



WATER IS LIFE PROJECT

Alaska Native Tribal
Health Consortium,
National Tribal
Water Center &
Alaska Rural Utility
Collaborative



WATER is Life is a collaborative health promotion campaign that uses art, culture, and media to create teachable moments that translate into positive community wide behavior change towards our most sacred resource – **WATER.**



Objective

1. Increase knowledge of water and its effects on health.
2. Increase community pride in and ownership of the local water and sanitation system.
3. Increase sustainability of the local water and sanitation infrastructure and traditional water culture.



Target Audience

The Water is Life project helps to create a pride and ownership in the water system to the three critical groups – Water Consumers, Water Treatment Plant Operators, and Utility Managers/Governments.



Partnering with Communities

Water is Life includes a community water visioning meeting, community water week activities and community water celebration.

Community Approach

Effective outreach and education starts with community participation.

Our team of experts are working together with the community:

- Youth education through teaching the importance of clean water through their traditional culture and lifestyle. (Lead by local elder)
- Youth water art activities. (Showcasing local artists)
- Community outreach on the Tribal radio station. (Interviewed by community members)
- Social media. (Facilitated and shared by local community members)
- Community newsletter articles. (Community members serve as contributing editors)
- Community Flyers. (Designed by local community members)
- Local News Coverage (Highlighting the community in a positive way)



WATER MURAL VISIONING

RUSSIAN
MISSION

What: Community Vision Meeting
(Dinner and Door Prizes!)

When: Tuesday, March 9th From
5:30-7:00 pm

Where: Russian Mission School –
Cafeteria

Who's invited: Youth, Elders,
Storytellers, Artists - Open to the
Public



Please call James Temte at the
National Tribal Water Center
(907) 729-3600 or Francine Moreno
at ARUC (907) 729-4502 with any
questions

Please bring stories, photos, and
memories to help describe Russian
Mission traditional culture and
water values

The National Tribal Water Center invites you to a community vision meeting to discuss and learn more about Russian Mission's traditional values and beliefs surrounding water. There will be a nationally recognized native artist in attendance to partner with local talent to design a mural for the school that will represent and celebrate the water culture of the village.



For project updates, follow us on Facebook: National Tribal Water Center and Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative



Community Water Culture Visioning Meetings

At community meetings the discussion is often about their traditional culture and what is most important to the community. This helps to inspire the design for the mural.



Visioning Meeting - Russian Mission AK – Water is Life



Visioning Meeting - Deering AK



Community Activities – Water Week

Activities to promote healthy water and sanitation behaviors include:

- Water bingo night
- Community movie night featuring films on traditional uses of water
- School Water Art Activities
- Water Ceremonies
- Children's Water Mural
- Water Celebrations





Youth Art Projects

Bringing water education into schools paired with exciting water art experiences provide lasting for our future city council members, tribal leaders as well as future utility operators, managers and consumers. Art activities with children reflecting water create teachable moments, opportunities to inspire youth, and promote healthy vibrant communities spaces.









Mural Creation

A public art mural reflecting the community's water culture. The mural is a continual reminder of our great heritage and is a source of community pride. When it is connected to the water and sanitation utility the positive community connection is formed between the community and the utility.





Celebrate Water!

A community dedication and celebration recognizes the importance of community water infrastructure, utility operators, and the role of the community.



Water is Life - Russian Mission

Through the efforts of the Water is Life project and the City of Russian Mission, the Russian Mission's water and sewer finances are no longer operating at a deficit, and now have a spare parts reserves account balance for the first time since being in the ARUC program. In September 2015, the City of Russian Mission had a negative balance of -\$44,084. As of April 30, 2016, their water and sewer net income (revenue minus expenses) had a positive balance of \$12,480.45. Additionally, the City of Russian Mission voted to have \$50,000 of sales tax revenue applied as a water and sewer subsidy for residential water and sewer rates to be decreased to \$60 a month. This is the lowest rate out of all of the ARUC communities.

Russian Mission water and sewer finances





Water is Life – Deering AK

Through the efforts of the Water is Life project and the City of Deering, the Deering sewer finances are decreasing debt. In a pre and post assessment the level of satisfaction the community has with their sewage service has rose from 8% to 46%.

"Feeling very proud. This mural that was painted on the water tank in Deering is from a photo of my gramma that my cousin took. They did a beautiful job on the mural! Its great to see art on big spaces."

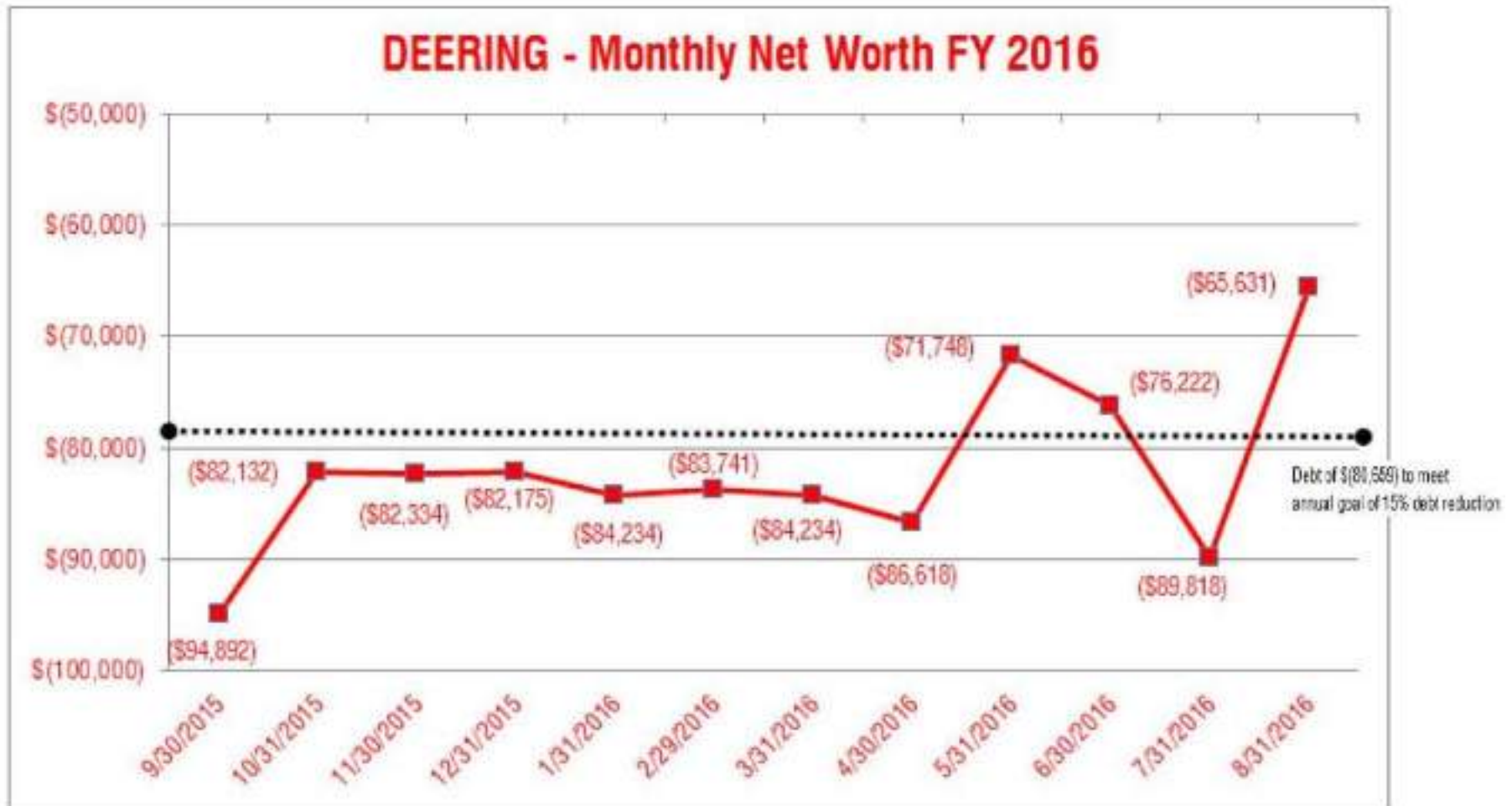
- Carmen Aqimayuk Sears, Deering community member



"A lot of my people are fishermen. We also hunt belugas, walrus, seals, ducks and other animals that also depend on water. What we eat is grown with water. It's important to show our kids how much we depend on water to feed our families every day and I think this (mural) helps."

- Ron Moto, mayor of Deering

Deering sewer finances





THANKYOU!

Behind the scenes there were many meetings with the Tribal and City Councils, Utility Management, Regional Health Corporations, ANTHC, ARUC and the NTWC. Without everyone's help this would not have been possible. Thank you, James Temte, Director of the NTWC and Marleah LaBelle, Community Relations Manager of ARUC.