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AN ANALYSIS OF FAUNAL REMAINS FROM THE SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

Abstract:

In this study, I examine the Prehistoric and Historic subsistence practices of the Western Ahtna Athabascan people in the Middle Susitna River area through analysis of archaeological fauna features excavated from eleven sites during the Susitna Hydroelectric Project (SHP). These sites were excavated by William Andrefsky, Charles J. Utermohle, and George S. Smith from 1979-1985 under the direction of E. James Dixon, who concluded they were occupied by Western Ahtna Athabaskan-speaking peoples from 4570±100 to the early 19th century. The SHP focused on a general lithic and faunal analysis, in the latter case focusing on the quantification, identification, and examination of faunal remains for evidence of cultural modification. A primary goal of this study was to re-quantify the faunal remains utilizing modern zooarchaeological methods and comparative samples. Vertebrate remains from eleven selected SHP sites were analyzed to determine similarities between the SHP sites. Using this data, a model demonstrating Mid/Late Holocene practices concerning site types and activity areas in the Middle Susitna River area of Alaska was developed. .