



Wrangell, Alaska  
September 7, 2022

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

Volume 120, Number 36

Oldest Continuously Published Newspaper in Alaska

12 Pages \$1.50

## \$49 million federal grant awarded to mariculture industry

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

A statewide coalition of fisheries and economic development organizations, led by the Southeast Conference, has won a \$49 million federal grant to help build up Alaska's mariculture industry.

"This is a moon shot," Robert Venables, executive director of the Southeast Conference, said of the challenges ahead and the potential rewards of growing the industry to raise and harvest shellfish and seaweed in larger commercial quantities.

"It's a big deal," said Wrangell's Julie Decker, executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, one of the coalition partners.

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster, as the group calls itself, already has \$15 million in matching funds and in-kind services to add to the federal grant, Venables said last Friday, listing Sealaska as among the donors.

The group plans to set up a revolving loan fund for shellfish and seaweed production. The federal funding also will go toward job training programs, research and devel-

opment, marketing, planning and technical support for green energy in the mariculture industry, and equipment and technology to help solve the challenges of building up hatchery and nursery capacity to create shellfish and seaweed seed.

The money will be used to develop "a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment and communities," according to a prepared statement issued by the Southeast Conference, a nonprofit organization of Southeast municipal governments and businesses.

There are several oyster and kelp operations in the state, but their total sales are a fraction of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster's 20-year target of a \$100 million-per-year industry, with 1,500 jobs producing and selling Pacific oysters, geoducks, kelp, blue mussels, red king crab, sea cucumbers and other species.

"We want to use that money to build capacity" to grow, harvest and market shellfish,

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## Steep drop in ferry travelers cuts into Wrangell's tourism

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Less frequent service and the loss of about 6,000 ferry travelers a year over the past decade has cut deeply into Wrangell's visitor industry.

"People view Wrangell as hard to get to," and the significant cuts to state ferry service perpetuate that image, said Marjy Wood, owner of Tye Travel.

After ferry service dropped from several port calls a week 10 years ago to one a week and developed dependability issues, travelers have booked ferries less frequently, she said. "It's hard to schedule (trips) very far in advance and feel comfortable about it."

More than 9,000 travelers a year came to town aboard a state ferry in the early 1990s. That had fallen to about 7,000 passengers a year 2010 through 2015. The numbers continued to decline as the state pulled ships out of service to save money, selling or scraping the vessels and reducing port calls. Traffic into Wrangell dropped to about 4,000 passengers in 2017, falling further in fiscal year 2019 to 2,600.

Passenger numbers crashed with the pandemic to fewer than 300 in calendar 2020 before rising to about 700 travel-

ers in the 2022 fiscal year that ended June 30.

While ferry traffic has sunk over the past decade, Alaska Airlines passenger loads have held steady in recent years. Alaska has been bringing about 20,000 people a year in and out of Wrangell, said Tim Thompson, airline spokesman in Anchorage. Though many air travelers are residents, not visitors.

Southeast-wide, about 372,000 passengers rode the state ferries in 1992, but traffic fell by more than half to 152,000 in pre-pandemic 2019.

Though not alone in suffering a sharp drop in passenger traffic, Wrangell's counts declined by a larger percentage than other ports. Ketchikan passenger numbers went from almost 36,000 in 2011 to 23,000 in 2019. Juneau dropped from 75,000 in 2011 to 41,000 in 2019, according to Alaska Marine Highway System statistics.

The ferry system "is a fantastic option, if it runs," Wood said. But the risk of disrupted travel plans if ships cancel is too much for some travelers. When booking travelers, Wood said, she always looks for backup plans, such as flights or, in Haines, Skagway and the rest of the state, driving connections.

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PHOTO COURTESY NINA JOHNSON/OREGON ARTS WATCH

Michael Hoyt and Kathleen Ash-Milby, curator of Native American Art, stand beside the killer whale hat at a Portland Art Museum event in May recognizing the repatriation of Wrangell Tlingit objects held in the museum's collections.

## Artifacts returned by museum belong to entire clan

By RASHAH MCCHESEY  
For the Wrangell Sentinel

Twenty years ago, the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska asked the Portland Art Museum to return nine objects that were taken from the Naanya.aayí clan in Wrangell almost 100 years ago.

Among them are a mudshark hat and shirt, killer whale stranded on a rock robe, killer whale hat, killer whale with a hole wooden fin, killer whale flotilla Chilkat robe, two mudshark shirts, and a headdress the clan says was captured from the Tsimshian during a battle near the mouth of the Stikine River, according to a federal register listing announcing that the museum intended to return the items.

They're "at.óww," which means they belong to the entire clan. They were a small part of a collection of more than 800 Indigenous objects that a former Wrangell schools superintendent either purchased or was given in the early part of the 20th century. The descriptions of his acquisitions

show that he generally purchased or acquired them from people who were part of the clan or connected to it, though at least one shirt made its way to him through someone who did not belong to the clan.

But when Tlingit & Haida made their request, on behalf of the Naanya.aayí clan and the Wrangell Cooperative Association, they argued that no one person should have been able to sell or dispose of clan property — the objects are sacred and they're cultural patrimony, meaning they belong to everyone in the clan.

Kathleen Ash-Milby, curator of Native American Art at the Portland Art Museum and a member of the Navajo Nation, said someone once explained the concept of cultural patrimony like this:

"The Bill of Rights is also a piece of paper. ... And if someone was to take that piece of paper and sell it to a collector in another country, that collector could not use the receipt as a justification

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## Mayor, 3-year assembly seats draw contested races

By LARRY PERSILY  
Sentinel writer

Two of the races on the Oct. 4 municipal election ballot are contested: There are two candidates for mayor and three candidates to fill two three-year terms on the borough assembly.

The other three races on the ballot — for port commission, a one-year school board term and two three-year school board seats — are all uncontested. Absent a surprising write-in turnout, the candidates on the ballot will win those elections.

Patty Gilbert and Terry Courson are competing to succeed Mayor Steve Prysunka, who decided not to seek reelection to a third term.

The mayor's job is a two-year term.

Gilbert currently serves as vice mayor and previously served on the school board. Courson served on the assembly after winning a one-year term in October 2020. He did not seek reelection in 2021.

Alex Angerman, David Powell and Brittani Robbins are competing for three-year terms on the assembly — the top two vote-getters will win.

Powell is finishing a one-year term on the assembly. Angerman, the CARES Act coordinator at WCA, ran and lost for school board last year. Robbins, the chamber of commerce executive director, was elected to the

school board last year.

Current school board member David Wilson is seeking reelection to another three-year term, which would be his third term on the board. Elizabeth Roundtree also filed for a three-year term on the board. She ran and lost in last year's school board election.

Esther Ashton, tribal administrator at WCA, is the lone candidate for a one-year term on the school board.

School board incumbents Julia Ostrander and Jessica Whitaker did not file for reelection. Candidate filings closed Aug. 31.

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to the following people listed on the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Community Scholarship Birthday Calendar.

**Wednesday, Sept. 7:** Donna Wellons, Mathias Wiederspohn.

**Thursday, Sept. 8:** Chandler Roane, Maxi Wiederspohn.

**Friday, Sept. 9:** Josh Blatchley, Jasmine Clyburn, Hope Miller, Andrew Scambler.

**Saturday, Sept. 10:** Connor Blake, Carol P. Haaseth; Anniversary: Arnold and Alice Bakke.

**Sunday, Sept. 11:** Nancy Cummings, Jake Eastaugh, Rebecca Helgeson.

**Monday, Sept. 12:** Bryant Benjamin, Roman Hite, David Rak.

**Tuesday, Sept. 13:** Wanda Banta, Frank Johnson, Bernie Massin, Jim Nelson Sr.; Anniversary: Jeff and Heidi Villarma.

**Wednesday, Sept. 14:** Mikki Angerman.

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

**DANCE FOR BABIES, TODDLERS and their FAMILIES** on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. through Oct. 27. This free activity is hosted by The Salvation Army. Adults must be present. If you are interested in volunteering as a live musician (guitar, piano, etc.) to play some nursery rhymes, call 907-874-3753.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** no movie this weekend.

**PARKS and RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD** regular meeting has been rescheduled for 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14, in assembly chambers at City Hall. Meeting information is available on the borough website [www.wrangell.com/calendar](http://www.wrangell.com/calendar). Email any comments to the board or the parks director at [kthomas@wrangell.com](mailto:kthomas@wrangell.com).

**WCA and BRAVE** are seeking assistant and substitute coaches to coach third through fifth graders for the I Toowú Klatseen (Strengthen Your Spirit) program. Sessions will be Sept. 6 through Nov. 18 on Tuesday and Thursday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Participants don't have to commit every week and don't need to be a runner -- just have a sense of spirit and fun. The program is open to Native and non-Native children. Contact Kim Wickman at [kwickman1299@gmail.com](mailto:kwickman1299@gmail.com) or 907-305-0425.

**PARKS and RECREATION** is offering multiple activities and programs to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities visit [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com) or call 907-874-2444.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com) or call 907-874-2301.

## Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.  
Must be fully vaccinated.

**Thursday, Sept. 8**

Roast beef with gravy, spinach, fruit slaw, mashed potatoes

**Friday, Sept. 9**

Ham, peas and carrots, tomato aspic, cornbread

**Monday, Sept. 12**

Hot turkey with cranberries, broccoli, carrot pineapple salad, mashed potatoes, gravy

**Tuesday, Sept. 13**

Everyday meatloaf, green beans, sunshine salad, au gratin potatoes

**Wednesday, Sept. 14**

Beef stew, cabbage with fruit cocktail, Pilot Bread

Please call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery. The senior van also is available to transport seniors to medical appointments, reasonable errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

**Friday, Sept. 9**

Matanuska, 1:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Sept. 13**

Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

**Saturday, Sept. 17**

Matanuska, 12:45 a.m.

**Friday, Sept. 23**

Matanuska, 6 p.m.

### Southbound

**Monday, Sept. 12**

Matanuska, 7:15 a.m.

**Thursday, Sept. 15**

Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

**Monday, Sept. 19**

Matanuska, 2 a.m.

**Monday, Sept. 26**

Matanuska, 7:45 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.  
Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Sept. 8	....	...	12:26	15.7	05:59	-1.8	06:10	2.1
Sept. 9	00:21	18.0	01:09	16.9	06:46	-2.5	06:58	0.7
Sept. 10	01:10	18.6	01:49	17.7	07:26	-2.7	07:42	-0.4
Sept. 11	01:56	18.5	02:26	18.1	08:04	-2.3	08:32	-0.9
Sept. 12	02:39	17.9	03:02	18.0	08:40	-1.4	09:03	-0.9
Sept. 13	03:21	16.9	03:36	17.4	09:14	-0.1	09:42	-0.5
Sept. 14	04:02	15.5	04:10	16.6	09:47	1.4	10:22	0.3

## Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Sept. 7	6:05a	7:28p	13:22h
Sept. 8	6:07a	7:25p	13:18h
Sept. 9	6:09a	7:22p	13:13h
Sept. 10	6:11a	7:20p	13:08h
Sept. 11	6:13a	7:17p	13:04h
Sept. 12	6:15a	7:14p	12:59h
Sept. 13	6:17a	7:12p	12:54h

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## The Way We Were In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

**Sept. 7, 1922**

A seaplane arrived here last night piloted by Roy Jones of Ketchikan. It alighted beautifully near the dock of the Alaska Sanitary Packing Co. Mr. Jones has made several flights today, taking up local people. Among those who have enjoyed the thrill of soaring in the air thousands of feet above the Earth are Leonard Campbell, Alex Vreath, Grover Foster, Dr. R. J. Diven, Ole Johnson, Misses R. J. Coulter, Katherine Harvey and Elwina Bradseth.

**Sept. 5, 1947**

Two senatorial parties who visited Wrangell last Saturday night, the Small Business Committee headed by Sen. Capehart, of Indiana, and the Public Lands Committee headed by Sen. Hugh Butler, of Nebraska, promised careful consideration of Alaska's problems following their inspection trip to the territory and return to Congress to Washington. Alaska Territorial Gov. Ernest Gruening accompanied the Public Lands Committee, and Secretary of Alaska Lew Williams accompanied the Small Business Committee. At a public meeting for the visitors at the Elks Hall, a beautiful key

carved from Wrangell yellow cedar and decorated with totemic designs was presented to Gruening in appreciation for the many favors he has done for the town. The key was carved by William Eastaugh, who made a similar one recently which was presented to Seattle Mayor William Devin when he and a Seattle Chamber of Commerce party visited Wrangell. Mayor Devin's key won wide publicity in Seattle for its beauty and unique carvings.

**Sept. 8, 1972**

Don Riach, Wrangell's band director and operator of Riach Ranch out the old airport road, set a new record this week by arriving home from his annual fall hay-buying trip to British Columbia with a whopping 12½ tons of alfalfa and timothy on his truck and on a heavy-duty trailer. Riach goes each year to Vanderhoof, B.C., for the hay for his animals, which this year includes 34 goats and two pigs. Last year was a record hay haul, too, but was only 5½ tons. Riach went first to Washington and Oregon on business and to have his truck repaired, then drove to Prince Rupert, picking up his big hay load on the way.

He arrived home on the state ferry Taku Monday night and was met at dockside by Mrs. Riach and the couple's seven youngsters.

**Sept. 4, 1997**

Wrangell's Economic Development Committee last Wednesday, Aug. 28, considered two proposals for funding from the Southeast Revolving Loan Fund. The committee tentatively approved a request from On-Site Systems of Auke Bay for \$500,000 to make and market an ultraviolet light system that disinfects muskeg tainted water - a device that was felt to have good potential in Wrangell, where available water supplies are below federal standards for clarity and color. The committee also heard a proposal from Dominic Papa of Wrangell for \$44,000 to start a hobby shop specializing in remote-controlled planes and cars. Although committee members found the idea appealing, they felt that income projections might be unrealistic, and recommended that Papa get assistance from loan officers at the Southeast Business Development Center to form a solid business plan.

# Port commission not ready to recommend lease at 6-Mile

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Last Thursday, the port commission unanimously voted down a motion that would have recommended the borough lease a portion of the 6-Mile mill property to Channel Construction.

Commissioners said they need more information before forwarding a recommendation.

Juneau-based Channel Construction, which is owned by William "Shorty" Tonggard Jr., requested to lease a parcel of waterfront property at the former sawmill site for scrap metal recycling. According to its application, the company seeks to establish a "prominent recycling yard" at the location, which would process scrap metal from Wrangell and areas around Southeast.

The requested parcel would comprise six acres of the 39-acre property.

The borough bought the property for \$2.5 million this summer, and is hoping

to sell or lease the land to generate jobs in the community.

Tonggard has been working in waste reduction and recycling around Southeast since the 1970s, when he took over Channel Construction from his father, William R. Tonggard. The company has used the former mill site for scrap metal collection in the past, under the property's former ownership.

The port commission was not wholly opposed to Tonggard's plan, and they requested more information on how long the lease would last and how the project would fit into the borough's overall vision for the property before they would make a recommendation.

"If we had a more specific business plan pertaining to this property, that would be beneficial," said commissioner John Yeager. He suggested negotiating a short-term lease with Tonggard that would allow Channel Construction to use the parcel while the borough continued to explore development options for

the site as a whole.

Yeager also suggested decreasing the amount of waterfront in the parcel by giving Tonggard access to a barge ramp. The rest of the recycling work, he explained, could potentially be done away from the water.

Commissioner Chris Bunes said she would have given the plan a "wholehearted yes" if she could be certain that any additional infrastructure added to the recycling yard by Channel Construction would be compatible with the borough's future development goals.

Along with the rest of the commission, she was concerned that providing a long-term lease for the recycling yard could limit future tourism development on the site.

"If we want to have cruise ship action, we'll need to think about the impact of those acreages," said Bunes. "I don't know what the bigger vision is."

Commissioner Frank Roppel also took the site's tourism potential into consider-

ation when he voted against the motion. "That's a community-wide decision because that would be a place where you could put a cruise facility," he said. "The water is deep enough."

The commission discussed the major tourism investments being made around Southeast by Huna Totem and Norwegian Cruise Lines and the impact that these developments might have on Wrangell. "The community needs to look around at what else is going on around Southeast," said Roppel. "It's stunning to me to see the amount of huge investment going into cruise passenger facilities."

The port commission requested a more detailed business plan from Tonggard and the borough that would address the length of the property lease, the amount of waterfront, and the specific infrastructure that Channel Construction would install at the site.

They will resume their discussion of the issue at the next commission meeting on Oct. 6.

# Keynote speaker will talk about healing from boarding school

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Jim LaBelle entered the Wrangell Institute in 1955 at the age of 8. Over the next 10 years, he would lose his hair, large portions of his memory, and the ability to speak Inupiaq. He has spent his life trying to understand what happened, and he will tell his story Saturday morning at the Sharing Our Knowledge conference.

For LaBelle, storytelling is an essential part of the healing process. As one of the keynote speakers at this week's Sharing Our Knowledge conference of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian tribes and clans, LaBelle will relate his experiences in an effort to "let the healing begin."

His presentation is set for 10 a.m. Saturday at the Nolan Center, followed by a panel discussion about Native boarding schools at 1:15 p.m. and then a healing ceremony at the former Institute property at 3 p.m.

LaBelle's 10-year stay at the Institute was a period of trauma and forced assimilation, he said in a phone interview Aug. 31. Like residential schools across the nation, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs' Wrangell Institute separated Native children from their cultures and support networks before "Americanizing" them, a process which at many

schools around the country involved mental, physical and sexual abuse.

The Wrangell Institute alienated LaBelle from his identity. "I was 8 years old when I went in and 18 when I went out the other end," he said. "At the end of that 10 years, I didn't really know who I was as a Native person. I knew everything else — American history, world history, English, English, English. But who is Jim LaBelle? What is his culture? What is his language?"

The federal residential school system lasted for more than 100 years and spanned 37 states, with 21 schools in Alaska alone, most operated by religious orders. Graves of American Indian children have been uncovered near many of the schools in the Lower 48, and a 2022 report by the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative anticipates discovering more burial sites as research continues.

No graves have been identified near the Wrangell Institute, which closed in 1975.

LaBelle speaks about his experiences as a boarding school survivor in confident, measured tones. But it wasn't always that way. "I got all tied up in knots and couldn't breathe," he said, describing his early efforts to articulate his trauma. "I'd break down."

Over time, recounting his

experiences became easier, and LaBelle hopes that his commitment to storytelling will inspire others to share. "Talking is healing in itself," he said.

He's since shared his story with countless news outlets, some from countries as far away as Qatar, Greenland and Japan. He's not surprised that his experiences with colonial oppression resonate with readers and listeners across the world. "It didn't just happen to me," he explained. "It happened to Aborigines in Australia, Māori in New Zealand. It's really all over the bloody place."

The messages he would like to send to the town of Wrangell center around healing, remembrance and acknowledgment. After seeking therapy, LaBelle has cultivated forgiveness for Institute staff, who he believes were indoctrinated by the government's racist "kill the Indian, save the man" philosophy. "I can't continue to harbor all this negative energy and hate toward institutions and people who contributed to my traumas," he said.

LaBelle doesn't want his remarks to be "all gloom and doom." He's quick with a joke — if Sharing Our Knowledge conference audiences are lucky, they might just get to hear his imitation of a Southern Baptist preacher. But despite his desire to "let the heal-

ing begin," he is not sure how Wrangell will react to his story.

"A lot of people owed their careers to the Wrangell Institute," he said, and not everyone wants to hear about the harm that was perpetrated there. Though he has no desire to "blame and shame," he hopes that Wrangell residents, particularly representatives of local Christian denominations, will use Sharing Our Knowledge as an opportunity to listen and reflect.

LaBelle will never forget the past, but he views the movement to reclaim Native culture with excitement for the future. The language-learning resources, the culture camps, the resurgence of traditional dancing, singing, and drumming are all part of "the resilience (he) sees in our Indigenous people."

Resilience is part of the theme for this week's conference in Wrangell. An estimated 90 visitors, academics, organizers, historians and healers will come to town for the sessions. The annual event, which moves between Southeast communities, was canceled last year due to COVID. It is run by a Juneau-based nonprofit with committee members from throughout Southeast.

While the conference seeks to build a healthy future for Alaska Natives, it is also committed to reckoning with the

region's past. The conference opens with a welcoming ceremony at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Chief Shakes House.

Sessions start at 8 a.m. Thursday and run three full days and Sunday morning. Most events will be held at the Nolan Center. A trip to Anan is planned for Sunday.

For more information or to register, go to [sharingourknowledge.org](http://sharingourknowledge.org).

And though conference organizers were unsure last week, it appears housing is settled for attendees. Thanks to the efforts of the Wrangell Co-operative Association housing committee consisting of Jana Wright, Brooke Leslie and Virginia Oliver, all of the conference's out-of-town guests will have a place to stay as they share stories, watch informative presentations, and connect with one another during the event's five-day run. Houses, churches, and rental properties around town have opened their doors to visitors.

Not all the conference's registered guests have yet confirmed their housing with Wright, but if anyone shows up and needs somewhere to sleep, she has a variety of options "on standby." For housing questions, contact Wright at 907-470-1011.

# Borough considers timber sale, other uses for Sunny Bay property

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

The borough's Sunny Bay property, a parcel of land on the Cleveland Peninsula about 37 miles southeast of Wrangell, is a potential candidate for a helicopter logging sale someday, though no definitive plans have been made to harvest timber at the site.

On a trip to Sunny Bay with the U.S. Forest Service in late July, Borough Manager Jeff Good learned there are valuable red and yellow cedar trees on the property. However, these trees are sparsely distributed.

Helicopter logging, also known as aerial timber harvesting, entails attaching cables to felled trees and lifting them out of the forest via helicopter. This method is most frequently used on steep terrain or in remote areas with limited road access. At Sunny Bay, it could allow loggers to harvest the highest-quality timber while leaving the rest of the forest standing.

"For helicopter logging," explained Good, "they want your better trees. It's really expensive to do helicopter logging, so that takes a lot of profit out of the timber." Red and yellow cedar are popular varieties of wood, due in part to their longevity and resistance to decay, and would be the most likely to produce revenue from a timber sale.

Both Good and Carol Rushmore, the borough's economic development director, intend to thoroughly investigate Wrangell's options, including the advantages and disadvantages of helicopter logging, before recommending a plan for the property to the borough assembly. Neither is yet certain of what the decision timeline may look like.

When Wrangell became a borough in 2008, it was granted entitlement lands by the state for economic development purposes. In 2016, after undergoing a lengthy back-and-forth deci-

sion process, Wrangell identified a total of 8,930 acres.

At approximately 2,500 acres, the Sunny Bay property is the largest of Wrangell's entitlement land parcels.

Helicopter logging leaves less environmental damage than traditional methods and carries a reduced risk of landslides, since only select trees are cleared. It would also allow the borough to use the land for other purposes, like recreation or development, once logging was complete.

However, the method requires skilled workers and costly equipment, which makes it an expensive option. Since the Sunny Bay timber sale would be smaller than the preferred size for helicopter logging projects, Good is not certain that the borough could get a bid on the timber.

Ideas are "just being thrown around at this point in time," said Rushmore, who also serves as the borough's planning and

zoning administrator. Other uses for Sunny Bay could include cabin sites, recreation and commercial development.

Good said a decision on the Sunny Bay land-use strategy is

still a long way off. "We would definitely go through a public review process," he explained. "Broadly, we're looking at a lot of different things for those properties."

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Just this one time for anonymous questions

By LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

Normally, I do not respond to anonymous questions. Most all newspapers, the Sentinel included, will not print anonymous letters. To do otherwise would allow people to take free shots at anyone they want, hiding from view and protecting their own identity while they criticize or question others.

However, sometimes the questions raised in an anonymous letter are worth sharing with the community. Such as the case of an unsigned letter mailed to the Sentinel, raising multiple questions about the proposed bond issues to pay for repairs to the schools and Public Safety Building. Voters will decide in the Oct. 4 municipal election whether the borough should borrow up to \$12 million to fund long-overdue repairs at all the buildings.

This is an important decision for Wrangell. The buildings all need a lot of work. The items include new roofing, siding, flooring, boilers, fire alarm system and heating/ventilation controls. The buildings range in age from 35 to 53 years old, and no wooden structure can stand in the rain in Southeast for that long and not deteriorate.

Repairing the damage will add to the borough budget, probably requiring an increase in property taxes.

And that's what bothers the anonymous letter writer, who asked several questions that I will try to answer.

Yes, the borough's purchase of the former sawmill property at 6-Mile took the land off the property tax roll. It looks like that will cost the borough about \$20,000 a year in lost revenue until it can sell or lease the property to a private owner(s). That is a small number, about 1% of the borough's property tax collection this year. And, to answer the writer's question, the borough assesses taxes on property it leases long term to private parties.

The writer asks how much tax revenue the borough is losing by its ownership of the former Wrangell Institute property. Zero. The land was never taxed. It was exempt when

it was operated as a federal boarding school and during its brief ownership decades ago by Cook Inlet Region Inc., the regional Native corporation for Southcentral Alaska. The borough plans to subdivide the lands and sell off the lots for housing development, which would make the land taxable. But that will take time and money — the borough will need to spend several million dollars to install utilities and build streets before selling the land.

**“Non-taxable property includes homes owned by senior citizens and disabled veterans, assessed at almost \$35 million ... the largest single category of tax-exempt property in town.”**

As for lost property taxes on the former Byford junkyard at 4-Mile, now owned by the borough, here too the plan is to sell the lots for private development. That would put the land back on the tax rolls — which is where it was before the state spent \$17 million to clean up the toxic mess at the site after the borough had acquired the land in a property tax foreclosure. Look for the assembly to take up the land sale this fall.

And the writer wanted to know how much property in town is exempt from taxes. Of \$289 million worth of land, buildings and other improvements in Wrangell, \$150 million is taxable. The non-taxable property includes homes owned by senior citizens and disabled veterans, assessed at almost \$35 million. That's the largest single category of tax-exempt property in town.

The other \$104 million in non-taxable property includes the Wrangell Medical Center, which cost \$30 million to build, and other property owned by SEARHC; state-owned property; the post office and other federally owned buildings; borough-owned buildings; and churches. That tax-exempt list is set by state and federal law — nothing the borough can do about it.

Yes, the letter writer is correct, it was the borough's responsibility to ensure that the schools and Public Safety Building were adequately maintained. And, yes, in a better world, some of the work would have been done over the years rather than piling up into a more expensive repair bill.

Regardless, it adds up all the same: What wasn't done in the past should be done now, and the community needs to decide how much it can afford and how to pay the bills.

EDITORIAL

Wrangell needs more than deepwater dock

The port commission last week declined to recommend that the borough lease a portion of its newly purchased property at the former 6-Mile sawmill site for use as a scrap metal recycling yard. It was nothing against the recycling business — Channel Construction, out of Juneau — which previously used the property under its previous owner as a staging area for scrap metal collection.

Rather, port commissioners said they need more information before making a decision: The length of the lease, the terms and, perhaps most importantly, how it would fit into the borough's long-term plan for the property.

In particular, a couple of commissioners asked how even a temporary lease for the scrapyards would affect hopes that a private party might develop the waterfront acreage for tourism use.

Commissioner Frank Roppel talked about how the deepwater site could be developed to boost Wrangell's cruise ship traffic. He pointed to Huna Totem's investments in building cruise terminals at Hoonah, Klawock, Juneau and Whittier. "It's stunning to me to see the amount of huge investment going into cruise passenger facilities," Roppel said.

All true. Other communities eagerly attract or, in Klawock's case, will soon attract many more than the 19,000 or so cruise ship passengers expected in Wrangell this summer. Those other ports, and their developers, focus on larger ships, providing the Three A's — amenities, attractions and activities — to entertain and educate travelers.

Wrangell can offer a lot for visitors, including Anan Wildlife Observatory and Stikine River tours, an impressive museum, petroglyphs, trails and more. The offerings match well with the passenger loads on smaller and mid-size cruise ships, but fall short of what would be needed if a larger ship with 2,000 passengers or more docked in town and the visitors tried to squeeze into the community's limited facilities and tours.

Big ships are not the easy answer for Wrangell's economic future. It would require a substantial investment of public and private funds to build up the activities and facilities for the larger passenger loads.

For example, tour operators would need to invest major-league dollars into building additional boats to accommodate a lot more guests, but they can't do that unless they know enough passengers will show up every summer to cover the costs. Restaurants would need to staff up and expand their hours to handle the heavier traffic. Neither the chicken nor the egg comes first — it's knowing someone will buy all the eggs before expanding the hen house.

Having a deepwater site is an attraction for tourism developers looking for a new dock site, but the town's plan also needs to consider what all those visitors would do when they get off the ship. And would the cruise lines see Wrangell as an attractive enough destination to bump another town off the itinerary so that they can remain on their seven-day cruise schedule?

The port commission is right to ask the questions, and the community needs to ask questions: What can it provide visitors? How many people does it want in town? Are businesses willing and able to handle more traffic?

Tourism is about more than just having deep water.  
— Wrangell Sentinel

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Biden makes America worse by attacking millions of people

What is wrong with the slogan "Make America Great Again"? Apparently a lot, at least according to President Joe Biden. In his fiery speech on Sept. 1, President Biden, while preaching unity, accused 73.6 million MAGA/Trump voters of "representing an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic."

He also quoted a federal judge, who said the "MAGA movement is clear and present danger to our democracy." Biden said of MAGA Republicans: "They embrace anger. They thrive on chaos. They live not in the light of truth but in the shadow of lies."

He was sounding more like a dictator than the leader of the Democratic party, I heard similar sounding speeches given prior to the Holocaust by Nazis and later by Russian Premier Joseph Stalin. True, President Biden stopped short

of announcing pogroms, open season on MAGA Republicans, imminent arrests and gulags, but it always starts with words.

By the way, it looks like the first "domestic terrorist" was Ronald Reagan, he used MAGA words in his speech on C-SPAN March 30, 1981. The No. 2 honor goes to Bill Clinton, he uttered those horrible MAGA words when announcing his candidacy, also in 1981.

I believe 73.6 million MAGA patriots deserve better than bullying, insults, intimidation and threats. As far as I know, the U.S. Constitution guarantees citizens (among other rights) plurality of opinions, freedom of expression and free elections. Which made this country great, not a pseudo-Democracy where the ruling class decides what Democracy is.

Judging by President Biden's policies of open Southern border, war on fossil energy, economy in recession and high inflation, perhaps he would

prefer the slogan "Make America Worse Now."

Ivan Simonek

Wrangell's music in the park helps bring everyone together

Wednesday evening, Aug. 17, may have been wet, very wet, but Mother Nature's deluge did NOT dampen the spirits of Wrangell residents attending the music fest at Shoemaker Park.

The community was once again privileged to be entertained by the Powers and their talented musician friends who are REALLY good at what they do, aren't they?

Having the Powers here with all they offer adds a special spark and another dimension to our otherwise quiet and simple lives.

Thank you again, Powers family, we are glad you call Wrangell home.

And thank you to Alaska Marine Lines and the many city workers, especially Parks and Recreation and Police Chief Tom Radke.

Music brings us, of all ages, all together for an evening of clean, wholesome fun.

We may indeed be isolated, but we have a precious quality of life here. I, for one,

would not want to live anywhere else on Earth but right where I am.

Thank you all, from one sincere, contented resident.

Rosemary Ruoff

Policy for Letters to the Editor

- Letters should be typed or clearly written and no longer than 400 words.
- All letters must be signed by the writer and include a phone number and any affiliation with a group which pertains to the letter.

The Sentinel reserves the right to edit any submissions. The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon for Wednesday publication.

WRANGELL SENTINEL

P.O. Box 798, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929  
Ph: 907-874-2301 • wrgsent@gmail.com

Letters are run on a space-available basis.

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska

WRANGELL SENTINEL

ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 20, 1902  
Published weekly by: Good Journalism LLC  
PO Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929  
Phone: 907-874-2301

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Wrangell Sentinel, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929

Sentinel staff:

Publisher ..... Larry Persily  
Editor ..... Marc Lutz  
Office Manager Amber Armstrong-Hillberry  
Reporter ..... Caroleine James  
Production ..... Marc Lutz

Subscription rates:

Local ..... \$46  
Other Alaska ..... \$62  
2nd class outside Alaska ..... \$70  
First Class ..... \$102  
Online-only subscription ..... \$40

Wrangell Sentinel (USPS 626-480) is published weekly except the third week of July and the week after Christmas by Wrangell Sentinel, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929. Periodicals postage paid at Wrangell, AK.

Phone: 907-874-2301; Email: wrgsent@gmail.com; Website www.wrangellsentinel.com. ©Copyright 2022.

## Mariculture grant

Continued from page 1

kelp and other seaweed, Venables said. As an example, he said, the group plans to talk with the state about expanding operations to ensure that the state lab can handle additional shellfish testing for commercial sales.

Several international firms are looking at investing in mariculture in the state, he said. "They will see this (federal grant) as a stimulus."

The group also plans to work with the University and Alaska Sea Grant network, tribes, vocational education programs and high schools to bolster training programs for jobs in the industry.

More jobs and workforce training

may be the first things the public sees from the grant, Decker said. "Hopefully, more people putting gear in the water, applying for sites." Many of the harvest and seed hatchery jobs will be similar to salmon hatchery work, she said.

Along with the Southeast Conference, coalition members include the state, the Prince William Sound Economic Development District, Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District, Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Alaska Mariculture Alliance, University of Alaska, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation and Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association.

The state budget this year includes a \$5

million grant to the Alaska Mariculture Alliance.

Venables credits a state mariculture task force with doing a lot of the homework that eventually led to the successful federal grant application. Then-Gov. Bill Walker created the task force in 2016. The group presented its final report to Gov. Mike Dunleavy in May 2021.

"That body of work really was the bones of putting this together," Venables said of the federal grant.

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation deserves credit for a lot of the work that went into putting together the program to grow a mariculture industry in the state, Venables said.

The years of work, research and collab-

oration were important to having a plan ready to go when the federal funding became available, Decker said.

Earlier this year, the Southeast Conference was awarded a \$500,000 federal grant to gather additional economic data and assemble its application for the large grant.

The \$49 million grant is one of 21 awarded nationally last Friday through the \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge, run by the Economic Development Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce. The program awarded funds to regional coalitions representing 24 states.

## Tlingit artifacts

Continued from page 1

for keeping that object because that individual did not own it," she said. "It belongs to the citizens of the United States."

Tlingit & Haida was able to demonstrate that the objects listed on their claim belong to the whole clan, partially through photographs that date back to the late 19th century and the very early 20th century, including a photo of Chief Shakes VI displaying some of the objects that belong to the clan in the clan house.

"It was a pretty clear demonstration that many of these specific objects belonged to this clan," Ash-Milby said.

"We are so grateful for all of the work that was done to return the Naanya.aayi clan's at.6ow," Luella Knapp, a member of the Naanya.aayi clan and the Wrangell Cooperative Association, said during a private transfer ceremony at the Portland museum on May 27.

"As a caretaker of these clan items, it is an honor. Receiving them back, one by one, brings back the spirit of the person who wore them," Knapp said at the ceremony.

While they were at the art museum, they were treated like other historical art collections, Ash-Milby said. "That means that they were kept in climate-controlled conditions and staff wore gloves when handling them," she said. "A lot of care was taken to make sure they stayed in the same condition as when they arrived at the museum in 1948."

Now that the objects have been returned to Alaska, they are being held by Tlingit & Haida for the next decision.

It's not clear what arrangements are being made to prepare for the arrival of those objects in

Wrangell. Both Ash-Milby and Tlingit & Haida Cultural Resource Specialist Harold Jacobs emphasized that those details are clan business.

"Ultimately these are objects of cultural patrimony that belong to the tribe, and they know best how to care for them going forward," Ash-Milby said.

This specific claim was the first she was able to resolve after she arrived at the Portland museum in mid-2019. She said she focused on it partly because it had been in limbo for so long. "I told them when I interviewed for the job that my first priority was to start working on these long overdue claims."

And, even after she got approval from her board and raised the funds to start the process of returning the objects, Ash-Milby said there was delay after delay.

When she was ready to post about the objects in the national federal register, a requirement before they can be returned, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. "All those federal offices closed," she said. That meant no federal notice, which meant even more delays.

Ash-Milby said she was aiming to get the objects back home in time for Sealaska Heritage Celebration 2022 in Juneau. But, when it came time to ship them via Alaska Airlines, the museum had a hard time getting transport to the airport because of a shortage of drivers. Then the flight was delayed.

But they did make it back to Alaska in time for the gathering.

Tlingit & Haida has a few more repatriation claims pending with the Portland Art Museum, though Ash-Milby said she doesn't think these current claims are ultimately Wrangell-bound.

## Ferry travelers

Continued from page 1

Though many of the lost ferry trips are due to residents making other travel plans — mostly flying — Wood said the reduction in tourists coming to town has meant a huge hit to businesses.

"I've talked with local tour operators" and they all have lost business, she said. The independent traveler coming into town aboard a ferry, booking tours and overnight stays has mostly "evaporated," she said. Though increasing numbers of cruise ship travelers have helped make up for tour operators' loss of ferry passengers.

Jim Leslie, who co-founded Wrangell-based tour operator Alaska Waters more than 25 years ago, also bemoans the loss of better ferry service. "We built our industry on the backs of the Alaska Marine Highway System," he said of the independent travelers who sailed into town and hired the company for tours.

But then as ferry service began to deteriorate about 10 years ago, Alaska Waters suffered — until cruise ship numbers increased enough to fill the gap and "keep us alive," Leslie said.

"I don't see the independent traveler being a

big part of Wrangell's future unless we have two ferries a week (in each direction)," he said. One a week just doesn't work for travelers who don't want or cannot afford to stay a full week to the next ship to continue their travel.

Alaska Waters has contracts to provide tours for passengers aboard ships operated by Sitka-based Alaska Dream Cruises, which runs half a dozen boats ranging in capacity from 10 to 76 passengers. "I think small and midsize ships are going to be the future for Wrangell," Leslie said.

The cruise ship schedule this summer called for about 19,000 passenger berths aboard ships calling on Wrangell, though occupancy has not been 100%. With one exception, the largest ship on the schedule carries fewer than 700 passengers.

Unlike the 4,000-passenger behemoths that call on Juneau, Ketchikan and Skagway, the ships that carry several hundred passengers appeal to travelers who want an expedition experience, Leslie said. That's a good market for Wrangell, he said. But it takes a lot of time and commitment to develop relationships with cruise operators, attend trade shows and promote the community's attractions, he added.

## Candidates

Continued from page 1

Incumbent John Yeager and newcomer Winston Davies have filed for the two open seats on the port commission. The seats are three-year terms. Davies would replace Frank Roppel, who is not seeking reelection.

In addition to the races for mayor, assembly, school board and port commission, the ballot will ask voters three questions: Should Wrangell issue \$3.5 million in bonds to repair the school

buildings; should the borough issue \$8.5 million in bonds to rehab and repair the Public Safety Building; and can the borough sell or lease the former sawmill property at 6-Mile that it purchased this summer.

Voter approval is required to sell or lease property worth more than \$1 million; the borough paid \$2.5 million for the land, looking to attract private developers for the property. The borough does not have

any prospective developers ready to sign a deal, but the assembly decided to ask voters for permission in October to save time should a buyer come to the table.

Early voting in the election will open Sept. 19 at City Hall. The early voting polling place will be open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

Election day voting will be held at the Nolan Center, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Oct. 4.

## Portland Museum returns historic items owned by clan

**Items 1-3: X'atgu S'aaxw/mudshark hat; X'atgu Koodás/mudshark shirt; Ditlein X'oow/killer whale stranded on a rock robe.** According to Portland Art Museum records, former Schools Superintendent Axel Rasmussen obtained the hat and shirt in 1930 from a family member of Chief Shakes VI who died in 1915, and in 1934 he obtained the robe from another family member in Wrangell. According to oral traditional information presented by the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes, these items were removed by Wrangell police after the death of a Mrs. Kunk.

**Item 4: Keet S'aaxw/killer whale hat.** According to museum records, on April 23, 1934, Rasmussen obtained the hat from a family member of Chief Shakes VI.

**Item 5: Keet kuwool/killer whale fin.** According to museum records, this wooden fin was first obtained by Andrew Wanamaker in 1933, and subsequently sold to Rasmussen.

**Item 6: Keet Naaxein/killer whale flotilla Chilkat robe.** Museum records indicate that in 1936, Rasmussen obtained the robe from Esther Johnson Orcutt. Photographic evidence of clan ownership is provided by a 1913 photograph in the collection of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art entitled "Coonk Shakes, Nephew of a Great

Chief of Wrangell," in which the robe appears next to other clan property, and a 1900 photograph showing the clan house panel from which the robe design was adopted.

**Item 7: X'atgu Koodás/mudshark shirt.** Museum records indicate that in 1934, Rasmussen obtained the shirt from William James, of Wrangell. According to the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes, James was the son of L'axdujeek, a "tribal" sister of Charlie Jones, aka Chief Shakes VII, and was not from the Naanya.aayi clan.

**Item 8: X'atgu Koodás/mudshark shirt with dentalia shells.** Museum records indicate that in 1931, Rasmussen obtained the shirt from Charlie Jones, of Wrangell. The 1931 sale occurred before Jones was installed as Chief Shakes (in 1940).

**Item 9: Geet Shakee.at/storm headdress.** According to the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes, this headdress was captured from the Tsimshian during a battle near the mouth of the Stikine River. Imbued with the words of "spirit songs," it was worn by the ixt' (shaman) in ceremonial dance. Photographs from ca.1890 and 1913 show the headdress in the clan house together with other clan property. Museum records indicate that in 1931, Charlie Jones sold the headdress to Rasmussen.

### The Family of Jerry Bakeberg

cordially invites you to a celebration of his life to be held at the Elks Lodge on **Saturday, September 10th** upstairs at 4:30 p.m.

A reception with sharing, hors d'oeuvres and a scotch doubles bowling tournament to follow.



# Peltola supporters cheer victory as ‘opening doors’ for Natives

ZACHARIAH HUGHES  
Anchorage Daily News

As a young teenager growing up in Bethel, Nikki Corbett got her first paid gig from Mary Peltola.

“I babysat her oldest,” said Corbett, who took care of Peltola’s eldest son.

Corbett, who lives on the Kenai Peninsula and is raising children of her own now, was one of the many Indigenous Alaskans from around the state who flooded social media with exuberant messages, reflections and recollections in the hours after Peltola’s victory in Alaska’s special U.S. House election was announced.

The Alaska Division of Elections on Sept. 2 certified the results of Alaska’s first ranked-choice voting tally, showing Peltola with 91,266 votes to Republican Sarah Palin’s 86,026, or 51.5% to 48.5%.

With her win, Peltola — who is Yup’ik and calls Bethel home — is the first Alaska Native elected to Congress. She will serve out the last four months of the late Rep. Don Young’s term. Peltola’s swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for next Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

Peltola, Palin and Nick Begich III, who finished third in the Aug. 16 special election, will battle again in the Nov. 8 general election to determine who wins a full two-year term in Congress. In the ranked-choice count for the special election, about 20% of Begich voters did not select a No. 2 candidate. Half selected Palin and almost 30% marked Peltola as their second choice, giving her enough votes to hold off Palin.

“I feel like it’s just going to open so many doors for rural Alaskans and Alaska Natives,” Corbett said. “Especially for those of us who grew up on the Kuskokwim and at fish camp and anaqing in (using) honey buckets, that is just amazing because we have come so far, and it’s incredible.”

Corbett said her pride came not just from Peltola’s victory, but the way the Democrat campaigned: remaining positive, friendly, embodying Yup’ik cultural values.

“We’re humble, and we’re kind, and we’re caring. Tearing other people down is not part of our culture,” Corbett said. “I feel like it’s really put us Yup’iks on the map. It’s a really good day to be Yup’ik.”

But the enthusiasm was hardly confined to the southwest river systems where Peltola grew up and which she represented in the state Legislature for a



Mary Peltola (right) reacts Aug. 31 to the results of the special election in which she won the race for Alaska’s seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. From left are Peltola’s husband, Gene Peltola Jr.; deputy campaign manager Hector Jimenez (seated); Peltola’s stepdaughter Kaeli Peltola; and campaign manager Anton McParland.

PHOTO BY MARC LESTER/  
ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS  
VIA AP

decade, at one point chairing the Alaska House Bush Caucus.

“My mom and I had happy tears,” said Megan Suksraq Onders, an Anchorage resident with ties to King Island and the Bering Strait region. She was eating at a Nome restaurant during a visit home when election results were announced. “It was totally dead. We had a spontaneous eruption at our table with the waitstaff.”

Onders began texting with friends and relatives, inviting them over for a party and king crab legs to her house.

“It was so beautiful. We had our Native friends and family from across generations — it just makes me want to cry — just gathered, with so much hope and beauty and togetherness,” Onders said, choking up.

The victory is buoying political enthusiasm heading into the November elections, according to Onders, who in the past has worked on an array of political issues and campaigns spanning Republican, Democrat and independent alignments.

Peltola’s success is especially affirming, she said, amid far-right efforts to discredit election systems and in the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision to invalidate federal abortion protections in a

ruling earlier this summer.

“This is on the ballot in November, and I think you’ll see women take this seriously,” Onders said. “The energy is there to make sure people get out the vote in November. It will be a voter campaign where we’ve got to get the Native vote out.”

It remains to be seen if the coalition of supporters and ranked-choice voting patterns that produced Peltola’s win will be replicated in November, when Alaskans head back to the polls to determine who will serve as the state’s sole U.S. House member for the full two-year term that begins in January. Some cheering her victory are wary it could lead to a backlash or complacency.

“I’m always nervous, whenever there’s something that leans toward equity ... sometimes you have blowback. Every time something moves forward, there’s more racism on the tail end of it,” said X’unei Lance Twitchell, a professor and researcher of Tlingit language and culture who lives in Juneau. “My hope is we can look at this as step one. We cannot forget step two.”

Twitchell said there’s excitement and a sense of relief that there’s finally an Alaska

Native set to hold federal elected office.

Even for those pleased to see a Democrat win a statewide race for the first time in more than a decade, Indigenous representation at such a high level brings a significance that will outlast the election cycle.

David Ket’acik Nicolai grew up on the road system but spent plenty of formative time with family in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, and believes Peltola’s firsthand knowledge of everything from exorbitant rural fuel costs to the economic centrality of salmon will be carried to the nation’s capital.

“Someone who has lived out there and understands all that is taking that same mindset to Washington, D.C., to represent us at the national level. That makes me feel really seen,” Nicolai said Sept. 1. “It never really rang home to me until Mary’s win yesterday.”

Nicolai said it was a special moment when he could tell his daughter there would be a representative in Congress who looks like her.

“It was just really heart-warming,” he said.

## Challenger Bynum has gap to overcome in race to unseat Rep. Ortiz

BY SAM STOCKBRIDGE  
Ketchikan Daily News

Incumbent Ketchikan Rep. Dan Ortiz, who also represents Wrangell, grew his lead over Republican challenger Jeremy Bynum, also of Ketchikan, with the final batch of state primary results released Aug. 31. Ortiz leads Bynum 2,174 to 1,812.

The latest results include 890 absentee, early and questioned ballots that state election officials had not tallied on the night

of the Aug. 16 primary. Ortiz, an independent, is seeking his fifth term representing southern Southeast in the state House.

The two will face off in the Nov. 8 general election for a two-year term to represent Ketchikan, Wrangell, Prince of Wales Island and Metlakatla.

Ortiz saw his strongest support in Metlakatla, with nearly three-quarters of in-person voters there casting their votes for him in the primary. The reverse held in Coffman Cove, where

voters decisively favored Bynum over Ortiz, with Bynum getting about two votes there for every vote cast for Ortiz.

In Wrangell, Ortiz outpolled Bynum 235-212. That count does not include absentee or questioned ballots, which were tallied separately.

Ortiz said the final tally “sets the table for a good race in the fall,” giving him an 8.7% lead over Bynum, though he fell “a little bit short” of his ideal goal of a 10% lead.

“So, there you go, I’ve got work to do ... after the primary, and I will continue to work hard and get out and talk to voters,” he said Aug. 31.

Bynum, who’s making his first run for elected state office, said the results signal that “we got to work a little bit harder on getting our message out there and let people know who I am, right? And let people know that they have an energetic alternative.”

“We’re in it to win it, and it’s just some good motivation to

work hard,” he added. “So, that’s what I’m looking to do, and that’s what the Bynum campaign is all about, is getting out there, spreading a positive message, and having a can-do attitude.”

Bynum serves on the Ketchikan Gateway Borough assembly.

Glenn Wright, a political science professor at the University of Alaska Southeast Juneau, said in a phone interview Aug. 30 that he’s not surprised Bynum attracted such a strong share of the vote running against a four-term incumbent, considering that the district has consistently elected Republicans in federal races.

“Given that (fact), and given his record as a moderate, and especially given the nationalization of politics at the local and state levels that a lot of people will tend to vote with their party, I’m not super surprised to see a strong challenger,” he said.

Ortiz likely will get even more of the vote in the November election, when voters tend to be more politically moderate, Wright said. “In general, first of all, voters in general elections tend to be more moderate than voters in primaries. And I think that that is still going to be true even under the new system here in Alaska,” said Wright. “My guess is that Ortiz will benefit from that, as somebody who I think has presented himself — and I think quite accurately — as an independent and a moderate.”

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# Historian tells story of 1908 shipwreck in 5-part podcast series

By MARK SABBATINI  
Juneau Empire

The story of a 1908 shipwreck near Wrangell that killed 111 of the 138 men on board — mostly Asian cannery workers returning home after the salmon season had ended — is narrated by current and former residents in a five-part podcast series that started last week.

Produced by former resident Ronan Rooney, the series will air at 11 a.m. every Thursday in September on KSTK radio, or people can go to Rooney's website [wrangellhistoryunlocked.com](http://wrangellhistoryunlocked.com) to hear the episodes. The first episode aired Sept. 1.

The Star of Bengal, a three-mast steamship built in 1874 by the same Irish shipyard that later constructed the Titanic, was beginning a voyage from Fort Wrangell to San Francisco when it struck rocks and sank near Coronation Island during a storm on Sept. 20, 1908. Coronation is in the outside waters, west of Prince of Wales Island.

Rooney, who now lives in Oregon, said in an interview Aug. 30 that this one is the most in-depth of the 10 Wrangell history podcast projects he started back in 2020.

"When COVID hit I was sort of lost, I didn't know what I was going to do," he said. "This was kind of the perfect thing. It lets me keep in touch with people back home."

Among his other podcasts at Wrangell History Unlocked are "The Christmas Bombardment" when "after a drunken party on Christmas Day turns violent, Fort Wrangell unleashes two days of cannon fire on its Tlingit neighbors." Other podcasts include the story of the arrest of Tlingit elder Tillie Paul Tamaree for "inciting" a tribal chief to vote, and stories of a couple of notorious murder cases.

Rooney said his research into the town's history and response from listeners extends far beyond the region. "It keeps me connected with people all over the world because when you try to tell



The Star of Bengal, shown above in the 1900s, sank in 1908 near Wrangell. Former resident Ronan Rooney has produced a series on the 1908 shipwreck of the Star of Bengal, part of his "Wrangell History Unlocked" podcasts. The episodes will air at 11 a.m. every Thursday in September on KSTK radio. The podcasts also are available on his website, [wrangellhistoryunlocked.com](http://wrangellhistoryunlocked.com).

the story of a small town it's connected to the whole world."

The Star of Bengal series opens with the ship's three decades of work carrying passengers and cargo worldwide before being sold to the Alaska Packers Association in 1905. From there, the episodes focus on the ill-fated journey and the aftermath including the captains of the steamship and two supporting tugboats facing "charges of cowardice from the survivors."

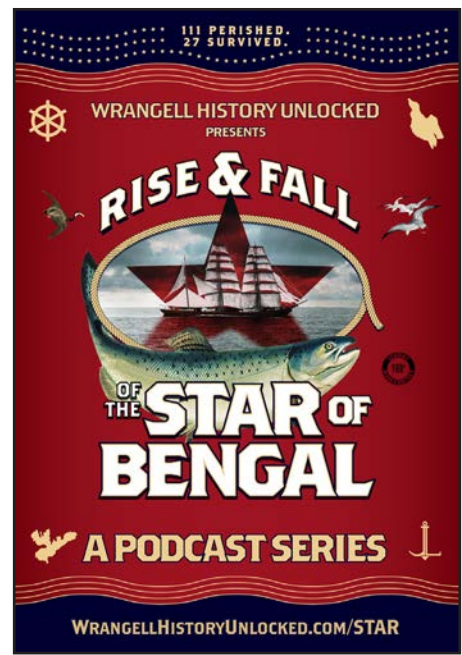
Rooney said he chose the shipwreck for his latest podcast project because "a lot of people in Wrangell have these kinds of jobs," plus he worked aboard a trawler himself with his father while living there.

"I can vividly describe what it's like to jump in that water because I've done it before," he said. "It's cold."

While his earlier podcasts were simple narrations by himself, with possibly solo piano music by his wife, the Star of Bengal series features a broad range of music and sound effects. Furthermore, he had numerous residents he still knows in Wrangell "phone in" their narratives of various people that were a part of the shipwreck's history.

Among the most notable contributions is from his mother, Alice, who in 1981 recorded an interview with a man aboard one of two boats that towed the Star of Bengal from port out to sea when the storm hit, causing navigational chaos among the three vessels and resulting in the steamship's wreck. Portions of the interview were part of the first podcast.

But not everything Rooney and those



participating in the podcast were told and learned about during their research is factual. His mother, for instance, was told that many of the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino cannery workers who mostly perished were locked below deck while the ship was sinking. In reality, Rooney said, the Chinese workers in particular simply didn't put on the lifejackets they were provided.

"The cannery workers were not seamen, they didn't necessarily know how to swim," Rooney said. He sets the story straight about such myths because "I still respect the fact this legend exists."

He explained, "One of my challenges was to go to the evidence, eyewitness statements and asking what makes sense. ... It's been getting more and more elaborate. I spent about a year researching this because there are so many twists."

That year includes three months of editing and producing the series.

## Library builds up offerings with new construction kit for kids

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel Reporter

Ever wanted to bend light? Build a wall-climbing gecko robot with air-suction toes? Control a bipedal, ultrasonic droid using your smartphone? These activities may sound like the work of a mad scientist, but thanks to the Irene Ingle Public

Library, Wrangell youth don't need a subterranean lair and an army of minions to explore the wonderful world of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, also known as STEM.

Starting in early 2020, the library began offering STEM kits for kids and families to check out and experiment with. Last week, it added a new construc-

tion kit to the mix, which will allow children to hone their engineering skills by building model cars, model rockets and more with the kit's Lego-esque pieces.

The library has 11 kits total, covering topics from robotics to circuitry to magnetism to anatomy.

Each one has a different suggested age range — 4-year-olds might prefer a money math game, while 14-year-olds might gravitate toward a programmable, build-it-yourself robot.

Library director Margaret Villarma hopes that more kids will take advantage of the program. "We've had a lot of homes-

chooled people who have used it," she said, but added that the library "would like to see them get checked out more."

Villarma and assistant librarian Sarah Scambler were inspired to start the STEM kit program after hearing about a similar initiative at the Anchorage public library. At first, the kits were part of the library's effort to engage with the community during the pandemic, but Villarma and Scambler plan to keep them around as case levels drop. "Lots of libraries have these now," said Villarma. "It's a fun way for kids to see what sparks their interest."

Lists of the kits' contents, along with the option to reserve a kit, are available on the library's website. Kits circulate for two weeks and can be renewed, depending on demand. The check-out process is just like checking out a book, except kits must be returned to the front desk, not slipped into a book return.

STEM kits were paid for by the Friends of the Library association, a nonprofit group dedicated to promoting the Wrangell public library to the borough as a "cultural, educational, and recreational asset."

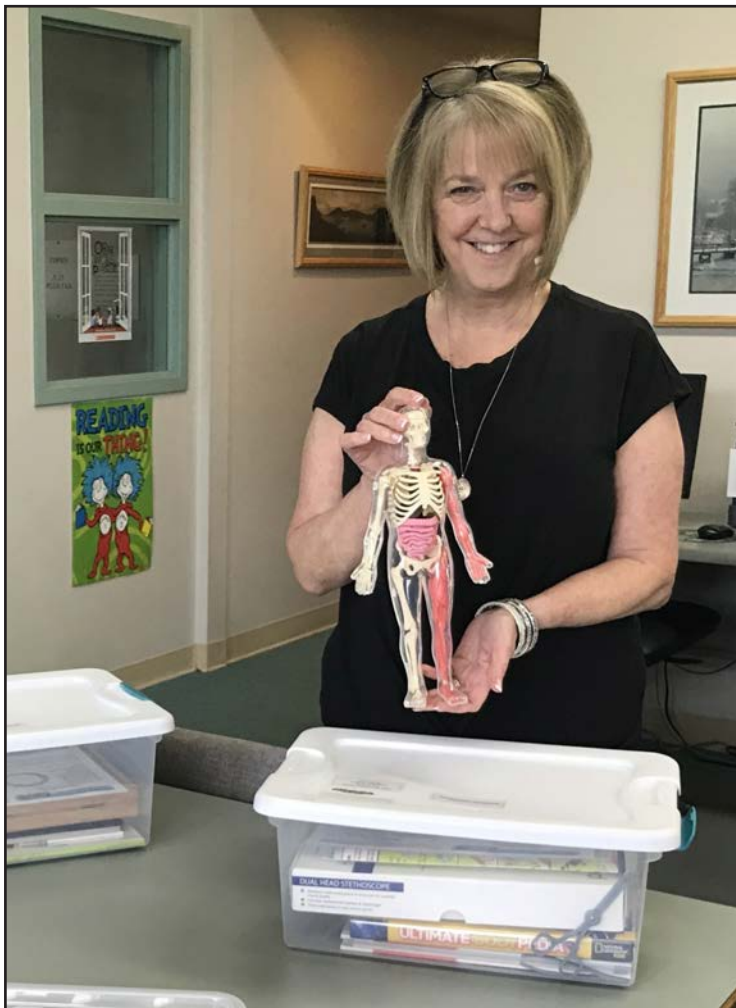


PHOTO BY CAROLEINE/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Margaret Villarma, library director, displays the dissectible plastic model from the library's anatomy kit. After removing the model's organs, kids can learn about their own organs using the kit's stethoscope and encyclopedia.



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# Shop Groundswell to close down after five years in business

By Marc Lutz  
Sentinel editor

Vibrant laughter and fresh scents emanating from the shop on Lynch Street let visitors know this wasn't just a place for cookie-cutter souvenirs and run-of-the-mill art prints.

For five and a half years, Shop Groundswell provided residents and tourists with fresh floral arrangements, locally sourced foods and Southeast artistry. Now, the shop and social hub is closing its doors.

Though it will be a loss to many in the community, it is a chance for owner Mya DeLong to finish the chapter on what she considers a successful five-year plan and begin the chapter on retirement.

DeLong opened Shop Groundswell in March 2017. She owned a home in Wrangell before that but only came here to fish commercially. When she made the decision to start the business, it was the first time she'd spent the entire year in the town.

"I saw a niche there with fresh florals — The town needed some color," she said. "I was going into my first winter here, and seasonal depression hit. I needed an outlet to be creative and I saw a need in the community to offer the service of flowers."

Growing up, DeLong's mother had a flower shop, and she saw the joy fresh flowers could bring to people. "I needed color."

Shop Groundswell wasn't to be a normal flower shop filled with stuffed animals, balloons and greeting cards found in other floral shops. DeLong wanted to offer art created in the community. In turn, that led her to offering local foods.

"There's so much rich culture here within Southeast," DeLong said. "As I travel ... I usually pick up chocolate, coffee, honey, some of the staples, so I wanted to be able to offer rounded-out Alaskan-themed foods. I'm a foodie myself. It seemed like a natural progression from the art to the food sector."

DeLong would often host parties to celebrate the artisans who sold their wares in the shop, bringing a social atmosphere to the space. That atmosphere expanded



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Mya DeLong, owner of Shop Groundswell, rearranges a cookbook in the shop's food section, which contains a selection of teas and Alaska-made canned goods. The store will be closing at the end of the month.

beyond the walls of the shop to the community, as she would provide floral arrangements for various functions or just to beautify little areas around town.

"It's somewhere they're going to have local goods, but it also always smells nice and there's fresh flowers around," said Valerie Massie, who has shopped there since it opened. "It felt like a spa almost, which is not a common feeling in Wrangell. It was nice."

Massie said part of the appeal of Shop Groundswell is the comfortable social aspect and the access to local goods on a regular basis. "You can get stuff from the community market once a month, but it's once a month."

Janell Privett, another longtime patron of the shop, said its closing is bittersweet

because DeLong is getting to do one of the things she loves, but the community is also losing another business. Before DeLong, Privett said people would either have to create their own floral arrangements or work with someone out of town. Arrangements weren't guaranteed to be delivered on time or could sometimes arrive frozen.

"I just happened to be (in Washington state) and went into Fred Meyer yesterday, and (Mya's) prices are cheaper than Fred Meyer's," Privett said. "The other awesome thing she did was recycle vases. Which, before she opened, I had them from weddings. I had them from this, I had them from that. You just kind of coveted them."

Privett, who also shopped with DeLong from the beginning, said she would buy flowers on a regular basis just to be perked

up. Flowers can be purchased through the grocery stores, but Privett said it's more personal to be able to pick and choose which stems go into an arrangement.

Shop Groundswell will close on Sept. 25. On Sept. 16 and 17, DeLong will throw a goodbye party, inviting the community to come by on those days. The remaining days will be spent wrapping up orders and clearing the shelves, DeLong said.

It has been a dream fulfilled for her, and she wants the community to know how appreciative she is for its support over the years.

"My gratitude to Wrangell for supporting my dream," DeLong said. "This was a great way to get to know the community and for the community to get to know me."

## Obituary

### Fisherman, veteran Arnold Bakke dies at 91

Arnold Elmer "Cappy" Bakke, 91, passed away surrounded by family at his side on Aug. 30 in Wrangell.

Graveside services will be held at noon Friday, Sept. 9, with a reception to follow at the Elks Hall. Donations of food for the reception will be appreciated by the family. Contact Tammy at 907-305-0270.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Wrangell Fire Department or the Wrangell Mariners' Memorial.

Arnold was born to Orlando Bakke and Marguret Gunyah on Oct. 25, 1930. He had four sisters: Lois, Marguret, Seena

and Yvonne.

He graduated from Wrangell High School and one of his fondest memories was playing basketball, his family said.

On Sept. 10, 1954, he married Alice Dietz and adopted her son David. Arnold Kilburn was added to their family, and not long after David passed at the age of 3 from cancer. In 1957, Helen was born. Alice and Arnold "cherished" 68 years of marriage, the family wrote.

"Cappy always loved the fishing life, working on numerous seiners and purchasing his own gillnetter in 1950, nam-

ing his boats after his loving sister Seena," his family wrote.

In 1951, Arnold joined the Army, served in a tank division and often talked about his time in Germany with his fellow soldiers. He was a proud member of the American Legion for 60 years, and marching in the Fourth of July parade was a priority.

He is survived by his wife, Alice; son Arnold (Ava) Bakke; daughter Helen (Steve) Keller; grandchildren Brandy (Jeremy) Grina, Solvay (J.C.) Gillen and great-grandchildren Jacob, Grina, Annika and Leeya Gillen.



Arnold Elmer "Cappy" Bakke

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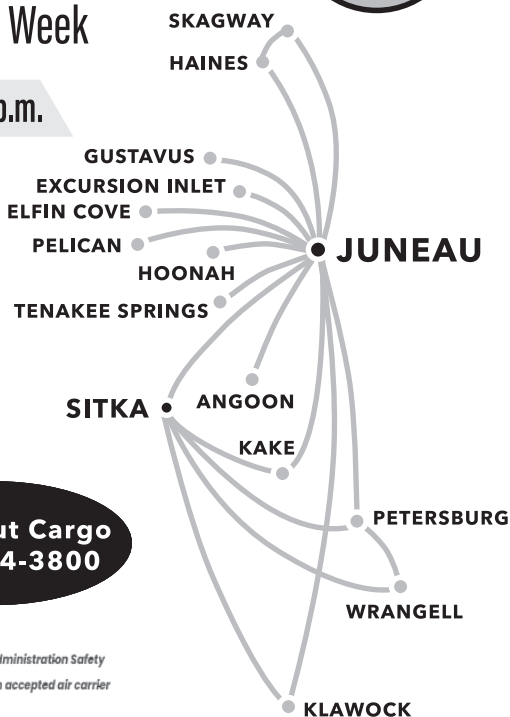


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# Murkowski, Tshibaka appear in first debate of U.S. Senate race

By SEAN MAGUIRE AND IRIS SAMUELS  
Anchorage Daily News

In their first time sharing a debate stage, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski and her Trump-backed challenger Kelly Tshibaka presented their visions for representing Alaska as Republicans. And the differences were just as pronounced in style as they were in policy.

Murkowski highlighted her 20-year tenure as a moderate dedicated to advancing resource development while maximizing federal funding for Alaska. For Tshibaka, it was a vision of resisting the Biden administration's energy policies and federal largesse, epitomized by this year's infrastructure bill that Murkowski helped author.

Democratic candidate Pat Chesbro, the third and often odd candidate out in a race largely seen as a referendum on former President Donald Trump's hold on the Republican Party, emphasized the risks of climate change and the need to wean the world off fossil fuels.

The 90-minute Alaska Oil and Gas Association conference debate, the first of several planned Senate candidate forums, was held in front of oil and gas industry heavyweights, state legislators and lobbyists at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage on Sept. 1.

The debate came after primary election results showed Murkowski leading the

race with 45% of the vote, followed by Tshibaka with 39%. Chesbro was in third with 7% and Buzz Kelley, a virtually unknown Republican, is set to round out the top four on the general election ballot with 2%. Event organizers said that Kelley didn't respond to an invitation to participate.

The four candidates will be on the Nov. 8 general election ballot.

There was little to distinguish Murkowski and Tshibaka in terms of resource development goals. Both want to reform and speed up the federal permitting process for oil and gas projects, and both want to secure long-anticipated projects like ConocoPhillips' pending Willow oil project on the North Slope and to build the King Cove Road, which is tied up in federal court.

But with differing views on bringing federal infrastructure dollars to the state and working across the aisle to deliver policy wins, the two spoke about starkly different visions.

Chesbro struck an entirely different tone, saying she supports oil and gas, but with caveats: She believes the industry should develop its unused federal oil and gas leases before necessarily acquiring new ones. She indicated past support for levying higher taxes on the industry, and she said that it should pivot to investing more in renewables.

"I think we could be a laboratory for renewable energy in Alaska," she said. "And I don't think we've taken enough opportunity to do that."

Tshibaka was repeatedly scornful of Murkowski for not doing enough to push back against "Team Biden" and for confirming the Democratic president's "radical nominees" who have "declared war on our energy industry." She was particularly critical of Murkowski's vote to confirm Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, but she also extended that criticism to U.S. Rep. Don Young, who supported Haaland's nomination, and U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, who voted to confirm Haaland too.

"We should have gotten something else out of that deal," Tshibaka said. "And our delegation could have done something better."

Murkowski, who highlighted her record and ignored Tshibaka's barbs, declined to say if she regretted voting for Haaland. She argued that Haaland would have been confirmed with or without her support. The important point now, she said, was building a productive relationship with Haaland and the Interior Department to develop Alaska's resources.

Debate moderator Kati Capozzi, president of the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, asked how much seniority matters in the Senate. Murkowski, currently

the 18th most senior U.S. senator, said her long tenure in the Senate has allowed her to build productive relationships.

"It's not just the years that matter," Murkowski said. "It's what you have done with it. And that's what Alaskans are looking for. They're looking for the value of that investment."

Tshibaka countered that Murkowski had "squandered" her seniority by not blocking the president's appropriations or his nominees.

Last week, Politico reported that Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's super PAC has scaled back its planned advertising in support of Murkowski after the primary election results showed her more comfortably ahead than earlier expected. Murkowski has millions of her own in her campaign account and a separate super PAC working to get her reelected.

Trump, who came to Alaska in July to campaign against Murkowski and in support of Tshibaka, continues to cast a shadow over the race. After the debate ended, state House member Tom McKay, an Anchorage Republican, noted that Murkowski had championed how she had built relationships. Referencing her vote to impeach Trump, McKay asked, if Trump runs and is reelected: "How are you going to deal with that relationship?"

## Libertarian candidate makes the final four for U.S. House Nov. 8 election

By JAMES BROOKS  
Alaska Beacon

In Chris Bye's preferred campaign photo, the Libertarian U.S. House candidate is ripping open his dress shirt to reveal a T-shirt that says, "Do Good Recklessly."

After fourth-place finisher Republican Tara Sweeney abruptly withdrew from Alaska's November U.S. House race, Bye, who placed fifth in the Aug. 16 primary, moved into the state's top-four ranked-choice election. That puts him alongside Democrat Mary Peltola and Republicans Sarah Palin and Nick Begich III in the race for a two-year term in the House.

Bye, a fishing guide from Fairbanks, spoke about his campaign while waiting to take his next client fishing. He said his picture encapsulates his message.

"I mean, we don't have to be Superman to do good. I mean, I can just be a fishing guide and pick up garbage along the way. This isn't complicated," he said.

Bye, a former U.S. Army officer with deployments in the

Afghanistan and Iraq wars, said he isn't wealthy and doesn't have a traditional political background, but that doesn't mean he can't do the job as Alaska's lone delegate in the U.S. House.

Born in Oxford, England, to an Air Force family, Bye said he "moved every two to three years" while growing up and went to two different high schools before joining the U.S. Army and going to college. He served in a variety of roles, including as an infantryman, in armor, and as a cavalryman before his career took him to Alaska with the 172nd Infantry Brigade.

While deployed to Iraq, he said he wrote to Alaska's congressional delegation frequently.

"I'd be like, 'Why am I in Iraq? Like, can someone please tell me why you voted to send us here? Because there is absolutely no constitutional emergency for us to be here,'" he said.

He said he was disillusioned by the "really dumb, canned responses" he got. "I just knew that I didn't fit in either (Republican or Democratic) party," he said.

On a subsequent fishing trip with a fellow officer, the other man gave him a copy of Ron Paul's book, "Liberty Defined."

Paul was the Libertarian Party nominee for president in 1988 and has espoused a philosophy of limited government intervention. Reading Paul's book "absolutely changed the way I look at governance," Bye said. "Overnight, I realized I had been part of the problem by settling for the lesser of two evils."

Bye retired from the military in 2017 and stayed in Fairbanks but didn't run for office until this year. The decision came with a high cost: Bye had to give up a civilian job on Fort Wainwright because federal employees aren't permitted to run for office.

The inspiration behind his decision, he said, was the passage of the federal infrastructure bill, known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Bye was dissatisfied by the cost of that measure. He briefly considered running as a Republican or Democrat but decided to run as a Libertarian after receiving an

email from the party.

"They welcomed me with wide arms, even though we've got some differences," Bye said. An example, he said, is drug policy. Bye favors continued restrictions on some controlled substances, such as fentanyl.

Answering a candidate questionnaire from the Beacon, Bye praised the U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* but said contraception and other medicines should be available "for all people without a doctor's prescription."

He has advocated restrictions on deep-sea trawling and the gradual elimination of the practice in order to reduce salmon bycatch.

Answering questions from Ballotpedia, he said his "top goal," if elected, is to accelerate the transfer of federal land to individuals and the state.

On his website, Bye advocates a 10% to 15% cut in federal spending and a 15% cut in the number of federal employees.

Bye acknowledged that he faces an uphill campaign toward November. He's received little

media attention to date, his competitors have raised significantly more money for advertising, and he received less than 1% of the vote in the primary election.

Still, he said, it's important for him to run. "I'm just a fishing guide, but if we don't have normal people in there, Alaskans are stuck with the status quo," he said. "And the status quo so far has failed us, failed miserably."



**Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA)** is recruiting for an Operator/Electrician for their Swan Lake Hydroelectric facility located approximately 22 air miles or 27 water miles from Ketchikan, AK. The position performs typical operations and maintenance duties associated with hydroelectric power generation and transmission facilities. Standard work schedule is 8 days on and 6 days off. Position requires residency on site in employer-provided housing during each tour of duty. Position will require travel by fixed wing aircraft and boat. Qualifications for the position include a High School Diploma, a valid Alaska Driver's license, and State of Alaska Department of Labor Certificate of Fitness in Electrical Field. Position is open until filled. Compensation is defined in IBEW Local 1547 Collective Bargaining Agreement. A general job description and electronic application process are available online at: <http://seapa.hydro.applicantpro.com/>. SEAPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Sept. 7 and 14, 2022

## Entomologists searching to learn more about bumblebees in Alaska

By KYLE CLAYTON  
Chilkat Valley News

A couple armed with bug nets wading through roadside fireweed were searching for bumblebees in the Chilkat Valley north of Haines earlier this month as part of a research effort to see if the Western Bumblebee's range includes Alaska. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists are considering proposing that the species be added to the endangered species list.

"It's disappeared over a big chunk of its former range which stretched from California out to some of the western states and all the way up into British Columbia at about 55 degrees north," said Derek Sikes, a University of Alaska Fairbanks professor of entomology.

"Haines and Skagway are the two Alaska localities that are at the greatest chance of that occurring. We're just outside of its range. We don't know if we're on the edge or not. If we find it here, then presumably we are on the edge."

Scant bumblebee data from Haines exists. The most recent museum records are from about 20 years ago, which included 29 specimens collected by Ken Philip, a UAF butterfly specialist who built the world's largest private collection of Arctic Lepidoptera butterflies and moths — more than 120,000 of them.

The only other bumblebee records in Haines are eight specimens that date back to

the 1950s when a U.S. Department of Agriculture entomologist based out of the Palmer research station collected specimens.

After collecting 136 specimens during their week in Haines, Sikes said he suspects he and his wife found most if not all the bumblebee species present in the Haines area. Melissa Sikes is a natural resource education specialist with the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District. The specimens await microscopic identification but Sikes estimates the catch includes three common species and three to five less common species.

"There's a lot of reasons why specimens are so important. They say a photo is worth a thousand words. A specimen is worth a million. There's so much you can do with a specimen," he said. "You can get the pollen off specimens that were collected hundreds of years ago and see what kinds of plants they were pollinating."

While they didn't find any Western Bumblebees, Sikes and his wife found a number of McKay's Bumblebees in the river valley, the sister species of the Western Bumblebee. It was the second or third most common species found, he said.

"There's some sort of weird disposition of endangerment because of the Western Bumblebee's genetics, their natural history," Sikes said. "We don't know what it is. There are all sorts of ideas ranging from habitat alteration to temperatures." There is a general

pattern "of bumblebees disappearing in the warmer parts of their range so their ranges are kind of getting smaller."

Some researchers think the decline could be attributed to parasites that affect bees raised commercially as greenhouse pollinators. Similar to the increase of parasites found in farmed salmon, the close proximity of animals makes it easier for parasites to spread.

Most bees, but bumbles especially, are aggressive pollinators, Sikes said. While many pollinating insects spread pollen incidentally in their search for nectar, female bumblebees collect the powdery substance in pollen sacs to feed to their young.

"They pack the pollen on this pollen basket so you sometimes see bees that have a big, yellow balls on part of their leg," Sikes said.

A decrease in bumblebee populations would likely decrease plant life and the animals that feed on those plants.

"In England there's some bees that have gone extinct and they've found some of the plants are having trouble as a result," Sikes said. "Every species is part of this functioning ecosystem regardless of whether we understand its value to us. It seems prudent to not let them disappear. Aldo Leopold said only a fool, when taking apart an engine, would throw away seemingly useless parts."

# Petersburg sets up task force to look for solutions to lack of housing

By CHRIS BASINGER  
Petersburg Pilot

The Petersburg Borough Assembly, which is creating a task force to look for solutions to the housing shortage in the community, held a work session Aug. 29 to get a better understanding of the challenges in developing or purchasing homes.

Assembly Member Dave Kensinger spoke on changing the zoning codes to make building affordable houses possible, and shared his concern that people cannot move to Petersburg if they do not have a place to live.

Some of the potential changes to the zoning codes discussed included allowing the development of more attached homes, condos and fourplexes to fit more

units on a lot.

The lack of available housing also is a problem in Wrangell, with business owners reporting in a survey this past spring that a lack of rentals and homes to buy makes it hard to recruit and retain employees.

"I'm hoping that when we're done here tonight that we can at least have a few ideas to move forward with to talk about at the next assembly meeting and at least have some kind of direction for the task force that we're trying to put together," Petersburg Assembly Member Jeff Meucci said at the start of the Aug. 29 work session.

Assembly Member Thomas Fine-Walsh also said there needed to be a focus on existing housing and lots that are underutilized or unused because of the

high cost of developing new homes.

Petersburg builder Joshua Adams discussed ways to encourage the private sector and develop underutilized commercial lots, which already have utilities.

Another issue discussed was the damage that vacation rental services like Vrbo and Airbnb are causing by taking away units that were previously used as monthly rentals. Cummings said there are less regulations on vacation rentals than monthly rentals, and that some landlords transitioned their units to vacation rentals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Petersburg Indian Association President Cris Morrison said she has talked to Borough Manager Steve Giesbrecht about ways tribal council could partner with the borough, such as sharing the

cost or seeking grant money for a housing needs assessment.

Giesbrecht reported the borough has been in talks with the consulting firm that wrote the borough's 2016 comprehensive plan about having them develop a housing needs assessment, which he said would cost \$76,000 and would take about five to six months to complete.

The assembly also previously authorized engineering services from PND Engineers to design an expansion of the Airport Subdivision and an extension of Fram Street. Though utilities and other costs are not finalized, Giesbrecht reported that the expanded Airport Subdivision would open up 25 lots and cost an estimated \$3.5 million, while the Fram Street extension would open up 12 lots and cost an estimated \$2 million.

# Consultant advises Sitka how to boost tourism experience and spending

By GARLAND KENNEDY  
Sitka Sentinel

With Sitka's largest-ever tourist season underway - with as many as 400,000 cruise ship passengers this summer - a consultant visited town last month and suggested possible improvements to visitor experiences. A crosswalk at a busy downtown street, more signs and more outdoor seating, and brighter paint colors on buildings would help, he said.

Representing an organization called the Destination Development Association, Roger Brooks travels the globe assessing popular tourism sites and reporting his findings to the locals.

Brooks was in Sitka under a contract with the city tourism bureau Visit Sitka, and delivered his report Aug. 12 at a public meeting. He specified that he views the town through the lens of an independent traveler.

"We look at Sitka - is this the place we want to live, retire,

raise a family, is it a place we would want to come and start a business or move a business or just work here? The entire focus of this whole thing is what else can be done locally to make Sitka an even better, stronger, more desirable destination," he said in his presentation.

Brooks emphasized the importance of navigational signs and accessibility, such as a crosswalk. He also suggested widening sidewalks in the downtown area.

"You could make this about people and if you double the width of your sidewalks, you could have sidewalk dining out there, you could have more room for those (shop) displays, benches, pots, flowers and best of all - people. Make downtown about people not cars, remove parallel parking and double the width of your sidewalks," Brooks recommended.

While he frequently commented on the beauty of Sitka and its surroundings, he joked that the range of building colors is limited and drab.

"Why does just about every building in Sitka have to be gray, brown or beige? On a gray, cloudy day you can't even tell the difference between the buildings and the sky."

While he and his staff were in town for a week, they rent-

ed a vehicle and drove to both ends of the road network. They had trouble finding the Alaska Raptor Center and the Fortress of the Bear on Sawmill Creek Road.

"We drove by both the Raptor Center and Fortress of the Bear twice because their signs are set way off - they are used to tour buses bringing everybody there," Brooks said. "What about the rest of us? It will increase visitor spending; studies have shown that wayfinding will increase visitor spending by 18% to 22%, and, you know what, that's the benefit of tourism, bringing more cash into Sitka."

The fee for the visit by Brooks and his team was \$25,000, funded by the city's transient lodging tax.

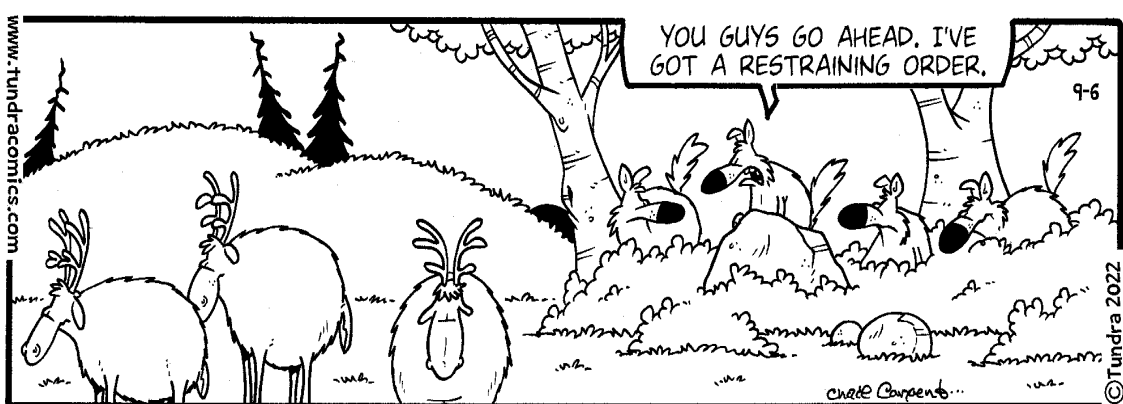
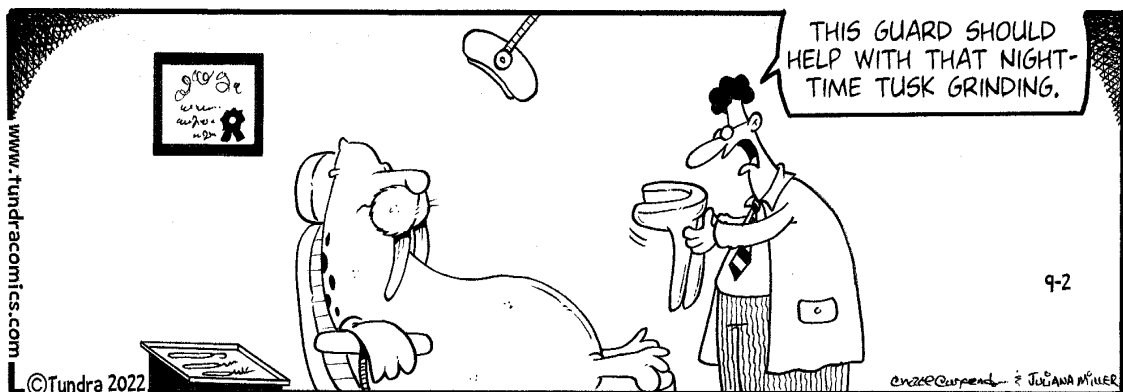
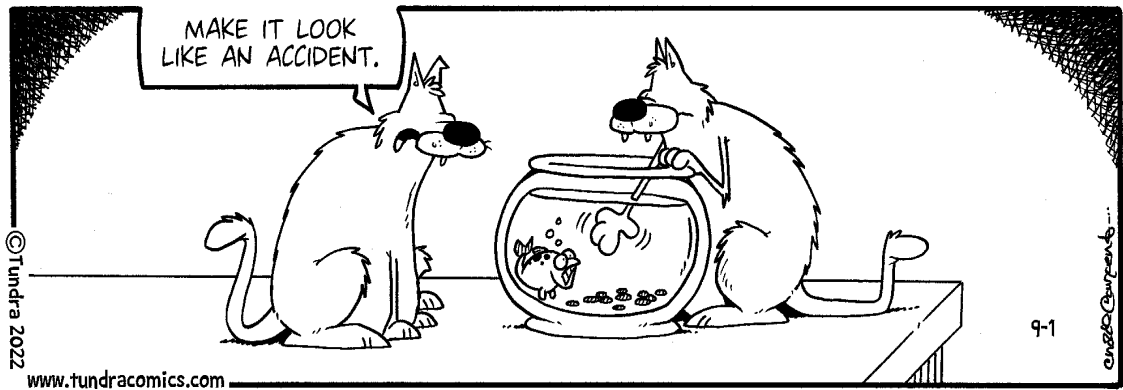
## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



### ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FORESTRY Notice of Intent to Claim Abandoned Timber Property

In accordance with Alaska Statutes 45.50.210 through .325, it is the intent of the State of Alaska to claim all abandoned timber property in the waters and on the tidelands of the State of the east side of Etolin Island from Canoe Pass to Olive Cove (including Brownson and other islands), Thomas Place to Blake Channel on Wrangell Island. It is the intent of the State to make the claimed timber property available for salvage under 11 AAC 71.005 through .910, Timber and Material Sale Regulations.

Parties wishing to comment may do so to the Alaska Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Ave., Suite 213, Ketchikan, AK 99901, phone 907-225-3070. Comments must be received within 30 days following the first date of this notice to receive consideration.

Greg Staunton, Southeast Area Forester  
Department of Natural Resources

Publish Sept. 7, 14 and 21, 2022

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL INVITATION TO BID High School and Middle School Fire Alarm Replacement

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska will receive sealed bids for the construction of the High School and Middle School Fire Alarm Replacement.

Work consists of all activities necessary to completely replace the existing fire alarm systems at the Wrangell High School and Middle School. This includes demolition and replacement of all field devices, initiation devices, flow and tamper switches, and all auxiliary components including fire alarm relays and circuit interface modules. Work includes demolition and replacement of the fire alarm panel, remote annunciator panels, fire alarm extender panels, and all fire alarm wiring. The engineer's estimate for the project is \$525,000 - \$575,000.

The contract documents are available in electronic format only and can be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website ([www.wrangell.com](http://www.wrangell.com)) under the Bids and RFP's section. Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on September 22, 2022.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Aug. 24, 31, Sept. 7 and 14, 2022

# Police seize half-million dollars of drugs in Ketchikan bust

*Ketchikan Daily News*

A shipment of heroin, fentanyl and methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$488,000 was seized by law enforcement in a case that resulted in the arrest of a Ketchikan man on felony drug charges.

"It's a lot as far as quantity," Ketchikan Police Lt. Andy Berntson said about the amount of drugs during an Aug. 31 press conference about the case. "It's a lot anywhere, but (in) Ketchikan, it's very significant."

Larry P. Marsden, 40, was taken into custody by Ketchikan Police Department officers on Aug. 29 and charged

with one count each of second-degree and third-degree misconduct involving a controlled substance.

Bail was set at \$105,000. His next court appearance will be a preliminary hearing on Sept. 9.

Marsden's arrest came after he took possession of a mailed package that police say contained 501.4 grams of heroin and 444.8 grams of methamphetamine, according to Ketchikan police. Subsequent searches of Marsden and his belongings allegedly found 133 grams of fentanyl, 33.7 grams of heroin and 23.9 grams of methamphetamine.

The investigation involved Ketchikan police and the re-

gional Southeast Alaska Cities Against Drugs task force. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service was involved with identifying the parcel, according to Berntson.

Law enforcement personnel outfitted the package with a beacon and tracking device

pursuant to a state warrant. The package was delivered on Aug. 29 to the address on the package, an acquaintance of Marsden.

Marsden allegedly took possession of the package at a residence in Bear Valley, according to the police press

release.

In addition to the other drugs found and seized during the searches of Marsden and his belongings, police seized \$13,127 in cash because the money "appeared to be illicit drug proceeds," Berntson said.

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC HEARING  
PUBLIC NOTICE**

During the Regular Assembly Meeting of Tuesday, September 13, 2022, starting at 6:00 p.m., there will be a **PUBLIC HEARING** on the following item(s):

- a. **RESOLUTION No. 09-22-1716** of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, amending the Fee and Rate Schedule for the Wrangell Water Department by adding the vacation rate for non-metered residential customers

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City & Borough of Wrangell

**Publish Sept. 7, 2022**

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Pursuant to the City and Borough of Wrangell Code, Sec. 3.04.080, notice is hereby given that the regular assembly meetings of the assembly shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month and shall begin at 6 p.m.

If any such Tuesday shall fall on a legal holiday as defined by the laws of the State of Alaska, the meetings scheduled for that day shall be held at the same hour on the next succeeding day which is not a holiday. Separate notice for the regular assembly meetings shall not be required. There will be no regular meetings the second Tuesday in July and August and fourth Tuesday in December.

If a work session is scheduled preceding the regular assembly meeting, publication shall be made on the website and posted at City Hall and the post office that the regular assembly meeting shall begin at 7 p.m.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Sept. 7, 2022**

**EMPLOYMENT ADVERTISEMENT  
WRANGELL CAPITAL FACILITIES DEPARTMENT  
Facilities Maintenance Specialist**

The Wrangell Capital Facilities Department is accepting applications for the position of Facilities Maintenance Specialist.

This position performs a wide range of technical maintenance and repairs of building systems, equipment and grounds throughout all Borough-owned facilities and assists other departments with special projects. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Facility Maintenance Specialist Lead. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 19 with a starting wage at \$25.26 per hour. Applicants must meet the qualifications of the position, as listed in the job description. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained at City Hall. To be considered, interested applicants should submit their City and Borough of Wrangell employment application, a cover letter and current resume to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929, or via email at [payroll@wrangell.com](mailto:payroll@wrangell.com). This position is open until filled.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Aug. 31, Sept. 7 and 14, 2022**

**CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
NOTICE OF REGULAR ELECTION**

Notice is hereby given that on the 4th day of October 2022, in the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, a Regular Local Election will be held for the purpose of voting on the following Borough Official positions and propositions.

- Borough Mayor: One seat, for-2 year terms
- Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2023
- Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms

**PROPOSITION NO. 1**

**Ratification of Ordinance 1029**

General obligation bonds for major renovation of middle school, high school and elementary school

**PROPOSITION NO. 2**

**Ratification of Ordinance 1030**

General obligation bonds for major renovation of Public Safety Building

**PROPOSITION 3**

**Ratification of Ordinance 1031**

Sale and/or Lease of the 6-Mile Zimovia Highway (former Mill Site Property)

The polls for said election will be open at 8 a.m. on the said day and will close at 8 p.m. on the same day.

Each voter must have the qualifications prescribed by state law. A qualified voter shall vote only once per election and shall exercise that right at the polling place established in the designated Wrangell Precinct (James and Elsie Nolan Museum/Civic Center) and in which he/she resides within the borough boundaries of the City and Borough of Wrangell.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

**Publish Sept. 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2022**

**State of Alaska  
Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry  
Southern Southeast Area Office**

**Preliminary Written Finding under AS 38.05.035(e) and AS 38.05.945**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, gives formal notice under AS 38.05.945 that the Division has made a preliminary decision under AS 38.05.035(e) regarding the sale of the following commercial timber sale: El Capitan Timber Sale (SSE-1380-K).

Before this sale may be held, the Commissioner will make a written final decision that the sale is in the best interest of the State. This decision will set out the facts and applicable policies upon which the Commissioner bases his determination that the proposed timber sale will or will not best serve the interest of the State. The final decision is expected to be available to the public after **September 26, 2022**.

The area of the sale is proximate to the El Capitan Passage on Prince of Wales. The timber sale area is found within Sections 1, 12, and 13, Township 66 South, Range 78 East, and Sections 6, 7, 8 and 18, Township 66 South, Range 79 East, Copper River Meridian. The sale area is found within the Petersburg A-4 NW USGS quadrangle. The main access for this sale area is from the existing Prince of Wales Road System, specifically off the 2000 Road.

The harvest units total approximately 340 acres and contain approximately 8,000 MBF of timber. This volume will be negotiated and sold under provisions of AS 38.05.115 or AS 38.05.118, in the form of one or multiple sales. The sale(s) will require in-state manufacturing and will be a negotiated contract.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of the preliminary decision. Comments should be mailed to the Alaska Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213, Ketchikan, AK 99901. Comments must be received at the Division of Forestry office no later than **September 26, 2022**, in order to be considered in the final best interest finding decision of whether or not this sale will be held in whole or in part. To be eligible to appeal the final decision a person must have provided written comment by **September 26, 2022**.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT:**

- Alaska Division of Forestry  
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 213  
Ketchikan, AK 99901
- Contact: Greg Staunton  
Phone: (907) 225-3070  
Email: [greg.staunton@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.staunton@alaska.gov)

Copies of the preliminary decision are available for review at the Division of Forestry at the above address and at the Ketchikan, Craig, Petersburg and Wrangell Public Libraries and the State Online Public Notice System at <http://notice.alaska.gov/207904>.

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special modifications to participate in this review may contact the number above.

Greg Staunton  
Southeast Area Forester

**Publish Aug. 31 and Sept. 7, 2022**

# Yakama chief continues fighting for Columbia River salmon

By DEEPA BHARATH  
Associated Press

THE DALLES, Oregon (AP) — Wilbur Slockish Jr. has been shot at, had rocks hurled at him. He hid underground for months, and then spent 20 months serving time in federal prisons across the country — all of that for fishing in the Columbia River.

But Slockish, a traditional river chief of the Klickitat Band of the Yakama Nation, would endure it all again to protect his right of access to the river and the fish that his people believe were bestowed to them by the Creator.

"It's a sacred covenant," he said. "Nothing's more important."

Tribal fishermen like Slockish have drawn the ire of commercial and sport fisherman as well as government officials over the decades for engaging in an act of faith. For Slockish and his ancestors, who have inhabited the Columbia River Basin "since the beginning of time," stewardship of the land, the river and its fish, animals and plant life is a divine contract at the core of a millennia-old religious practice. They've fished in the river not just to practice their faith, but also to eke out a livelihood.

Tribal fishing rights along the Columbia have spurred bitter, drawn-out legal and legislative battles. This is despite an 1855 treaty with the federal government stating that the tribes would cede most of their lands, but retain their fishing rights.

In April 1983, Slockish and four other fishermen were convicted in U.S. District Court for selling salmon caught out of season to undercover federal agents in a sting that became known as "Salmon Scam." Slockish was charged with ille-



PHOTO BY JESSIE WARDARSKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wilbur Slockish Jr., a river chief of the Klickitat Band of the Yakama Nation, looks at petroglyphs in Columbia Hills Historical State Park in June in Lyle, Washington. In the 1980s, Slockish served 20 months in federal prison on charges of poaching salmon from the Columbia River. He says he went to prison to fight for his people's right to practice their faith.

gally taking 16 fish from the river.

Tom Keefe Jr., a Washington-based civil rights lawyer who represented the fishermen in that case, said federal agents maintained 40,000 salmon were missing from the river but later discovered that the fish had migrated to tributaries because of pollution.

Keefe said that for Slockish and the

other fishermen, the fight to save the river and its resources has always been about religious freedom. A practicing Catholic, Keefe said representing the fishermen gave him a window into the spiritual lives of the "river people."

"To them the Columbia River is a giant cathedral that stretches from the mouth of the Pacific Ocean to the mountains of

Canada," he said.

Slockish is "a man of integrity and commitment," Keefe added. His voice cracked with emotion as he described the moment the Klickitat chief removed his wedding band right before heading to prison, placing it in Keefe's palm for safekeeping.

Slockish hasn't stopped fighting for the river. After his release from prison, he focused his efforts on water quality and health issues related to the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Benton County, Washington, which was decommissioned in 1989. The plant released significant amounts of radioactive waste into the river, causing irreparable ecological harm.

For the past two decades, Slockish has made presentations at elementary schools around Thanksgiving about the spiritual significance of the river and its fish. He has represented the Yakama Nation on several river-related commissions and committees and still serves on the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, which represents the tribes and their rights along the river.

Slockish and the other fishermen's high-profile case has helped bring attention to their issues and given tribes better access to the river, said Jeremy FiveCrows, the organization's spokesman.

The 20 months Slockish spent in prison "were hell," but it's all about keeping a promise he made as a 14-year-old — to the first salmon he ever caught — to be a good steward of the land.

Slockish still recalls the way that fish looked him "dead in the eye" as if to say: "I've done my job. Now you do yours."

## Recovery project will look for ways to boost abalone numbers

By YERETH ROSEN  
Alaska Beacon

There is only one species of abalone native to Alaska waters, and a new project is underway to try find ways to boost its depleted numbers.

An Alaska Abalone Recovery Working Group is brainstorming ideas for strengthening the state's vulnerable population of pinto abalones, also known as Northern abalones or, to the Indigenous peoples of the region, Gunxaa and Gúlaa.

The working group includes representatives from state and federal agencies, tribal governments and others, including support from Alaska Sea Grant, a program based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks that provides marine education, re-

search and technology.

That has started with surveys of people in Southeast Alaska where pinto abalones are part of Indigenous tradition.

The reception so far has been enthusiastic, said Ashely Bolwerk, the Alaska Sea Grant fellow leading the community engagement aspect of the project.

"Everybody I talk to is really excited about abalone, so it makes it a really fun topic to focus on," said Bolwerk, who lives in Sitka and is working on a fellowship with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Pinto abalones are found as far south as Baja California and as far north as Southeast Alaska, but throughout the range, numbers have been sparse and uneven, according to NOAA

Fisheries. That inconsistency extends to the Alaska populations. For example, the Sitka Sound population seems to be increasing, while abalones around Prince of Wales Island are hard to find, Bolwerk said.

In Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian traditions, pinto abalones are valued for their meat — and more. They were traditionally used for trade, and their shells are integrated into artwork.

But scarcities have left some gaps in traditional practices and knowledge, Bolwerk said.

She was introduced to the subject as an offshoot of her research work as a graduate student working on a project studying sea otter reintroduction off British Columbia. That led to work at Prince of Wales Island and a relationship with the

tribal government in Hydaburg, where community members told her about the severe decline in their cherished resource.

"There are folks in Hydaburg who don't harvest abalone anymore because they don't see enough at their sites and are sort of self-managing," she said. Some say they haven't harvested in so long that they're forgotten how to process the meat, she said. "There's a whole generation of kids who can recognize abalone shells in regalia and things like that but have no idea where the animal lives or what it looks like when it's alive."

Pinto abalones live for 15 to 20 years and reproduce slowly and in irregular patterns, making them inherently at risk for depletion, according to NOAA. The species is classified as en-

dangered in British Columbia and Washington state, though NOAA Fisheries in 2014 rejected petitions to grant range-wide Endangered Species Act protections.

Overharvesting by people has gotten much of the blame for the recent declines across the range. Commercial harvests have been closed in various areas, including in Alaska in 1996, though some very small-scale subsistence and personal-use harvests continue in parts of Southeast.

People are not the only abalone eaters. Sea otters have also gotten some of the blame for abalone declines. However, sea otters have an important place in the ecosystem, too, in eating creatures like sea urchins that could otherwise mow down kelp forests.

For the Alaska Abalone Recovery Working Group, the plan is for the survey to be completed in August, Bolwerk said. Results are expected to be presented to communities over the winter, she said. From there, the working group will consider potential rebuilding actions.

Possible responses include mariculture — either farming pinto abalones all the way to adulthood or a more limited project that would help restore wild populations, Bolwerk said.

Also possible are habitat improvements or changes to management of species that interact with pinto abalones. In British Columbia, for example, there is an effort to increase harvesting of sea urchins, which compete with abalones for kelp and seaweed, Bolwerk said.

Another idea is an educational campaign to raise the public profile of the abalone that crawl along the rocky seafloor. "Maybe some added emphasis on how important it is to local cultures and communities might help bring in more funding and create more awareness of the work that needs to be done," Bolwerk said.

## We're looking for opinions!

Wrangell has never been short of opinions  
but we seem to be short of letters to the editor

Send us your letters and share your  
opinions with the community.

Limited to no more than 400 words,  
accuracy and civil language.

Email your letter to [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com)

  
WRANGELL SENTINEL