TROTH YEDDHA’

In February 2013 the U.S. Board on Geographic Names officially recognized Troth Yeddha’ as the name for the ridge that is home to the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. In Lower Tanana Athabascan this name means “Indian potato ridge,” and refers to the plant with an edible root — *Hedysarum alpinum* — that is a traditional food for Native people throughout Alaska. The Athabascan, or Dene, languages have ancient ties to the Tanana Valley. Athabascan geographic names are functional and rule-driven and are shared across neighboring languages. Seeing these as interconnected facts, numerous Tanana Valley Athabascan experts have shared the Troth Yeddha’ place name with pride.

In 1994 the late Chief Peter John of Minto said Athabascan people long ago used to come to Troth Yeddha’ to talk and give advice to one another about what they were going to do. When they learned this place would be used for a university, he said, they decided that the school would be good and would carry on a traditional use of this hill — a place where good thinking and working together would happen.

In recent years numerous facts about the Chena Athabascans of Troth Yeddha’ have been assembled. Until the 1840s a small village was located at a pond at the base of the ridge, where the UAF Physical Plant is now. Place names for water features surrounding the ridge have also been reconstructed.

UAF celebrates and honors the historical place of Alaska’s first peoples. In 2008 the Board of Regents set aside seven acres as Troth Yeddha’ Park. The park will be a venue to celebrate the rich cultures of Alaska Natives and their presence on the Fairbanks campus.

For more information visit http://www.uaf.edu/trothyeddha/.