

Ernest J. Karass
Juneau, AK
Sitka Tribe Member

January 21, 2018

Board of Fish members,

Hi, my name is Ernie Karras and I am a member of the Sitka tribe. I've been a part of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery since 1987. I participated from 1987 to 1991 as a cork skiff. From 1991-2003 I was a deck hand, then went back to the cork skiff, which I still do to this day. I've also taken part in the Dutch Harbor winter bait herring fishery.

In my 30 years of employment plus experience in family subsistence, I had/have confidence in the experience, concern and research of managers of the herring fishery from Bob DeLong, to Bill Davidson, to Dave Gordon, and now Eric Coonradt.

I am a member of the Sitka tribe. I've set branches in Sitka Sound and gone to harvest them after the spawn, and then have seen the tribe come and set branches in the same place after the fish have already spawned. I've had my branches set down by other tribe members. When I went to their meeting to discuss my concerns, they kicked me out before the meeting even started. Within an hour of this meeting, I had local police officers present me with a one year order to stay off of STA property.

I was there when Steve Demmert brought his seiner full of eggs from community to community, and then the Tribe shut that down because he had "Seattle" on the back of his boat. In the past, the native permit holders who would bring eggs to the communities included: Captain Merle and Sony Enloe with the F/V Icy Queen, the F/V Claudia H., and the F/V Alice H; and, Captain Charlie Skultka with the F/V Claudia H.; Captain Leo Woods with the F/V Outlook; and George and Joe Demmert with the F/V Lady Dianne and the F/V Lovey JoAnn. They all used to the communities without discrimination, to whoever made their way to the harbors, and STA seems to have forgotten about that. Now the Tribe uses politics to chase away the boats that helped so many families get traditional foods that they couldn't have gotten otherwise.

Finally, I want to talk about Vaughn Skanna with the F/V Katlian, who is from Klawock and has harvested eggs on branches in Sitka Sound for donation to the communities. I have known Vaughn for over 30 years and he is not a thief as he has been accused of! 90% of his sets came to Sitka for local distribution, with only 10% being brought to Craig and Klawock for his people. Which should not be viewed negatively in my opinion.

I want us all to get along. We can resolve this with reasonable management that satisfies subsistence and economic use responsibly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ernie Karras