

RC 042

BOF
Staff
ADF&G
Advisory Committees
US Forest Service Subsistence
Coast Guard

My name is AH KA SHOAK, my other name is Raymond S. Nielsen Jr.

I am a lifelong Sitkan, a citizen of Sitka Tribe of Alaska. I was raised learning the Native ways, and still practice them today.

I support any proposal that supports and benefits Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Subsistence priority must come first and be protected. We have occupied this land and practiced our way of life for thousands of years. Our people settled here because of the availability of natural resources, protection from weather – a place we call (Sheet'ká Kwáan) Sitka Kwaan.

Our practice of herring egg gathering has been going on for generations and little has changed. Part of our cultural tradition is gathering eggs. It is the first and most important food source of our people.

In 1990-1991, I helped STA put together the Traditional Food Program, this hunting, fishing, picking, gathering, harvesting, processing, and disbursing foods, and most importantly, advocating for our resources. In the early 90s I went to the Board of Fish in Ketchikan to put on the table our way of life, practices and participation, and uses. Now today we still have to fight for all of that.

I support our inborn, inherent right to trade, barter, sell, share, give away, cook, and advocate for our natural resources coming from our traditional area.

The Grease Trails are a very big part of our history/tradition. This oral history was passed down, recognized by other communities of Southeast Alaska, other tribes of Alaska, Yukon Territory, British Columbia, and Washington (State). We continue to do this today.

In the high profile case Jackson v U.S. Government, the first case was a hung jury. In the appellate court, it was a unanimous victory for our people. The people of Sheet'ká Kwáan have a long history of being stewards of our natural resources. We continue to endeavor to take care of our families, STA citizens, and other people of the Pacific Northwest.

The commercial herring fishery has been against us the whole time. By proposal we secured a No Fish Zone, which was expanded; now the industry wants that area smaller. The industry has used its boats to scare fish out of the No Fish Zone into the fishing area. This happened right in front of the Alaska Fish and Game, and nothing was done about it. Intimidation against us will not work, we are willing to go to the next level to protect our rights.

We are the only federally recognized tribe occupying Sitka. The last three years, the industry has hired a seiner and crew to harvest herring eggs on tree branches to hand out to whomever, trying to undermine the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Not once have we ever asked for help from the commercial fishermen. It is illegal for them to pay anyone to conduct a subsistence (CCT)

activity unless you are a federally recognized tribe. But everyone seems to look the other way. To this day, they are still not listed in the books as a tribe. The first year was the Julia K from Seattle. The captain is Native, but a resident of Washington State. The second year was the Jade Ann from Kake, the captain is Native and did not know everything was wrong, and would not do it again. The third year was the Jeannie Marie, and I do not know the captain. The pay was quite good, a crew member bragged about how good the money was, and wanted half that much the following year.

We know that the industry, Silver Bay Seafoods and Mr. Steve Reifenstuhl were right in the middle of it. I consider this an ethics violation of substantial proportion.

The industry, because the BoF and the ADF&G have let them play their hand, we are now ready to step up to the next level and play ours.

I dedicate my testimony to the memory of brother John Littlefield.