Tribal Council

Lawrence Widmark
Chairman

Dionne Brady-Howard
Vice-Chairman

Louise Brady
Secretary

Lesa Way
Treasurer

Harvey Kitka
Council member

Mike Miller
Council Member

Martha Moses
Council Member

Frederick Olsen, Jr.
Council Member

Robert Sam
Council Member
**Sitka Tribe of Alaska Department Staff**

**Administration:**
Lisa Gassman - General Manager  
Anne Davis - Deputy General Manager  
Mary Ferguson - Executive Assistant  
Dianna Audette - Human Resources Generalist  
Alexandra McGraw - Reception/Admin Assistant  
Robert Caldwell - Covid-19 Coordinator  
Jonathan Gagliardi - IT Administrator  
Vera Gibson - Compliance Specialist  
Dave Salter - Maintenance Specialist  
Anthony Kell - Custodian

**Finance:**
Les Teterud - Controller  
Heather Albertson - Payroll Specialist  
Koren Debell - Accounts Payable/Receivable  
Robin Sherman - Grant Writer/Administrator

**Legal and Tribal Court:**
Diana Bob - Tribal Attorney  
Pete Esquiro - Chief Judge Tribal Court  
Vacant - Realty/TERO Specialist  
Danielle Pensley - Family Law Attorney  
Stephanie Hawney - Healing to Wellness Coord  
Semaite Abiy - Sitka Fellow  
Vacant - Tribal Court Clerk

**Resource Protection:**
Jeff Feldpausch - Resource Protection Director  
Chris Whitehead - Environmental Program Mgr.  
Elizabeth Borneman - Environmental Specialist  
Helen Dangel - Natural Resources Specialist  
Kari Lanphier - Environmental Lab Manager  
Leigh Engel - Weir Manager/Fishery Biologist  
Muriel Reid - Natural Resources Technician  
Naomi Bargmann - Environmental Research Asst.  
Nicole Filipek - Environmental Lab Technician  
Tara Racine - Environmental Education Coord.  
Trenton Hammock - Asst. Traditional Foods Spec.  
Will Peterson - SEATOR Project Manager  
Vacant - Fisheries Technician  
Vacant - Traditional Foods Specialist  
Vacant - Cultural Resource Specialist

**Cultural Resources:**
Tristan Guevin - Cultural Resources Director  
Lakrisha Johnson - Education Director SNEP  
Lillian J. Young - Workforce Development Manager  
Hillary Nutting - Youth Programs Manager  
Alex Johnson-Rice - Cultural Program Instructor  
Starr Jensen - Early Childhood Ed. Cultural SPC  
Charlie Skultka Jr. - Traditional Arts Instructor  
Mark Sixby - Arts and Culture Instructor  
Claire O'Halloran Hill - Wooc.heen Instructor  
Hollis Esposito - Americorps Volunteer  
Chuck Miller - Culture & Community Liaison

**Sitka Tribal Enterprises:**
Camille Ferguson - Economic Development Director  
Dale Lindstrom - Tourism Manager  
Leo Jimmy - Building Attendant  
Sandy Lorrigan - Business Manager  
Serena DeTemple - Gaming Manager  
DeeDee Todd - Gaming Worker  
Dorothy Gordon - Gaming Worker

**Social Services:**
Melonie Boord - Social Services Director  
Catherine Rogers - Child Advocacy Center Coord.  
Clara Gray - General Assistance Caseworker  
David Voluck - ICWA Attorney  
Krista Perala - ICWA Caseworker  
Jade Nodes - Intake Specialist  
Jean Swanson - Outreach Family Caseworker  
Kelsey Carney - Transitional Housing Manager  
Vacant - ICWA Caseworker

**Transportation:**
Gerry Hope - Transportation Director  
Sabrina Smith - Transportation Manager  
Gary Lang - Transportation Dispatcher  
John Paul, Jr. - Driver  
Lawrence Johnson - Driver  
Lionel Carroll - Driver  
Carl Lindstrom III - Driver  
Ralph Jones - On Call Driver  
Al Bigley, Jr. - On Call Driver  
Steven Stiles - On Call Driver
Welcome to the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) Annual Report, and to the 31st STA Annual Meeting. I want to thank you for your interest in STA and for attending this meeting held virtually for the first time in our recent history.

I want to share my goals as Chairman. I have been on the Tribal Council since 1989 and Chairman of the Tribe for most of those years. I tried to “retire” from STA in 2012, I got a two week vacation before the Council appointed me to a vacant Council seat. My highest priority is to provide necessary services to Tribal citizens first and foremost. We are here for you, I believe citizens to be at the top of the organizational chart. Next, I want STA to have successful partnerships with other organizations and high level of collaboration with other governments. Finally, I also recognize the staff of STA work so hard for our citizens and that they often have so much on their plates, I encourage a focus on quality over quantity. I would like the Tribe to put in place a Strategic plan to guide us over the next 3-5 years.

I also want to encourage you to participate in our tribal government. We have Committees and Commissions that would welcome your expertise. The Tribe has the following committees/commissions and generally meet at the times designated. Please take part in your government:

- Governance Committee (monthly 1st Monday at 11 am),
- Cultural Resources Committee (1st Thursday at 2:00 pm),
- Finance and Economic Development Committee (one day before council meetings—which are set for the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Noon and 6:30 pm respectively),
- Health and Human Services (1st Friday at noon),
- Enrollment Committee (1st Thursday at 11 am),
- Education/Scholarship Committee (3rd Thursday at noon),
- Natural Resources Committee (Last Thursday of each month 6:30 pm),
- Transportation and Community Development Committee (3rd Thursday at Noon), and
- Kayaani Commission (1st Tuesday of each month 6:30 pm). Our Judiciary Committee and Marine Mammal Commission meet as needed.

The Council also serves on other committees/commissions: BIHA Board of Commissioners, Historic Preservation Commission, SEARHC Board of Directors, UAS Advisory Council and Liaison positions to the City Assembly and Sitka School District. Thank you for being at our Annual Meeting of Citizens and reading this report.
2020 was a very busy year at Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA). We had to adjust the way we did business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please review this report for details on all that was done despite a pandemic. Highlights of additional services provided as a result of the pandemic include but are not limited to:

1) Providing direct financial assistance to all of our enrolled Tribal citizens, 2) working with the Sitka School District to provide devices necessary for our kids to do well in school despite having to work from home instead of being in school, 3) providing devices to all of our higher education/AVT students for school and 4) providing devices to Elders so they could get in to the “zoom” or online world and stay connected with family. Our Social Services department also provided food through our food pantry program. As Social Services vacated 204 Siginaka for the health upgrades remodel, they switched to providing grocery gift cards to households in need. Staff took on the new programs related to COVID and continued to do their usual jobs. I am very proud of the way staff adjusted and we continued to provide services to citizens.

In 2020, we welcomed a “new” (returning) Tribal Council Chairman with Lawrence “Woody” Widmark being elected the Tribal Council Chairman. We also welcomed 3 new Council members in the the 2020 Election—Louise Brady, Dionne Brady-Howard, and Frederick Olsen, Jr. Thank you to outgoing Council Chairman KathyHope Erickson, Nancy Douglas, and Lillian Feldpausch for your years of service to STA.

Finally, I get the privilege of announcing the Tribal citizens of the Year for 2020. The Council selected Margaret Carlson as Citizen of the Year for her work with American Legion, they noted she always helps with fundraisers in the community and goes above and beyond. The Council selected Elders of the Year of Pat Alexander and Chief Judge Pete Esquiro. Both were selected also for their service to the community and Tribe. Congratulations to the Citizens of the Year 2020!

Please ensure you read this report, though it is long, to see all that the Tribe focused on in 2020.
Human Resources:
I am happy to report that our native preference hire rate at STA of 72%. In 2020, Sitka Tribe of Alaska was able to keep staff on through the pandemic with minimal layoffs. Although, we could not hire our seasonal positions, we were able to continue to operate and adjusted as needed to ensure our staff was safe. This was a difficult year as we faced the COVID-19 pandemic, but I am very happy to report that our STA staff took this challenge on and adjusted and we continued to thrive. Our staff worked remote and did a great job adjusting. All of us here at the tribe are very much looking forward to 2021.

In March 2020, HR was very busy with drafting policies for our staff’s safety with the pandemic. As most seen, things changed quickly and progressed very fast. I am happy to report that we were able to be responsive to these changes and implemented policy at the Tribe to ensure staff and families remained safe.

In June 2020, Sitka Tribe received CARES funding from the federal government. The Tribal Council designated these funds to help our tribal citizens with financial assistance. In July 2020, STA hired a COVID-19 coordinator to assist with the uplift of added duties. We processed thousands of applications and distributed millions of dollars for financial support to our Tribal Citizens.

Janitorial:
Administration provides custodial services to all STA offices and common areas at the various locations: 456 Katlian Street, 429 Katlian Street, 204 Siginaka Way. We also provide janitorial services to NOAA and Rural Development offices. Anthony Kell joined our team in July, 2020. He quickly learned the COVID-19 cleaning guidelines provided by the CDC and ensured staff were safe in all our buildings.
Enrollment:
A little change happened in 2020, Chaix Johnson resigned and went to work for Tlingit and Haida. I am happy to introduce Vera Gibson. Vera was hired in mid-October 2020 as the Compliance Specialist. Vera joins Sitka Tribe with extensive administrative experience. We are very excited to have her be apart of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska family. Welcome Vera!

The two Compliance Specialists in 2020 enrolled 195 new tribal citizens and relinquished 12. Attempts continue to find tribal citizens with invalid addresses. The Compliance Specialist is currently auditing all files in progeny to review those that have either "bad address" or showing no address at all. A program on the Internet called "True People Search" has been a great benefit in finding many of the missing addresses for our citizens. Using this program allows the Compliance Specialist to verify it is the right person because it lists their birth month and year, previous addresses for the past 10-20 years, and possible relatives. If those three items match the citizen listed in progeny (i.e.: previous address matching an address we once had on file), the address is updated with what True People Search says is their current address. Many addresses were also updated for all citizens that completed the Covid-19 funding application, which listed their current address.

Due to Covid-19 and the restrictions of the public entering the STA facilities, the Compliance Specialist has been working with Tribal Citizens who request a new STA Tribal Card, by allowing them to take a selfie with their phones and take a picture of their signature and sending to her cell phone so she can download, crop, and print a new card for them that includes a current picture and signature.

To be more current with changes in how we address our Tribal Citizens, the Compliance Specialist has worked with Support at Progeny and updated all the cards in the program to change the words from "Tribal Member" to "Tribal Citizen".

Sitka Tribe of Alaska also continues to work on updating our Tribal IDs to the enhanced ID cards. Card printer has been ordered and received and will be installed this week. Moving towards the enhanced ID cards is an ongoing process.

Information Technology:
Last year was a little bit wild for the IT department as you can imagine during the pandemic. We moved to deploy laptops to all employees for the ability to work-at-home under the CARES Act. We deployed over 40 laptops as well as printers, monitors, scanners, and other equipment. We also purchased printers and scanners for employees' desk workspace. This is to help reduce devices being used by multiple employees and help stop the spread of the virus in the workplace. We also ordered hundreds of iPads and laptops for higher education and elders under the CARES Act. We installed server racks in the new Siginaka building for housing our servers. These racks are also housing NOAA and GSA's server and networking equipment. We will be upgrading our networking equipment for 2021 with our eventual move into the new Tribal Headquarters building.
Facilities Maintenance and 204 Siginaka Way:
Sitka Tribe of Alaska purchased 204 Siginaka Way for the Tribal Headquarters. In 2020, the remodel efforts went into full force. New siding panels, windows, HVAC system, heat pumps, touchless bathrooms to name a few things that we were able to complete in 2020. Our goal for 2021 will be to finish the construction to the entry, 1st floor, and 3rd-floor offices. Our hope and our vision is we will be able to move to our new location by mid-September 2021. Dave Salter, the Maintenance Specialist, has done an outstanding job assisting with overseeing and working on our large construction projects and the general maintenance duties around the other Tribal properties.
Tribal Council Support:
The Tribal Council is made up of nine (9) Elected members. A Tribal Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and five council members. In November of 2020, Lawrence “Woody” Widmark won the election as Tribal Chairman, and Louise Brady, Dionne Brady-Howard was also elected for a council seat. Fredrick Olsen, Jr. was appointed to fulfill a one-year seat vacancy. In early January 2021, the Tribal Council elected Dionne-Brady-Howard as Vice-Chairman, Louise Brady as the Secretary, and Lesa Way as the Treasurer.
The Tribal Council meets twice a month to host an Action-Only meeting and a regular monthly Tribal Council meeting. The Administration department prepares all the agendas and packets for these meetings. Administration records and generates minutes for all the council meetings. The administration team does final resolutions, ordinances, and correspondence.
The Administration team ensures compliance is held with the Tribal election by following the Election Ordinance. The Council is a very busy elected body. They are involved with many Committees, Commissions, Ad Hoc Committees, and External/Semi-External Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

Events:
Annually Sitka Tribe of Alaska strives to provide healthy activities for our Tribal citizens and the community of Sitka. 2020 threw a wrench in that plan. We quickly made adjustments and changed our thinking to COVID safety. Administration assisted with herring egg distribution and in July 2020 with the cancellation of our annual picnic, distributed over 250 picnic baskets filled with picnic favorites to families. We provided gift bags to Tribal Elders, distributed air purifiers, hosted a Census drive to assist with completing the online application, and distributed cares act funding. STA distributed food boxes and assisted Tribal citizens in any way possible.
On June 17, 2020, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Tribal Council approved the budgets designed to mitigate the effects of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. STA recognized all tribal citizens and their families have been negatively impacted in one way or another. Citizens applied for the assistance detailed below, provided updated contact information for enrollment records, and certified they were impacted by COVID-19 to receive the assistance. STA provided a one-time cash payment of $250 to all tribal citizens enrolled in STA as of June 17, 2020, the “tribal citizen of record” date established by the Council with approval of the budgets. Every citizen was eligible for this payment regardless of residency or age. Tribal households in Sitka were eligible to receive an additional one-time payment of $1500/$500 based on residency.

Total CARES Act Dollars Spent
Direct vs. Indirect

- Total Dollars Spent on Direct Services: $2,937,838.91
- Total Dollars Spent on Indirect Services: $2,304,345.69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Tribal Citizen/Household Direct Financial Services</th>
<th>6,680</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Local Organization recipients of Direct Services</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Dollars spent on Direct Services</td>
<td>$2,937,838.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Dollars Spent on Indirect Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Dollars Spent from CARES ACT funding</td>
<td>$5,242,184.60</td>
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Top Five Direct Service Items

- Direct financial assistance: $2,285,500.00
- HEPA Air Purifier Units w/ extra filters for elders: $47,461.50
- ITCARES Elder and Special Categories: $129,150.00
- ITCARES PK - 12: $243,156.70
- Food Pantry: $83,726.62

Top Five Indirect Service Items

- Improvements to STA buildings to ensure reduced transmission of COVID: $1,653,906.86
- Administration of Funds: $30,834.83
- STA Staff COVID Testing: $57,225.00
- Renovation of Tribal building to install cottage kitchen/training center: $148,588.35
- STA cleaning supplies/items necessary to work remote: $330,507.96
**Financial Services**

**Financial Services:**
The Finance Department works hard behind the scenes to ensure that the other departments have the funding they need to carry out the services STA provides the community. Our goal is to maintain the strong checks and balances so that we are all held accountable for the handling of STA's funds. Proper handling of funds keeps our books ready for inspection by funding agencies and the auditors.

**The Finance Department is comprised of a five-person team:**

**Kristina Crandell,** CPA and Finance director. Kristina monitors the Tribe's transactions and account balances; investigates and corrects mistakes or unusual items; provides quarterly financial reports to the Finance Committee and Tribal Council; and works with the auditors to get STA's annual audit completed by September 30th.

**Les Teterud**, Interim Finance Controller. Les returned to STA in December 2020 and is assisting with grants, financial statements, and higher-level accounting assistance in line with annual timeline.

**Robin Sherman** is the Grant Administrator. Her two major responsibilities; first to oversee the development, preparation and submission of grants to secure funding to support all STA departments and, second, to support department directors, program staff and finance staff to ensure accurate financial reporting and procedural compliance on all grants, including governmental grants.

**Koren DeBell** is our Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable Technician. Koren ensures that our bills get paid on time; that all paperwork has been reviewed and verified before a check is cut; and monitors and records the money collected by STA through its business entities.

**Dianna Audette** in 2020, *(Heather Albertson has stepped in to this role in 2021)* is our Accounting/Payroll Specialist. Dianna ensures that all STA employees are properly paid. Dianna also oversees our monthly bank reconciliation; processes credit card requests; process purchase orders for employees to buy items for their programs; and assists with Human Resources.

For the year ended December 31, 2019 the following is a summary of auditor’s result for audit completed September 24, 2020.—see next page.
Financial Services continued

Financial Statements
Type of Auditor's Report Issued: Unmodified

Internal control over financial reporting:
- Material weakness(es) identified? No
- Significant deficiencies identified that are not considered to be material weakness(es)? No, None reported
- Noncompliance material to financial statements noted? No

Federal Awards
Internal control over major programs:
- Material weakness(es) identified? No
- Significant deficiencies identified that are not considered to be material weakness(es)? Yes*

*STA did not have the paperwork showing we did a check on vendors before doing business with them and we had one of our Admin staff step in to a direct service role for a short time but didn't reflect those hours worked directly on the program on the timesheet. We immediately corrected those issues for those minor findings with a corrective action plan and training for staff.

Auditee (STA) qualified as a low-risk auditee? Yes

In 2020 we had an operating budget of $16,225,813, STA 2021 budget is $18,219,330:

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget 2021</th>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Admin</td>
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<td>Grants W/O Directors</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,219,330.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CULTURAL RESOURCES, EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

"Even from long ago we cherish our grandchildren; no matter what we value, we offer it up to them"
~The STA CREED Vision from Kaalátk' Charlie Joseph Sr.~

Yee gu.aayáx x'wán (you all be brave / have courage). While 2020 was a challenging year for the Cultural Resources, Education, and Employment Department (CREED) and the tribal citizens, tribal youth, and tribal families we serve, it also reminded us of our resilience, and our ability to face challenges head-on with the same resolve that our ancestors have shown since time immemorial.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit Sitka in March of 2020, our department and staff transitioned quickly to delivering programs online, and we were able to continue offering SNEP Culture Class, the Strengthening Families through Culture Program, academic support, in-school traditional arts classes at Sitka High School, and most of CREED’s other regular programs and services.

As 2020 went on, CREED was able to continue offering its regular programs and services in both virtual and in-person formats while also offering new programs and services meant to address the challenges faced by tribal citizens because of the coronavirus pandemic.

New programs and services provided by CREED in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic included a USDA Summer Foods Program offered in partnership with the Sitka Conservation Society, Kids Kupboard, and Youth Advocates of Sitka that served breakfast and lunch to over 400 children throughout the summer; a collaboration with the Sitka School District (SSD) to provide all students K - 12 with new computing devices so that our children would have the tools they need to succeed at online learning during the 2020 - 2021 school year; and the STA IT CARES iPad and Computer Distribution Program that distributed more than 300 iPads to tribal elders living in Sitka, more than 70 computing devices to tribal citizens attending college, and iPads to all children being served through STA Social Services’ ICWA program.
In addition to those programs and services, CREED distributed food boxes and food cards, partnered with Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV) to offer the Keet Kids Run i toowu klatseen Program to 2nd - 3rd graders, worked with Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and the SSD to offer the Wooch.een Head Start Pre-school virtually and through take-home learning packets and HATCH tablets, offered dual-enrollment traditional arts classes at Sitka High School and Pacific High School virtually, provided 44 STA Higher Education Scholarships to support tribal citizens pursuing college degrees, and worked closely with SSD on the Smart Start COVID-19 School Reopening Plan, the process to hire a new Superintendent, and the 2020 - 2021 SSD strategic planning process.

While it has been and continues to be a challenging year for us all, we have also learned and grown as a department and seen silver linings like increased family participation in our classes, better use of online learning tools, and new curriculum and classroom materials that we want to carry forward into the future, and that we believe will strengthen the work of CREED and our ability to serve tribal citizens the best going forward. **Yee gu.aayáx x’wán.**

**Overview of CREED Programs and 2020 Year in Review**

**Sitka Native Education Program Culture Class:**
The SNEP Culture Class program, now almost 50 years old, is offered to students kindergarten – 12th grade in partnership with the Sitka School District’s Cultural Program. SNEP Culture Class gives students the opportunity to learn Tlingit language, traditional arts, song and dance, and other cultural knowledge in an afterschool setting. Program registration is at the beginning of each school year and is open until classes fill, with priority given to Native students and STA Tribal Citizens.

In 2020, after ending the previous school year in online formats, SNEP began offering in-person classes in September. All classes SNEP followed COVID-19 mitigation guidelines developed by STA and SSD, and by September students had practice in the school buildings keeping 6 feet social distance and wearing masks all day. Our students were very adaptable, and they just seemed happy to be seeing each other and their teachers face-to-face.
When we began the 2020-2021 school year, we were able to offer Kindergarten & 1st Grade Class for 1.75 hours per week, 2nd & 3rd Grade Culture Class for 1.75 hours per week, at the Keet Gooshi Héen (KGH) Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), capped at 15 students, 4th & 5th Grade Culture Class for 1.75 hours per week, Academic Support for 2nd - 5th Grade Students for all SNEP students prior to class starting, 2nd - 5th Grade Drumming Class for 1 hour per week, 6th - 12th Grade Gáajaa Héen Dancers (GHD) Culture Class for 2 hours per week, Academic Support for GHD Students prior to class starting, GHD Art Class for 1 hour per week virtually, GHD Drumming Class for 1 hour per week.

By October and November, though, COVID-19 community transmission was too high to continue in-person classes, so all SNEP Culture Classes moved to remote instruction, utilizing both Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms. This did cause our offerings to shrink slightly because we felt it was not great for our students to spend all day in a virtual school and then spend multiple hours in virtual culture classes. All classes are now one hour at most. This was challenging for various reasons, but we have worked through those challenges as they arose and started to see the silver lining of offering remote culture classes.
One positive change we have noticed, particularly in our GHD class (6th – 12th graders), is that we now have younger siblings, older siblings, parents, aunties, uncles, grandparents sometimes listening in, playing language games, and helping their family members with new language lessons or art lessons. We have also managed to create a sense of community within our virtual rooms, and we strive to maintain strong relationships with students and families, despite the distance.

**Sitka Native Education Program Haa át Galtsaagu Yís: For Our Harvesting Culture and STEAM Camps:**

The department has been collaborating with the Sitka School District’s Cultural Program to provide culture and STEAM camps to students in kindergarten through 5th grade for more than six years. Camp registration begins late in the spring, so keep your eyes open to register your child. In the summer of 2020, CREED had to cancel the annual in-person Haa át Galtsaagu Yís: For Our Harvesting Culture and STEAM Camps, and instead offered the Strengthening Families through Culture Program in collaboration with CCTHITA and SSD. The Strengthening Families through Culture Program was offered for an hour each week via Zoom, with Tlingit language, traditional arts, movement, and take-home family activities.
In-School and Afterschool Traditional Arts:

The department has been offering traditional arts classes to students 6th through 12th grade in in-school and afterschool settings in collaboration with SSD and Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI), reaching more than 150 students a year. In addition to Traditional Arts classes offered through the SNEP Culture Class Program, STA CREED offers credited courses during the school day at Sitka High School and Pacific High School, with a student option for dual-enrollment credit through the UAS Sitka Art Department and UAS Northwest Coast (NWC) Art Program. CREED has also worked with Blatchley Middle School to offer traditional arts classes in the woodshop program each Monday over the last several years.

In 2020, Charlie Skultka Jr., Mark Sixbey, and UAS Art Professor, Liz Zacher, collaborated to develop a comprehensive curriculum for UAS NWC Art 181 and 281, and offered NWC Art 181 at SHS in the fall, while expanding traditional arts / NWC arts classes in the spring to NWC Art 181 and 281 at SHS, a special topics formline class at PHS, a raven’s tail weaving class scheduled for March 2021, and enrichment opportunities through collaboration with BMS teachers and staff.

In addition to classes being offered for 6th - 12th grade, STA Arts and Culture Instructor, Mark Sixbey, has been developing a wide variety of traditional arts / form line activity packets and instructional videos that have been used by CREED staff, SSD teachers, and other community partners to teach form line design to preschool - 12th grade students.
The Wooch.een Preschool: continues to operate as a collaboration between STA, CCTHITA, and SSD, and during the 2020 - 2021 school year is serving 30 children and families through virtual classes offered multiple times per week, take-home learning packets delivered to homes, virtual family engagement activities, and Hatch tablets with learning activities to get students kindergarten ready. The Wooch.een Preschool operates as an American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start program, with its staff dedicated to working with children and families through classroom and home-based programs and service that help prepare children for kindergarten. STA CREED staff focus on integrating Tlingit and Alaska Native culture into the Wooch.een Preschools classroom and parent, family engagement activities.
Boys Run / Keet Kids Run i toowu klatseen (strengthen your spirit):
is a collaboration between STA CREED, Sitkans Against Family Violence’s (SAVF) Primary Prevention Program, and a number of other partner agencies. For the 2020 - 2021 school year, Keet Kids Run I toowū klatseen (KKRITK) was adapted from the similarly named Boys Run I toowū klatseen program that has been offered to 3rd - 5th grader boys for the last seven years. Each of the KKRITK lessons is rooted in Southeast Alaska traditional tribal values, such as Respect for Self, Elders, and Others, and Respect for Nature and Property. These values are reinforced throughout the program with stories like “How Raven Stole the Sun” and “The Young Man and the Egg Shell.” Participants also learned more about the values through writing prompts and fun activities (see drawing of a participant’s family). They practiced introducing themselves to their teammates on a video call using a traditional origin story structure, discovered the Tlingit words for different emotions in their program journals, and learned the Native Youth Olympics Scissor Broad Jump through a pre-recorded video. In addition to stories, activities, and video calls, KKRITK participants engage in physical activity throughout the season that helped them prepare to run a culminating 5K run that saw over 50 participants this year.

Participants showed incredible strength of spirit this 2020 season, and it was a privilege to watch them grow and learn. Throughout the program, they learned to process emotions and resolve conflicts in healthy ways, to practice allyship, and to celebrate cultural diversity. We are excited to continue offering Sitka’s young people the opportunity to learn these invaluable skills, and will offer Keet Kids Run I toowú klatseen again this spring. Contact STA Youth Programs Manager, Hillary Nutting, at hillary.nutting@sitkatribe-nsn.gov for more information or to register your child.

STA Youth Activities Scholarship Program:
offers an annual scholarship of up to $100 for tribal youth to participate in extracurricular activities, sports clubs, music, camps, or other youth activities. The coronavirus pandemic impacted the STA Youth Activities Scholarship Program because of the cancellation of many extracurricular activities such as sports clubs and the Sitka Fine Arts Camp; however, we are seeing an uptick in applications at the beginning of 2021, and hope to get back to the same level of scholarships as in the past. STA Youth Programs Manager, Hillary Nutting, can be contacted at hillary.nutting@sitkatribe-nsn.gov for questions about the program or to submit a scholarship application.
Middle and High School Summer Camp:

STA CREED offers middle and high school camps, with a focus on outdoor recreation and traditional harvesting and processing activities. In 2020 middle and high school camps were cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic; however, CREED staff used this time to collaborate with local and regional partners such as UAS, SSD, CCTHITA, and SHI to develop the camp into a college and career pathway program focused on natural and cultural resource management.

In-School and Afterschool Academic Support and Extracurricular Activities:

are being provided through CREED’s Youth Service Program. CREED staff, the school district, and other community partners help support individual students and improve school climate. Programs and services offered by STA Youth Services and its partners include academic and post-secondary support at the Sitka High School Student Support Center, the Keet Kids Run Program, Sitka Youth Leadership Committee, and a number of other programs and services. STA Youth Programs Manager, Hillary Nutting, can be contacted at hillary.nutting@sitka-tribe-nsn.gov for questions or to request support for your child.

Summer Youth Employment Services (YES) Program:

is a partnership between Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska to give youth ages 16 - 25 opportunities for full time summer employment and training. The YES Program was suspended during the summer of 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but CREED plans to resume the program in partnership with CCTHITA for the upcoming summer 2021.

STA Back-to-School Event:

More than 200 Tribal Citizens received backpacks full of school supplies for the 2020 - 2021 school year. For the 2020 - 2021 school year, CREED partnered with the CCTHITA TANF Program to provide backpacks and school supplies, which were distributed through contactless drive-up delivery to meet STA’s COVID-19 mitigation guidelines.
STA Higher Education Scholarship Program:
STA HE Scholarship program offers supplemental scholarships to Tribal Citizens enrolled in full time higher education programs. In 2020, STA awarded 44 higher education scholarships during our May 1 and October 1 deadlines. STA Tribal Citizens and Native students graduating from SSD should contact STA Workforce Development Manager, Lillian Young, at lillian.young@sitkatriben-nsn.gov with questions or for assistance with completing an application for the May 1 and October 1, 2021 deadline. The May 1 deadline is for the full academic year, and the October 1 deadline is for the spring semester 2022.

STA UAS Dual-Enrollment Scholarship Program:
The UAS Dual Enrollment Scholarship program is open to all Tribal Citizens in 11th and 12th grades to help support the full cost of enrollment in UAS classes and other university programs that give students a head start with college. Interested parents and/or students should contact STA CREED Director, Tristan Guevin, at tristan.guevin@sitkatriben-nsn.gov with questions or for assistance with completing an application.

STA Adult Vocational Training Scholarship Program:
The AVT Scholarship Program provides scholarships for Tribal Citizens residing in Sitka to attend vocational training / career and technical education programs that allow them to attain their career goals. STA AVT Scholarship applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and are available to any Alaska Native or American Indian adult 18+ years old who has been residing in Sitka for the previous 6 months. For questions or for assistance in completing the application, contact STA Workforce Development Manager, Lillian Young, at lillian.young@sitkatriben-nsn.gov.

STA Cultural Resources Program:
The Cultural Resources program has the goal of providing cultural and other education programs and services for adults and families. The goal of the STA Cultural Resource Program is to work closely with STA CREED and other STA staff, STA government-to-government partners, and other community and regional partners to promote Tlingit, Alaska Native, and indigenous culture and to advocate for the interests and needs of STA Tribal Citizens in Sitka’s and Alaska’s public institutions. Much of the STA Cultural Resources Program’s work is guided by the STA Cultural Resource Committee. For questions about STA’s Cultural Resource Program or to get involved contact STA Culture and Community Liaison, Chuck Miller, at chuck.miller@sitkatriben-nsn.gov.
The Legal Department consists of 5 employees and the Tribal Court. The Legal Department had staff transitions in 2020; new hires are Stephanie Hawney as Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator and Danielle Pensley as Family Law Attorney. In 2020, the Legal Department was able to host Semaite Abiy, as an Alaska Fellow. He was the Department’s Legal Intern. This report will outline the work performed by the employees in the Legal Department. The Legal Department is mostly focused on the legal and judicial issues on behalf of the Tribal Government. We are not able to assist everyone who calls needing legal advice but we do attempt to be responsive and helpful when possible. All the Legal Department staff enjoys working for the Tribe and we try to help out where we can in line with our job duties.

**Tribal Attorney:**
The Tribal Attorney role is to provide legal advice to the STA tribal government and Tribal Council. In 2020 a lot of time was committed to COVID related matters including; workplace safety, COVID necessary updates to the employee policies, review and compliance for distribution of federal CARES Act funding, contract review and negotiation for remodel work at 204 Siginaka, and support all STA departments on their COVID adjustments. The Tribal Attorney executed other job duties including updating internal policies and other internal legal issues on behalf of the Tribe. The Tribal Attorney also supervises the STA v. State of Alaska herring litigation. In 2020, STA won two major court hearings about the subsistence herring right and is waiting for the judge to rule on the final element of the case. The next steps for legal enforcement of the subsistence herring right includes working to ensure there is reasonable time and opportunity afforded for the 2021 harvest season. The Tribal Attorney supervises the staff in the Legal Department.

**Tribal Court:**
In March 2020, the Tribal Court adapted to COVID-19 and made court happen with Zoom videoconferencing. The Court was able to continue hearing court matters and issuing orders. Judges Pete Esquiro and David Voluck worked with the Tribal Court Clerk to establish ways papers could be submitted to the court by email or by dropping material off at the STA Administrative Building. The Tribal Court is in the process of adopting a computerized case management system that will streamline the files at the Court. The case management system is part of a larger effort to modernize the Tribal Court in response to a US Department of Justice court evaluation and related federal grant to implement suggestions from that evaluation. The Tribal Court Clerk position became open in January 2021 and STA is seeking applicants for that position.
Family Law Legal Assistance:

STA has a United States Department of Justice grant that is dedicated to funding one attorney and supporting Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV) for legal representation when there are elements of domestic and family violence in a relationship. In August, Danielle Pensley took over as the Family Law Attorney and since that time she’s been establishing client referral sources, managing family law litigation in State Court, coordinating with the SAFV advocates to assist the SAFV clients. Danielle has been appearing in community settings, when allowed by COVID protocols, and appeared on KCAW to explain the scope of her work. Danielle is accepting civil cases that have elements of domestic and family violence in relationship. The level of legal representation Danielle provides can vary based on the situation, sometime she will provide brief service to assist someone who wants to carry out their legal case on their own other times she will appear in court on behalf of a client. The goal of this program is make legal representation available to people involved in a domestic violence situation, free of charge. People who are in need of this type of legal services should reach out to Danielle at the STA Administrative Office.

Healing to Wellness Court:

STA is establishing a “restorative justice court” with the goal of providing a judicial forum to establish accountability for a criminal offender and the opportunity to address issues that contributed to the decision to engage in criminal conduct; like substance abuse and mental health burdens. This is called the Healing to Wellness Court. The Healing to Wellness Court is like a partnership with STA, State, SEARHC, and law enforcement. When an individual has a criminal case in the State Court system the defendant, prosecuting attorney, the defense attorney, the judge and STA Healing to Wellness Coordinator will meet and confirm that taking a break from the strict criminal procedure of conviction, jail time or fine is the best fit for the situation. If there is any victim as a result of the criminal activity the victim of the criminal actions will be consulted whether the Healing to Wellness Court is agreeable to them. At that point, the case will transfer to STA Tribal Court and the defendant will participate in programming that is evidence based and successful in other communities. There are only a few models of this court in Alaska so far but it is being used in other states in USA with great success. Part of the Healing to Wellness program includes coursework based on culture and tradition and Tribal Citizen elders will be working with the Court as a resource to the Court participants. The first clients for Healing to Wellness will be selected in Spring 2021.

Realty and Probate:

STA acts on behalf of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs when it comes to processing Native probates, allotments, and restricted lands for the Tribe. In 2020, the Realty Officer assisted Tribal Citizens with will drafting and executions, facilitated records requests, and maintained contact with the BIA. In 2020, implementation started for the Alaska Native Veterans Allotment Program. That is a program where Alaska Native individuals who were in active service military service during the Vietnam era are eligible for new allotments of land in Alaska. The Legal Department will be hosting a Legal Clinic about the program in March. The Legal Clinic will take place on March 23, 2021 from 3p - 6p at the STA Administrative offices. No appointment is necessary. Please bring any mail you received about the Veterans Allotment program. The Realty Officer position became open in January 2021 and STA is seeking applicants for that position.
Department Operations During the Pandemic:
The COVID pandemic created numerous challenges to implementing several programs and projects operated out of the Resource Protection Department (RPD). While some projects and programs experienced minor setbacks, others were put on hold for a short period of time until a plan could be devised for their safe implementation or put on hold indefinitely until they can be safely implemented.

After the shelter in place mandate came out in early March, we identified RPD staff as essential under the state mandates. These positions included the Department Director, the Traditional Foods Specialist, the Traditional Foods Assistant, the Environmental Lab Manager, the Environmental Lab Specialist, and two Environmental Technicians. These staff were able to continue to harvest traditional foods, provide paralytic shellfish toxin testing for the public, and maintain basic department operations.

One of the most challenging aspects of working during the pandemic was operating the tribes' boats and the Klag Bay weir. The challenge to operating the boats evolved around the inability to maintain social distancing (maintaining 6 feet of separation) of staff. While operating the boats increased the risk of contracting the virus by limiting the number of people on the boat, requiring masks to be worn at all times, leaving cabin windows and doors open when possible to ensure adequate air flows through the cabin, and frequent COVID testing we were able to mitigate the risk to acceptable levels.

Klag Bay (approximately 60 miles north of Sitka) weir operation was affected by STA boat use (transportation to and from Klag) day-to-day camp life, and the weir's operation. To address these challenges, RPD staff developed an operation plan that followed CDC recommendations as much as possible. An emergency evacuation plan was developed in case a weir crew member became ill and needed emergency transport back to Sitka. Through strict staff adherence to the plan, the RPD weir staff completed weir operations without contracting the virus.

Pictured above Jerry Srelow
Jerry passed away shortly after leaving employment with STA in 2020. Rest in peace Jerry, we appreciate all that you did for STA and our citizens.
Committees/Commissions Staffed by the Department:
The RPD staffs the Natural Resource Committee (NRC), the Sitka Marine Mammal Committee (SMMC), and the Kayaani Commission (KC). Tribal citizen participation on any of the Tribe’s committees or commission is essential to addressing issues that affect the tribe or its tribal citizens. If you are interested in serving on the NRC, SMMC, or KC contact Resource Protection Director Jeff Feldpausch at 747-7469 or email jeff.feldpausch@sitkatribe-nsn.gov.

Traditional Foods Program (TFP):
The “Shelter in Place” orders announced in early March created a major challenge for the harvest and distribution of foods through the TFP. Through careful and creative planning and the help of staff from all of STA’s departments the Tribe was able to safely harvest and distribute herring eggs tribal citizens this year.

The year round distribution of processed (frozen and vacuum sealed) traditional foods through the Resource Protection Department was suspended from March through October due to the staff working remotely. Thank you to the Social Services staff for distributing foods to citizens during that time. In November, after developing a distribution plan, the RPD again began distributing foods out of the Healing House, located at 429 Katlian St. If you’re interested in receiving traditional foods enter the south door on the front of the building and ring the bell, staff will collect your information and distribute traditional foods.

Under a Native American Agricultural Fund grant, the RPD distributed 100 raspberry plants to tribal citizens this spring. We hope these plants will help mitigate poor salmonberry years caused by climate change. Raspberries bloom later and can avoid those late spring frosts that impact other berries. Also, under this grant, the RPD produced approximately 120 pounds of Tlingit potatoes for distribution. In year two of this grant, we hope to double production.

Due to poor sockeye salmon runs, the wet summer, and one of the TFP boats sinking at the end of June 2020, no sockeye salmon were harvested. Fortunately, the department was able to purchase salmon and halibut for the TFP with CARES funding for distributing.
Herring:
STA successfully litigated the first two portions of its lawsuit against ADF&G over its management of the Sitka Sound herring stock under 5AAC 27.195 (a) and (b). The court ruled that ADF&G failed to document its measures to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvesters to meet their needs by distributing the commercial fishery over time and area. The court further ruled that ADF&G failed to document how it considered the subsistence harvest’s quantity and quality when making management decisions. The third portion of the lawsuit addresses the constitutional requirement to manage the fishery under the maximum sustained yield principle. Oral arguments were heard in January and we await that decision.

Fisheries Program

Herring: Herring Camp and Research:
STA was awarded a Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Youth Initiative grant to reinstate the much beloved Herring Camp for 2020. However, due to this hands-on learning, the program was canceled and will be reprogrammed for a variety of virtual and distance learning lessons for the spring of 2021. The students will study herring biology and ecology through both Western science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge perspectives; lessons included herring anatomy and physiology, life history, forage fish ecology, predator-prey dynamics, oceanography, traditional harvest, traditional ecological knowledge, the cultural importance of herring, herring stories, and class discussions about subsistence and culture.

A no-cost extension was granted for STA’s Sitka Sound herring population genetics project through January 31, 2022, due to pandemic-related delays and restrictions. The project is currently testing herring sampled throughout Sitka Sound for genetic differentiation to investigate the possibility that Sitka Sound herring consists of multiple genetically distinct populations. The project is funded by the North Pacific Research Board and is conducted in partnership with the University of Washington (UW). Although the 2020 field season was mostly canceled, field staff were able to obtain a valuable sample of 50 larvae from West Crawfish that is both geographically and temporally distinct from the spawning area in Sitka Sound. These samples were shipped to the University of Washington. Our research team met in August and agreed to sequence ~48 herring from each of the following spawning locations: Craig, Crawfish Bay, Krestof Island, Olga Point, Sitka Sound, and Berner’s Bay. These samples represent a range of spawn times and locations across the greater Sitka area. UW staff will complete DNA sequencing at the end of January and present preliminary data at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium. The STA-UW report will be complete by January 2022. Samples that cannot be analyzed due to funding constraints will be archived for potential sampling with future funding sources.
Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Monitoring:
RPD had a challenging but successful and safe season at Klag Bay. COVID safety measures were developed and adopted, the number of personnel and transportation was restricted, staff were regularly tested before transfers. The weir was operational from June 26th through September 4th. RPD staff counted 4,122 sockeye salmon at the weir and were confident the structure remained 'fish-tight' throughout the season. This is the fifth-lowest escapement estimate in the 20-year history of the project. Creel surveys estimated the subsistence sockeye harvest at 1,599, the sixth-lowest estimated creel survey harvest at Klag Bay. STA is working with USFS to develop methods to accurately record escapement at low flows and reduce impacts on fish migration. STA will also collaborate with the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition to install temperature loggers throughout the Klag Lake watershed to investigate thermal heterogeneity within the watershed and its potential impacts on fish. The past five years (2016-2020) have been five of the six lowest returns in the project's history. In addition to sockeye, the crew counted 395 pinks, 1,0492 cohos, and 246 Dolly Varden. RPD will be reapplying for another four years of US Fish and Wildlife Service funding in February 2021 and will complete a final report for the 2018-2021 program cycle in April 2021.

Shellfish Biomass Surveys:
STA’s Shellfish Biomass Surveys program was selected by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (UFWA) to celebrate the 20th anniversary and success of the Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (TWG). Since 2018, RPD has provided training, supplies, and individual support for STA’s harvesters and Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR) partners and their Tribal communities, conducting 47 population assessments of key subsistence shellfish throughout Southeast Alaska and Kodiak. From a single monitoring survey at Starrigavan Beach, STA’s Shellfish Biomass Surveys program has developed into multi-year projects and was awarded $200,000 through the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the second time in 2019. STA presented the 2018 and 2019 results during the SEATOR workshop in May and completed a final report in June. The first sampling season of the 2020-2022 program was cancelled due to COVID travel restrictions. However, four shellfish biomass surveys were completed, and a no-cost extension was granted through 2023. Data collected will allow local Tribes to manage and assess local clam populations. Shellfish biomass and abundance estimates will be monitored for each species at each beach. Developed length-weight curves and growth rates will be used to aid future surveys and compare growth rates throughout Southeast Alaska.
Helen Dangel, Natural Resource Specialist (NRS):

Brownfields/ Tribal Response Program (TRP):
A brownfield is a site that is contaminated by pollutants or hazardous substances, and that this contamination impairs the development or use of the site. Examples of brownfields include illegal dumps, former industrial areas, or abandoned mines. The site's reuse can be commercial, residential, or returning the site to its traditional subsistence use.

The STA TRP has had several focuses in the past year:

Starrigavan Bay Sediments:
The TRP was able to fund a consultant, BGES, Inc of Anchorage, to sample sediment and clam tissue in the Starrigavan area to see if heavy metals and other contamination levels have changed since 2003. RPD staff Helen Dangel and Will Peterson assisted with the sampling. BGES is currently working on the report and analyzing the data.

Klag Bay Abandoned Mine:
The old Chichagof Mine at Klag Bay has large tailings piles that leach into the bay where many local people harvest sockeye salmon. A large EPA-funded sampling and assessment done in 2018-2019 showed the site meets the Superfund site's criteria. In the past year, the TRP formed the Chichagof Mine Working Group, made up of a diverse group of staff from Alaska Dept of Environmental Conservation, Dept of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, US EPA, Conservation groups, and others interested in finding ways to clean up the site. Recently, a small business group has come forward with a leaching process that may help clean up the tailings' contamination. It is unknown if this will prove cost-effective, but many different people are interested and hopeful.

Former Alaska Pulp Mill/ Gary Paxton Industrial Park:
The TRP has been tracking construction development and may pursue sampling for dioxins disturbed by construction. Recently, an undocumented landfill has come to light as extreme weather has caused the land to subside. The previously unknown landfill is now spilling into Sawmill Creek, home to a Steelhead run and other trout.

For more information, or to look at a map of contaminated sites in the Sitka area, please go to http://www.sitkatribe.org/pages/brownsfield
STA Environmental Research Lab and the Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research Network:
The Sitka Tribe of Alaska Environmental Research Lab (STA-ERL) is a research laboratory producing analytical data associated with marine biotoxins, ocean chemistry and other environmental parameters in Alaska. These data are used to inform the public about Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) levels in subsistence shellfish, the abundance levels of harmful algal species in surface seawater samples, and carbonate chemical signatures on community beaches. STA-ERL staff are the coordinators for the Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR) network. This network is comprised of 17 Tribal Governments throughout the Gulf of Alaska working together to ensure access to traditional foods. The current focus of the network is mitigating the risk of PSP and monitoring changing ocean conditions. To do this, SEATOR partners implement shellfish biotoxin and ocean acidification monitoring in their communities. Associated data is then distributed to SEATOR partners and community members. Despite hardships caused by Covid-19, STA-ERL staff were able continue the to ensure the data collection and analysis efforts continued in 2020. More than 800 shellfish samplers were analyzed for PSP, more than 50 phytoplankton observations were conducted for the Sitka area, and more than 200 ocean chemistry samples were analyzed for carbonate chemistry parameters.

STA-ERL Staff:
Seven full time staff work with STA-ERL.

Chris Whitehead, Environmental Program Manager:
Chris has worked at STA since August 2013 and has developed the STA environmental program including STA-ERL and SEATOR projects. Chris’s main focus is securing funding, building and maintaining partnerships, and increasing the capacity of STA-ERL to support the needs and priorities of STA.

Kari Lanphier, Environmental Lab Manager:
Kari has worked for STA since May 2017. She enjoys working to protect the safety of subsistence foods with a great team in Sitka and throughout Alaska. Kari is excited to continue to build capacity within STA-ERL so additional analytical data can be used to better understand and manage natural resources in southeast Alaska.

Naomi Bargmann, Environmental Lab Specialist:
Naomi has worked for STA since December 2018. She is the lead lab analyst for STA-ERL. She tests shellfish for biotoxins to inform community members about the potential risk of consuming subsistence foods. She also creates new laboratory procedures to expand our testing capabilities. She enjoys the diversity working at RPD and with the STA-ERL program. Whether it’s gathering herring eggs, shucking shellfish, working one-on-one with students, or running lab analyses, each day is different. Working with STA has been rewarding and she is looking forward to more traditional food gathering and conducting research.

Willoughby Peterson, Environmental Lab Specialist:
Will has worked for STA since June 2019. He is excited to be working on the Ocean Acidification (OA) baseline data collection projects that include operating the Burke-o-lator, coordinating water sample collection from Sitka and SEATOR partner sites, and data analysis. Additionally, Will assists with shellfish processing, mentoring RASOR students, and collecting traditional foods. Will is a STA member who is proud to be doing this important work for his tribal people.
Muriel Reid, Natural Resources Technician:
Muriel has worked for STA since September 2019 after being both a BLaST and tribal youth intern at STA-ERL. She assists RPD staff with their projects, primarily within the STA-ERL. In 2020, Muriel redirected focus from in-person lab work to outreach and data. She developed handouts, presentations, and social media posts for various workshops and public health outreach. And she assisted in the implementation of domoic acid testing, RASOR year two materials, and paralytic shellfish toxin communication. She also continued lab work and data organization in the biotoxin and ocean acidification programs. She appreciates her part in improving food security through processing samples and assisting the traditional foods program.

Tara Racine, Environmental Education Coordinator:
Tara Racine has worked for STA since April of 2020. She coordinates department relevant educational activities between STA’s Resource Protection Department and the Sitka School District. Her responsibilities also entail coordinating between partner organizations on a multi-year behavioral research study that focuses on the effectiveness of educational interventions of Sitka K-12 students in reducing children’s risk of exposure to paralytic shellfish toxins. Tara creates the study’s K-12 curricula and conducts the educational intervention activities.

Nicole Filipek, Environmental Lab Technician:
Nicole has worked with STA since August of 2020. She performs weekly seawater and phytoplankton sampling and bi-weekly shellfish sampling at Starrigavan Recreation Area, and prepares shellfish samples for biotoxin screening. Nicole leads the efforts in analyzing phytoplankton samples to determine the quantity and types of phytoplankton. She also assists with ocean chemistry in Sitka Sound by processing discrete seawater samples collected by SEATOR partners. In addition, I provide physical, logistical, and clerical support for the whole of the Resource Protection Department.

Lance Laity, Tribal Youth Intern:
Lance was a Tribal Youth Intern through January and February 2020. Lance worked on projects in the biotoxin lab, vermiculture and assisted in multiple other RPD projects.

Current Projects:
Subsistence Shellfish Biotoxin Testing:
In 2020, STA-ERL facilitated the collection of approximately 500 surface seawater samples and 900 shellfish samples. The majority of these samples are used to inform individuals about the PSP risk associated with the harvest of subsistence shellfish in Southeast Alaska. STA-ERL also analyzes non-subsistence shellfish such as oysters, scallops and geoducks in association with research projects that hope to evaluate these commodities as live commercial products. In addition to testing shellfish for toxicity, SEATOR partners collect phytoplankton observations as an initial warning system for PSP. In Sitka, more than 50 individual microscopy observations of phytoplankton were completed in 2020. Throughout the SEATOR network, more than 500 phytoplankton observations were made in 2020.
**EPA IGAP:**
The IGAP project continued to support the efforts of STA-ERL staff in 2020. This program provided the initial funding for the subsistence shellfish and phytoplankton work done in Sitka. Outreach and education efforts are also supported by IGAP including the maintenance of the SEATOR website and coordination with Sitka School District.

**Ocean Acidification:**
In 2017, a Burke-o-Lator (BoL) was installed at RPD. This BoL is one of four in Alaska and continuously measures carbonate chemistry in Sitka Sound. This information will help us understand if organisms have the necessary building blocks in their ocean environment for sustainable life. Additionally, the BoL has the capacity to test SEATOR partner discrete surface seawater samples for carbonate chemistry parameters. By combining the sampling efforts of multiple Southeast Alaska Tribes, more baseline data is available to help understand and interpret changing ocean conditions in our region. In 2020 SEATOR partners collected over 350 discrete seawater samples, and despite shutdowns due to Covid-19, managed to analyze over 200 of these samples.

**BIA Tribal Youth Initiative:**
In 2019, RPD was awarded a BIA Tribal Youth Initiative Grant. This grant allows RPD to host STA tribal citizens that are juniors or seniors in high school. RPD hosted one student in the spring of 2020. Unfortunately, this program was put on hold due to Covid-19. RPD is excited to continue this program when able.

**BIA Coastal Resiliency: Mercury**
In 2018, RPD procured funds and equipment to analyze subsistence halibut and harbor seal samples for mercury. Hopefully, this program will elucidate data gaps so that mercury distribution is better understood for the Southeast Alaska region. Thus far, analysis has been focused on understanding intramuscular differences in total mercury in fish harvested in Sitka Sound.

**NOAA Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms:**
Funding: NOAA, Duration: 3 years
This project started in October 2017 and is in its final year. The project is a collaboration between the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association and STA. Partners are focusing on mapping *Alexandrium* cyst beds, looking at *Alexandrium* cyst ecology and wintertime toxicity of geoducks, and coordinating with resource managers and stakeholders to address geoduck management and needs. To date, STA-ERL has analyzed nearly 200 geoduck samples for PSP toxins. So far data suggests that currents play a large role in transport of cysts, and therefore HAB events in Southeast.

**AmeriCorps VISTA:**
RPD is grateful to have the opportunity to host an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer in 2020. AmeriCorps VISTA members add significant capacity to the department. Primarily, VISTA members assist with providing effective outreach materials associated with data produced during STA-ERL project initiatives, developing educational curricula, and coordinating student-centric projects. Our 2020 AmeriCorps VISTA was Jesse Endert. Her term ended in August 2020. After her time with STA Jesse took an Environmental Specialist position with Ketchikan Indian Community.

**Climate Ready Tribes:**
Funding Agency: National Indian Health Board, Duration: 3 years. In 2020 STA finished Year 2 for the Climate Ready Tribes Program. Year 2 was focused on providing climate adaptation strategies through baseline data collection. STA also started Year 3 for this same initiative. Year 3 will focus on coalescing ocean acidification data collection and analysis strategies among coastal tribes in Alaska.
M onitoring and Event Response for Harmful Algal Blooms:
Funding Agency: NOAA, Grant Period: 3 years
PSP is considered the primary health risk to shellfish harvesters in Alaska. However, with changing ocean conditions, illnesses such as, Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) and Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP), are emerging concerns. The risk of DSP and ASP in Alaska is currently unknown as there is no regulatory agency testing for either risk. This project will allow STA-ERL to analyze 200 subsistence shellfish samples for both ASP and DSP per year for three years. Ideally, this baseline data collection will lead to a better understanding of the health risks associated with ASP and DSP in Alaska. 2020 was year one of this project, and despite lab capacity significantly decreased, staff were able to collect 200 samples for DSP and ASP and have tested over 100 of these samples. So far no DSP has been found in Southeast Alaska shellfish collected during the summer of 2020.

E M O R Y N I H:
Funding Agency: National Institute Health, Grant Period: 5 years
STA, in collaboration with Emory University and the Sitka School District, has received funding to develop a PSP forecasting tool, expand the current biotoxin sampling program, and develop culture-based science curriculum for all of Sitka’s schools. The program hopes to teach students about PSP, environmental management, safe harvesting practices, and research techniques. Other activities to be implemented with this project include “Culture Camps” for grade school students, an after-school science program for middle school students, and week-long, intensive “Clam Camp” for high school students. All of the teaching materials have been submitted to the Internal Review Board for Clam Camp. Clam Camp is expected to be executed during March or April 2021.

Rural Alaska Scholars in One-Health Research:
Funding Agency: National Institute Health, Grant Period: 5 years. STA received funding in partnership with University of Alaska Southeast to increase the engagement of tribal high school students throughout Southeast Alaska in science and scientific career pathways. This proposal will implement place-based mentoring in multiple communities throughout Southeast Alaska. Alaska Natives are under-represented in science, technology, engineering, and math fields and environmental resource management, despite close ties to environmental health and millennia of accumulated traditional ecological knowledge. Students participating in this project will design and implement a science project centered around shellfish biotoxins or harmful algal blooms in their communities. STA staff will continue to work with students to design projects, train mentors, analyze student samples, and assist with data interpretation.

Headlights:
Funding Agency: Alaska Ocean Observing System, Duration: 3 years
STA has been supported by the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) for many years. AOOS primarily provides support through hosting web portals, and funding supply and maintenance needs for our Ocean Acidification program.
2020 with its Coronavirus Pandemic, visited a great number of hardships for our Tribal families and brand-new physical complications on the Department’s delivery of services. Wanting to model resilience and healthy adaptations, the Department took on a cautious yet determined effort to maintain positive staff morale in difficult working conditions while raising the bar of service to the Tribal citizenry.

Jade Nodes, Intake Specialist, remains the hub of our Department communications with Tribal citizens; flexibly going wherever she is needed most by the Tribe: Assisting Administration at the Main building while monitoring, responding, or forwarding all Social Services calls. Jade was lead coordinator on Department events like the Indigenous peoples “Blanket Exercise”; Health and Human Services Committee meetings; Tribal Youth holiday gift bag effort in which 302 youth received bags; Department food assistance program with 1,104 individuals receiving food pantry boxes, 687 receiving food grocery cards, 450 receiving “Farmers-to-Families” food boxes, and 144 receiving bus passes. Always on the go, she also finds time to make sure to scan and electronically file tribal financial assistance and Indian Child Welfare Act files. All this while continuing to take college courses towards her social work degree.

Catherine Rogers, Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Coordinator, went above and beyond her job description to assist the Legal Department for over half the year as the Interim Legal Assistance to Victims (LAV) attorney while also working as CAC Coordinator. Catherine was successful this year in obtaining a fully signed Memorandum of Understanding linking SEARHC, Sitka Police Department, Sitkans Against Family Violence, State of Alaska District Attorney and Public Defender offices in the effort to provide trauma-informed local support for children and families who may be impacted by severe traumas. Catherine worked to secure additional funding to rent a physical space for the Tribe’s CAC and coordinated a training from the Alaska Child Welfare Academy to assist in the development of protocols and case reviews for the CAC’s Multi-Disciplinary Team. These protocols are currently under review. Catherine was also successful in securing additional grant funding to provide evidence-based trauma treatment for Sitka’s community mental health providers as part of CAC accreditation by the National Children’s Alliance. Other duties as assigned, Catherine took it upon herself to produce a COVID-19 Legal Resources flyer for public distribution.
Jean Swanson, Outreach Family Caseworker, continued her efforts on “Strengthening Families Through Healthy Activities” open gym, open swim, and open beading studio until COVID-19 Public Health restrictions took hold in March. Jean actively manages 11 Tribal Court guardianships with support and advocacy for Tribal youth and families, delivering food boxes, arts and craft supplies, outdoor games, and cultural books to Tribal guardians to assist with the family stressors and child-care disruptions caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Jean is an active participant in Sitka’s Early Childhood Coalition and is adding her strength to events to address childcare needs in Sitka while continuing her facilitation of the Fatherhood is Sacred, Motherhood is Sacred, Linking Generations Through Strengthening Relationships curricula first in-person, and then adapting to remote participation through Zoom.

This year Jean completed the “Basic Skills” child welfare program through the Alaska Child Welfare Academy and received her certification as a facilitator of the “Addressing Family Violence and Abuse” curriculum through the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association. Jean is a steadfast advocate for our Tribal youth and families and helped press the State of Alaska Office of Children’s Services Chafee Independent Living Program to accept Tribal youth in Tribal Court child protection cases on the same footing as children in the State of Alaska child protection system. In between her activities, Jean helps coordinate our Department’s “Kids in Care” database, maintaining an accurate record of the Tribal youth in our ICWA and Tribal Court child protection systems. Jean also led the coordination of the Department’s “Honoring Our Tribal Elders” holiday gift bag/turkey distribution with 187 Elders served. All this while continuing her higher education through courses toward a social work degree.

Clara Gray, our General Assistance Caseworker, is a rock amidst the turmoil – maintaining the Department’s complicated array of financial assistance programs throughout the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as office renovations, working remotely and meeting in-person as needed to assist clients achieve their goals of self-sufficiency, meeting monthly milestones, and even providing helpful accountability when needed. Clara is an active member of Sitka’s Early Childhood Coalition, Wooch.een Health Network, and the Sitka Homeless Coalition. Clara has directly served Tribal Citizens in each program as follows:

- LIHEAP Energy Assistance: 74
- Emergency Assistance: 35
- General Assistance: 34
- Burial Assistance: 14
- Employment Assistance: 22
- Child Care Assistance: 14
The Department’s Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Team of Krista Perala, Lead Caseworker, and David Voluck, ICWA Attorney, continued to manage over 93 ICWA cases both in, and outside of, Alaska. Known in court rooms throughout the nation as the “Wonder-Twins”, David and Krista set the standard for active tribal participation in every child’s case. Krista is on the front-lines, participating in the field with Initial Assessments, and meeting constantly with child protection partners – defending ICWA’s mandates and connecting families with the best possible resources.

Krista continued her professional development, training to be a facilitator for the “Knowing Who You Are” cultural sensitivity curriculum and taking college courses toward a social work degree. Krista is exacting with her time and paperwork, being instrumental in our Department’s completion of quarterly “time study” reports which result in reimbursements under the State of Alaska’s Title IV(E) program – funds which can be directed straight back to Tribal citizen services. In her spare time, Krista actively participates on the Tribe’s Enrollment Committee and assists with the Tribe’s Kids in Care database.

David was able to successfully complete the full revision of the Tribe’s Children’s Code, which was passed by the Tribal Council in June 2020. He assisted in developing an ICWA Memorandum of Agreement with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska to help detail inter-tribal collaboration when children may be dually enrolled; this MOA was recently signed by both tribes and is a model of inter-tribal collaboration of use to tribes throughout Alaska.

With the assistance of Chuck Miller, David helped write and provide staff support regarding the Tribe’s resolution on the relocation of the Baranof statue from Centennial Hall. David teamed up with Jean to negotiate equal treatment for Tribal youth in Tribal Court guardianships when it comes to eligibility for State of Alaska Chafee Foster Care “Independent Living” funds.

David continued to provide Associate Judge assistance to Chief Judge Peter Esquiro when needed. Lastly, he helped develop the Tribe’s Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Free Workplace signage.
Kelsey Carney, Transitional Housing Program Coordinator, continues her efforts toward providing interim housing solutions for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence/dating violence, or stalking. The program is designed to assist survivors in gaining the skills to obtain and maintain permanent housing and healthy lives free from violence. Assistance may include rental assistance, deposit, food, and household goods for a minimum of 6 months. Kelsey assisted 8 clients in their transition from interim housing toward their own self-sufficiency and stable housing while closing out a grant. Kelsey helps coordinate Sitka's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and Community Coordinated Response meetings with Sitkans Against Family Violence, Sitka Police Department, and SEARHC. Kelsey helped bring a successful Historical Trauma training, presented by STA's Chuck Miller, for the SART and SEARHC staff. Kelsey has started work on new protocols and procedures for the Tribe's new Transitional Housing grant, completed skills training for group facilitation, and recently passed her Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW) exam.

Xannie Borseth, Sitka Fellows Program - Tribal Elder Community Coordinator through May of 2020, coordinated monthly moving screenings, and personally called 250 Elders during the Pandemic to check on them and provide information on resources as well as delivering food boxes to their homes. Xannie worked with Tribal Elders to produce a Spring newsletter, and worked with the Sitka Community Land Trust and Chuck Miller on the Tlingit name of the Halibut Point Cottage, S'us' Heeni Shaak.

The Social Services Department as a full team:
- Assisted the Resources Department with the Herring Egg Distribution.
- Hosted Alaska Indigenous Blanket Exercise in collaboration with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and SEARHC; a participatory exercise designed to foster truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The event was attended by 30 participants from community partners with SEARHC, SAFV, STA, YAS, SCPS, Braveheart, and Sitka Police Department.
- Coordinated Tribal Elders and Tribal Youth Gift Bag Distributions.
- Received "Lights in the Night" award from the Alaska Children’s Alliance for outstanding child protection teamwork.

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska Department of Social Services remains grateful for the resources and support provided so we can safeguard the health and well-being of our children and families. We look forward to 2021 being a year of healing for all those negatively impacted by the Pandemic and are honored to assist in all ways possible.
There are two main operations within transportation:
1. "the RIDE" – fixed route public transit operation
2. The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP)

Public/Tribal Transit:
"the RIDE," as all public transit services around Alaska and the country, has been impacted since the arrival of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Services were suspended from March 23rd to July 10th, 2020, and resumed service on Monday, July 13th. Unfortunately, because of a shortage of drivers, "the RIDE" was only able to resume service with two buses covering the three bus routes since resuming service. If anyone is interested in being a driver, please see information later in this report on how you can apply, our pay and benefits are competitive.

Fortunately, with additional funding from Congress to public transit operators, and in coordination with the Center For Community, CFC, (of whom STA has a contract to operate two of the three bus routes) have been able to install bus driver safety barriers, spray anti-virus buses each night after service hours, had funding to power wash each bus shelter. Also, masks are required (and free masks are available if needed) for both passengers and drivers since resuming service – aside from a few minor incidents in the summer; everyone has complied. 50% capacity has been in force since resuming service.

STA received two grants to replace two buses. Last year, in February and the summer, STA received the two (larger) 29-foot buses to replace the older (2009 and 2010) 29-foot buses. CFC received a grant and purchased a smaller, 24-foot bus to replace the older 2008 bus of the same size. The 29- Foot buses are low floor and have “kneeling capacity,” where the passenger entrance side lowers some. These buses have a front entrance ramp for wheelchairs and those who wish to use a ramp instead of the step.

These buses also have airline-grade HEPA air filters and security camera systems.
STA and CFC each received grants to replace buses. STA will add one more 29-foot larger bus, and CFC will replace one 24-foot smaller bus. Normally it takes over one year for processing, ordering, and manufacturing/delivery of a new/replacement bus. At the time of this report, STA or CFC began ordering the next new/replacement buses. CFC nor STA have begun ordering the new replacement buses as of “press time”, but the goal is to order them by summer. After receiving these two buses, STA will have a full fleet of replacement buses! Finally, “the RIDE” would encourage Tribal Citizens and the General Public to apply to be drivers. There are minimum requirements; you can find the application on www.sitkatribe.org or call 907-747-3207 before picking up an application at the STA Administration Building (456 Katlian St.).

STA used some of the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) Tribal Transit CARES Act capital funds to replace the 2007 service truck for “the RIDE”. Pictured is the replacement truck to support “the RIDE” as required by the granting agency, FTA.

The Annual “Fill the Bus” food drive was canceled last year. Normally held in September, the cancellation was due to COVID-19. As with all other activities in Sitka, around the state and nation, it was with the necessity of caution. We hope to restart this campaign in 2021; keep your eye open for updates before September 2021.

Bus Maintenance Facility Grant project is funded by the FTA, through the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF), matching funds from STA’s Tribal Transportation program. The DOT/PF holds the funding and controls all aspects of the site selection process, including environmental assessments, architectural and engineering, and coordinates the design with STA. From the initial study, conducted by LSC Transportation Consultants, INC. In 2009, and researching/studying six sites, this seventh site at the lower parking lot of 456 Katlian Street began the assessment process in February 2019. After the DOT/PF selected the A & E (architectural and engineering) firm, Bettisworth North, who submitted their report on March 10, 2020, that concluded the site is suitable for the following: a bus stop pullout, administrative and operation space for five employees, 2 bus maintenance bays, 1 bus wash, parts, and tool storage. The project for this site would be further along. However the DOT/PF’s project engineer contracted COVID-19 and has not been able to keep a regular schedule, but considering he is doing okay, the project will enter it’s design phase—hopefully by this spring.

**Tribal Transportation Program (TTP):**
Congress funds the TTP to Tribes in an annual funding formula. Funding is for road/bridge construction and road maintenance projects. Also, funds for this program can be used to match other grant funds, such as STA’s Bus Maintenance Facility or new bus purchases and bus maintenance, which has helped because of “the RIDE”’s aging bus fleet. In 2020 Road maintenance for the access road to STA’s Administration Building was worked on twice.
Once with gravel and once with recycled asphalt, the seasonal snow plowing and salt/sand spread over the winter. The TTP successfully received funds through the TTP’s High Priority Projects Program to help the City complete the Indian River Road project and build a bus turnaround/pullout across from Peter Simpson Road as well as road maintenance for the access road to STA’s Administration Building. For road maintenance, STA was approached by a resident on Kirkman Way to help with smoothing out some of the rough spots on the lower half of the road. Through a collaboration with the City staff we completed this road maintenance project. The City removed five large surface rocks, upgraded the storm drain system, and topped off the road with recycled asphalt.

The resident who approached STA sent an email after the project was completed, saying “Our road is pretty sweet now, thanks for all your assistance with this project!” In addition to Kirkman Way, there was road maintenance to the Administration Building (456 Katlian) had grading/gravel/spread recycled asphalt/compacted done to it in August/September. And there was snowplowing to the bus stop [pullouts and the Administration Building last winter. Pictured are the road maintenance projects to Kirkman Way and Tribal Way.

Congress could not pass their Transportation Reauthorization Bill last year as the previous transportation bill, FAST (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation) Act, expired. Instead, Congress extended the FAST Act at the 2020 funding levels until September 30, 2021. Although the House passed a larger bill, H.R. 2, that included a new transportation reauthorization bill, INVEST (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation) in America Act in June 2020, the Senate held up action on the House’s bill.

STA worked with the Alaska Tribal Transportation Work Group, Intertribal Transportation Association, and National Congress of American Indians to ensure significant “plus ups” of Tribal elements in the House’s INVEST in America Act. Plus-ups include an increase in funding for the TTP from an annual $505M to $800M, reinstates the high priority projects with $50M/annual funding, adds an Office of Tribal Affairs US DOT’s new tribal Self-Governance Program. For the Tribal Transit Program, there is an annual increase from $30M to $46M for operating funds and increases its capital funds from $5M to $10M/year. Since the Senate refused to act on the House’s bill, as in all other bills that Congress did not adopt in the last session, now all bills start fresh in the new congress. However, it is anticipated work is done by the House last session will be the framework for the new Congress. As in the past three years, STA is positioned to have strong input with ATTWG, ITA, and NCAI on the Tribal elements into the next Congress’ Transportation Reauthorization Bill.
Sitka Tribal Enterprise Director Camille Ferguson (ED) oversees Tribal Tours, the Sheet’ka Kwaán Naa Kahidi Community House, the Community House Gift Shop, the Naa Kahidi Dancers, Sitka Tribal Tannery and serves as a consultant for Tribal Charitable Gaming. 2020 was the most challenging and devastating year for STE enterprises due to the world pandemic that caused the loss of business, cancellation of projects and loss of employment opportunities for tribal citizens.

The following employees continued employment with STE throughout 2020:

- Camille Ferguson, Economic Development Director
- Dale Lindstrom, Tribal Tours Manager
- Sandy Lorrigan, Business Manager
- Serena DeTemple, Gaming Manager,
- Gaming Staff Dee Dee Todd and Dorothy Gordon
- Leo Jimmy, Community House Attendant

The following positions were not filled due to COVID-19:
Tribal Tours Summer Seasonal Staff including: Tour Assistant Bus Driver, Sales Staff, Tour Representative and Walking Guides, Made in Sitka Gift Shop: Sales Lead and Sales Assistant.
Naa Kahidi Dance Manager, Dionne Brady; Co-Managers Dorothy Gordon and Jenna Martin.
Tribal Tannery Lead, Caleb Harris, and Tannery Technician, Wyatt Weaver, were employed until August 2020 and furloughed due to the lack of business.

STE is thankful for all those who stood by in hopes that a tourism season would happen. STE prepared and planned for what was expected to be a banner year, although a tourism summer season did not materialize. STE staff worked with other departments on projects funded by the CARES ACT, a bill to help ease the pandemic fall out.

The following report explains what STE did to prepare to reach the goals set for 2020 and what happened due to COVID-19. It was truly a sad year for the department, however, the skeleton crew that remained took on more than whatever they could to help our community and those affected by the pandemic.
In 2020 Tribal Tours hired Dale Lindstrom as the new Tribal Tours Manager. Dale’s first project was to work on refurbishing the existing Tribal Tours bus fleet and this was completed in March. The buses would be operated fully by Tribal Tours. This would increase employment as well as revenue in order to decrease a lease expense, netting a larger profit.

Dale reviewed and updated old job descriptions and began recruitment for the summer season by attending the Sitka High School’s job fair. We incorporated Tribal Tours training as part of the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Conference that was set for end of March 2020.

Tribal Tours entered into land excursion agreements with Royal Caribbean Cruises, Holland America, Princess, Silver Seas, and with plans to continue its partnership with Alaska Coach Tours in FY 2020 tourist season. However, the pandemic began affecting the travel and tourism industry in the beginning of March, creating a decrease in cruise and independent travel to Alaska. Almost 100% of our revenue stream was lost as Tribal Tours watched the decline in reservations went from two thousand tours down to zero. All dance shows were cancelled due to the social distancing and the need to keep our youth and elders protected from the virus.
The Sheet’ka Kwaán Naa Kahidi Community House is the primary home to the Naa Kahidi Dancers. The facility is used for a wide variety of events, including meetings, conferences, weddings, cultural celebrations, memorials, graduation ceremonies, and Tribal Council meetings throughout the year. STE Staff created a brochure to deliver to hotels, B&B’s and resorts with plans on increased use for 2020. Staff updated the sound system, fixed broken lighting, provided headsets for the hard of hearing and additional kitchen equipment. Plans for an Artist Market were developed for the outside, as well as additional landscaping. A herring bike rack was installed that complemented the outside area.

The Community House Giftshop staff worked a variety of local artists to create more of the “Made in Sitka” feel and authenticity for the shop. Some of the artists included: Jerrod Galanin, Henry Larson, Lee Burkhart, Peter Esquiro, George Bennett, Judy Kell, Pauline Duncan, Robert Miller, Robbie Martin, and Maria Guthrie. Unfortunately, the Gift Shop had to shut down, but did open July to beginning of September for limited hours due to the pandemic and sales were not as expected, leaving a large inventory for 2021.
Gaming:
Bingo and the Alaska Wild Game Pull Tab Parlor were not exempt from the impacts of COVID-19. Bingo cancelled the majority of bingo nights due to fear of gathering in crowds and social distancing. After adjusting the seating arrangement and requirements, bingo was open to the public, but struggled with attendance. For FY 2020, the Alaska Wild Game Pull Tab Parlor and gaming will not be able to provide financial contributions as they did in years past.

Sitka Tribal Tannery:
A major restructure and re-start were essential for the Tannery business to create a safe work environment and change public perception. There was a major investment by the Tribe to rebuild and repair all aspects of the Tannery. Two full-time Tannery technicians were employed, but a third technician was planned to be hired later based on business profitability. The facility has been cleared of all broken equipment, cleaned inside, code regulations instituted, equipment maintained, and the building was pressure washed. Sitka Tribal Tannery will be repairing the reputation of poor service, poor product, long wait time and lost hides. An assessment was conducted demonstrating the cost for processing was no longer cost effective, creating an increase in losses. Research was conducted to look at alternatives to combat the higher cost to do business. Based on the research findings, the option to downsize and look at today’s newer technology was favored. After much research, STE acquired an auto-tanner (a pressurized, automatic tanning machine) to reduce labor hours and material usage down by half. The cost to produce a tanned sea otter hide has been reduced by this auto-tanner from $94 to $38 and reducing high risk physical labor. This plan would allow the Tannery to reduce its square footage by over 50%, opening almost 10,000 square feet of space for other economic ventures, i.e., rental space, storage, sewing business, etc. At the beginning of 2020, the Tannery ran a “test batch” to verify equipment and provide training for both Caleb and Wyatt. The only hides that would be focused on were seal, seal lion and sea otter. Due to the pandemic, the Tannery also suffered from lack of hunting by hunters and the Tannery was unable to obtain hides to continue training. The staff continued working on a customer service-based business that focused on quality, care, and communication with its customers through Facebook as a social media outlet for training and for sales. With lack of product to produce and lack of sales, the Tannery had no option but to furlough the Tannery staff and explore other revenue options for the 4608 Halibut Point Road facility.
2020 Heritage and Cultural Tourism Conference:
$26,000 cash revenue was raised with $8,000 in-kind, all returned to sponsors after cancellation. Expert presenters in the field of travel and tourism were confirmed and arriving from all parts of the country. The Conference was funded, planned, taking reservations, readied for execution, and cancelled due to COVID only 3 weeks from the conference start date.

COVID-19 – Other Projects Created under the Cares Act:

4608 Halibut Point Road – Repurpose Project:
STE developed a business plan to utilize the 3,000 square feet of unused area created by the downsizing of the Tribal Tannery. The plan included a Cottage Industry Development Center that included storage, office rental, and a full commercial kitchen rental with walk-in coolers and commercial grade freezer. Opening of the facility is scheduled for April 2021.

STE was awarded the City of Sitka Treasury Grant to carry out programs funding under the CARES Act listed below:

**Food Security Program - $200,000**
- Fish Distribution to Community
- Distribution: 1,300
- Food Card Distribution for the Community
- Mini Grant for Agencies and Organizations for Food Security

**STE Assist Other Departments**
- Elders Christmas Delivery
- Distribution of Air Purifiers
- Herring Eggs Preparation and Distribution
- STA Summer Picnic Baskets Distribution
- Transportation for Lunch Food

**Homeless Program- $50,000**
- Mini Grants for Homeless Programs
- Winter Clothing and Essential Needs Distribution
- Housing for the Homeless