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Testimony Board of Fish Sitka Alaska

To madams national-capital.com <madams@national-capital.com>

Sitka, Alaska January 15, 2018

To: Board of Fish State of Alaska

From: Marvin Adams, Tlingit of the Raven moiety from the Kwasshki Kwaan Clan in Yakutat. My Tlingit name is Kaa'na Kw Eesh, I am clan house leader of the Tsisk 'w Hit (Owl House).

Like many here testifying today, I wear more than one hat. For the record, I am also a holder of a limited entry power troll permit and personally own 40' Fishing vessel F/V Ole Buddy a power troller formally known as FV Franscesca. I also serve on Executive Committee of Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska a Federally recognized Southeast Alaska Regional Tribe.

We the undersigned Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska whom represents 30,000 tribal citizens file with the Board of Fish a strong complaint for the apparent unlawful over harvesting of herring fishery resource. Our tribal citizens since time immemorial have clearly depended on this Herring fishery not only for our social, cultural, and commercial needs but our ancestors and elders had fully recognized that many many other marine mammals and other marine species are totally dependent on the Herring resource to sustain a healthy food chain. Over harvesting has a devastating impact on the herring resource.

I will use Yakutat, Alaska as an example. 50 years ago Yakutat had a very viable herring spawning activity. The herring were spawning every where, Humpy Creek, Red Field Bay, Canoe Pass, Crab Island, Puget cove, Doggie Island, the whole Yakutat area was milky white as the herring were spawning. King salmon would be in abundance, Alek kings were everywhere. It was very common to harvest 50lb to 60lb Alek River kings. For the Tlingit it was rich in oil content as these kings would fatten up and make the run up Alek river to spawn. I remember seeing theses kings dripping their oil in the village smoke house. The herring spawn was so plentiful we would drop hemlock in the water and provide our village in an abundance of herring eggs.

However, In early 1970 the State of Alaska Fish and Game had a first commercial herring opening in Yakutat. In one year the Herring fishery was cleaned out. The next year there was no more herring available not even to use as fish bait. The community didn't get to harvest herring eggs on branches and

the herring didn't even spawn in the area any more. Fortunately, we had Tlingit family in Sitka that started sending herring on branches to Yakutat.

Today, like my grandfather DS Benson had wrote to you in August 1, 1904 one hundred and twelve years ago I am formally writing to the Board of Fish in strong protest to stop the apparent mismanagement of Sitka Alaska Herring Fishery. I ask the Board of Fish to study the Yakutat Herring depletion in 1970's as a prime example of what can and will happen if the Sitka herring fishery over-harvesting is left unchecked today and into the near future. If Alaska were still a US Territory today the Alaska Tribes would have a seat at your table. Federal law allows Federally recognized Tribes a government to government relationship. All though this is not applicable to State of Alaska Statues and State law, I ask the Board of Fish to seriously consider this complaint

I closing, I plead with the Board of Fish, please help protect the Herring resource, protect our tribal citizens way of life. Protect our food chain that so many species depends on this critical food chain resource. Our Tribal Assembly has passed Tribal Assemble TA 17-01, TA 17-14, TA 17-15 urging the Board of Fish to stop the over harvesting this valuable resource. Thanks you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today. Gunalcheesh!

Marvin Adams

DS Benson letter to the US Federal Government regarding blocking the Situk River. August 1, 1904

To Marvin Adams <madams@national-capital.com>

An Interesting Piece of Yakutat History...

Posted on

<<https://situkriver.wordpress.com/2012/03/16/an-interesting-piece-of-yakutat-history/>> March 16, 2012 |

<<https://situkriver.wordpress.com/2012/03/16/an-interesting-piece-of-yakutat-history/#respond>> Leave a comment

While we continue to watch snowflakes fall and wait for the roads to reopen (yes, I'm stalling before real fishing reports resume)... Here is a glimpse into Yakutat's past regarding the "Seatuck River". A letter from two prominent Yakutat residents to the "United States Government - from 1904. Most interesting I found was the suggestion from the government guy that they should make sure they have white witnesses, not just natives "in order to disarm possible prejudice"... Um... correct me if I'm wrong, but it looks to me that it only reinforces prejudice if you require white testimony to prove a case...

The following complaint was received by the hand of Lieutenant Emmons, at Sitka, to whom it had been given for presentation to the authorities:

YAKUTAT, ALASKA, August 1, 1904.

To UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT:

We, the undersigned Indians of Yakutat, Alaska, do hereby send to United States

Government a strong protest against unlawful fishing in Seatuck River, etc.

We

have seen the rivers dammed right across with seines and so by hindering the salmon to run up the river and spawn. We are dependent on fish for our living in the future, and if they fish like the Yakutat and Southern Railway Company have done this summer all the salmon in the rivers, lakes, and inlets will be gone and destroyed.

Thus we send in our protest against the Yakutat and Southern Railway Company for unlawful fishing and damming rivers, and fishing on Saturdays and Sundays. (Signed) CHIEF GEORGE.

D. S. BENSON.

After consultation with Governor Brady and United States Commissioner DeGross in regard to a prosecution, I dispatched the following reply to the complainants:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,

Sitka, Alaska, August 86, 1904.

CHIEF GEORGE and D. S. BENSON, Yakutat, Alaska.

DIVISION of ALASKAN FISHERIES,

GENTLEMEN: