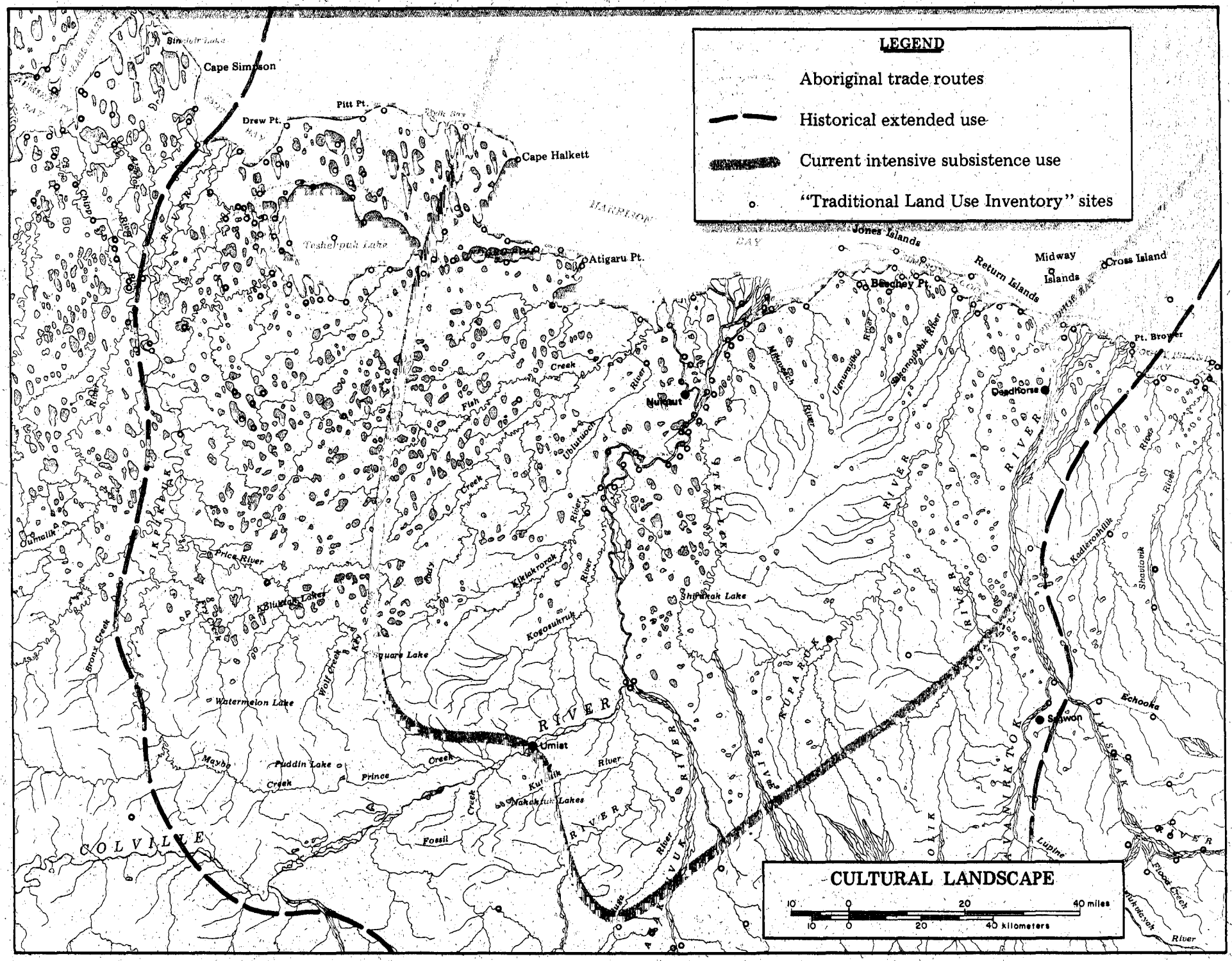
Since the onset of arctic commercial whaling in the 1850's, the Inupiat have sustained a series of incursions from the outside world. Effects have been mixed. The rifle and the snow machine were easily adopted into Inupiat life, but imported disease and liquor devastated the people. Their resource base suffered direct attacks or modifications from commercial exploiters and traders, and their way of life was challenged by missionaries and government agents. The recent period of land and development legislation, technological invasion, and wildlife scarcity has had enormous impact on both the people and their homeland.

Through all this the direct homeland relationship has endured as the vital center of Inupiat culture and consciousness. Within this geographic base the people constantly renew the lifeblood of their culture. The people who live here, who hunt and fish and trap here, know this landscape throughout. There are no nameless valleys here, no places vacant of memory and association. This is no frontier to be conquered. It is home.

The Inupiat have demonstrated continuing ability to adjust and adapt to change. Through economic, technological, and social innovation they have expanded their tool kit to survive the onslaught. Major new tools include the political and administrative processes that are now determining the destiny of northern Alaska. The people of Nuiqsut view this cultural plan as an instrument to help them protect their homeland.

Bessie Ericklook, an elder of the Colville delta region, describes the trading post at Kayuktisiluk (about 40 miles up the river) operated by Wilber Itchuagaq during the 1930's:

> It was quite a while after Itchuagaqs moved here from the east that the store was built . . . It was there that we'd meet for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and we'd hold games there til New Years . . . People living around here used that store by trapping and trading. They didn't use money to buy things from it. When we were growing up we didn't know money. Fox and squirrel furs were our money. We had never seen any money, not even a penny. We finally saw real money in 1950. It was an awesome thing to see. This was when the cat trains for the contractors started coming through.


LEGEND
Aboriginal trade routes
Historical extended use
Current intensive subsistence use
"Traditional Land Use Inventory" sites
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Teshekpuk Lake
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Sagwon
Echooka
Shaviovik
Kadleroshilik
Kogosukruk
Kikiakrorak
Shipirak Lake
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Puddin Lake
Nakechtuk Lakes
Bluffy Lake
Price River
Fish Creek
Ublutuoch
Mikkelsen Bay
Lupine
Flood Creek
COLVILLE
RIVER

Freida Elavgak, born at Nuvuk (Barrow) in 1902, describes one of the last trade fairs to be held at Niglik at the mouth of the Colville River. She attended this trade fair when still a young girl:

> Right after the nalukataq (whaling) festival, people from Nuvuk start getting ready to go to Niglik for the trade fair. I traveled with my parents, Aquvaaq and Kinnaluqan, along with my brother, William Leavitt, Sr., and his wife Clara. We always traveled with other families and stick together no matter what the problems may be . . . The main thing that people traded with was seal pokes filled with muktuk, blubber, and whale meat, all put in separate pokes. They also had fox skins of different varieties to trade with and dried caribou skins that are used for beddings. The things that they traded for with them was cloth, shells for rifles, canned goods, tobacco, flour, sugar, tea, coffee, all the necessary things that we might need during the winter.
>
> Before reaching Niglik you can start hearing the Eskimo drums beating and it is such a joy to hear their beat, knowing that you are expected and are welcomed by the people . . . After the big Eskimo dance they start the trading . . . After all the trading at Niglik people continue on to Tigvagiak to trade but they do not hold any dancing or anything, they just trade there at Tigvagiak or Saviugvik. From there we continue on to the place where Itkillikmiut stay; there we finish with all our goods that are traded for white man's food. All of this occurs during the summer time when we are able to travel by boat and we travel along the coast stopping at various places to sleep and rest.

The Nuiqsut cultural landscape is the territory established by ancestors and passed on by today's families to those of tomorrow. It is a complicated geography that can be shown on a map only if the boundary is a shifting horizon. It is a composite of places and events that people have directly experienced or heard about in songs and stories passed down through generations. Here, in this landscape—recalled in memory culture—is the history, the knowledge, the spirit of thousands of years of Inupiat experience.

What museums, libraries, and sanctuaries are to some societies, the cultural landscape of Nuiqsut is to its people. But there is more here than memory and sacred association. It is the place of instruction and education for the youths who will inherit it. It is the range of the wild resources that sustain the people, who, by taking these resources, replenish both body and spirit. Only in such terms can the meanings of this landscape be conveyed by the people of Nuiqsut.

The Colville Delta has long been favored for settlement because it is near the marine resources of the Beaufort Sea and gives access to interior hunting, fishing, and trapping locations. Intersecting riverine and coastal travel routes made Niglik, at the mouth of the Colville River, the most important trading center on the northern Alaska coast.

The arctic coastal plain stretches from the foothills of the Brooks Range to the northern coast. From the air the terrain looks flat, but on the ground it is an undulating landscape with many small relief features—banks, bluffs, meadows, and draws. It is dotted with innumerable swamps, ponds, and lakes. There are active dune deposits. Frost cracks and polygonal ground are common features. Here and there, frost-heave hills (pingos) rise above the generally marshy terrain. Three major channels of the Colville (Nuiqsut being on the westernmost Nigeluk or Nechelik Channel) and dozens of distributary streams form a maze of waterways throughout the delta. Many abandoned river channels and benches are now fully vegetated with grasses, sedges, and willows typical of the wet tundra environment.

Along the coast, shallow embayments meet salt marshes, thaw lakes, and rivers in a rich estuarine environment. Capes, spits, and barrier islands project into the sea, both creating and being created by the currents that sweep these shores. The coastal margins combine with winds and deep ocean currents to form a dynamic sea-ice system, which includes the open-water leads used by migrating sea mammals.

Inland from the delta, the slowly rising plain is rimmed first by finely sculptured foothills, then by the ice-chiseled peaks of the Brooks Range. These east-west-trending highlands and mountains are crossed by broad, river-carved valleys and passes, traversed by arctic dwellers for thousands of years.

It is a country of great variety—enhanced by dramatic seasonal opposites of light and darkness, warmth and cold, frantic growth and ice-sealed dormancy. Fitting into these land-, sea-, and icescapes is a wide variety of mammals, fish, and birds. Taken together, these animals were historically and remain today the staple food resources of the Nuiqsut people.

Inupiat culture is a human manifestation of the land and sea that sustain it. The places that were important long ago continue to be important today, and in these places essentially the same things continue to happen. History and living experience come together at the hunting and fishing camps. Though tools and methods change, caribou tastes the same.

This continuity means that the cultural resources of the Inupiat people are both old and new, both sacred and useful. No one from Nuiqsut would stop fishing because ancient relics were found at the fish camp. An ancient net weight would confirm that the old people once fished here, too. And, if it were needed, the weight might be used again by today's fisherman.

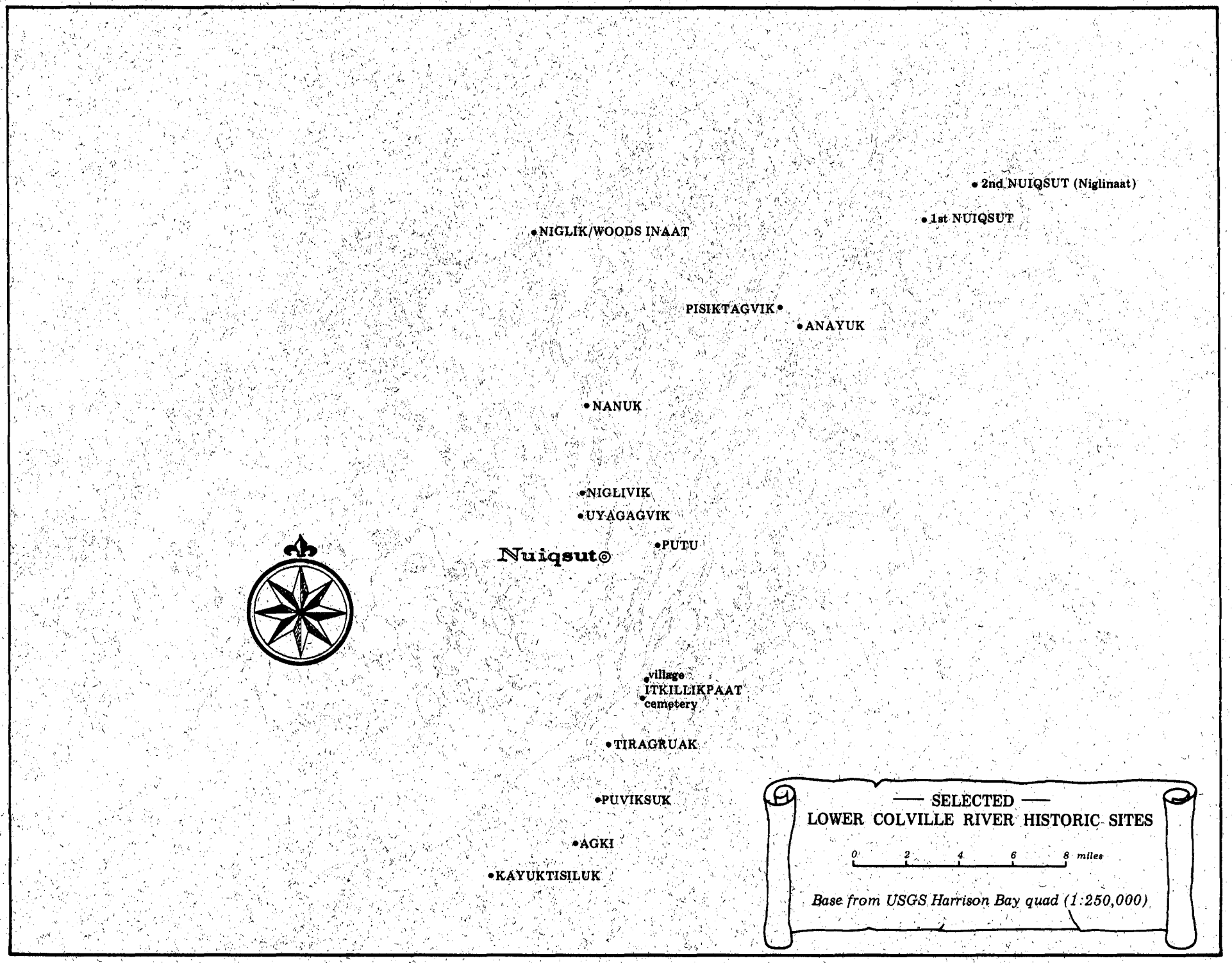
More than a hundred major sites are listed on the Nuiqsut Traditional Land Use Inventory, which documents places of historical and current importance to the people of Nuiqsut. These sites stretch along the coast and follow major drainages far inland.

In the summer of 1977, to further document historical and current values of Nuiqsut-vicinity sites, an archeologist and an ethnohistorian visited selected sites under guidance from village elders and officials. Previous archeological work at Jones and Thetis Island sites, northeast of the Colville's mouth, had produced remains and artifacts estimated to date back 500 years. Most of the sites visited in the 1977 season are of the recent historic past, dating from the turn of this century. Some sites are unquestionably older and have prehistoric components. Evidence from other sites in the region indicates ancient occupation.

The 14 sites selected for the 1977 work are representative and help outline the area's history. The overriding theme of this history is the evolution of Kukpikmiut society from the time before European contact through subsequent periods of exploration; commercial whaling, trading, and trapping; reindeer herding; and post-World War II military construction. Significantly, though material things changed as the newcomers brought in new tools and utensils, the basic patterns and rhythms of Inupiat life show remarkable continuity. Site use continued to be determined primarily by the availability of wild resources.

The recent resettlement of Nuiqsut affirms the persistence and continuity of Inupiat culture in general and Kukpikmiut society in particular. Despite sweeping changes brought by Euro-Americans, the northern Alaska Eskimo keeps returning to old places to revive old ways. In a sense, the people have come full circle, using new technology and social organization to revitalize old values.

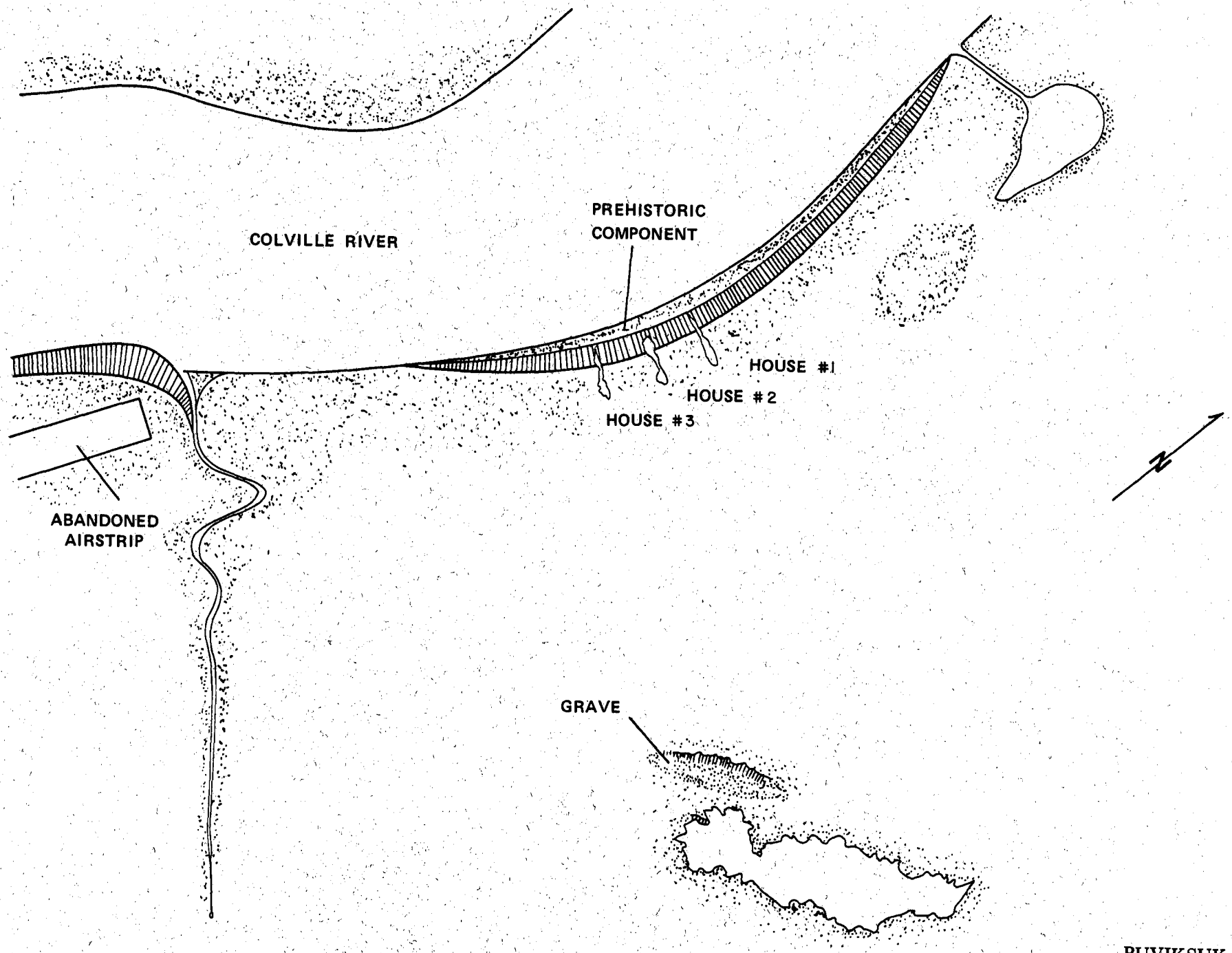
These 14 sites, and the many others not visited, are artifacts of the period of change. They represent more than physical remains. For current users they provide spiritual links to a past that is ongoing and alive in more than memory. Three of these sites are described in some detail to illustrate their many values, tangible and intangible.


2nd NUIQSUT (Niglinaat)
1st NUIQSUT
NIGLIK/WOODS INAAT
PISIKTAGVIK
ANAYUK
NANUK
NIGLIVIK
UYAGAGVIK
PUTU
Nuiqsut
village
ITKILLIKPAAT
cemetery
TIRAGRUAK
PUVIKSUK
AGKI
KAYUKTISILUK
SELECTED
LOWER COLVILLE RIVER HISTORIC SITES
0 2 4 6 8 miles
Base from USGS Harrison Bay quad (1:250,000)

The site possessing the greatest time depth is Puviksuk, first mentioned in the mythology of the Nunamiut, the Inland People. The time is Itchaq Imma, the dawn of oral history, a time of fact and fancy, without division, not even by generations. It is the time of the Nunamiut creation. Aiyagomahala, the man giant who created the Nunamiut and taught them how to live, told the Nunamiut to hunt and collect animal skins and he would soon call another people to come together with them to trade. After freezeup he set out for what is now called Point Barrow, and while he walked on his journey, he said to himself, "I think I should build a snow house so that people will remember me from generation to generation." About 5 miles above the confluence of the Itkillik and Colville Rivers, Aiyagomahala built a snow house in the evening of his first day of walking. He stayed overnight there because he wanted to be rememberd. Aiyagomahala told his people that his snow house turned into a small knoll with a hollow on top where he had left his pack.

Today the knoll is called Puviksuk by the Nunamiut. This collapsed pingo also contains the grave of a woman who was believed to possess the supernatural power to shift from human to animal form.

Other aspects of the site are the remains of at least three semisubterranean houses and a lithic tool component which is eroding out of an embankment, exposing many stone and bone implements on the beach front. Although the remains are not firmly dated, they are believed to be of late prehistoric vintage. The site is still used as a hunting camp.

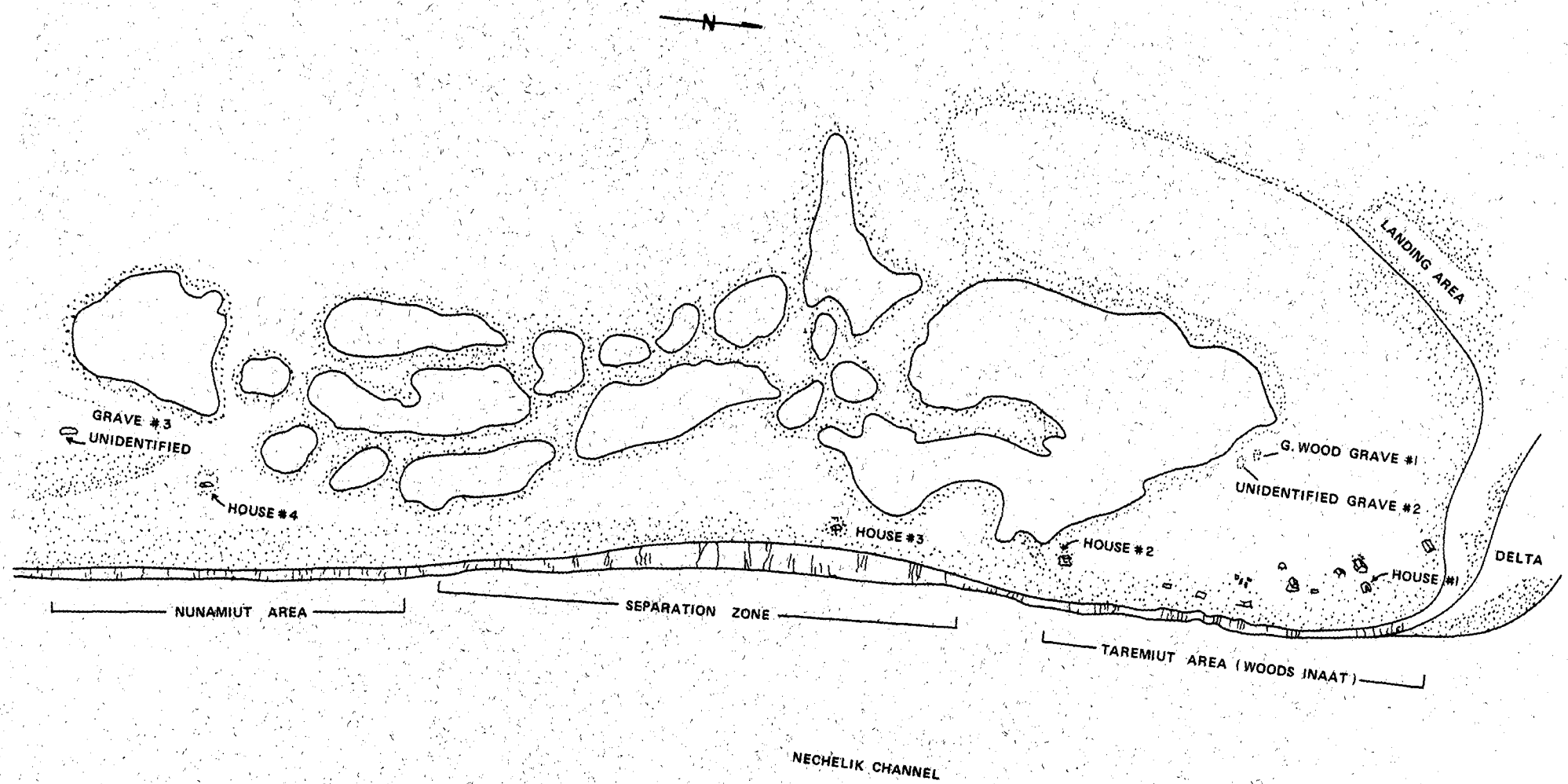

COLVILLE RIVER
PREHISTORIC
COMPONENT
HOUSE #1
HOUSE #2
HOUSE #3
ABANDONED
AIRSTRIP
GRAVE
N

PUVIKSUK

From prehistoric times until the beginning of this century, the site of Niglik, or Nerlik, provided a vital link in the trade and commerce network of the northern Alaska Eskimo. The trade fairs that took place here for several days each June brought together, on neutral ground, inland and coastal people. Siberian goods, brought overland from the Sisualik trading site near present Kotzebue, continued their way into the Canadian Arctic from Niglik. Even after the arrival of commercial traders, the Niglik trade fairs continued, incorporating modern trade goods with traditional ones until the early decades of this century, when for a variety of reasons the old trade networks collapsed.

The old Niglik trading site occupies three distinct areas along the river bluff and beach front: the Taremiut (Coastal People) area, the Nunamiut (Inland People) area, and an unoccupied separation zone between them. The Nunamiut camp area contains large quantities of bone and stone artifacts, eroding out of the river-cut face of the bluff. The site possesses great scientific value, for here arctic material culture can be traced from prehistoric to historic times, then compared to the current material culture and subsistence activities of Woods Camp.

Since the late 1940's, Niglik has hosted Woods Inaat (Camp), site of the Woods family residence and one of the most important fish camps on the lower Colville River. The area also serves Nuiqsut people as a hunting and camping locality and as a base for ice fishing and winter trapping.

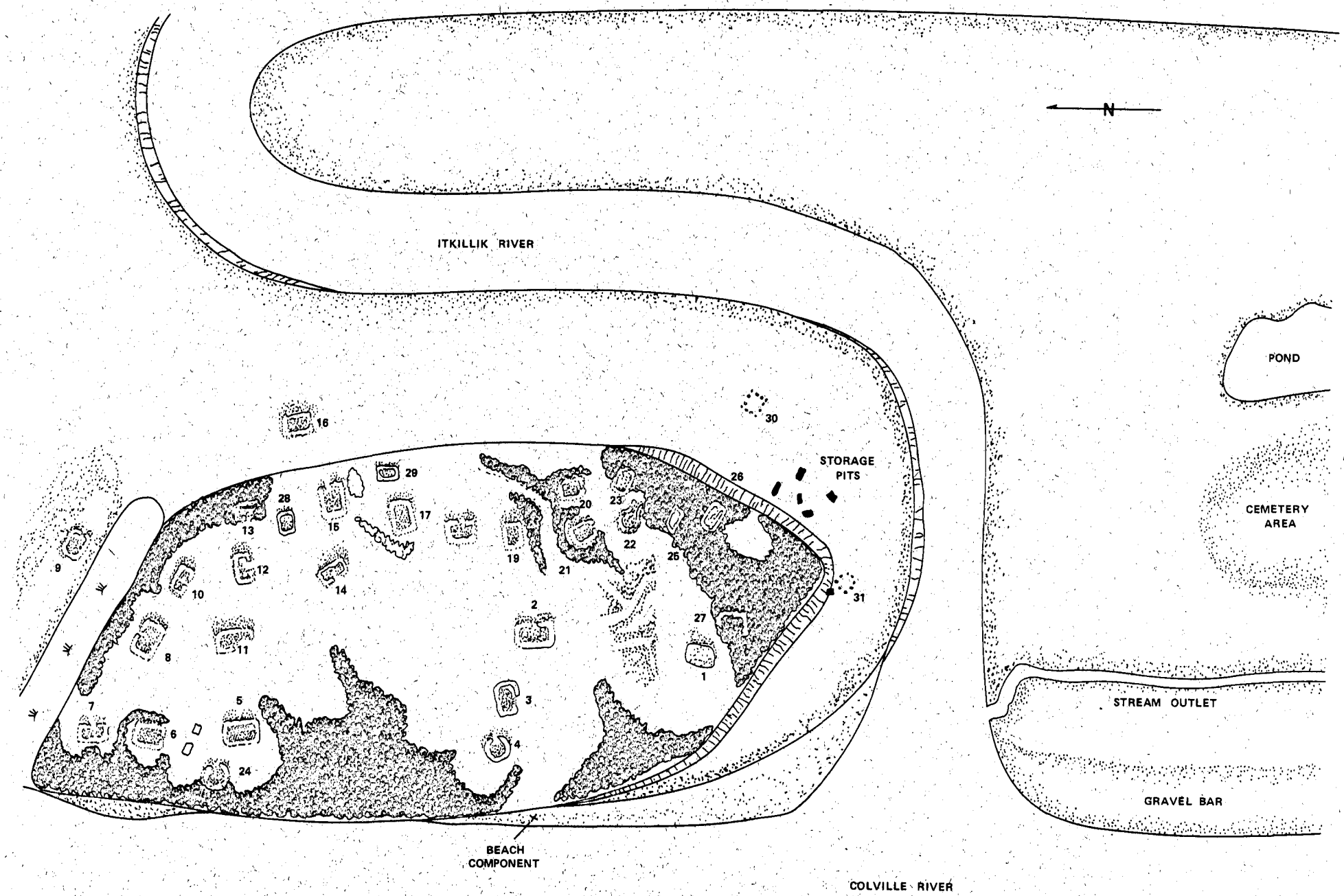


NIGLIK/WOODS INAAT (CAMP)

The site of Itkillikpaat, located at the confluence of the Itkillik and Colville Rivers, illustrates how resource availability influences settlement patterns. During part of the winter of 1907-08, Vilhjalmur Stefansson lived at the site, which, in his words, was "... about the only place on the (lower) Colville which seems to have food supplies enough to make wintering safe ... there is excellent fishing in the autumn and several varieties of fish can be caught there in some numbers all winter."

At that time five houses were reported. During the 1977 field work at least 25 house remains were located, making this the largest of the 14 sites investigated. The site was seasonally occupied from at least 1907 (probably much earlier) until the late 1940's. It is now used by a Nuiqsut family as a fish camp.

The main reason for Itkillikpaat's importance was its fishery. In conjunction with other resources, such as caribou and ptarmigan, it provided usually dependable food supplies. But even this fishery was variable, and from time to time families would move their camps to alternate fishing sites, such as Kayuktisiluk or Tiragroak.



ITKILLIKPAAT

Site Name	TLUI No.	Type of Site	Cultural Remains Present
*Puviksuk	76	creation, hunting camping, fishing	houses, lithics, grave
Pisiktagvik	84	battlefield, hunting, fishing	none
*Niglik/Woods Inaat (Camp)	58	trade fairs fish camp	sod houses, smokehouse cabins, storage pits, grave
Agki Creek	75	hunting, camping fishing	houses
Kayuktisiluk	74	trading post	sod houses, ice cellars grave, warehouse
*Itkillikpaat	3	fish camp	sod houses, storehouses cemetery
Tiragroak	77	fish camp	sod houses, storage pits

*See site descriptions and maps

Nuiqsutpiat	88	fishing, trapping camp	sod houses
Niglinaat	89	fishing, trapping camp	sod houses
Nanuk	60	reindeer herding station	sod houses, ice cellars reindeer corral
Putu	80	hunting camp	sod houses, ice cellar
Anayuk	5	fishing, hunting camp	sod house
Niglivik	45	fish camp	sod house
Uyagagvik	63	quarry, fish camp	none

*See site descriptions and maps.

Today, as in the past, subsistence harvest of wild resources is the central occupation of traditionalist Inupiat. Most of the people in Nuiqsut and other northern Alaska villages are traditionalists. Despite their acceptance of many elements of Euro-American culture, technology, and economy, these people continue to participate in and depend on the subsistence way of life, either as hunters or as sponsors and sharers of the hunt. Subsistence provides such necessities as food and clothing, and it organizes the people's lives seasonally, socially, and ceremonially in the defining patterns of their culture.

To help document this continuing dependence, Nuiqsut hunters have compiled maps and other data to show where and when wild resources can be found. They have described their individual patterns of hunting, fishing, and trapping and the geographic ranges of these pursuits. And they have shared their individual and family methods of balancing cash economy and subsistence activities to allow purchase and operation of the equipment essential in the modern subsistence quest.

Historically, the people of the lower Colville were nomadic. Dog teams—the only method of winter transportation—could cover only limited distances in a day, so hunters and their families had to move about to intercept game. Today the people live in a permanent village where they have the benefits of education, health, and other social and government services. Yet the animals still roam widely, and seasonal locations for fishing and trapping are scattered over a vast territory. This explains why the snow machine in winter and the outboard motorboat in summer have become the essential tools of modern subsistence. Fast transportation from a fixed base has supplanted nomadism.

Machines and their fuel cost money; so do housing, household goods, and heating fuel. There are some local salaried jobs and occasional wage employment on construction projects in the villages or at Prudhoe Bay. But usually cash is hard to come by in Nuiqsut, and inflation and the always-high cost of living in the Arctic eat it up quickly. Traditional patterns of sharing, cash sponsorship of hunters in exchange for shares of subsistence goods, and a thriving barter market between Nuiqsut and Barrow (Nuiqsut fish and pelts for Barrow ducks and sea mammals) help counter the lack of cash in Nuiqsut.

A Nuiqsut hunter's particular subsistence style depends largely on his access to cash, which in turn gives him access to productive hunting and fishing locales. The various subsistence pursuits require differing amounts of cash. The most expensive hunting activity is fall whaling, which costs at least $2,000 for a two- to three-week hunt. Caribou and waterfowl hunting require less cash. More than anything else, fishing is the mainstay of those who cannot afford more costly subsistence activities. Fish camps can be established both summer and fall, and nets can be checked for days and even weeks on end with almost no consumption of gas.

Nuiqsut subsistence depends mainly on the harvest of terrestrial animals—most notably caribou, moose, wolf, wolverine, and fox—and freshwater fish. Marine resources such as seals, whales, and polar bears are secondary. For eight months of the year (October through May), snow machines enable Nuiqsut hunters to cover the great distances necessary for the harvest of terrestrial mammals.

The caribou harvest has been the critical component of the Nuiqsut subsistence complex. Cash outlay is small, and usually some caribou range near the village year round. At various seasons they may be at Fish Creek, scattered along the coast, or on the Colville River channels. Summer caribou hunting trips were usually combined with fish netting to produce a fairly reliable harvest for the time and money invested.

Recently imposed Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulations prohibiting summer harvest of caribou and restricting hunting at other times have definitely hurt the people of Nuiqsut, especially those unable to pursue "expensive" subsistence resources.

In the typical pattern of substituting one resource for another, the limits on caribou have increased the importance of moose. Most moose hunting occurs before freezeup, with the best hunting areas accessible by boat up the Colville. The growing interest of Fairbanks sportsmen and guides in Colville River moose hunting could jeopardize this harvest by Nuiqsut residents.

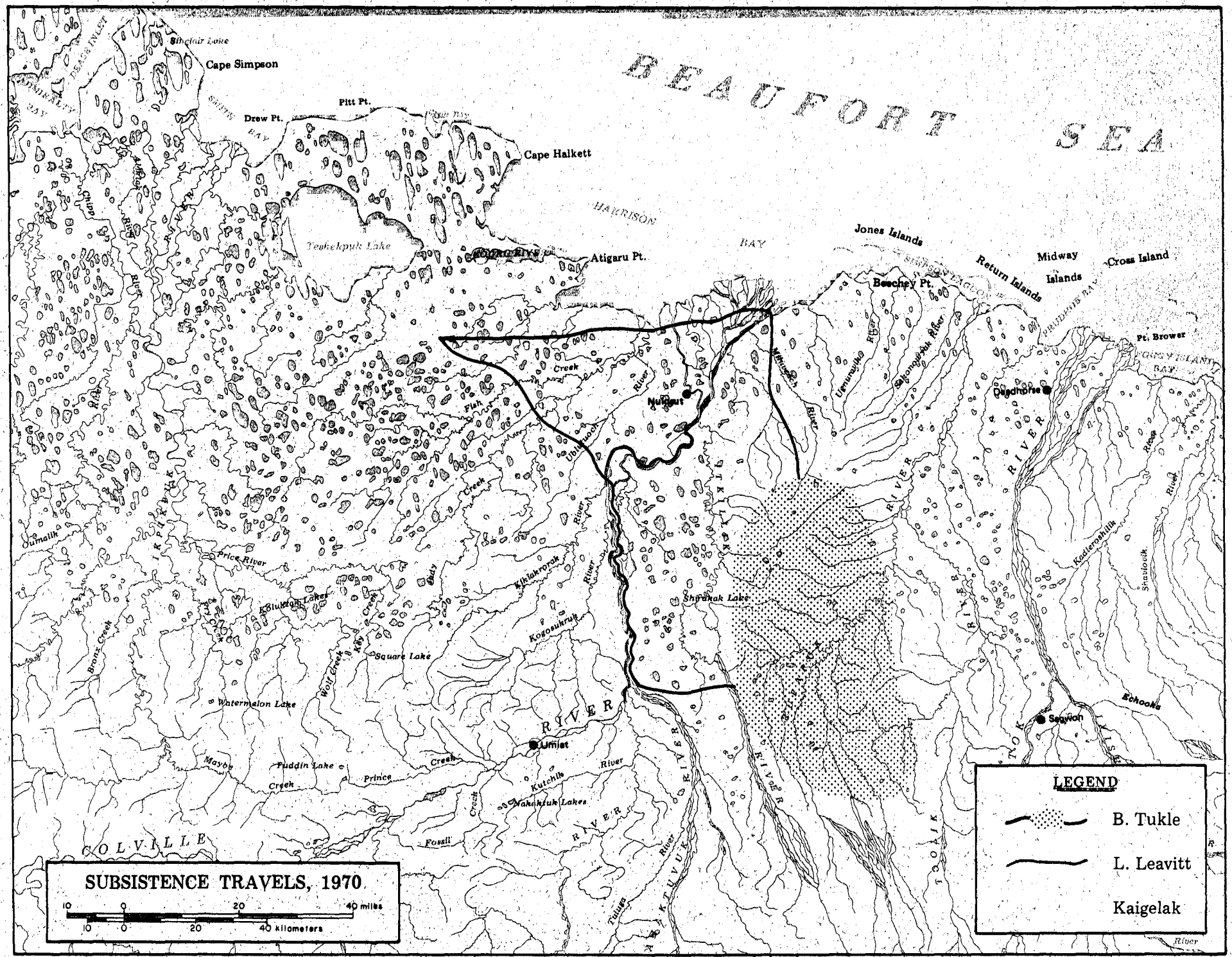
Spring hunting of polar bear and seals on the sea ice off the Colville Delta and trapping (coastal and interior) are other important options for people without significant cash income.

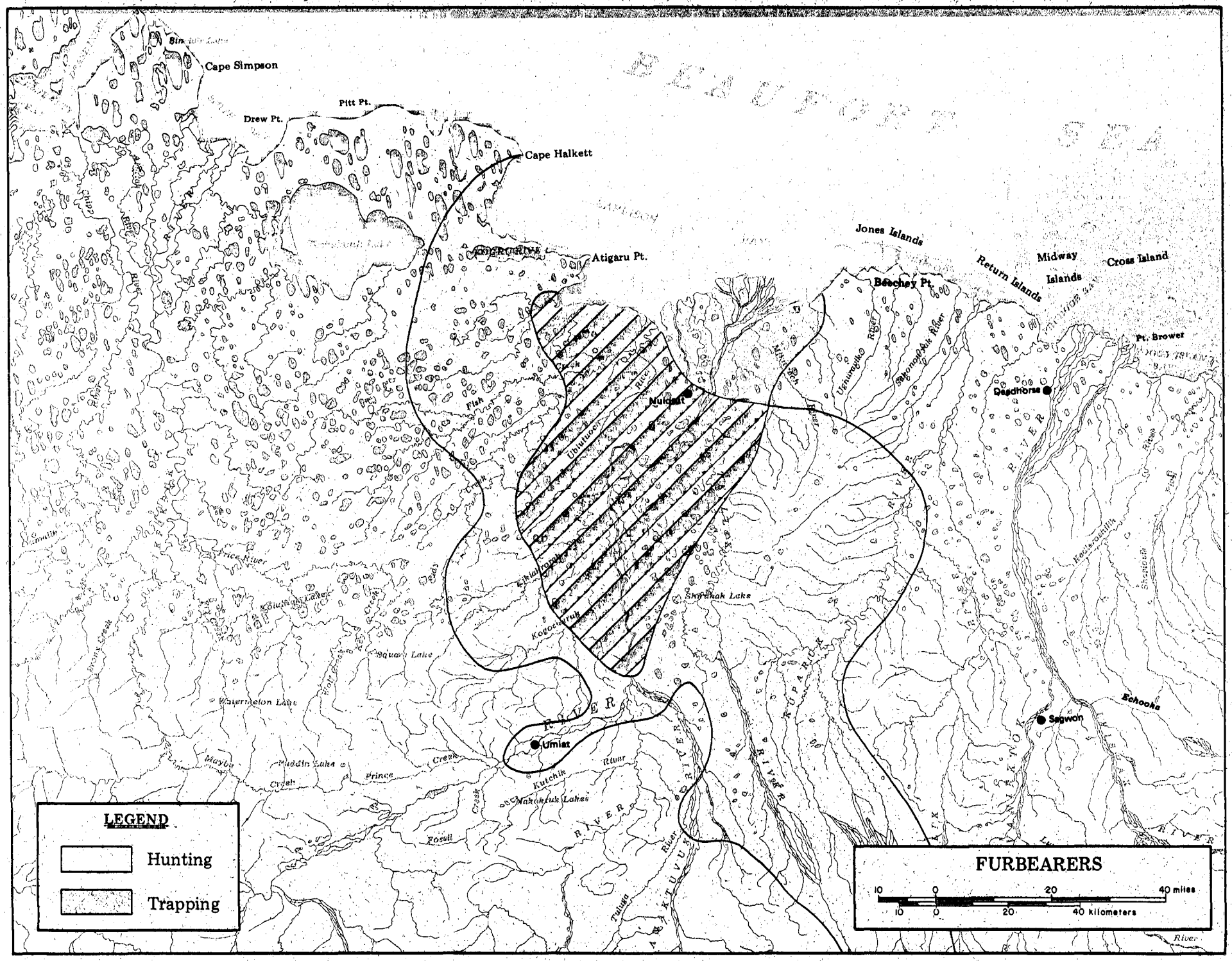
Availability of subsistence resources, their quality, and the methods of harvest differ seasonally. Harvest possibilities also vary from year to year because the locations of particular types of game and the time of year when they are available both change. News of resources travels quickly through the village, and hunting, trapping, and fishing parties rapidly respond to this information.

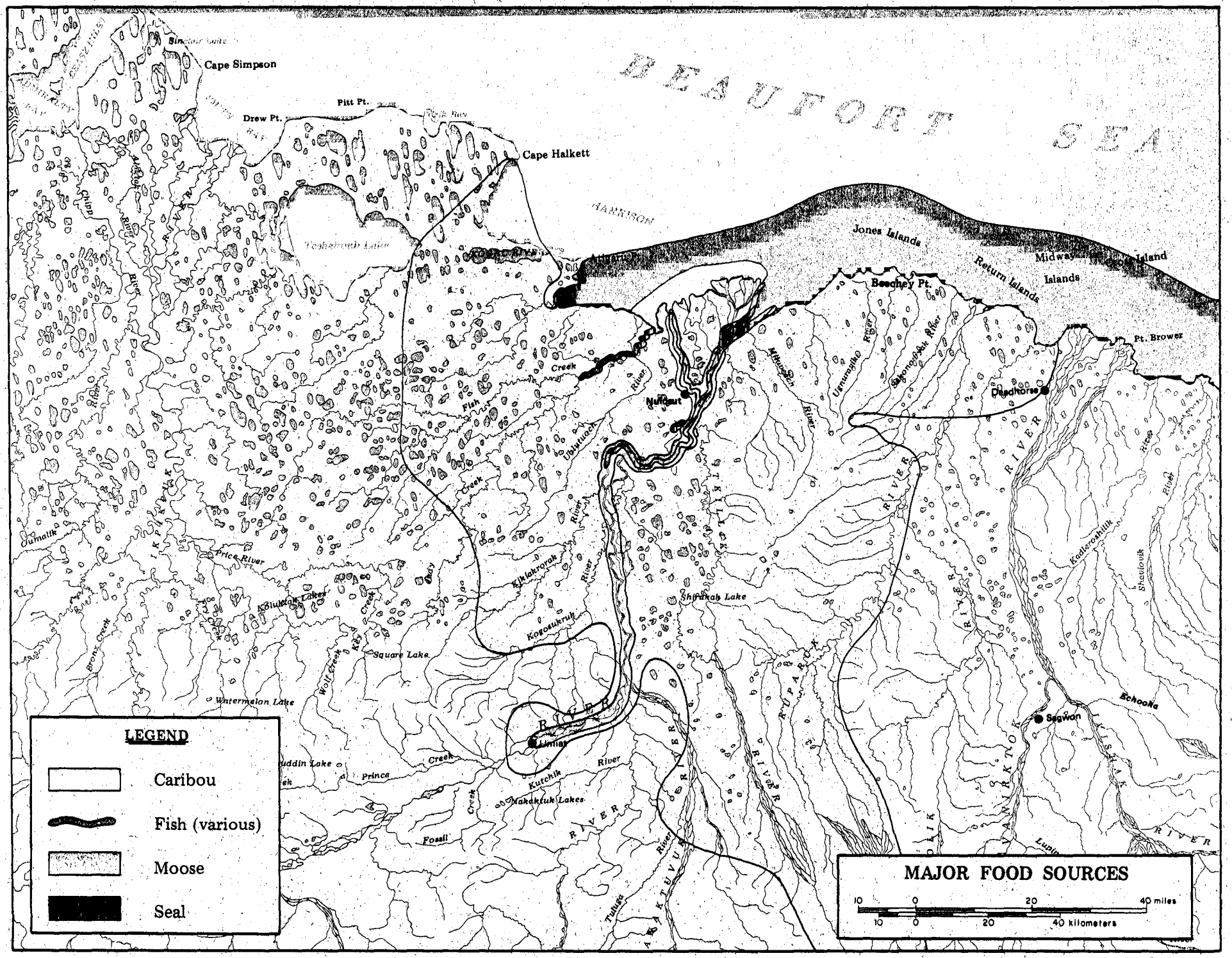
Because of these seasonal and cyclic variations in wild resource patterns (as well as imposed hunting restrictions), Nuiqsut hunters must be flexible. If a primary resource fails, "normal" subsistence rounds may be completely changed, forcing reliance on different geographic areas and animal species. This explains why the hunting landscape must be extensive—in effect, an open range based on biological factors rather than modern land classifications. Seasonal sensitivities of terrestrial and aquatic animals and the matching responses of hunters also dictate the need for great caution in the timing of exploration or development activities.

In 1974, an investigation was conducted to document Eskimo use and occupancy on the Arctic Slope. A summary of selected testimony taken from Nuiqsut-vicinity residents gives an idea of the vast geography covered by Inupiat hunters and trappers during the period just before Nuiqsut was reestablished.

> In 1970, several persons went on extended hunting and trapping trips into this region. Luther Leavitt went hunting and trapping from the mouth of the Colville south to the Chandler and Anaktuvuk Rivers. Ben Tukle, Joash Tukle and Max Ungarook went on a lengthy trip covering interior portions of the area between the Colville and Sagavanirktok Rivers (B. Tukle). Starting from a main base camp southeast of Teshekpuk Lake, they headed southeast to the Colville River and down it to its junction with the Anaktuvuk River. They then swung east over to the Itkillik River and the western slopes of the hills between the Colville and Sagavanirktok Rivers. From a camp on the Itkillik they went hunting and trapping all over the hills between the Colville and Sagavanirktok Rivers as far as the White Hills (M. Ungarook). From this area the hunting party proceeded north to the Colville Delta, Nuekshat Island, Woods Camp and then back to the base camp southeast of Teshekpuk (B. Tukle). Clay Kaigelak went hunting and trapping along the coast east of the Colville Delta.

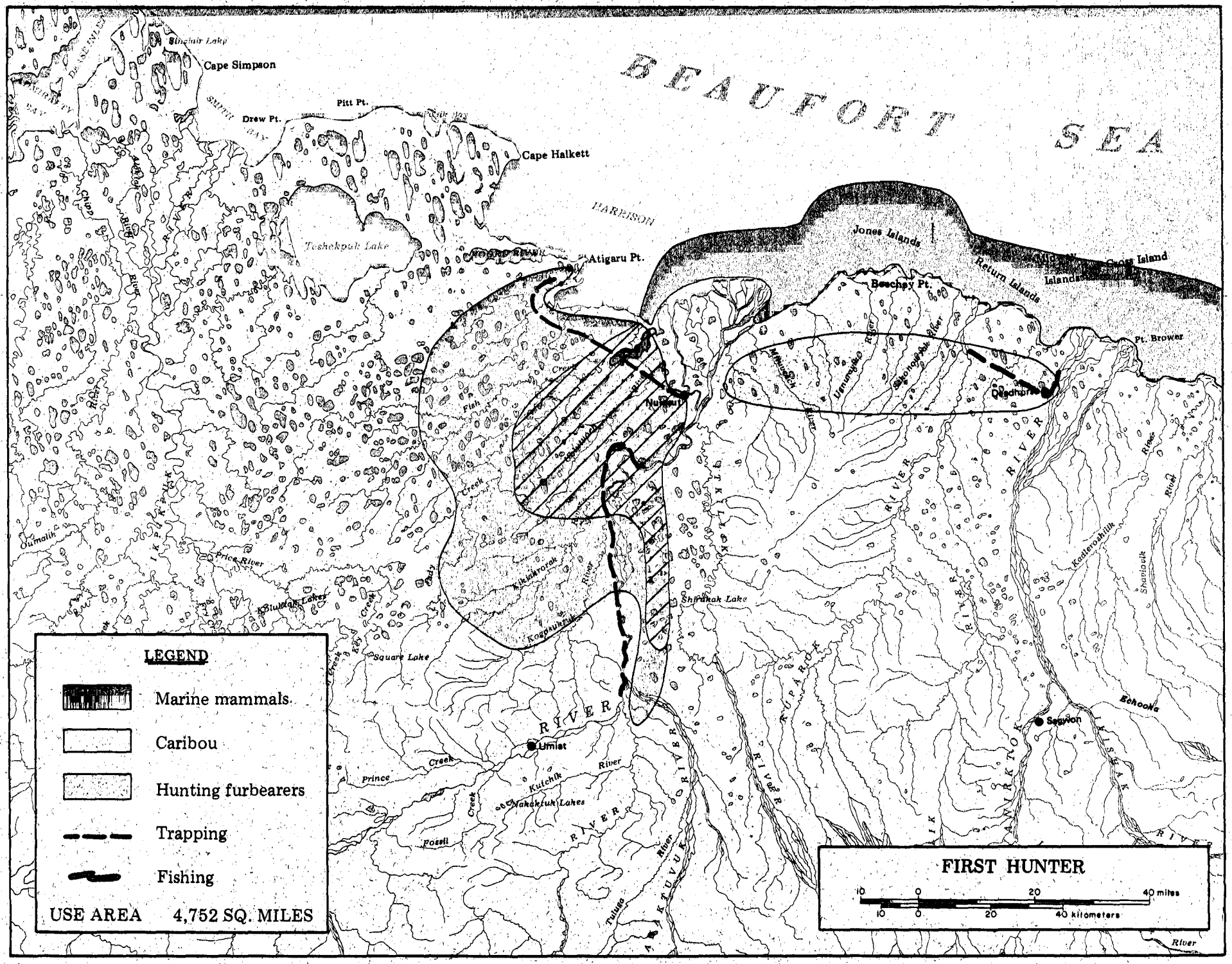

BEAUFORT SEA
Sinclair Lake
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
HARRISON BAY
Teshekpuk Lake
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Dogshorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Seagwon
Echooka
Price River
Bluff Lakes
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Puddin Lake
Prince Creek
Kutchik River
Nakakituk Lakes
Fossil
Shifuruk Lake
Kogosukruk River
Kikiakrorak River
Ublutuoch River
Fish Creek
Ikpikpuk River
Colville River
Chipp River
Oumalik
Bronx Creek
Maybe Creek
Wolf Creek
Kaly Creek
Tuluga
Kaktovik River
Tooolik River
Ugnuravik River
Sakonowik River
Kadleroshilik River
Shaviovik River
LEGEND
B. Tukle
L. Leavitt
Kaigelak
SUBSITENCE TRAVELS, 1970
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers

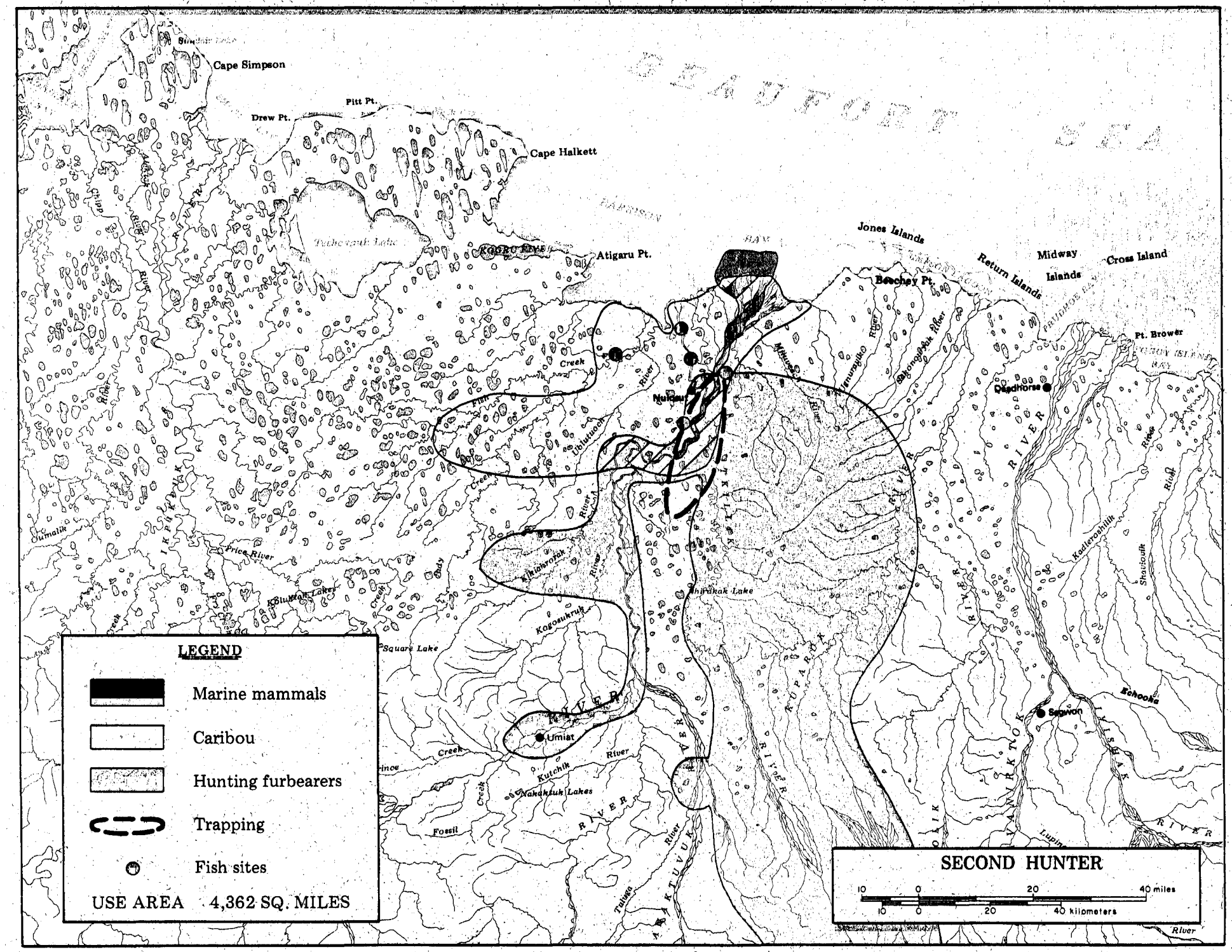

Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Seqwon
Echooka
Fish River
Ublutuoch River
Ikpikpuk River
Kogoluktuk
Shrublike Lake
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Maybe Creek
Maddin Lakes
Prince Creek
Kutchik River
Nakokiuk Lakes
Fossil Creek
Tuluga River
Price River
Kogosukruk River
Ugnuravik River
Sagavanirktok River
Kadleroshilik River
Shaviovik River
Echooka River
Kuparuk River
Colville River
Itkillik River
LEGEND
Hunting
Trapping
FURBEARERS
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers

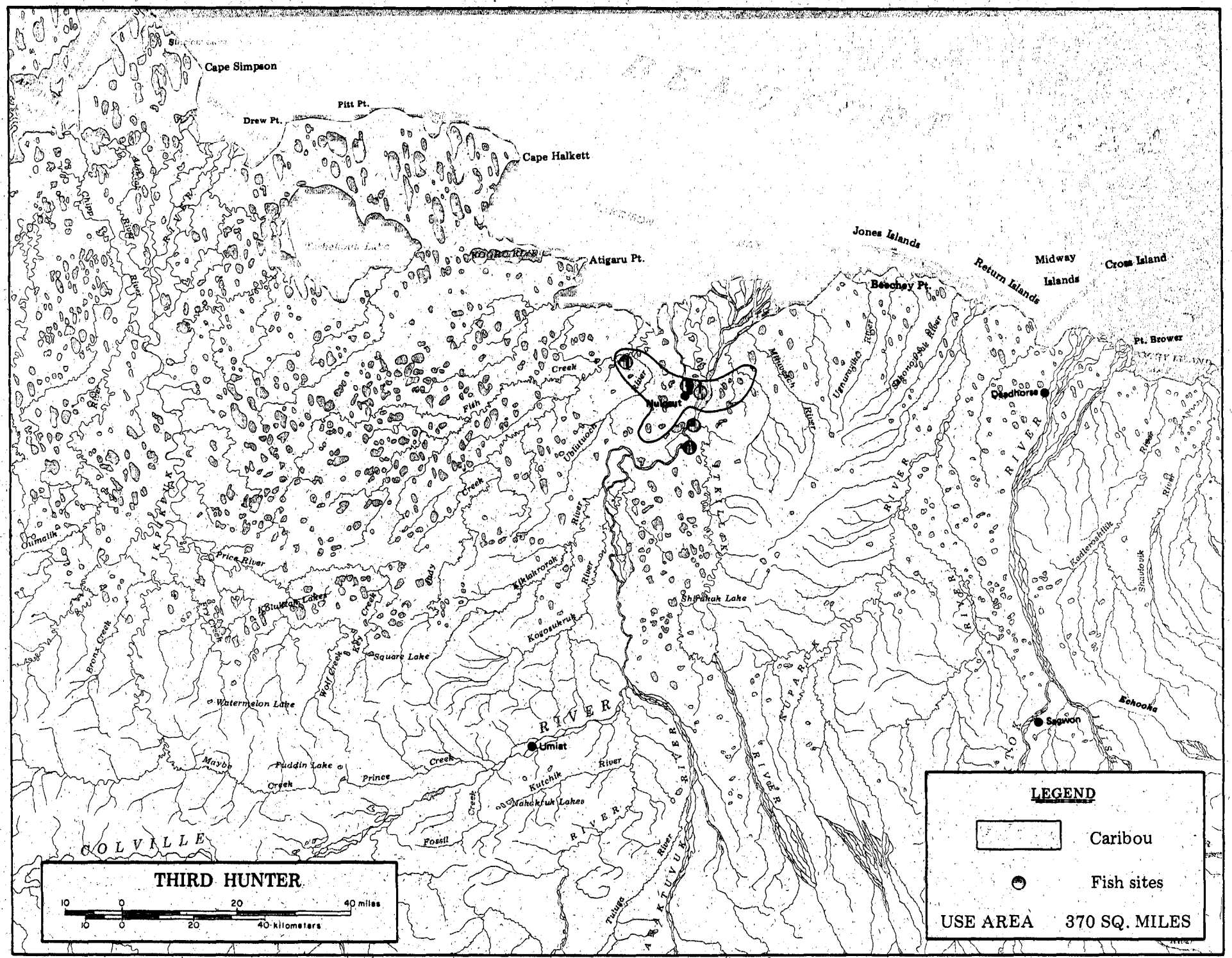

BEAUFORT SEA
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Utukok River
Kikiakrorak River
Kogosukruk River
Kuk River
Kobuk River
Noatak River
Selawik Lake
Shirukak Lake
Price River
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Kutchik River
Makokkuk Lakes
Fossil
Prince Creek
Wolf Creek
Bronx Creek
Kaolinak Lakes
Kadleroshilik River
Shaviovik River
Echooka
Segwon
Umiat
LEGEND
Caribou
Fish (various)
Moose
Seal
MAJOR FOOD SOURCES
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers

The following maps, compiled from data provided by three Nuiqsut hunters, illustrate different subsistence styles based on such variables as cash availability, job or village responsibilites, and resource preferences. The maps persuasively show the vast distances and ranges required in the Arctic for animals and hunters alike. The first and second hunters require more than 4,000 square miles of hunting, fishing, and trapping territory. Even the limited range of the third hunter totals nearly 400 square miles.

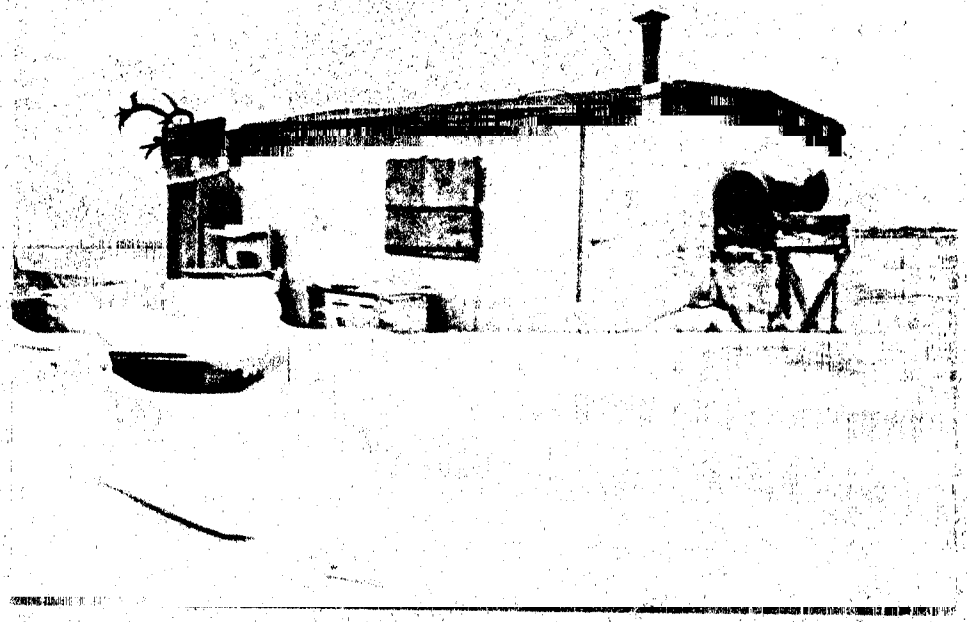
This analysis of the Nuiqsut subsistence economy exemplifies the complex and changing relationships in all northern Alaska villages between geography, cash, and natural resources. Nuiqsut's caribou and fish economy cannot be shifted easily to a sea mammal economy. Natural limitations on the availability of sea mammals near Nuiqsut, compounded by logistical and access problems, inhibit such a shift. Therefore, natural and imposed restrictions on caribou harvest strike especially hard, for they leave only secondary resources to fall back on. These neither singly nor in combination can supply the needs of these people. Even when primary resources are abundant, people must have access to them. This means that the hunter (or the hunter and his sponsor) must have cash to invest in machinery and gasoline, the essential tools of the modern arctic subsistence complex.

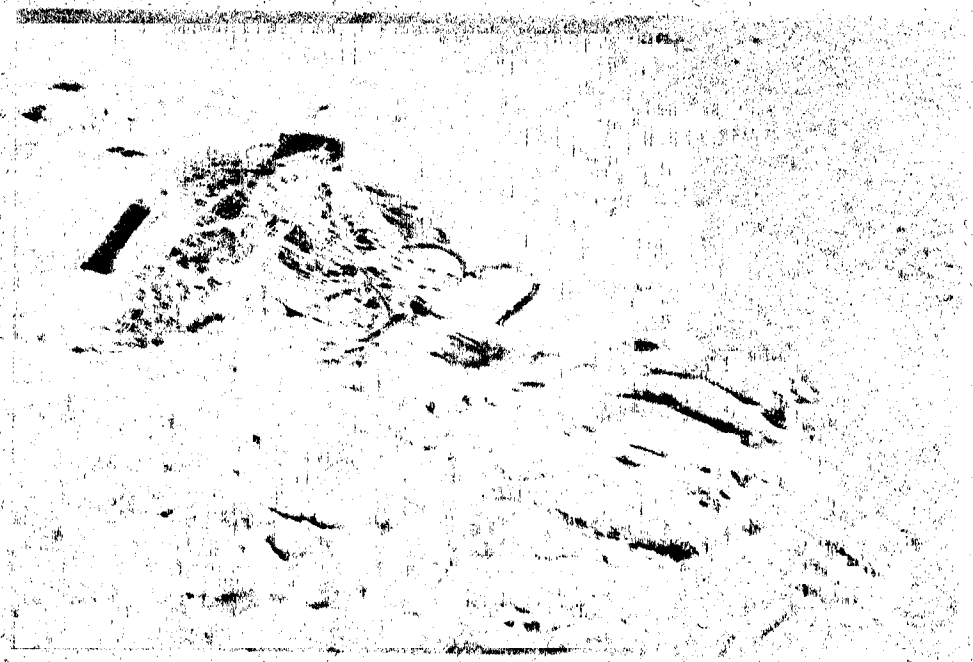

BEAUFORT SEA
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
HARRISON
Teshekpuk Lake
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Nuiqsut
Qiqiktaruk
Umiat
Seavon
Echooka
Square Lake
Price River
Kikiakrorak River
Kogpuktuk
Shinuhak Lake
Nakaktuk Lakes
Kutchik River
Prince Creek
Fossil Creek
Tuluga River
Katievoshtlik River
Shaviovik River
Oumalik
LEGEND
Marine mammals
Caribou
Hunting furbearers
Trapping
Fishing
USE AREA 4,752 SQ. MILES
FIRST HUNTER
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers

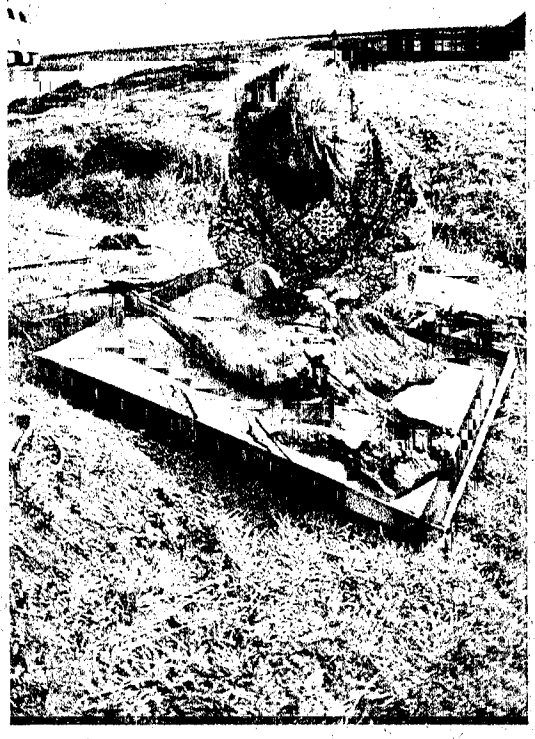

LEGEND
Marine mammals
Caribou
Hunting furbearers
Trapping
Fish sites
USE AREA 4,362 SQ. MILES
SECOND HUNTER
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Sagwon
Schooks
Square Lake
Price River
Kogosukruk
Kutchik River
Nakahtuk Lakes
Fossil
Shinuhak Lake
Kadleroshilik
Shaviovik
Sagavanirktok River
Kuparuk River
Ikpikpuk River
Colville River
Itkillik River
Ignuniguk River
Sakoonagvik River
Miluveach River
Ublutuoch River
Kikiakrorak River
Tuluga River
Lupine River
Jumalik
Chipp River
Kogru River
Tulugak Lake
Kilustak Lakes
Square Lake

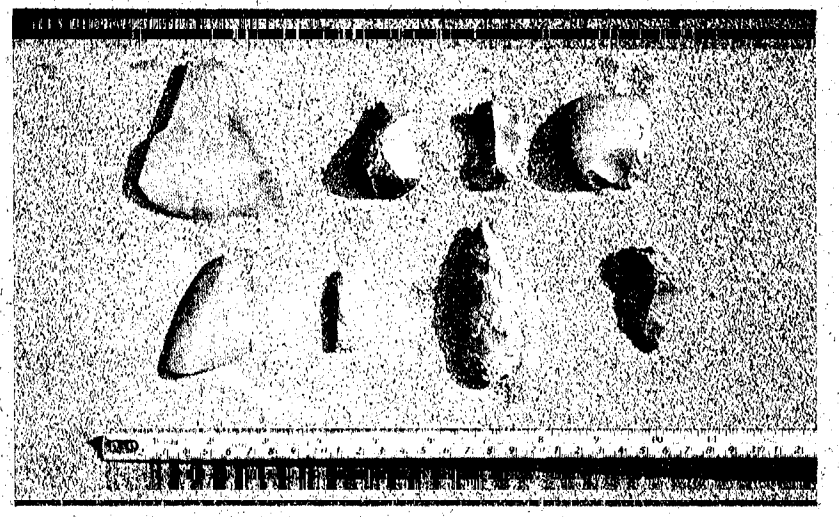

Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Sagwon
Echooka
Price River
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Fuddin Lake
Nahokfuk Lakes
Shipahak Lake
Kikakrorak River
Kogosukruk River
Kutchik River
Prince Creek
Fossil Creek
Fish Creek
Ublutuoch River
Miluveach River
Usuktuk River
Sagavanirktok River
Kadleroshilik River
Shaviovik River
Colville River
Itkillik River
Anaktuvuk River
Tuluga River
Chipp River
Gilmalik
Bronx Creek
Wolf Creek
Maybe Creek
Kuparuk River
Toolik Lake
THIRD HUNTER
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers
LEGEND
Caribou
Fish sites
USE AREA 370 SQ. MILES

The cultural landscape of Nuiqsut, then, is occupied by a heritage community that perpetuates Inupiat culture by harvesting the wild resources of land and sea, by preserving places and ideals of value, and by transmitting this heritage to future generations. It is a place that cannot be truly owned by any transient human group nor consumed for any ephemeral human purpose, for it must be passed on intact. It is a cosmos that unites time and space, people and nature, resources and values. This place cannot be understood in simple economic or physical resource terms. Such tools of understanding are too primitive. Yet those from afar who have plans to alter this landscape are using such primitive tools, as did their predecessors.

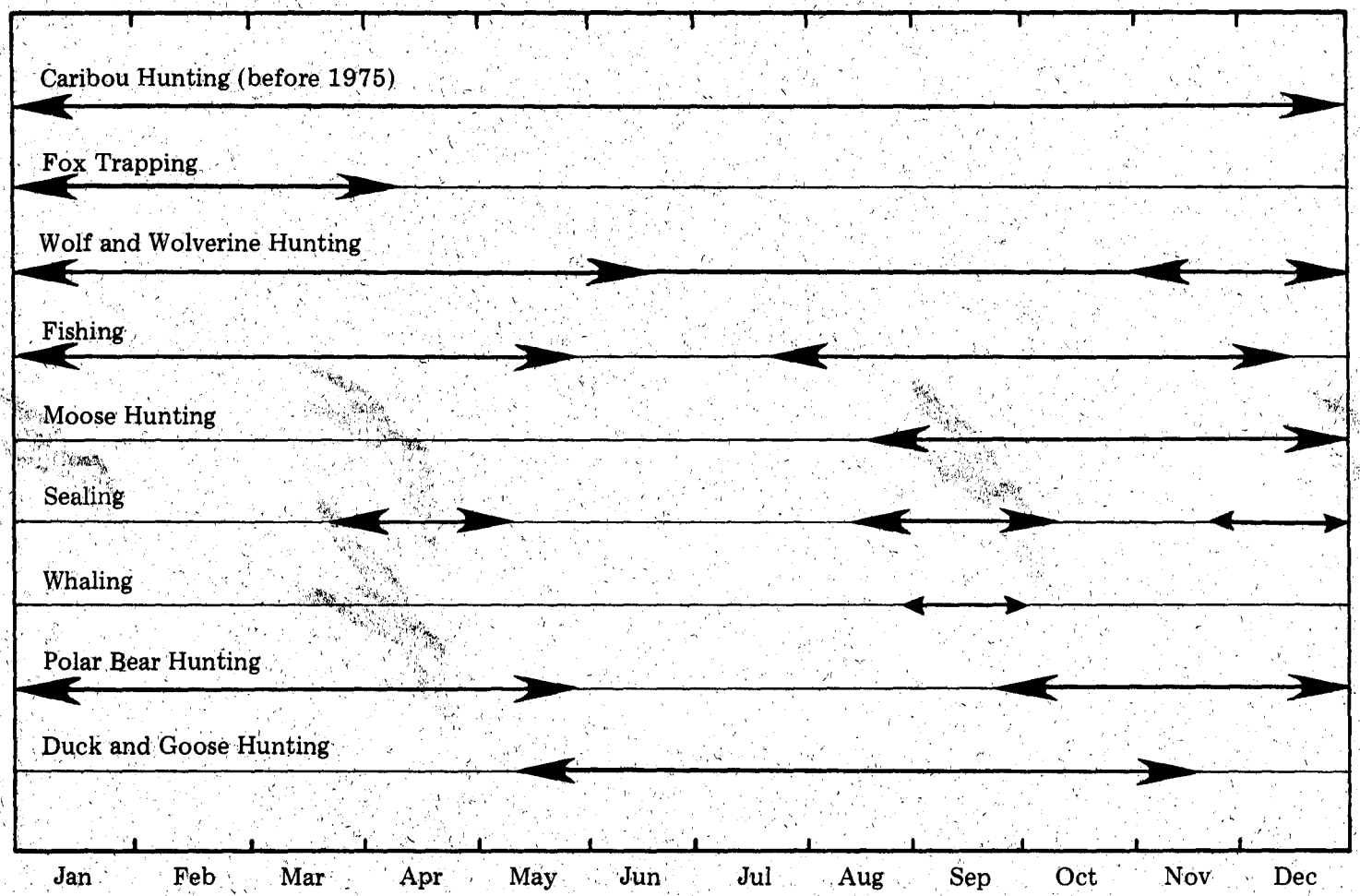








Nuiqsut Annual Subsistence Cycle



Distinction has been made between people who derive life and sustenance from a traditional homeland and those who reach around the world to satisfy their resource appetites. In recent decades those people with worldwide hungers have looked to the Arctic for resources that are running out elsewhere. The Inupiat see their homeland and way of life threatened.

In the face of ever more powerful and pervasive technological intrusions, the Inupiat have focused their concerns on protection of the arctic environment. To the extent that this environment is healthy and productive, the people flourish and their culture is perpetuated. But if it is damaged and made unhealthy, cultural patterns attuned to the hunt and the sharing of its harvest lose purpose and fade away.

The village of Nuiqsut appears to be a long way from anyplace—beyond the crunch of crowding and competition for land. But this is an illusion. The onslaught of planes, helicopters, seismic operations, development roads, on- and offshore drilling sites, gravel mining, barge traffic, and construction projects grows apace. Strangers are everywhere—technical crews, agency officials, investigators, and planners—all busily concocting an unknown and probably unpleasant future. Sometimes the evidence is simply a cluster of lights glittering on winter's dark tundra. Or it may be a distant helicopter, landing, then taking off—but for what purpose, under whose authority?

Village people have expressed their feelings about these things:

> Too many airplanes and helicopters scare away the moose and caribou.
>
> Now we are only 17 miles from an oil-field road that goes all the way to Fairbanks.
>
> Fish and Game regulations don't help us. Moose season is too late so we can't get our boats upriver before freezeup. Guides and sport hunters from Fairbanks can fly in and get the moose we need for meat, especially now that we can't get enough caribou.
>
> We told all of them that we don't want oil

drilling in the Beaufort Sea. If they have blowouts and spills there, we won't have any seals and whales. They're going ahead anyway.

Those oil exploration crews wreck our camps. They tore up our ice cellars at Oliktok and left meat and fish around to rot. They must not know we still use those camps.

Our channel is blocked. Is this because they are taking gravel upstream? What does this do to the fish? We aren't catching many this year.

Sometimes even Barrow gets like the outsiders. They speak for all the villages and start things before telling us about them. We want to speak for ourselves.

Oil companies are coming in all over but only two or three people from Nuiqsut got jobs.

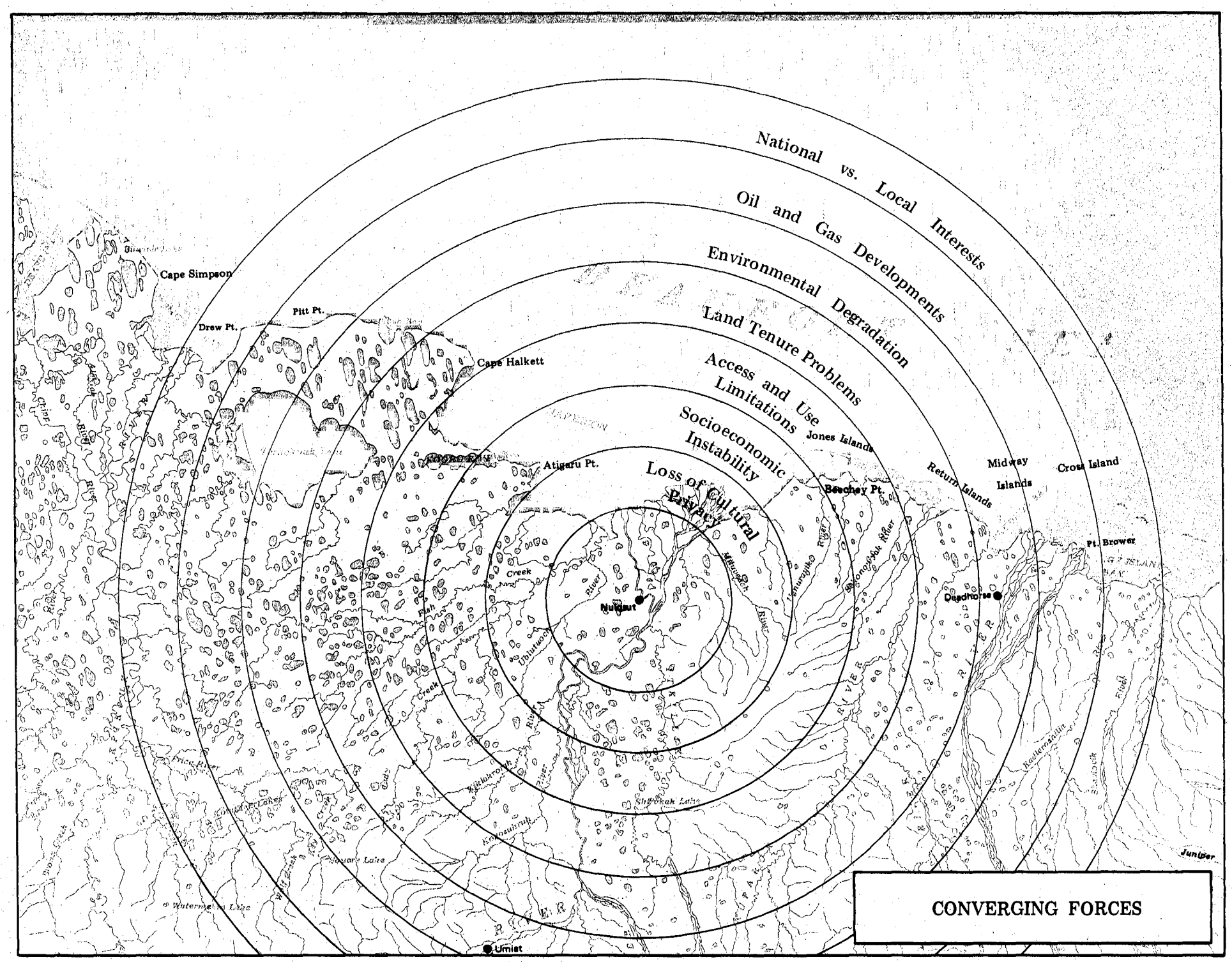
They won't give me my allotment, but the companies can go anyplace and do anything.

These new oil drilling sites are right where we hunt and fish, right at our subsistence camps.

Whichever threat is talked about, the people's concern centers on the health of the homeland environment, the abundance of its wild resources, the people's right to use their traditional hunting and fishing places without being overrun by outsiders and their machines.

Next in importance is the desire to share in a stable economy so that the people have cash for their subsistence and household expenses and can afford to bring to Nuiqsut those benefits of modern life that strengthen the community.

Batteries of scientific studies have produced libraries of technical analysis about the villages of northern Alaska in this time of rapid change. These studies have gone into every aspect of the physical, biological, and human environment. After all this picking apart, the big question for Nuiqsut remains: Can national, state, regional, and Nuiqsut interests be made compatible? Can the people of this village continue their way of life, blending traditional and modern? Can they remain Inupiat, attuned to their homeland, but also at home in the other world that each year takes over more of the Arctic's spaces?


National vs. Local Interests
Oil and Gas Developments
Environmental Degradation
Land Tenure Problems
Access and Use Limitations
Socioeconomic Instability
Loss of Cultural Privacy
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Beechey Pt.
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Pt. Brower
Nuiqsut
Deadhorse
Umiat
Juniper
CONVERGING FORCES

Up to this point this plan has:

- defined the cultural landscape—the geographic and spiritual homeland of the Nuiqsut people;
- shown by text, pictures, and maps how the community continues to carry on its heritage way of life in this landscape; and
- described in general terms the kinds of forces converging on Nuiqsut.

Now the people of Nuiqsut want to assert themselves to protect their homeland and heritage. Principal local institutions for this purpose are the Village Council and the Kuukpik Corporation, the village business corporation authorized by ANCSA. Villagers are aware that they must ally their own local powers of government and landownership with other powers and jurisdictions—including the North Slope Borough, the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS), protective state and federal laws and agencies, and private companies operating in the area. Only through this combination of powers can the village forcefully influence what happens to its cultural landscape, which extends far beyond the village proper and is affected by events and activities originating far from Nuiqsut.

The main objectives of the plan are to:

1. Control the pace and magnitude of change to promote stable and beneficial socioeconomic conditions in the village.
2. Protect the natural environment and wild resources from adverse effects of industrial and technological activities.
3. Establish the historical/cultural/subsistence resources and values of the village as major considerations in land-use planning, development, and operations.
4. Adapt imposed landownership and jurisdiction to the traditional law of free access and use by the homeland people.
5. Perpetuate traditional activities to assure transmission of cultural values to future generations.

The discussion and recommendations that follow set forth a framework for action, based on applicable laws, agreements, and procedures—either existing or suggested. From this framework, the people of Nuiqsut can develop specific action programs that are best suited to their concerns and energies and to the challenges facing them now and in the unfolding future.

Through local initiatives and in alliance with supportive institutions, the village of Nuiqsut can influence the future of its cultural landscape in these major ways:

1. Consolidate village-centered powers of government, landownership, and administration to protect the village proper and its near environs.

2. Strengthen existing and devise new cooperative agreements and administrative techniques that lead to strong village participation in the management of lands and seas beyond direct village control.

3. Seek application of existing authorities, such as North Slope Borough zoning ordinances and state and federal laws, that:

   - improve socioeconomic conditions,
   - control environmental pollution,
   - protect natural and cultural resources and values, and
   - recognize traditional land use rights and privileges.

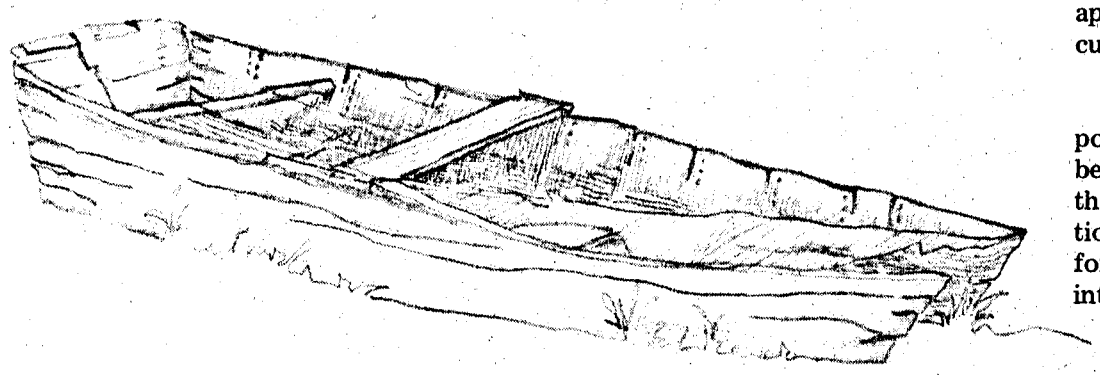
4. Seek new authorities that increase village influence on plans and decisions at regional, state, and federal levels.

* * * * *

Compatible sharing of lands and waters is the central issue for Nuiqsut. Villagers want free access and use for their own traditional purposes, and they want to exert control over nontraditional uses by others. They feel that in the recent past this pattern has been reversed—traditional users have been controlled and nontraditional users have been free to go anywhere and do many things viewed as destructive and intrusive.

Ideally, villagers want homeland uses to be governed by the concepts and balances shown on the accompanying map. The final task of this plan is to suggest how these concepts and balances can best be approximated in the context of imposed systems of land tenure. Achieving the most freedom for Nuiqsut and the most control over others will not be easy. Many laws, officials, and agencies are involved. Planning meetings, follow-up communications, more meetings, and field checks at development sites all take time, energy, and constant attention.

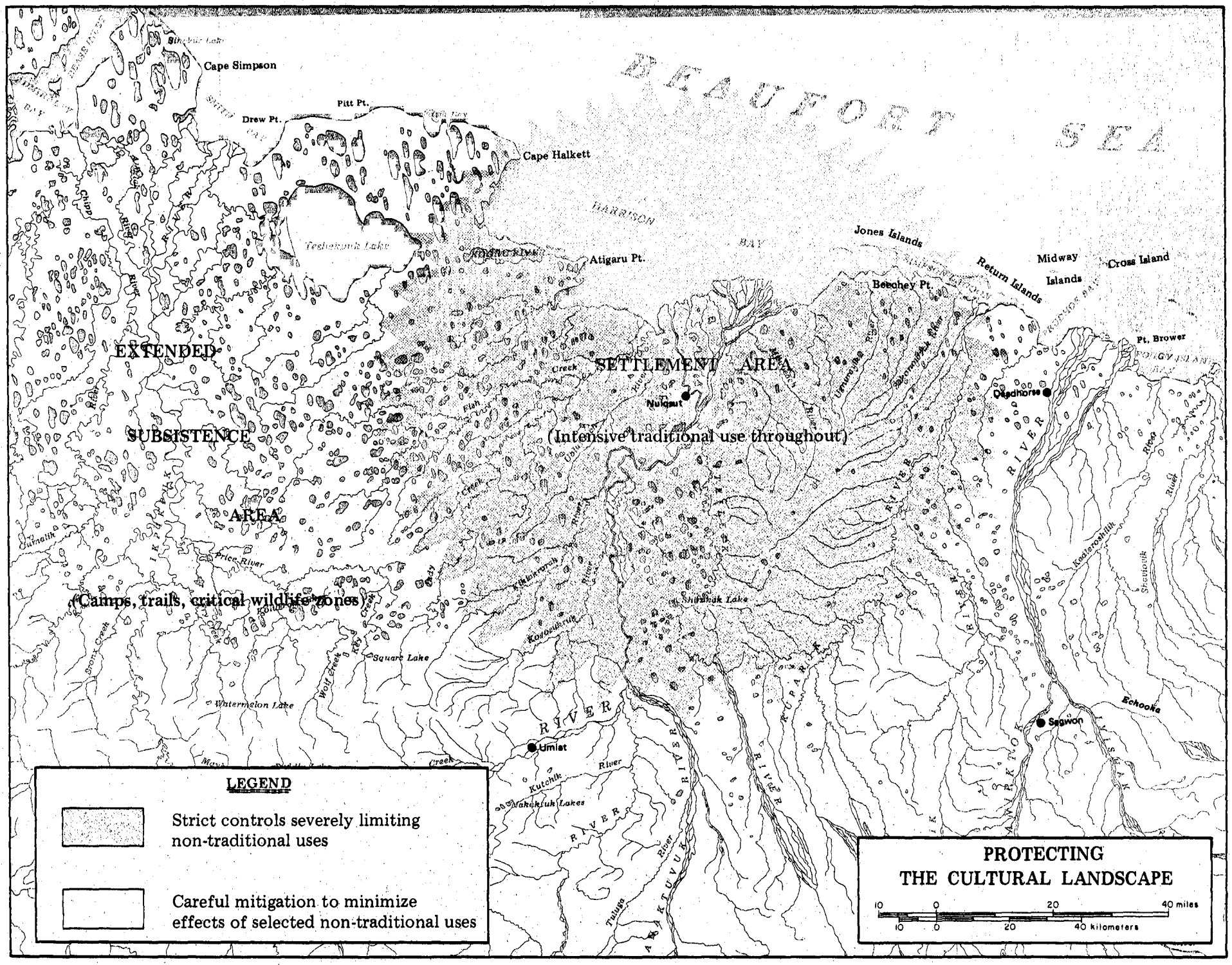
The village cultural system is not geared to handle the onrush of new and strange responsibilities. Even now, Nuiqsut is periodically overloaded with construction projects, day-to-day village and corporation business, and the recurring emergencies that beset a place at the far end of supply and maintenance systems. Village leaders are often swamped by the demands of their different roles—as traditionalist hunters or homemakers and as participants in ever more complex governmental and corporate affairs.



Direct and productive actions between kinsmen and neighbors define the traditional system. By contrast, the new system involves indirect communications with strangers and few measurable results. This would be bad enough if there were basic agreement on desired results. But often the two cultures are far apart on both ends and means because of profoundly different cultural ideals.

Nuiqsut's dilemma stems from these cultural cross purposes. If, in the attempt to save their heritage, village people become immersed in the meeting-paperwork-telephone world of the new culture, they may be indirectly co-opted. If, in frustration, they withdraw to pursue traditional activities, they may forfeit their heritage by inaction. Neither extreme is in the best interest of the village.

Is there a middle way? Can the village organize its own resources and its relationships with other institutions to strike an acceptable balance between traditional activities and essential involvement in the new culture? Which processes, at what points, are best suited for direct and productive village action? Which are best suited for supportive institutions?


PROTECTING
THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers
LEGEND
Strict controls severely limiting non-traditional uses
Careful mitigation to minimize effects of selected non-traditional uses
EXTENDED
SUBSISTENCE
AREA
(Camps, trails, critical wildlife zones)
SETTLEMENT AREA
(Intensive traditional use throughout)
BEAUFORT SEA
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
Atigaru Pt.
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Seqwon
Echooka
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Price River
Shublik Lake
Nakakiuk Lakes
Teshekpuk Lake
Harrison Bay
Colville River
Kuparuk River
Sagavanirktok River
Kavik River
Atigun River
Dietrich River
Chipp River
Kutchik River
Tulugak River
Koolerosuk River
Sheenjek River
Kokolik River
Kikiakrorak River
Kogosukruk River
Fish Creek
Ublutuoch River
Itkillik River
Ikpikpuk River
Bronx Creek
Wolf Creek
Dalton Creek
Dumalik Creek
Ivishak River
Sagavanirktok River
Toolik Lake
Sinaloa Lake

From these questions, two working premises emerge:

1. Villagers will be most effective promoting their own freedom of access and use within the Nuiqsut cultural landscape.

2. Supportive institutions will be most effective controlling destructive or intrusive uses by others.

Assuming that these premises are correct, a useful division of labor follows: Villagers should concentrate their efforts on the geographic and cultural realities that they know best; supportive institutions should concentrate their efforts on the planning and procedural systems that they know best. Of course there must be linkage and overlap between freedom and control efforts. For example, free village access to a fish camp would do no good if an agency had already permitted an industrial use that ruined the fishery.

The following hypothetical example illustrates a positive combination of village and outside interests and the linkages between them:

> A fish camp containing historic resources is located within the Nuiqsut cultural landscape on federal land. The village, in cooperation with the North Slope Borough, has previously identified this site and its environs on the Traditional Land Use Inventory and the National Register of Historic Places, which are incorporated in village and borough planning documents. A comprehensive cooperative agreement between the village, the borough, and the federal land management agency authorizes traditional access and use of this fish camp and other subsistence and cultural sites. It also provides that plans for any industrial activity near such sites must be assessed by people of the village before the agency issues any operational permit.
>
> An oil exploration company submits plans and requests a permit to drill a test hole near the fish camp. As specified, villagers examine the plan and provide data about the fish camp and factors that control the health of the fishery (drainage area, ice conditions, water depth, seasonality, etc.). Mitigations and stipulations are incorporated into the operational plan, and all parties agree to monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that actual operations meet these conditions. Only then is the permit issued.

This example illustrates processes that can be adapted to many situations affecting the cultural landscape. But even this relatively simple sequence sets forth an involved set of preconditions, events, and communications that would unduly burden Nuiqsut's present capabilities.

Nuiqsut is not unique in facing more problems than it can effectively handle alone. Many Alaska villages have tried and failed to meet the policy and administrative demands of the larger legal and land tenure systems within which they must now operate if they are to maintain their traditional freedoms and exert control over their cultural landscapes.

A number of solutions have been devised to help the villages. In general terms, these solutions are of two kinds: 1) to increase village-based capabilities for policy making and management of local affairs; 2) to combine the resources of a number of villages in larger organizations for greater regional effectiveness. Examples of the second method include the merger of regional and village corporations in NANA, the formation of the Interior Village Association in Doyon, and the corporate merger and nonprofit association of selected villages in the middle Kuskokwim River area. Together, these two approaches reinforce each other. Stronger local capabilities enhance liaison and cooperation between villages in dealing with outside forces. Associated villages can concentrate their resources to handle specific local problems.

Nuiqsut could improve its local capabilities by taking two significant steps. *First, residents should agree on a policy* that would make mutually supportive the village as municipality and the village as corporation. *Second, the village should hire a person to fill the role of cultural guardian,* the link between the village and its supportive institutions.

The municipality provides services and is the focus of cultural concerns; the corporation is a profit-making business. A policy bridge between these two legal entities, which are made up of the same people, would avoid conflicts of purpose and encourage complementary actions. Assuming that the village wants to maintain the traditional way of life (consonant with modern village needs), recommended elements of policy would be as follows:

1. Municipal service responsibilities and development projects should be based on appropriate technology, and they should be paced and seasonally adjusted so that families and individuals have plenty of time for subsistence and other traditional activities.

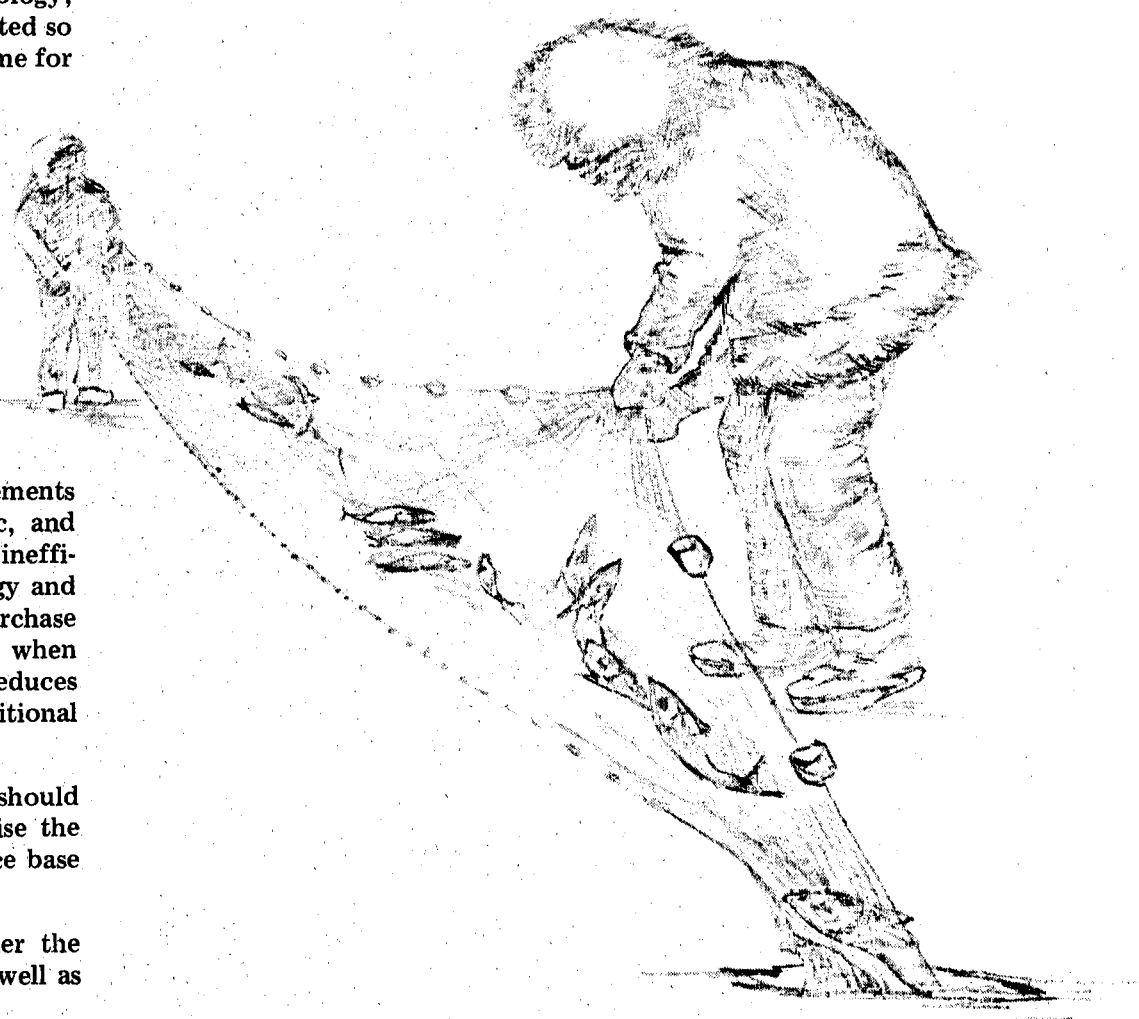
2. The benefits of proposed capital improvements should be weighed against social, economic, and cultural costs. (For example, houses that are inefficient to heat in arctic conditions waste energy and produce an inflated need for cash for the purchase of fuel oil. Pursuit of cash separates families when jobholders have to leave the village, and it reduces the time and resources available for traditional activities.)

3. Profit-making activities of the corporation should not harm the lands and waters that comprise the near physical, biological, and cultural resource base of the village.

4. Corporate business decisions should consider the social and cultural needs of shareholders as well as their need for revenue.

The policy could be expressed in a comprehensive village plan which would include this cultural plan (refined and approved by the village). Evolving with the changing needs of the village, the policy would enable the people to judge the public import of major proposals, whether locally initiated or issuing from the Borough or ASRC.

As the foundation of a comprehensive village plan, the policy could be used positively as well as reactively. For example,



municipal annexation and zoning procedures could be used to define acceptable uses of lands held by the village corporation. In this way the legal distinction between municipality and corporation would be preserved but within the context of a larger public purpose.

The proposed cultural guardian would have a foot in each of the worlds important to Nuiqsut. The guardian's understanding of the Inupiat value system and the legalistic/administrative systems of the modern world would provide the essential link between Nuiqsut and its supportive institutions. Such a link—steady, accessible, and thorough—would allow the village to centralize under strict control the day-to-day tasks and follow-through of cooperative planning and action based on agreements and protective laws. The guardian would be responsible for an effective system of communications and administration that would guarantee significant village participation at critical points in the flow of events. The guardian would bring to the village itself the division of labor that would give villagers the time to be traditionalists.

No existing village officials or technical aids would be displaced by the cultural guardian, whose main function would be that of a broker between the village and outside interests.

Nuiqsut's financial resources are limited. Without assistance, it is doubtful that the village could attract the caliber of person needed for the cultural guardian job. Initially, several villages might want to combine resources and share a guardian. For example, Nuiqsut, Kaktovik, and Anaktuvuk Pass have broadly similar problems and they have strong historical and cultural ties, reflected in their overlapping cultural landscapes.

If Nuiqsut wishes to pursue the cultural guardian idea, either alone or in association with other villages, it should look to the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope for both technical and financial assistance. ICAS is becoming a strong regional center for cultural affairs, and its tribal government responsibilities give it access to federal funds and programs directly relevant to the objectives of this cultural plan.

If adopted by the village, these suggestions to improve local capabilities through ICAS assistance and, possibly, to associate with other villages would lay the foundations for productive linkage between Nuiqsut, its supportive institutions, and outside interests.

* * * * *

The greater part of Nuiqsut's cultural landscape lies beyond village-controlled lands and waters or sites owned by Nuiqsut families. Therefore, to maintain traditional freedoms and exert controls over modern uses of these extensive areas, Nuiqsut must rely on cooperative agreements and protective laws governing these other jurisdictions.

The trust responsibilities of state and federal governments in relation to Native peoples are strong and continuing elements of public policy. The basis for this relationship lies in the concept of equity—a recognition that small Native societies cannot match force and influence with larger societies. The cultural guardian will be deeply involved in strengthening this relationship.

Cooperative agreements can become major instruments for expression of trust responsibilities. They provide a positive way (as distinct from an adversary way) for the smaller and the larger societies to balance, make equitable, their respective rights, powers, and privileges.

Though conceived under the authority of modern laws, cooperative agreements can be made relevant to traditional law and custom. An ancient legal concept helpful here is the usufruct—the right to use and enjoy something belonging to another so long as it is not damaged. With respect to Nuiqsut's extensive cultural landscape, cooperative agreements by which agencies officially recognize the villagers' traditional rights of access and use would be a form of usufruct.

As an immediate objective, the village should review the 1974 cooperative agreements executed by ASRC and the Kuukpik Corporation with the federal government (originally the Department of the Navy, now the Bureau of Land Management) and with the State of Alaska.* These two agreements contain important stipulations relating to exploration and development activities on village-selected lands. They include arrangements for village participation in the planning process, standards for environmental mitigation and rehabilitation, and statements of intent to protect wildlife, habitat, and subsistence sites and activities.

Nuiqsut should be fully aware of both its rights and its obligations under these agreements because they directly affect the immediate cultural landscape. The federal government retains rights to easements and controlled exploration and development in those village-selected lands that lie within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A); the state has similar rights within three townships that it selected and then relinquished (except for subsurface estate) by land exchange with ASRC.

Beyond village-selected lands, Nuiqsut's cultural landscape is owned by the federal government (both lands within NPR-A and areas east and south of the Colville River), the State of Alaska, and ASRC. At this time NPR-A is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), but, depending on forthcoming decisions by Congress, the reserve may be managed entirely or in part by other agencies. Most of the federal lands outside NPR-A but still within the Nuiqsut cultural landscape will continue to be managed by BLM. Various state and federal agencies have responsibility for offshore oil and gas leasing and development in sectors of the Beaufort Sea near Nuiqsut.

It is essential that the village join its supportive institutions in developing broad-scope cooperative agreements with the land managing and leasing agencies. Principal sources of support in this effort are the North Slope Borough, ASRC, and ICAS. Nuiqsut should seek sponsorship from ICAS for the overall campaign to achieve these cooperative agreements.

*Copies of these agreements and other referenced authorities are contained in the technical volume accompanying this cultural plan.

ASRC is important both as a landowner/manager and as a supportive institution. In this dual role it offers a good starting place for the village's campaign to safeguard its cultural landscape through cooperative agreements. ASRC has precise legal responsibilities as a profit-making corporation, but the historical and legal contexts of its founding and operation endow it with broader public purposes and sympathies as well. The potential for an enlightened blending of economic pursuits and cultural considerations already exists within ASRC. A cultural landscape agreement between ASRC and Nuiqsut could make that blending explicit. The process of developing the agreement would offer instruction for village leaders to prepare them for negotiations in less hospitable institutional settings. If the proposed cultural guardian participated in this process, the division of labor concept could be perfected in both the village and the supportive institution. The guardian would find counterpart interests and individuals within ASRC to aid in the resolution of economic and cultural issues.

If the village and ASRC adopt this suggestion to develop a cultural landscape agreement, representatives of the Borough and the State should be invited to participate in the process, both for edification and because these political entities exercise jurisdiction over ASRC-owned lands. Students and instructors from Inupiat University would benefit from auditing the proceedings, as the university states in its objectives that it wants to become a major resource in cross-cultural affairs.

It is very important that Nuiqsut's leaders and cultural guardian find and cultivate counterpart interests and individuals in the agencies that control the larger cultural landscape and its fish and wildlife. BLM employs staff specialists charged with environmental protection and cultural resource and wildlife management. Similar staffs can be found in the State's Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) have legal responsibilities for and expert staffs to deal with subsistence matters. The State's recently created Subsistence Section (within ADF&G) is charged by the Legislature to carry out the State's policy of giving subsistence the highest priority among all the beneficial uses of fish and wildlife.

Some agency counterparts will directly support Nuiqsut's heritage concerns; others will indirectly complement village efforts. For example, habitat and wildlife conservationists in various agencies may support Nuiqsut's cultural plan rather than industrial development because subsistence uses do not endanger habitat. Whether they are directly or indirectly supportive, counterpart interests in the agencies will become Nuiqsut's cultural guardians "once removed."

If there are no effective counterpart interests and individuals in an agency, Nuiqsut and its supportive institutions should urge the agency to create them. Both cooperative agreements and agency legal requirements could be used in these efforts.

Cooperative agreements with land and resource management agencies through alliance with counterpart interests in these agencies provide the best immediate means for Nuiqsut to maintain traditional freedoms of access and use throughout the cultural landscape. (This approach would not preclude comprehensive and supportive Congressional action on NPR-A, other federal lands, and offshore areas. In fact, cooperative agreements spelling out mutual interests and accommodations could be useful to Congress.)

Many models exist to illustrate the scope and substance of cooperative agreements. Perhaps the most pertinent model for this cultural plan is the cooperative management agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Native organizations of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. This agreement recognizes the mutual interests of the parties and sets forth a process for continuing consultation, planning, and supplemental agreements so that traditional and agency land uses complement one another. The agreement has been effectively and beneficially in force since April 1974. Nuiqsut leaders and their cultural guardian would benefit from consultations with key people in the Association of Village Council Presidents, Calista Corporation, and the Fish and Wildlife Service before initiating their own cooperative agreement campaign.

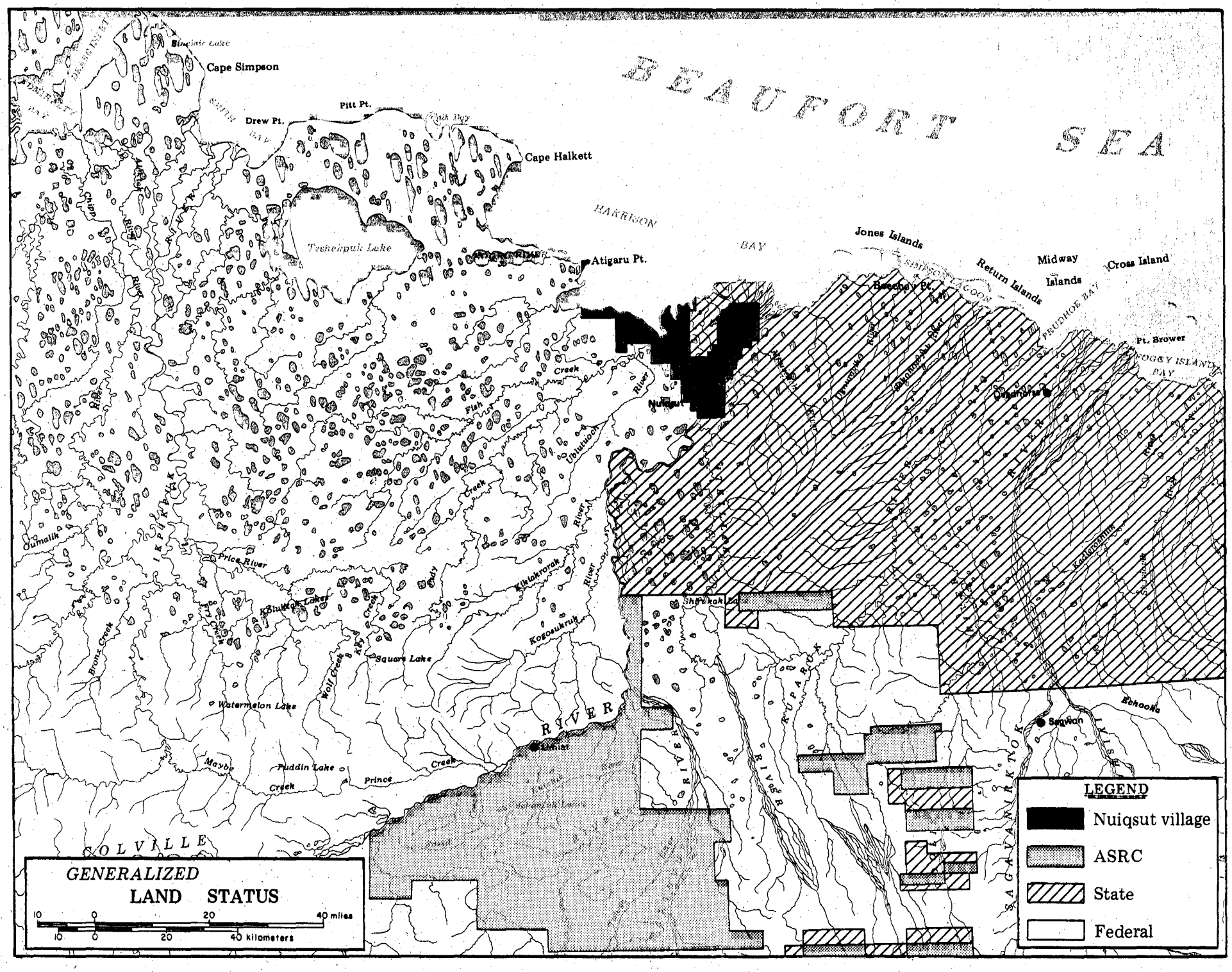
* * * * *

Assertion of traditional freedoms is relatively easy, for they relate directly to the villagers' most critical needs and the geography they know best. Controlling or influencing the actions of others is more difficult, for such actions are end products of national policies and economic interests of great magnitude and momentum. Yet there are federal and state laws already on the books designed to protect the resources and values of Nuiqsut's cultural landscape. Local cooperative agreements should be designed to complement the body of law that requires responsible government agencies to be enlightened enforcers of cultural and environmental standards.

Commonly, state and federal agencies throw curve balls (that is, problems) at outlying villages, especially by means of public participation meetings. Seldom are the alternatives presented by agency officials at such meetings true alternatives. Rather, they tend to be variations on decisions already made. ("Would you like OCS development to proceed this way or that way?") Village participation in such meetings is often limited to bemused listening and watching. The meetings are too tightly scheduled, the official presentations are too long, and there is neither time nor provision for translation into the Inupiaq tongue. Assuming that some "input" or "feedback" does go on the record, it often remains there—as evidence of input or feedback but not as a public contribution to be acted upon. Thus, public participation becomes a pro forma exercise that fulfills procedural requirements of the laws that the agency is supposed to substantively administer. Thus, the problems remain with the village as agency officials fly off to the next meeting.

This scenario reflects cross-cultural confusion and communication problems more than bad faith, but the results are the same for the village.

If Nuiqsut, through the cultural guardian and supportive institutions, is to throw curve balls back to the agencies—that is, make them perform their own duties—mastery of protective laws is the first requirement. Mastery here means knowing the key provisions of preemptive laws, the procedures for initiating their application, and the agencies and officials responsible for their administration.


BEAUFORT SEA
Cape Simpson
Pitt Pt.
Drew Pt.
Cape Halkett
HARRISON BAY
Jones Islands
Return Islands
Midway Islands
Cross Island
Atigaru Pt.
Beechey Pt.
Pt. Brower
Teshekpuk Lake
Nuiqsut
Kuparuk River
Sagavanirktok River
Colville River
Price River
Square Lake
Watermelon Lake
Puddin Lake
Prince Creek
Echooka
Seqwan
LEGEND
Nuiqsut village
ASRC
State
Federal
GENERALIZED
LAND STATUS
10 0 20 40 miles
10 0 20 40 kilometers

Barring outright agency hostility or neglect, the methods for calling responsible agencies to account should be cooperative and should make full use of the counterpart concept already discussed. Adversary proceedings, through administrative appeals and lawsuits, may be required in some instances; but because of their unpredictability, cost, and duration, they are no substitute for comprehensive, long-term protections based on positive application of the laws.

To the extent that responsible agencies are their own policemen, enforcers of their own mandates, the village and its supportive institutions are relieved of that function. This formula is not, however, a recipe for relaxation. Local vigilance will be required to assure that project-sponsoring or -licensing agencies comply with environmental and preservation laws governing project plans, developments, and operations.

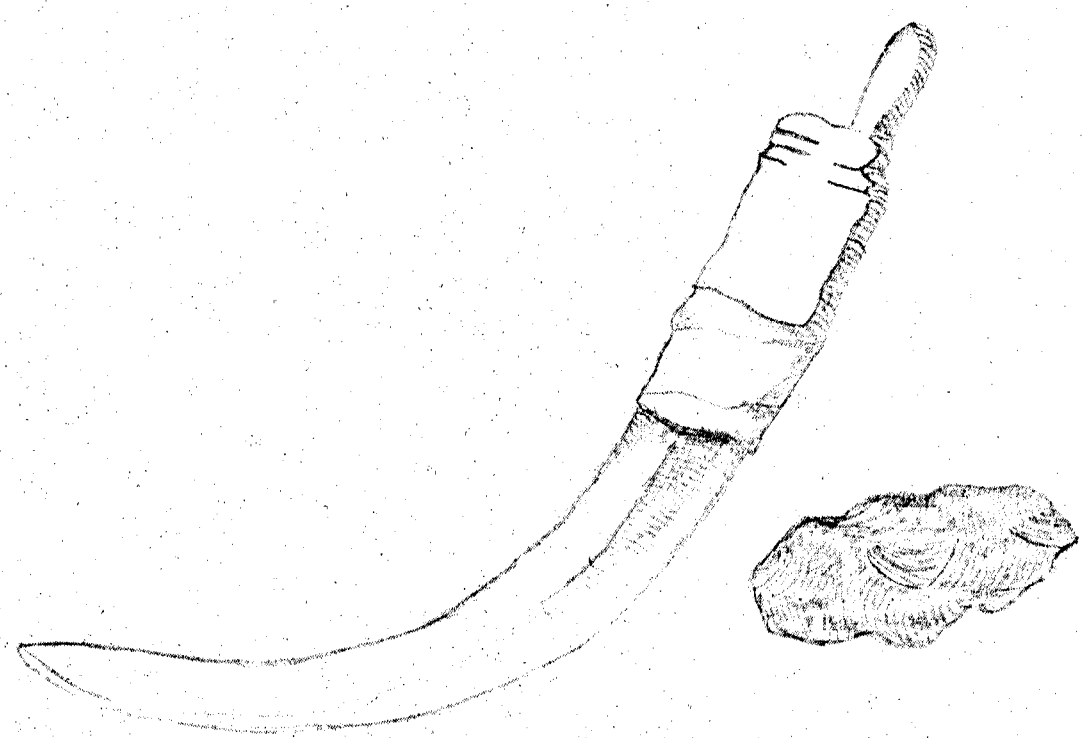
Again, the division of labor concept is important. The cultural guardian and supportive institutions will be responsible for getting village concerns incorporated in project plans, expressed as stipulations. Villagers, as they travel through the cultural landscape, will observe developments and operations and give early warning to the guardian if these activities violate the stipulations. The guardian and supportive institutions will cooperate in conveying these warnings to the sponsoring agencies and, if necessary, to regulatory bodies that can force compliance. A few instances of locally reported violations leading to forced compliance will stimulate sponsoring agencies to be more energetic as monitors and enforcers of their own mandates.

The accompanying technical volume lists and shows the application of major federal and state laws that require land and resource management agencies to protect environmental and cultural resources. Generally, these laws require that the agencies respect local interests and plans to the extent that they would not be inconsistent with or frustrate agency policies and programs. Recent federal legislation calls for cooperative and consistent planning between all levels of government, and the State's grant of planning and zoning powers through the North Slope Borough charter provides the means to achieve consistency of state planning with local plans.

At this time the North Slope Borough is preparing a coastal management program for the Prudhoe Bay area. This program proposes classification of lands and waters to protect habitat, wildlife, subsistence activities, and cultural resources. It would limit industrial uses and developments to particular zones and types of activities, depending on environmental sensitivities. Eventually, these classifications and implementing zoning and activity ordinances will be acted upon by the North Slope Borough Assembly.

The pattern being set by this program is ideally suited to attainment of the objectives of Nuiqsut's cultural plan. Adapted to Nuiqsut's needs and the jurisdictional variations within its cultural landscape, the program would incorporate the freedoms and controls developed through cooperative agreements and protective laws. It would then synthesize these elements in land and water classifications and activity restrictions, formalized by ordinance.

This cultural plan, refined and approved by the village, would be the foundation for the Nuiqsut area management



program. Through the mutual efforts of village people, their cultural guardian, supportive institutions, and counterpart interests in government agencies, the program would aim to achieve equitable balance between traditional and modern social needs.

Nuiqsut's management program should deal immediately with four critical matters already raised by village and borough.

1. The village should set high standards of protection for its own land and resource uses. These standards should complement federal and state laws and guidelines within an enlightened regional management system. Wainwright's self-imposed ban on the use of nets for smelt fishing early in this century exemplifies the kind of village regulation needed for high management standards. To the extent possible, the village should be its own regulator and enforcer, with assistance from the borough's public safety office when required.

2. The village, in cooperation with the borough, should appropriate a water supply from the Colville River and tributary and adjacent water bodies adequate for both village uses and preservation of fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife habitat. Such appropriation is authorized by the Alaska Constitution and state law and by ANCSA, which reserved waters sufficient to accomplish the purposes of its land conveyances to Alaska Natives. All federal and state agencies need to agree on the priority of community and wildlife-habitat water allocations before any appropriations are made for industrial uses. Eventually, the state should delegate to the North Slope Borough the authority to resolve water use conflicts at the local level. By this means local villages could establish water districts similar to those in the other western states.

3. Village and Borough should work closely with the State Department of Natural Resources to strengthen the protective features of the State's land classification scheme east of the Colville River. At present, all of this state land is classified as Resource Management except for the pipeline utility corridor and specific industrial sites around Prudhoe Bay. The multiple-use Resource Management classification is compatible with oil and gas development. Some protection is provided by an overlay Special Use Lands stipulation, which requires a special permit for surface-disturbing activities. All of the present retention classifications (lands to be retained in state ownership) are multiple-use categories; however, one classification, Wildlife Habitat, is more compatible with the cultural landscape than the others. The current land classification situation makes urgent the need for cooperative management agreements and borough zoning and activity ordinances to control industrial uses. In addition, joint land use planning should aim for reclassification of critical areas as Wildlife Habitat.

4. Nuiqsut's location on the Nigeluk (Nechelik) Channel of the Colville River was based on easy access to the river's main channel for fishing and hunting. Recent closure of the channel to boat navigation by shallows and resultant unthawed ice has critically reduced access to subsistence sites. Village and Borough must quickly initiate a program to reopen this channel, in cooperation with concerned federal and state agencies.

Land use studies now being conducted on NPR-A, as directed by Congress in the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act (PL 94-258), have produced preliminary land use options and guidelines that can be adapted to Nuiqsut's management program. Many federal agencies and representatives from the State and the Arctic Slope region have participated in these studies. Proposed land use options range from a mineral development emphasis to the opposite pole that would stress protection of fish and wildlife habitat and positively support the continuance of the subsistence way of life. This planning process highlights the concept of agency counterparts. In developing its management program, Nuiqsut and the Borough should identify and join with the agencies, options, and guidelines most supportive of the cultural landscape and the heritage community.

This concluding section of the cultural plan has presented a framework for action by the people of Nuiqsut. It has suggested ways to direct frustrated energies and concerns into constructive channels. It has taken account of Nuiqsut's cultural dilemma through the division of labor concept, whereby a cultural guardian provides a buffering link between traditionalist villagers and modern institutions and systems. Its proposed solutions begin at the village itself, then work outward by means of cooperative agreements, protective laws, and comprehensive plans and programs. It has recommended specific alliances with supportive institutions, whose broader capabilities and powers can help Nuiqsut to extend its own.

Each step in this process leads to the next. Village cohesion precedes constructive intergovernmental relationships, which in turn precede broad solutions over the extensive cultural landscape. For this reason, the suggestions offered here are concrete at the village level and progressively more conceptual at succeeding levels.

The people of Nuiqsut will decide for themselves how far and how fast they want to go with this plan—or whether they want it at all.

Acknowledgements

True to their tradition, the people of Nuiqsut have shared unstintingly their knowledge and hospitality during the studies and visits leading to preparation of this cultural plan. To name those who lent special assistance would require a village census. To these people, and to their well-being in a changing world, this plan is dedicated.

The Nuiqsut Traditional Land Use Inventory, assembled in cooperation with Nuiqsut informants by Flossie Hopson of the North Slope Borough, made possible definition of the cultural landscape. Additional data on subsistence, ethnohistory, and cultural resources were gathered in Nuiqsut by David Hoffman, David Libbey, and Grant Spearman. These data are assembled in *Nuiqsut, A Study of Land Use Values through Time,* published jointly in 1978 by the North Slope Borough and the Cooperative Park Studies Unit of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Richard K. Nelson, William Schneider, and Rosita Worl contributed germinal ideas and concepts relating to cultural values and the land. These are embedded in the text. Dick Hensel, Bob Jenks, Larry Kimball, and Charles Konigsberg gave practical suggestions for village action.

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The quotations on page 6 are from Jean Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1970, p. 34).

Historical photographs are from Bessie Ericklook's collection. Current site photographs were taken by David Libbey, Grant Spearman, and Anne Marie Falvey. Chuck Evans provided pictures of the move from Barrow to the Colville.

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