



Ruby Community Plan

2023~2028

Prepared by:
Tanana Chiefs
Conference

In Conjunction
with: Ruby
Community
Members

In Collaboration
with: Ruby
Tribal Council

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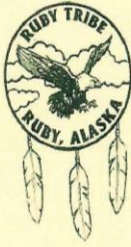
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FIGURE 1 WILDFLOWERS BY ELIZABETH CAPTAIN

RESOLUTION



RUBY TRIBAL COUNCIL

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Ruby, Alaska 99768

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Resolution # 23-24 Adopting Community Plan

Whereas, this Community Plan is important to the future growth and development of

Ruby; and,

Whereas, this plan was created through a public process that captured the values and goals of our community; and,

Whereas, this plan is a tool that helps us manage change in our community; and,

Whereas, this plan is intended to coordinate future community development and service delivery; and,

Whereas; it is understood that this document was created for public use and will be made publically available and,

Whereas, we ask all public, private, and non-profit entities serving our community to recognize and use this plan; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the parties of this resolution agree to work together to pursue the values, goals, and vision express in this plan.

Certification

We hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed and approved 4 in favor, 0 opposed by the following parties:

Patrick McCarty

1st Chief

Allyson McCarty

Secretary/Treasurer

7-11-23
Date

July 13, 23
Date

INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This community plan reflects the opportunities, as well as the challenges for future health and sustainability. This document is a culmination of several community wide visioning and planning events that provided an opportunity for Ruby community members to share their ideas and input on the goals and priorities that should guide future decisions. The goals highlighted in this document represent a desired state. It provides an outline of future project development.

While a lead entity may be indicated for some priorities this illustrates a pre-existing connection to that priority and is in no way binding. To achieve the flexibility that funding and staff resources require, goals and strategies are broadly expressed.

While the strategies identified in this plan indicate agreed upon community priorities, a notable missing element in this document is land use planning. Although the planning process and community profile information may be adapted to include land use planning elements later, the intent of this planning process was to establish a shared vision among community members in addition to satisfying requirements of funding agencies for documented community priority projects.

The Ruby Community Plan is a living document, should be updated as the goals and objectives identified in the community plan are accomplished. The goals and objectives included in this plan reflect the top priorities identified by community members and utilized to plan future projects and guide future development.

Tanana Chiefs Conference Planning and Development Program assisted with compiling content of this plan. Tanana Chiefs Conference Planning & Development staff traveled to Ruby in October 2022 to hold a meeting to establish the goals and action items in this plan. It was adopted by Ruby Tribal Council on July 11th, 2023.

VISION

We the People of Ruby desire to preserve and promote a healthy village and traditional cultural values: Through cooperative efforts, we can create employment and economic opportunities; improve public and private facilities; better educate our own people, and manage our natural resources in a holistic way.

We must be resilient and adaptive to social & climate change. To adopt alternative energy, agriculture and environmentally sustainable community development reflective of our tribal resolutions for a prosperous and healthy future for 7 generations.

GOALS SUMMARY

Youth & Elders

- Ruby find funding to build a multipurpose center that can house spaces for cultural and physical activities within the community. Such as dance group gatherings, potlatches, elder meal services, space to create and teach Alaska Native history, indoor sports court that can be used for multiple indoor games, and childcare space for working parents that will help children with educational, physical, social skills and cultural skills.

Housing

- Ruby community members would like to create a plan to obtain housing that is both energy efficient and affordable for both low income and middle class families alike.

Public Utilities

- To help offset the high cost of energy within the community and to be more energy efficient, community members would like to have solar panels installed on both commercial and residential buildings.

Public Facilities

- Ruby community members would like to continue the process of planning and constructing a new community tribal hall.

Subsistence

- Ruby community members would like to continue their advocating efforts to protect subsistence hunting and fishing rights in and around the Ruby area.

Transportation

- Ruby community members would like to plan and construct a building that can ensure a maintenance (shop) area, office space and house equipment that can be used year round and protect workers and equipment from the elements.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HISTORY & CULTURE

The community of Ruby was originally a supply point for gold miners in the area during Alaska's gold rush in the early 1900's. The name of the new settlement was after the red colored stones that were found on the riverbanks that were thought to be rubies. The first known gold strikes were at Ruby Creek in 1907 and later at Long Creek in 1911. Soon after hundreds of prospectors who travelled far distances came to the area.

In 1912 the US Post Office was established which then led to the incorporation of Ruby as a city in 1913. It was reported that during this time there was at one point over 1,000 miners that settled in Ruby and the surrounding areas. During this time the population was made up of non-native miners, so the community was governed by these non-native miners. Which was later transitioned to the Pioneer Igloo Number 5, an outpost of the Pioneers of Alaska Fraternal organization.



FIGURE 2 HISTORIC RUBY – ALASKA DIGITAL ARCHIVES

With the large population which was not common during this time the town was booming. Which brought a lot of business to the area. During these early times of the community they had stores, outfitters, a newspaper, lumber mills, hotels, movie house and show hall. Unfortunately a fire in 1929 destroyed many of the businesses. A few years later a flood took the remaining buildings that were close to the river.

Although a couple mining camps can be found in the area most of the miners of the gold rush left. Mining operations were shut down during World War II, with that the non-native miners left. By 1939 there were only 139 residents of the area. Sometime after the war families from Kokrine Hills decided to relocate to Ruby which brought the population back up. By 1973, Ruby was incorporated as a second class city. During this time a clinic, water source and school were built.

Despite during the creation of Ruby and many of the residents being non-native, today Ruby now is a prominently Alaska Native community. And are still strongly connected

to their native culture. The community was given the Denaakk'e name Tlaa'ologhe meaning 'at the edge of the bluff'.

LOCATION

The community of Ruby lies approximately at 64°44'14"N 155°29'16"W. On the south bank of the Yukon River near the Kilbuck-Kuskokwim Mountains. Ruby is about 230 air miles west of Fairbanks 50 air miles east of Galena. Ruby is accessible by plane year round or by the Yukon River during certain times of the year. It is located in the Nulato Recording District in an area that encompasses 7.6 sq. miles of land. Ruby lies adjacent to the Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge, which encompasses 2.1 million acres

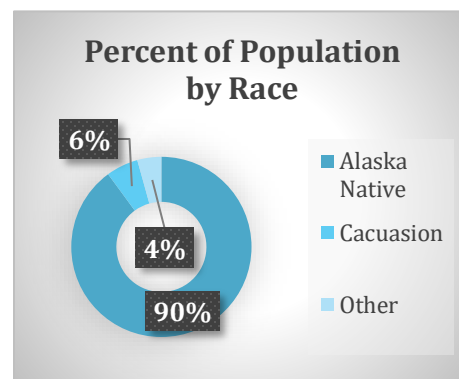
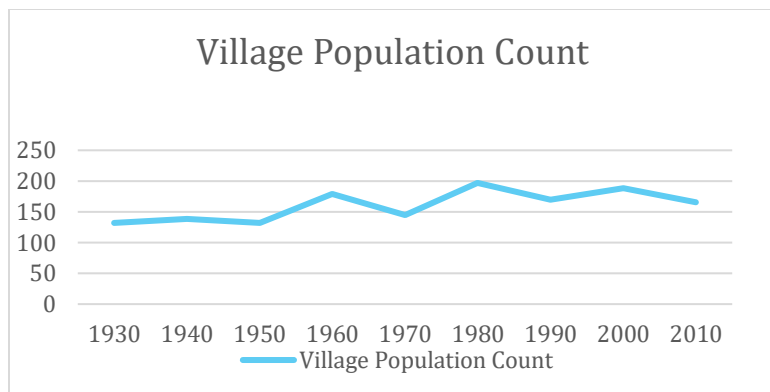
CLIMATE

Ruby, along with most of Interior Alaska, is part of the continental climate zone. They experience extreme temperatures, characterized by long and harsh winters and short and hot summers. The extreme weather temperatures can measure anywhere between -53 to 98 °F. The average daily temperatures during the summer months is in the 70's while during the winter months the average temperature is around 0° degrees plus or minus. Temperatures of -30°F to -40°F common during winter months. Annual precipitation is 12 inches of rain and 78 inches of snowfall. The Yukon River ice break up typically happens during the timeframe of end of April to mid-May.

POPULATION

The 2020 U.S. Census recorded the local population at 139 people. Knowing this number can quickly fluctuate due to housing, jobs and the season. The following chart shows that the population of the village fluctuate between 150-200 range with community members coming and going. Such fluctuation can be due to elders leaving for full time care, children or young adults leaving for schooling opportunities or lack of housing or job opportunities.

According to the US Census in 2020, residents identified themselves as 125 Alaska Native, 8 Caucasian, and 6 with a mixed race.



GOVERNANCE

RUBY TRIBAL COUNCIL

The Ruby Tribal Council which hold a seven member tribal council, ten employees to run day to day operations, and tribal judges and clerks is recognized by the federal government as the official tribal governing body for the village. The council members serves three-year terms that are staggered for re-election every two years. Council members meet every month to discuss current grant proposals, programs, mitigating tribal issues, and relevant information sharing. The Tribal Court consists of elected board members and the Traditional First Chief. Their terms of service end when their council member term ends. In 2014, the Tribal Council updated and adopted new codes of operation.



FIGURE 3 KENDRA MCCARTY TRIBAL BUILDING

The Tribal Court consists of elected board members and the Traditional First Chief. Their terms of service end when their council member term ends. In 2014, the Tribal Council updated and adopted new codes of operation.

The tribal office is a main employer for the community and staffs the following departments in the tribal office to run programs including:

- ❖ IGAP Program
- ❖ Consolidated Tribal Government Program
- ❖ Tribal Transportation Program
- ❖ ICWA
- ❖ Family Violence Protection Program
- ❖ Tribal Workforce Development
- ❖ Natural Resources -Subsistence

The Tribal Council passed the tribal constitution in 1978. The most recent updates to the Ruby Tribal Constitution include the community's Codes and Ordinances made in 2008. The Ruby Tribal Council established the codes to protect our cultural and natural resources and preserve our cultural heritage.

CITY OF RUBY

The city of Ruby was originally incorporated in 1913 during the Gold Rush era and was governed by Miner's meetings and later by Pioneer Igloo Number 5. After the end of the Gold Rush era the population declined and eventually in 1973 Ruby was incorporated into a second class city.

The City of Ruby employees consists of seven board members and five staff. The board members serve three-year terms, with staggering re-elections every two years. The city runs the local laundromat, community electrical plant, sewage lagoon, and partial oversight on the health clinic. The staff consists of a mayor, city administrator, generator operator, laundromat maintenance, and custodian.



FIGURE 4 CITY OF RUBY OFFICE

VPSO/ LAW ENFORCEMENT

The community does not have a Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO). As of 2022, Ruby does not have housing designated for the VPSO. The nearest Alaska State Trooper is located 52 miles away stationed in Galena. Local tribal government makes legal decisions in tribally enrolled client custody cases, domestic violence and trespassing violations.

DINEEGA CORPORATION

Pursuant to the ANCSA land settlement, Ruby created their village corporation in 1973 and owns 115,200 acres surrounding the community. The corporation currently has 9

board members each with 3 year terms. Their focus is of the management of these lands on the protection of traditional shareholder uses, and responsible economic development of natural resources. Since the incorporation in 1973 the number of shareholders has grown as shares are passed onto decedents and as of 2022 have 300+ shareholders. Day to day staffing for the corporation includes three full-time employees and a president. As subsidiary of the corporation it owns and operates Dineega Fuel Company.



FIGURE 5 DINEEGA CORPORATION OFFICE

DOYON, LIMITED

Ruby is part of Doyon Limited, the Alaska Native Regional Corporation for Interior Alaska established in 1972 under the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (ANCSA). Provisions under ANCSA, Doyon is entitled to receive approximately 12.5 million acres across Interior Alaska, making Doyon the largest private landowner in Alaska. Doyon has, to date, received title to nearly 10 million acres, mainly around the 34 villages within the TCC region.



Doyon Vision:

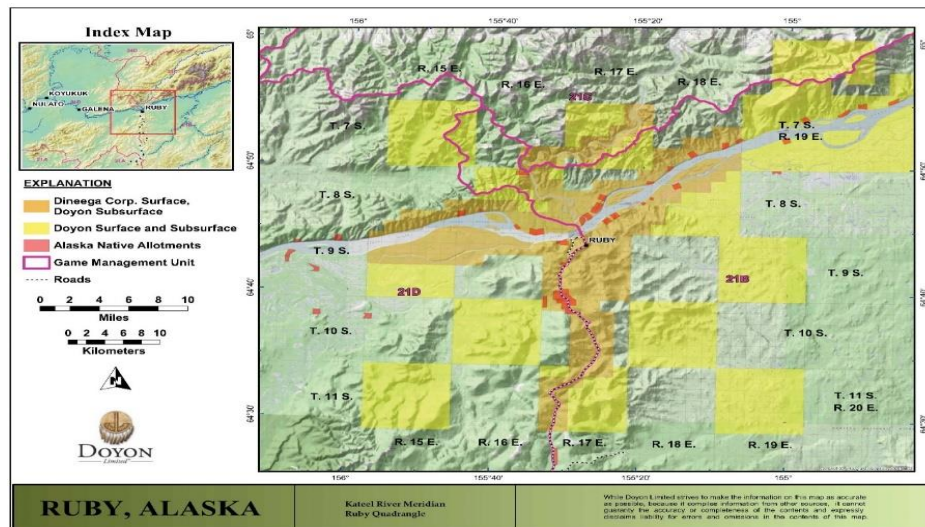
Leader in All We Do

Doyon Mission:

To continually enhance our position as a financially strong Native corporation in order to promote the economic and social well-being of our shareholders and future shareholders, to strengthen our Native way of life, and to protect and enhance our land and resources.

Doyon Values:

- Financially responsible
- Socially and culturally responsibility Alaska Native people
- Pride and respect in Native ownership
- Commitment to the long-term
- Honesty and integrity
- Commitment to excellence
- Respect for employees
- Commitment to employee safety and sound environmental practices



TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

Tanana Chiefs Conference was officially formed in 1962 and incorporated under Alaska State Law in 1971. We are organized as Dena' Nena' Henash or "Our Land Speaks"; an Alaska Native nonprofit corporation, charged with advancing Tribal self-determination and enhancing regional Native unity. TCC provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior.



TCC provides services while balancing traditional Athabascan and Alaska Native values with modern demands. TCC's objectives are to provide health, social, and economic services to the native people and villages of interior Alaska, known as the TCC region, using

federal, state, and local resources. TCC is comprised of three core departments: 1. Administration; 2. Health Services; and 3. Tribal Client and Tribal Government Services.

Within those core departments, we offer services in the following categories: Tribal Development; Self Governance; Housing; Public Safety Officer; Natural Resources; Client Development; Elder Nutrition; Employment and Training; Child Development; Child Protection; Head Start; Staff Development; Vocational Rehabilitation; Work Assistance Program and ASAP; Dental; Quality Management; Laboratory; Contract Health; Registration; Environmental Health; Pharmacy; Medical; Family Medicine; Family Medicine RN; Specialty Clinics; Radiology; Community Health Outreach Program; Home Care Provider; Behavioral Health; Old Minto Family Recovery Camp; Psychiatry; SBIRT; Paul Williams House; Community Health Aide Program; Bertha Moses Patient Hostel; Eye Clinic; Housing First; Wellness and Prevention; and Willow House.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference region covers an area of 235,000 square miles in Interior Alaska, which is equal to about 37 percent of the entire state, and just slightly smaller than the state of Texas. Within our region are six subregions:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| -Yukon Flats | -Lower Yukon | -Yukon-Koyukuk |
| -Yukon-Tanana | -Upper Kuskokwim | -Upper Tanana |

Within our six subregions are 39 villages, for an approximate population of 6700. We also serve clients in the Fairbanks area.

DENAKKANAAGA

Denakkanaaga, meaning “Our People Speak” in Denaakk’e (Koyukon Athabascan), is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization which serves as the voice for the Interior Native elders in the Doyon and Tanana Chiefs Conference region. Denakkanaaga acts on behalf of the elders, working to ensure the organization addresses concerns regarding topics such as Native cultures, traditions, languages, subsistence and social issues. As the population over 65 grows within Interior Alaska, Denakkanaaga works with other organizations to maximize efforts to advocate for Native Elders.



Denakkanaaga Core Values/Commitments:

- United Voice; Keep Native voice stronger together for positive action
- Continue traditions, art, cultural values, language, and subsistence life
- Unity among Native organizations and people

Denakkanaaga core programs:

- Peer support for each other (elder to elder)
- Support/mentor the next generation
- Cultural programs
- Regional voice on issues/concern

INTERIOR REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA), a non-profit organization, is the Tribally Designated Housing Entity for Ruby Tribal Council. Formed in 1974, they implement the Indian Housing Plans to improve and expand affordable housing. IRHA offers services such as, grant writing, environmental reviews, project managers, project site control, payroll, accounts payable, financial reporting, procurement, material inventory/shipment, homebuyer counseling and collections.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide housing opportunities and support self-sufficiency through housing.

VISION STATEMENT:

Thriving families with quality affordable housing.

VALUES:

- ❖ Innovation
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Honesty
- ❖ Accountability

PUBLIC UTILITIES

WATER AND SEWER

The City of Ruby owns and operates the water plant, which provides water to the washeteria and watering plant. Many residents self-haul their water to small holding tanks from the main watering plant. Roughly, 30 homes have individual wells and septic system. The city is able to pump septic systems with their septic tank truck. The cost of operating the water plant is a tremendous burden to the city. Waste heat from our electric generators that greatly offsets heating fuel costs for our laundromat.

The Merrelaine A. Kangas School has their own self-contained well system, which has untreated water. A community biomass assessment determined to be a good choice for applying biomass heat for heating the water and school.

Suggested improvements include providing the City of Ruby with a community sludge disposal facility that will safely collect septic sludge and holding tank waste per ADEC regulations. The new facility would include a new sewage disposal cell with liner, percolation cell, and fencing.

SOLID WASTE

The City of Ruby operates a Class III landfill, located 25 miles from Ruby on the Poorman Rd. Ruby's current landfill has reached its maximum capacity and no longer meets the needs of the community.

During a community meeting held in June 2010, constructing a new landfill and closing out the current one emerged as the community's highest immediate priority. Because of its great importance the community of Ruby has already begun preparations for building a new landfill site in anticipation of securing funding to do so. The Tribal Council identified the IGAP program as the lead organization to secure funding for a landfill design. Identifying an appropriate site for the new landfill and nominating a new road to the site was progress. A new burn barrel is burning waste at the landfill now reducing the amount of bulk waste into the already full waste pits. The community is planning a new dump for relocation before 2022.

Suggested improvements include constructing a trench and fill landfill in a separate location to include fencing, signs, burn unit, dozer, and honey bucket cell. Close existing trench and fill with 2 feet of cover material.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

United Utilities provides telephone services through landlines to homes and provides internet. GCI provides cell phone services. In 2014, DRS installed two microwave towers near Ruby. The new towers were placed in hopes of providing broad range fast internet for the community and improve existing cell phone coverage.

Internet

United Utilities, Inc. (a joint company with Yukon Telephone) provides DSL internet service through the telephone landline service. Satellite internet service is available through Viasat, but if issues arise finding a repair technician maybe an issue.

Cable Television

Local networks and cable are available to those who wish to subscribe to Dish Network. Though their services residents are able to watch local Alaska news, cable and on demand movies.

POWER/ENERGY

Bulk Fuel

The Dineega Fuel Company is owned and operated by Dineega Corp. In 2012, the bulk fuel facilities received an upgrade to their 100,000 gallon holding tanks. The current cost of gasoline is \$7.25 per gallon. A bottle of Propane is \$230.00, and #1 oil is at \$7.25 per gallon. With Ruby being a remote village to offset some of the costs to delivering fuel they have fuel delivered by the barges services that run during the summer months.



FIGURE 6 DINEEGA BULK FUEL

In 2012, City of Ruby did a bulk fuel renovation for the main electrical generator and it holds 7,000.

In addition to Dineega Fuel Company and the City of Ruby other business own fuel holding tanks. Below is the breakdown of the bulk fuel inventory in Ruby (DCRA, 2022)

- State of Alaska, DOT: 4,000 fuel capacity
- City of Ruby: 12,000 fuel capacity
- Dineega Fuel Company: 194,800 fuel capacity
- Yukon Koyukuk School District: 65,610 fuel capacity

Electric

The City of Ruby owns and operates the power plant. With their diesel generators they are able to provide electricity to the community. As of 2022 prices are .75 cents per Kilowatt/h, which is down from .98 cents per Kilowatt/h in past years.

The City of Ruby receives an energy subsidy from the State of Alaska Power Cost Equalization Program, which assists local residents in offsetting the high prices of energy, which is common in rural Alaskan communities. The current PCE rate is approximately a little more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 75-cents kWh. The PCE rate changes often as fuel prices change.

There was a hydrokinetic turbine pilot project underway in Ruby that lasted 4 years (2008 to 2012). The turbine put power into Ruby's electricity grid and produced enough energy to power three homes successfully. The hydrokinetic pilot project administered by the Yukon Intertribal Watershed Council and was the only one of its kind in the nation. It had some technical problems to be resolved and the project is on hold.

Our laundromat and new clinic utilizes over twenty solar panels to reduce diesel use at our new power plant. Waste heat from the generator helps to heat the laundromat, fire garage and clinic to offset heating fuel in those buildings. Ruby Tribal Council has a resolution and feasibility study to use a biomass heat source when it is applicable to new development or remodeling existing buildings.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

ALTONA BROWN HEALTH CLINIC

The Altona Brown Clinic provides the health services for the community. The late Altona Brown, who was the last traditional medicine woman in the area, is who the clinic was named after. The Ruby Tribal Council owns and operates the clinic. Through a partnership between the City of Ruby, Alaska Denali Commission, and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) built the health clinic in 2013. The city provides additional funding for maintenance.



FIGURE 7 ALTONA BROWN HEALTH CLINIC

TCC Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) provides funding for permanent health clinic staffers, two-full time and one part-time health aides. The tribal council hired health aides in February 2014 and able to see patients one-on-one. TCC also provides itinerant nurses and physicians that travel to the community frequently to provide additional services to residents. If an individual has a greater need for health care services beyond routine, a majority of residents get treated at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, in Fairbanks.

POST OFFICE

The Post Office operates five days a week (9:00am-5:00pm). A staff of one maintains the post office. The post office receives mail daily by air by Wrights Air.

PUBLIC PARK

The community has a small park downtown; located next to the Yukon River it has a covered picnic area and campground.



FIGURE 8 RUBY POST OFFICE

Mostly river rafters, travelers, and tourists use the area. It utilized by community members for social picnics and barbeques

MERRELINE A. KANGAS SCHOOL

The Merrelaine A. Kangas School was built in 1978 and is part of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District. The school teaches grades kindergarten through 12th grade. For the 2022-2023 school year there are 3 teachers and 25 students. The school operates a breakfast and lunch program, Head Start, an archery program, seasonal culture camp, culture week, and gym nights.

In 2013, the community received capital improvement project funding for school renovations. The Alaska Department of Education awarded Ruby \$6,791,484 to complete the project. A new school playground was completed in 2012. The new playground has slides, swings and monkey bars that meet current safety standards. The school received a grant totaling \$421,367.00 for the construction of two new teachers housing units in 2009. Both are complete and filled.

In 2014, Merrelaine A. Kangas School, Ruby Tribal Council and The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service collaborated in the preparation of native plants and tree garden in front of the school. In August of 2014, lower grade students hand planted and transplanted shrubs and trees for the garden. Adults share knowledge on hydroponics, gardening and subsistence to the kids in school.



FIGURE 9 MERRELINE A. KANGAS SCHOOL - PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CAPTAIN

WASHETERIA

In 2005 the washeteria was completed after the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium was awarded a grant for the work. The facility features three showers, four washers and six dryers. The city employs one person operate the facility.

Approximately seventy-five residents utilize the washeteria each week. Many of the residents rely on the water services from the washeteria. The majority of the community does not have running water and those with private wells suffer from poor water quality due to high traces of iron present in local soil.



FIGURE 10 RUBY WASHETERIA

COMMUNITY HALL

The Ruby Community Hall was built in the mid 1970's and does not have running water. In 2010, the building logs were restored and upgraded for weatherization purposes through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) under a one-time grant to stimulate the economy. The community uses it for public meetings, dances, cultural dances, potlatches, and funerals. The Community Hall is where most community events take place.

The community has started the process of building a new building to be used as the community tribal with a new location.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

As of 2022, the community has no formalized search and rescue response team. The tribe completed a Small Community Emergency Response Plan in August 2014. The plan establishes a community-wide emergency response so that a local disaster response will be faster, more effective, and more organized.

The community of Ruby has several pieces of equipment that help during times of emergency. The City of Ruby owns and operates the fire truck. In 2014, the city replaced the water valves in the truck that were leaking due to water freezing. The tribe owns and operates the ambulance, water truck, satellite phone, Search and Rescue radios, VHF radios, two gurneys, snow-machine, four-wheeler, and boat. The fire truck and ambulance are housed at the fire hall throughout the year which is own and maintained by the City of Ruby. The boat is housed near the washeteria during the winter months. The two-way radios and four-wheelers are housed at the tribal council office for regular use.



FIGURE 11 RUBY EMS TRUCK

ECONOMY

LOCAL STORES

The community has two local stores. The Ruby Commercial sells groceries, tobacco and liquor 10:00 to 5:00 pm. McCarty's Services a home based store, which is open in the evenings to sell a small selection of groceries, snacks, and tobacco.

OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES

The community members of Ruby are entrepreneurship driven and many of the members have started the own business

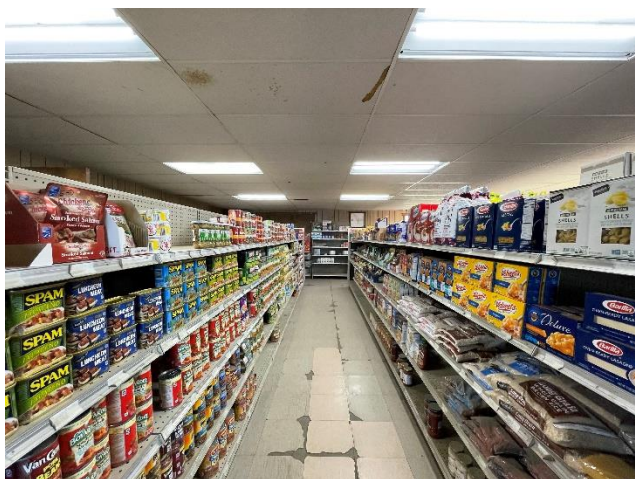


FIGURE 12 RUBY COMMERCIAL COMPANY

in the community, a main on being bed & breakfast for the many workers that come and go throughout the year.

In addition to the services provided many of our local residents utilize their knowledge of traditional crafts to sell pieces to interested buyers. Many local residents utilize their knowledge of traditional beading, skin sewing, and creating items to sell upon request.

GOLD MINING

Near Ruby, there are at least five small (2-5 man operations) gold mining camps operating, with a majority off Poorman Road. The gold industry in the community promises to be ongoing and possibly expanding with new prosperous finds every year. The largest gold nugget ever found in Alaska was near Ruby in 1998. In addition to gold mining endeavors, Ruby has one permanent construction contractor, past gold miner, heavy equipment operator, and well driller; Gary Kangas, who does a lot of work in the village and subcontracts in many of our local building projects.

HOUSING

CURRENT HOUSING

Based on 2020 U.S. Census information, Ruby has 103 housing units. And of that only 56 of those houses are occupied. Leaving 47 houses vacant. The houses that are currently vacant are mainly because the houses have been deemed unlivable. Which can be common in the rural communities.

Like many surrounding communities local residents feel there is always a demand for new housing. Due to a lack of housing some families will have to relocate to either a new village or to the nearest city.

ricates homes to build in Ruby. Ruby is on a five-year funding schedule and builds homes roughly every five years. In 2021, Ruby Tribe received funding to build two homes to reduce overcrowding during the COVID pandemic.

Families that are able to locate and harvest timber suitable for housing are able to use local sawmills that are in the village. This type of project typically takes a lot of effort and time and help from family and friends. Depending on the support can be a longer process.

It is estimated about 18 people built their homes that they currently reside in. The construction of these homes is typically of local spruce timber.

TRANSPORTATION

Ruby has limited transportation modes depending on the time of the year. As Ruby is not on the Alaska Road System, flying is the frequented and fastest mode of transportation to the nearest city, Fairbanks, AK. In addition to flying another mode of transportation is using the water ways.

AIRPORT

The State of Alaska DOT & PF own and operate the local runway located in Ruby. This airstrip is a 4,000 ft lighted gravel runway located at 64-43-38.0000N 155-28-11.6000W. There is not control center. FAA currently does have an operating weather camera to assist with the visualization of the weather. To assist the SOA DOT & PF with the maintenance of the runway there is an airport facility the houses a caterpillar grader and cade loader.



FIGURE 13 RUBY AIRPORT SHOP -
PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CAPTAIN

Because of the distance from Ruby to the nearest city, Fairbanks 230 air miles flying is typically the preferred method of travel. Depending on flight route which can stop in other villages typically takes 1 hr 30mins. Airlines to fly into Ruby are Wrights Air Service and Everts Air. In addition to passenger travel flying groceries or household items into the community is popular. Items freighted in by plane have to be paid for by the pound. But depending on space availability freighting items such as groceries or household items can be delayed. On occasion larger items such as ATVs and snow machines have been flown into communities.

WATERWAYS

Another mode of transportation of travel in and out of the community is on the Yukon River. This type of transportation can be done by aluminum boats, snow machines and for larger freight transportation or fuel delivery barges.

Traveling on the river during the summer months is typically done to travel from village to village or camp sites. With Alaska's warm weather, beautiful scenery and long summer nights traveling on the river is a preferred way of travel for some community members during the short time frame given between ice break up in April or May and freezing in the late fall. During those winter months when the ice is thick enough travel can be done on snow machine. As the temperatures and weather during the winter can be hazardous traveling by snow machine is used by fewer people.

Whether it be in boats in the summer or snow machines in the winter traveling on the Yukon River is very important to the subsistence lifestyle many community members still live. They are able to fish, hunt and trap. And are able to access family camps that are along the rivers.

For larger freight transportation barges are popular. The larger commercial barges services run out of Nenana, AK which is located on the river bank of the Tanana River. There, building supplies, large vehicles (cars, trucks, buses/vans, heavy equipment) and fuel can be brought in and out of the community. This is not typically a fast service but can either be less expensive or the only option for delivery of some items.



FIGURE 14 YUKON RIVER TRAVEL - PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CAPTAIN



FIGURE 15 BARGE PHOTO FROM MAUREEN MCCARTY

In addition to these larger commercial barge services there have been start up companies that can produce these services on a smaller scale.

ROADWAYS

The 40-mile Poorman Road in Ruby. The road is a vital resource in ensuring the community members maintain subsistence activities in their region. It also provides necessary transportation to a number of mining claims. AKDOT cited that it costs the state roughly \$115,000 annually, by not clearing icy drifts or thawing culverts. Ruby was the only community in the Northern region to receive a funding cut. As a result the City of Ruby and Ruby Tribe have had numerous discussions with the State of Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) on extending funding to maintain the road. Ruby Tribal Council will be planning to maintain the Poorman Highway starting in 2024 along with the Ruby Slough.

There are discussions of utilizing the existing Poorman Road to create a road between Ruby and McGrath. Many residents in Nikolai and others along the Iditarod Trail are opposed to a road but an ATV trail and winter trail improvement are compatible with most residents along the trail as more of a benefit with less disadvantages. The proposed trail would provide intermodal connections between the Yukon and Kuskokwim River. Additionally Ruby have access to a larger subsistence area to harvest for villages between Ruby and McGrath. Additionally the “Road to Nome” project includes the road to Tanana, which bypasses Ruby by a few miles north.

INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION

All of the roads in and around Ruby are maintained gravel roads. In 2008, the City of Ruby turned over the responsibility of maintaining local roads and trails over to the Ruby Tribal Council. After retaining the responsibility for roads and trails, Ruby Tribal Council began contracting directly with the Western Federal Highway Lands Administration (WFHLA). From 2008-2011 the Ruby Tribal Council successfully secured \$341,000 for planning, scoping, engineering, and the Environmental Impact Statement of several of its roads. Out of the \$341,000 there was a remainder that the tribe put aside to complete phase 1 of Ruby Slough Rd. They have also secured over \$1.27 million through BIA for road improvements. Ruby Slough road project is starting phase 2 in 2024.

The tribe completed an updated long-range transportation plan in 2005, which includes information on Ruby's current road inventory. The road inventory covers future planning and maintenance for road construction.

In 2010, Ruby Tribal Council purchased a water truck for a dust control program. The Tribe is currently discussing applying a palliative to our roads occasionally as needed to decrease dust. We will be working with NRCS and Alaska Trails Committee in coordination with DOE to maintain and rebuild our off road trails for better travel and subsistence opportunities.

In 2017, the tribe to build Ruby Slough Road for its Phase 1 put \$230,000 federal money aside. Phase 1 was completed at the end of the summer of 2018.

In 2018, Denali Commission also awarded Ruby Tribal Council Transportation \$104,852 to repair drainage, culverts, berms and road repairs around Ruby town site.

Again, in 2018 the Transportation Department paid for the survey of the Ruby town site gravel pit. Dineega Corporation transferred full ownership to the tribe's transportation department to store heavy equipment and supplies.

In early 2020 the Transportation Department secured safety funds in an award of \$30,720 to complete a Road Safety Audit on the first 14 miles of the State of Alaska owned Poor-man Road. As a result, Dineega and the State completed an MOU with the State allowing the tribe to write grants for the state owned road.

In the spring of 2020, the Transportation Department received \$6,959,205 to complete Phase II of the Ruby Slough Road in order to access the slough gravel at the end of the 3-mile road. The tribe is required to secure a 9.03% (\$690,795) match in which they were able to get a Denali Commission grant for \$250,000 also that spring.

The Transportation Department received funding for a Transit Grant Bus for public transportation for the town of Ruby. Because this bus will happen to run during school hours, schoolchildren may ride the bus and local residents may utilize the bus to go to local organizations.

LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

LAND OWNERSHIP

The Dineega Native Corporation owns approximately 115,200 acres around the City of Ruby which the ANCSA 14(c)3 conveyance agreement gave the amount of 880 acres to the City of Ruby most of which is privately owned. The Nowitna Wildlife Refuge covers 2.1 million acres just east and upriver adjacent to Ruby. The 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) created the refuge. There are numerous native allotments, BLM, and state land in Blocks surrounding Ruby. There is a limited amount of city and a few Native allotments available for sale. See appendices for detailed map of land ownership.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Climate changes have been and continue to negatively affect the community. Travel is more limited because of dangerous conditions if the Yukon River does not stay frozen for as long as it used to. Hunting season is warmer, which seems to affect animal behavior relevant to subsistence activities, grassy ponds are losing more water every year and there were no berries in the summer of 2014 which people rely on. Unpredictable weather patterns increase situations for accidents and other consequences in daily living. We have seen unfamiliar insects, birds, and other flora and fauna in Ruby. We do not know how much this will determine the future of our local environment and eco system.

Our public dump/landfill is full, overused, and ready to close. Ruby's dump pollution problems began with the increased introduction of non-biodegradable products and toxic materials. Wild animals and birds eat from the waste and water runoff that pollutes the area. We have a recycling initiative with a back haul program but it needs to be improved and enforced as the pollution problem still persists with even more foreign, non-renewable materials and toxins brought in to the village. The bulk of the garbage problem includes construction materials, discarded appliances, disposable use design, and food and product packaging. Ruby does have a dump plan to be initiated, a new landfill site and a high temperature trash burn unit is has been purchased and being used to eliminate part of the garbage. Construction of a new dumpsite is on the horizon.

SUBSISTENCE

The harvest of subsistence foods is not what it once was before the 1950s, when people moved from camp to camp following the “cycle of life.” Store bought foods are replacing seasonal subsistence foods and activities. However, subsistence harvested food is still traditionally shared throughout the whole community which offsets the high price of food, encouraging healthy diet practices, offsets high costs of living, and gives a good foundation to traditional cultures. A subsistence harvest survey conducted in 2011 by the Alaska Fish & Game Department found that Ruby residents consumed:

- ❖ 32,075 lbs. of edible salmon
- ❖ 4305 lbs. non-salmon fish
- ❖ 1,040 lbs. berries and greens
- ❖ 16,160 lbs. moose bear and other mammals
- ❖ 505 lbs. birds
- ❖ 22 lbs. outside hunted marine mammals

Boat hunting areas are on the Nowitna, Yuki and Melozi Rivers and tributaries with the remainder of hunters using the 40 mile long Poorman Road with trucks and ATVs. Berry picking and grouse hunting are on and near the road. Most of subsistence fishing uses gill nets on the Yukon River where we harvest salmon and other species; fresh water fish such as grayling are caught in the Melozi River using a fishing pole.



FIGURE 16 KING SALMON -
PHOTO BY MAUREEN McCARTY

Changing climates and increasing state regulations affect changes in subsistence activities. More than 100 years ago, caribou were much more abundant in this area and was the main ungulate harvested for subsistence food when moose were rare at the time. Now, caribou are rare. The community used to participate in livestock herding, raising reindeer but the practice went away over time. Ruby is creating a business plan to acquire more reindeer. Restricted fishing regulations and closures drastically limited a large percentage of subsistence fishing in our community. The summer of 2020 restricted king salmon harvest, which still did not meet escapement goals for passage in to Canada and the fall chum and silver run was not open to fishing due to very low numbers for the first time ever in Ruby. Hunting regulations in the area are similar and are difficult to understand with antler cutting, timeframes, and specific use areas. Our local fish and game advisory committee submits proposals to all federal and state authorities to modify and change regulations in support of required subsistence harvest and maintaining high fish and wildlife populations and cooperate with authorities.

The refuge provides ideal breeding grounds for migratory birds with its marshy swamps and shallow lakes. There is upwards of 120 different species of migratory birds that feed and nest on the Nowitna Refuge. The refuge is plentiful in fish and game including different species of salmon, grayling, pike, and whitefish. Large mammals include moose, bears, wolves, and lynx. The Refuge consists primarily of the wetlands and boreal forests along the Nowitna River that flows into the Yukon River.

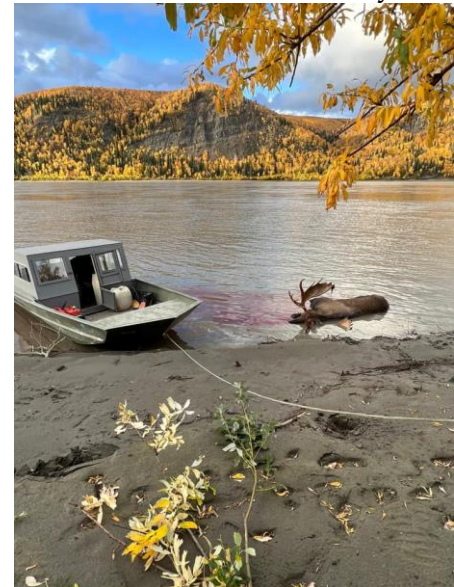


FIGURE 17 MOOSE HUNTING SEASON
- PHOTO BY STACEY CAPTAIN

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The location of Ruby puts them in the route of two major races that are held in Alaska.

The Iron Dog which is considered the world's longest, toughest snowmobile race that runs from Big Lake, AK through the Alaska Range through Ruby to the Yukon River

onto the Bering Sea Coast to Nome, AK. Ruby serves as a pass by on both the north bound and south bound route. Totaling 2,503 miles.

The second race the community of Ruby is part of is the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Another tough and grueling race done with the help of 12-16 sled dogs, a dog sled and a musher during sometimes harsh weather.

This race starts in downtown Anchorage, AK and similar to the Iron Dog race travels through the Alaska Range into Ruby where mushers then get onto the Yukon River to travel to Nome. This race mileage totals 975 miles.

Cultural events are also held in the community such as memorial potlatches. This gathering is typically done to honor the passing of a family member or friend of the community.

Members prepare gifts and food to share with the community and to those who traveled for the gathering. After the eating and gift giving is completed it follows with indian dancing and songs and/or fiddle or rock music to continue the celebration of life. Annual events are also planned to help bring the community together. In the spring before ice break up a spring carnival will be held along the river where people can participate in dog sled and snow shoe races, activities and games for kids, sometimes snow machine races. With the winter temperatures warming some neighboring community members are able to join the festivities.

During the summer the community holds events to celebrate the 4th of July.



FIGURE 18 WINTER EVENT - PHOTO BY MAUREEN MCCARTY



FIGURE 19 SUMMER EVENT - PHOTO BY MAUREEN MCCARTY

CHURCHES

Founded in 1946 the St. Peter in Chains Catholic church is one of the two churches in the community. Services are held Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Founded in the 1980 the Ruby Bible Church is the second. In 2019 Samaritan's Purse constructed a new building to hold services. The church is able to hold summer vacation bible school and studies for the youth in the community. Services are held Sunday at 11:00 a.m.



FIGURE 20 ST. PETER'S IN CHAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH



FIGURE 21 BIBLE CHURCH FROM SAMARITANS'S PRUSE WEBSITE

COMMUNITY GOALS & ACTION ITEMS

GOAL SETTING EXERCISE

Tanana Chiefs Conference Planning & Development (P&D) staff traveled to Ruby in October 2022 to hold a community meeting to establish top five goals which community members would like to see accomplished within 5 years. P&D did an exercise where they were given \$500 in monopoly money to spend on any categories. These were the top six goals. Attendees were asked to create a goal statement and action items.



FIGURE 22 COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETING IN RUBY

YOUTH & ELDERS

Goal: Ruby find funding to build a multipurpose center that can house spaces for cultural and physical activities within the community. Such as dance group gatherings, potlatches, elder meal services, space to create and teach Alaska Native history, indoor sports court that can be used for multiple indoor games, and childcare space for working parents that will help children with educational, physical, social skills and cultural skills.

Action Items:

- Research grants that could possible fund building a multipurpose building. Possibly ICDBG, professional sports leagues, Rasmuson Foundation.

- Look for land for the potential building of a multipurpose building. Or look at the possibility of renovating the old Teen Center that closed down.
- Research grants or programs that will support activities that are both culturally and physically healthy for the community. Such as TCC's Wellness & Prevention program, Rasemuson Foundation, Denakkanagaa, Doyon, Ltd. Daaga's fund.
- Reach to programs that have held cultural activities in communities. Such as YKSD, TCC, Doyon.

HOUSING

Goal: Ruby community members would like to create a plan to obtain housing that is both energy efficient and affordable for both low income and middle class families alike.

Action Items:

- Meet with Tanana Chiefs Conference and Interior Regional Housing Authority regarding current housing plan that was established to build a total of 6 houses in the community.
- Meet with both Dineega and the City of Ruby about securing land for housing in the community.
- Research grant opportunities that can assist Ruby with their housing plan.
Grants that are not exclusive to one income level.
 - Rassmuson
 - ICDBG
 - HUD
- Research housing packages that will meet the needs for families in Ruby.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Goal: To help offset the high cost of energy within the community and to be more energy efficient, community members would like to have solar panels installed on both commercial and residential buildings.

Action Items:

- Meet with Alaska Native Renewable Industries (ANRI) and TCC's Energy Conservation to create an energy plan and finding potential funding and grant opportunities.
- Work with TCC's Employment & Training and ANRI to hire and train local Ruby residents to both install and maintain solar panels within the community.

Ruby community members would like to the health and well-being of all community members by improving the current drinking water and water disposal.

- Meet with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Tanana Chief's Conference (TCC) Office of Environmental Health, and Village Safe Water (VSW) regarding current public water systems and/or lack of in homes in Ruby.
- Test current water systems in community.
- Meet and work with ANTHC to complete installation of wells and septic tanks.
- Explore potential watering points within the city limits.
- Secure funding purchase and place water holding tanks

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Goal: Ruby community members would like to continue the process of planning and constructing a new community tribal hall.

Action Items:

- Research grant opportunities available for the project. Potentially contract with TCC/Grant Writer to pursue available grants to fund project.
- Post invitation of bidding for Contractors for the construction of the community Tribal Hall.
- Research construction trades training for potential residents to locally hire for the construction of Tribal Hall.
- Connect with the City of Ruby to ensure Tribal hHall will be connected to both the public water system and electricity.
- Prepare to apply for Rasmuson's Tier 1 grant for the furnishings for the Tribal Hall.

Goal: Ruby community members would like to construct an airport waiting station near the Ruby Airport runway.

Action Items:

- Reach out to State of Alaska DOT&PF and inquire about the possibility of leasing a small amount of land for the building of a waiting station.
- Send out request of support to airlines that fly to Ruby, AK. i.e. Wrights Air Service & Everts Air.

SUBSISTENCE

Goal: Ruby community members would like to continue their advocating efforts to protect subsistence hunting and fishing rights in and around the Ruby area.

Action Items:

- Community members would like to maintain and potentially grow the community Advisory Community. Encourage all community members to be knowledgeable about issues/concerns facing them.
- Research possible funding opportunities to increase outreach in the community.
- Request a letter of support from the community of Tanana, AK to request the relocation of the Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge to either the community of Ruby, AK or Tanana, AK. Locations that are closer to the Refuge.
- Research possibilities of adopting animals such as reindeers to the area. Reach out to TCC's Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Task Force for their input.
- If regulations continue on fishing in the Yukon River research information on fishing farming and if that is something the community can establish.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Ruby community members would like to plan and construct a building that can ensure a maintenance (shop) area, office space and house equipment that can be used year round and protect workers and equipment from the elements.

Action Items:

- Contact Federal Highways regarding this project and research potential funding opportunities.
- Work work with Ruby Tribe's Transportation Coordinator to ensure that the newly acquired Transit Van is added the Transportation inventory.

- Research funding opportunities to help assist the Tribe at training and employment for a driver of the transit van.

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