

## Nudech'ghela Flag for the Ninilchik Tribe and Territories

*This flag is a symbol for the Ninilchik Tribe that incorporates elements of the tribe's history and cultural makeup into a unifying visual identity. Its purpose is to serve as a national and cultural icon of the Ninilchik people, their traditional territories, and all friends and allies in today's towns and neighborhoods who recognize the Ninilchik tribe's presence, heritage, and governance as an integral part of public discourse and direction.*



### Imagery

The overall image of the flag represents a faceted yellow agate stone reflecting direct sunlight on an ocean shore, emblematic of the Ninilchik tribe's waterways and history. Nudech'ghela, agate in the Dena'ina language, has been collected in the form of loose stones washed on the region's shores since the first known origins of prehistoric Kachemak culture millennia ago. In Dena'ina culture it is heralded as a sign of luck or good fortune given from sky spirits and tribes and families continue to collect these stones today. For many children, their first memories of being at one of the many beaches or tidal flats is being taught about agates and their significance and how they glow in sunlight, and prominence of that pastime on the flag is a connection between the past and future generations.

## Colors

The agate is on a dual field of copper and jade, precious metal and stone iconic of the tribal region. The joining of these two colors represent the tribe's history as being a cultural meeting place for generations and its continuing identity as indigenous people of mixed heritage connected by a common homeland.

Copper is the warm wood color of fresh birch bark peeling, which is emblematic of the tribe and the etymology of the tribe's name. The name Ninilchik originated from the Dena'ina name Niqnalchint, meaning "place by Ninilchik river", which itself is derived from Niqnalchintnu, meaning "lodge at a river". The root word in this geographic name is nichit, a traditional partially subterranean lodge home. In the Dena'ina language the word is the same word used for freshly peeled birch bark, which shows the importance of the connection between the concept of home and the symbol of birch bark being a dynamic material and a home for the living tree inside.

Jade is the color of the most iconic precious stone in the region and represents the tribe's connection to the natural world. It is the color of the combination of the sky, sea, and forests and its flora, fauna, and marine life. This color's aquatic hue also represents the tribe's position geographically as the only Déné family culture to have oceanic territories and marine traditions.

The three colors of agate, copper, and jade are all among the distinct colors in Dena'ina thought and language: agate is neither yellow nor orange, copper is neither red nor brown, and jade is neither blue nor green. Last of the colors is cloud white at the center of the flag, representing the traditional creation story of the land and its people from the cloud of creation.

## Shape

By having five sides and points the nudech'ghela itself is symbolic of five sets of five aspects in the Ninilchik tribe's heritage and lands

1. The five main river systems within Ninilchik lands: Ggasilatnu (Kasilof), Niqnalchintnu (Ninilchik), Taqidnatnu (Deep Creek), K'kaq'atnu (Anchor), Q'anul'atnu (Fox)
2. The five directions in the Dena'ina directional system historically used by all tribes in the Outer Inlet dialect area that are based around the vantage point of Tuyan, also known as the Ninilchik Dome: Yunch', Yutsen, Yunit, Yuneq, and Yudut.
3. The five current seats of the tribe's governing council.
4. The five major periods of tribal history: Prehistoric Kachemak origins, early Dena'ina, colonial eras, contemporary tribe, and the future.
5. The five architectural lines visible from looking inside the entrance to a nichit: Two along where the ground meets the first walls, two from where the top walls meets the roof, and the main pole and smoke opening at the top.

## Flag Specifications

Aspect ratio: 2:3

Shaping and construction: Squared agate pentagon centered on a vertically bisected field of copper and jade. Pentagon is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the flag's height and roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the flag's width. Pentagon is centrally inset with a white pentagon that is roughly  $\frac{3}{5}$  the size of the agate pentagon, creating a border of agate of uniform width.

HTML/Hex color codes:

- Agate #FFCC00
- Copper #AA4400
- Jade #008066
- White #FFFFFF

Design drafted on 6/2/20 by Argent Kvasnikoff