



RC 017

**Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Grand Camp**  
Post Office Box 35071 Juneau, Alaska 99803

February 22, 2015

**GRAND CAMP FISHERIES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF FISH AND THE ADF&G**

**Executive Summary of ANB Grand Camp Position**

The Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) stands behind the proposals developed by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. We therefore strongly support **Proposal 114, 115, 121 and 125** on Herring Management by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the Organized Village of Kasaan.

We also urge the Board to manage a locally supported solution under the authority of Resolution 14-12 attached. Communities have the most to gain or lose as commercial fishing vessels are mobile and able to fish many gear type and species. Fisheries should be managed from an overall perspective with inputs from the smallest wild stocks. For this reason we also endorse **proposal 192** by Kootznoowoo for the requirement of Fish Tickets for Sockeye in Districts 12 & 14 and, until further evidence is available, restrictions on Commercial fishing efforts in District 12 as is outlined in **Proposal 193**.

**Background**

The ANB was organized by 12 students of Sheldon Jackson technical school in 1912 and stands today as the oldest Native political organization in the country. This organization was formed to begin the means to move Alaska Natives out of the darkness of savagery and into the throws of civilization and to promote equality among the races. ANB also sought to protect its people from the ambiguous state they were framed in as they had no treaties to protect them from injustices or to protect their resources and lands. They had obvious concerns of overharvesting by the timber and fishing industries that fought with more sophisticated and financial resources to prevent Tribal Rights from taking root in the Tongass. Since the beginning of the Territorial Government Tlingit chiefs appealed to Governors and to Washington DC for protection from encroachments and wanton taking of the resources. In areas of Alaska where Americans had not reached to the extent they had in the Tongass the Federal Government was able to establish reserves of land and water intended to protect Indigenous peoples so that they could survive as a people. The federal wisdom at the time was that Alaska Natives could not survive without resources that the land provided.

**Concern of ANB**

Herring was at one time plentiful throughout Southeast. Today, only Sitka Sound provides a harvest healthy enough for the taking. Herring processing plants began as early as 1878 and expanded

throughout Chatham Strait until the species became depleted in the 1920's and never recovered. (North Pacific Research Board. Project #728.)

In Sitka Sound, only 2 of the 3 subspecies exist in numbers today. One is the Silver Bay stock. Silver Bay was a name given by the Tlingit for the remarkable silvery hue given the bay by the returning herring. This subspecies was depleted by a combination of overfishing and the development of a hatchery in Silver Bay. From the 1920's on, Alaska Natives from San Francisco to Barrow learned to rely on the harvesting of Herring Eggs by the local Natives. Because of the harvesting of the eggs commercially for Japan and the winter harvest by the State of Alaska for research and for sale as bait, this depletion has caused a fear of overharvesting and local natives have all but eliminated the taking of herring for food and drying.

We had proposed to then Senator Begich to allow us to begin a project of reseeding areas of Southeast with fertilized herring eggs. Two communities immediately volunteered to be recipients. There is no other stock capable of restocking Southeast Alaska. Sitka herring stock, in its current state, is not currently healthy enough to utilize in this project. As the Sitka Tribal herring biologist has shown through more than 20 years of research, and the fact that 4 of the last 5 years herring roe harvests have not met minimum standards, we implore that true conservation measures be taken. We will ask our current Congressional delegation to continue this work and urge the Board of Fish to make sure necessary "seed stock" is available as a priority before other uses.

### **Recent Developments**

During its January meeting, the Federal Subsistence Board passed a unanimous motion to close the federal waters of Sitka Sound around Maknahti Island to commercial purse seine herring harvests.

Subsistence is meant to be the first and foremost consideration of fisheries management, according to both state and federal laws and must also be managed by the best available science. For this reason we support proposals put forth by Angoon and Sitka and urge the State Board of Fisheries to consider "at risk subsistence fisheries" in all proposals it evaluates as is outlined in **Proposal 173** which requests that the Board address habitat, conservation, and subsistence priority when considering regulations and policies, as follows:

5 AAC 01.176 ...

(d) In Southeastern Alaska, the board must always assess the impact that past and current management actions for wild and hatchery salmon have had on each community's ability to meet cultural and traditional subsistence uses. The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) must specifically address habitat, conservation, and subsistence priority obligations in their regulations and policies for commercial, sport, personal use, and hatchery programs. When the board considers regulations and policies that might compromise customary and traditional subsistence uses the affected communities shall be consulted. The board shall use the traditional use areas outlined in Goldschmidt and Haas (1946) to determine the communities they are obligated to consult with.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood has fought for land rights, the passage of a settlement act and continues to encourage Communities to preserve traditional ways as means of maintaining their health and diet. It is indeed unfortunate that designating their home a National Monument was not enough to protect their way of life. We applaud the extraordinary step that Angoon has taken to petition the United States of America to step in and protect its self-determination and look forward to just that. We understand the Kootznoowoo as an ANCSA entity can only go so far in its authority as is outlined in **Proposal 200** to close those public waters of the National Monument. We respectfully urge you to consider under the Board's authority the Angoon Community Association's **Proposal 199** for a 5 year closure that will allow for a rebound of all fisheries in the Angoon area and provide a biological background for fisheries management that the world can look to.



Marcelo Quinto, Chair

Fisheries, Wildlife and Subsistence Committee



Eric Morrison, Grand President

Alaska Native Brotherhood