

## **Sqilantnu Archaeological District and Mining Cabins**

### **Kenai National Wildlife Refuge/Alaska**

The Kenai Peninsula has been inhabited for around 8,000 years. The Sqilantnu Archaeological District, located at the confluence of the Russian and Kenai rivers on Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, offers clues to the peninsula's early inhabitants. Gold miners and trappers, like Andrew Berg, came to the area in search of a fortune during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Berg originally came to Alaska in search of gold and fur, but in 1897 began a new career as a hunting guide for big game hunters. He later served as a game warden and stream guard. The miners and trappers are now gone but many, including Berg, left behind cabins that serve as testimony to the mining and trapping heritage of the area.

The Andrew Berg Homestead Cabin was relocated in 2000 from the shore of Tustumena Lake to the refuge visitor center so it could be better preserved and interpreted for visitors (Figure 16). Before the cabin was dismantled, Service archaeologists took measurements, and then marked and catalogued all of the logs for proper placement upon reconstruction. Refuge staff, the Youth Conservation Corps, and volunteers from the local community participated in the relocation effort. Several partners have supported this project, including the U.S. Forest Service, Cook Inlet Region Inc., and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. The refuge is working on restoration of other historic cabins for public use, through a permit and fee system. The opportunities for heritage tourism and education abound.



***Figure 16. Restored and Relocated Andrew Berg Homestead Cabin***