

# Nunivak Island offers cultural experience

By: Terry Don

Photos: [timpearson.net](http://timpearson.net), Martin Leonard III

Text: Reprinted from *The Delta Discovery*, July '04



Nunivak Island Cultural Education and Adventures (NICEA), a new company based out of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island offers sea kayaking, hiking, cultural tours and a once in a life time opportunity to experience some of the most breathtaking scenery and wildlife in southwest Alaska.

NICEA is a newly created, wholly owned subsidiary of NIMA (Nunivak Island Mekoryuk Alaska) Corporation. NICEA specializes in providing alternative education, wildlife viewing and outdoor adventure-based activities such as hiking, backpacking and kayaking. NICEA's diverse offerings are a result of partnerships with the Alaskan Outdoor Center, Kuskokwim campus, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.



This June NICEA launched its inaugural season with the arrival of 10 students from the Y-K Delta who participated in our summer science field camp. The students were from the villages

of Napaskiak, Kwethluk, Bethel, Tununak, and Alakanuk. The course, Biology 104 Natural History of Alaska is taught through the Kuskokwim campus and is an approved science course in the University of Alaska system.



Students applied and were selected based on academic achievement and demonstrated aptitude. All students who participated in this year's summer science field camp passed the course and received 3 science credits through the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Upon arrival in Mekoryuk, this year's students were outfitted with outdoor gear provided through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture, which allowed NICEA and KUC to fully sponsor this year's cohort of students. Once the students were outfitted, they were provided classroom instruction before preparing to travel to Nash Harbor, approximately 40 miles west of Mekoryuk, the site of NICEA's camp.

Once in camp the students participated in lectures, day hiking and backpacking, and sea kayaking trips to augment their academic instruction. In addition to the formal academic instruction, NICEA provided elders in residence to supplement the western scientific knowledge with local and indigenous knowledge of Nunivak Island.



In addition to providing alternative education programs, NICEA also provides cultural and interpretive tours for guests who come to Nash Harbor with Cruise West, a cruise ship that makes a Bering Sea trip from Anchorage to the Aleutians, the Pribilofs, Nunivak



Island, Saint Lawrence Island, Russia and Nome. Cruise West first came to Nash Harbor in the summer of 2003 and contacted NIMA to make it a regular stop along their Bering Sea trip. In response to this, NIMA created a subsidiary to combine its educational and adventure based offerings to provide cultural tours to Cruise West clients. Cruise West has made three stops to Nash Harbor and are scheduled to make their last trip of the season on July 23.

For additional information....links:

<http://www.nimacorporation.com> NIMA Corporation website

<http://www.nimacorporation.com/NICEALLC.htm> Nunivak Island Cultural and Educational Adventures

[http://fc.bethel.uaf.edu/~summer\\_science/](http://fc.bethel.uaf.edu/~summer_science/) Kuskokwim Campus, College of Rural Alaska, UAF

[http://www.geocities.com/alaskan\\_outdoor\\_center/](http://www.geocities.com/alaskan_outdoor_center/) Alaskan Outdoor Center website

<http://www.cruisewest.com/ships/soo.aspx> Cruise West Spirit of Oceanus

<http://www.deltadiscovery.com/leadstories/bethelnews.html#summer> The Delta Discovery



For more on NICEA and its offerings contact Wayne Don [wdon@nimacorporation.com](mailto:wdon@nimacorporation.com)