



Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Brownfields Program

Brownfield & Marine Debris Site Surveys

[July 9, 2019](#) Post written by Muriel Reid.

Within the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Resource Protection department, there are many ongoing projects, including the brownfields and marine debris program. Lead by Helen Dangel, the Tribal Youth interns were able to get a closer look at the processes done to update data on debris and contaminants around Sitka.

A brownfield is a contaminated site on public land intended to be cleaned and reused. Many of the brownfields around Sitka are Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) due to the precautionary military sites made in WW2.



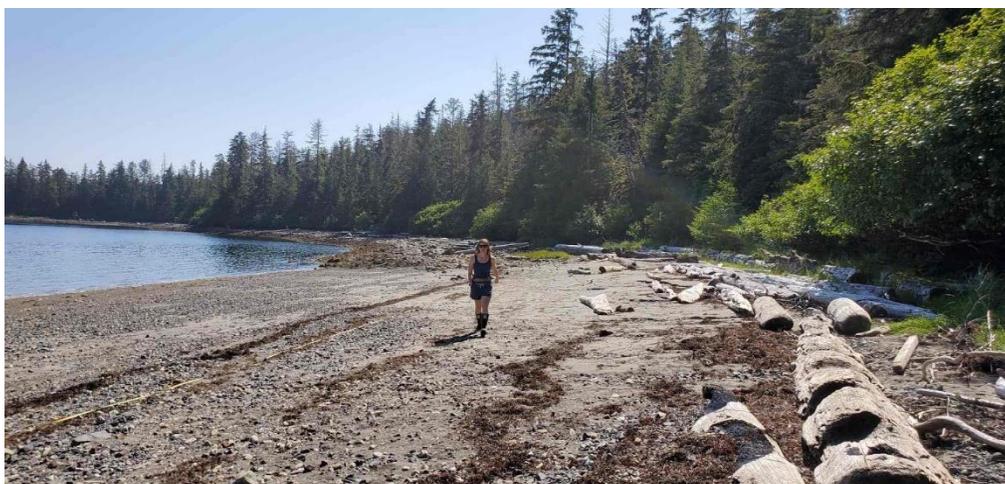
From left to right: Sitka National Historic Park Ranger, TYI Interns Morgan Feldpausch, Muriel Reid, and Phillip Barker, and STA RPD Staff Helen Dangel.



A large section of asphalt uncovered by erosion on the beach. Smaller pieces were found across most of shoreline. Picture by Muriel Reid.

On Wednesday June 26th, as a practice site characterization on a known and safe brownfield, the team surveyed remaining debris from an asphalt plant that was operative until 1995 at the Sitka National Historical Park. While there, Helen taught the interns to recognize where there are differences in plant growth, changes in the height of the land, and new contaminants uncovered by erosion. After identifying asphalt surrounding the site, they learned how to mark points, make lines, and map areas on a handheld GPS called a Trimble. By mapping a section of where there is visible asphalt, the group helped define a specific area for recovery.

Two days later, some of the RPD staff and interns went out to Krestof Island to complete two marine debris surveys. Helen led the group in staking out, recording, and surveying transects of the beaches decided beforehand. The transects were four randomized 5-meter-wide columns in a segment of a beach spanning 100 meters. Within the sections, the survey focused on fragments larger than 2.5 cm to exclude counting micro and meso plastics. Working in teams of three, everyone identified and logged debris found in predetermined columns of the beach before cleaning up what they found and heading back to town.



Ms. Clare walks along the beach after the group cleaned up their flagging. The Resource Protection Department spent Friday afternoon on the island recording and picking up debris. Picture by Morgan Feldpausch.

Thank you to Helen Dangel for teaching the crew throughout the week and spearheading both important projects.