

**Sitka Long-Range Tourism Plan Collaborative Process**  
**Stakeholder Meeting #10**  
**May 1, 2006 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.**  
**Centennial Hall Exhibit Room**

**Summary:**

Stakeholders continued to hear presentations about various requested bits of information. The following items were presented and the Stakeholders reached agreement about what they learned, which puts these items to rest until the visioning/planning phases later in the process:

*What is the environmental impact of the cruise industry? (cruise ship category)*

*Environment impact comparison: large ship to small (planning category)*

The Stakeholders also heard an expert panel presentation addressing the following requested piece of information:

*What are the various positions on the visitor – charter/ subsistence/ sport/ commercial fish allocation? What is the effect of “visitor fishing” on fish allocations in Sitka area? (Community issues category)*

Stakeholders felt the presentation on the first question was adequate, and agreed to close that question for now. Further information will be presented on the second question in the future.

**In attendance:** Wendy Alderson, Linda Behnken, Chris Bryner, Jeff Budd, Tom Corso, Ken Corson, John DeLong, Dorrie Farrell, Jeff Farvour, Angela Filler, Peter Gorman, Dustin Hack, Roger Hames, Judy Johnstone, Mike Litman, Mim McConnell, Liz McKenzie, Mary Jo McNally, Tina McNamee, Mary Beth Nelson, Richard Nelson, Judy Ozment, Ken Rear, Tim Ryan, Scott Saline, Spencer Severson, Andrew Thoms, Floyd Tomkins, Dena Williams.

*Steering Committee:* Hugh Bevan, Julia Smith, Stef Steffen

*Facilitators:* Matthew Turner and Kayla Boettcher

**Information about the public meeting on Thursday, May 4**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> public meeting for this process is scheduled for Thursday evening, 7-9 at the Naa Kahidi. This is a chance to communicate what's been going on in this process with the rest of the community. Matthew tells the SH that he hopes a lot of them would be willing to attend that meeting. He'd like to make that meeting look and feel a little like what the SH do here, rather than just having one person talking and showing a power point. Instead the idea is to hang up all the posters we've created, talk about the process step by step with the audience. After each step, we'll break community members into small groups to talk with SH about that piece of the process that was just covered. This provides the community members more of a chance to talk with SH, ask questions, and learn more from them about the process. The three stages that will be discussed are the initial stages of the process (identifying Stakeholders), identifying concerns, and identifying needed information. Each category is displayed on a wall, and attention will be drawn to the appropriate wall when that stage is presented. Matthew reminds the SH that this is their chance to test how we're doing here. If the process is working, there will be few things that the community at large will be able to comment on or add into the mix. If they mention things that we haven't done, we capture those and break them back to the group.

Matthew asks if there are SH willing and available to be there and help – there are several hands raised.

Matthew continues with a presentation about group decision-making, using a diagram called the “Diamond of Participatory Decision Making” (see handout for more information). There are lots of examples of times when a group has to make a decision together about something. Sometimes its as simple as putting in a picnic table. The group spends some time talking about it, there’s a few ideas, they discuss those, and then they come to a decision. Not every question is that simple – the question before us in this process is not that simple, it’s a question with many different facets and things to consider. We’re going further than the easy decision. We’re gathering ever more divergent perspectives. Every time we think we have an answer to something, it generates three more questions. This is called the divergent zone. We’re expanding.

We’re into a new phase right now – the Groan Zone. Things keep expanding, you might feel like we’re in the wilderness, it doesn’t seem to be going anywhere. Part of it is our own capacity to manage information. This group is trying to manage a lot of information as a group. You’re also being asked to consider things from others’ perspectives – that’s not easy to do. At some point, we’ll reach a new point. When the group is ready to start to make decisions, we reach the convergent zone. The group will agree that things start to make sense, and we can move on from there. Finally, something beautiful happens – closure. From the Groan Zone, it’s hard to see where this process is going. The most dangerous thing to do is lose faith in the process. Matthew tells the group that he just wanted to let them know that where we are in this process is okay. Some of the frustration is letting go of old ideas and preconceptions of how it’s always done – once we let go of some of those old things, the creativity begins. He also reminds them of an old poster that listed things that could slow down or destroy the process – one item on that list is if the SH stop coming. He tells the group he hopes they stick with it and keep coming.

### **Information presentations**

#### **Ken Rear – Environmental group**

*Requested information covered in this presentation:*

- 1) *What is the environmental impact of the cruise industry? (cruise ship category)*
- 2) *Environment impact comparison: large ship to small (planning category)*

Environmental impact of cruise ships

Ken read the Summary of his report [see handout].

Q: What are the sizes of “small” vs. “large” ships?

A: This is all about ships with accommodations - 50-250 passengers is small; over 250 berths is large.

Q: Do small cruise ships have regulations?

A: They’re allowed to continually discharge gray water; fecal coliform counts in composition of untreated grey is similar to black – the independent study (that Ken refers to in his report) considered grey and black all together.

Q: Are there any new regulations that they can’t discharge?

A: There are new regs, but they exempted boats made before 2004

Q: Does Sitka make those regs?

A: it's the state that regulates the emissions.

Q: How far out is state water?

A: 3 miles, but for discharges they have to be 12 miles

Q: Did you take into consideration the impact on the town or just the water, like air, sound, etc.

A: I tried to find out anything I could about the environmental impact. There were other things that I didn't cover – like impact on seals and sound.

Comment from Ken's committee – the group has more information to present that's not included in Ken's report.

Ken: I did look into the marine mammal issue a little bit. I tried to keep things in context of what's happening in Sitka – that's why I didn't include a lot of that information – not a pup ground or ice field;

The other issue – underwater soundscape – some ships went down to navy listening station, got a sound signature made and analyzed sounds from cruise ships, made comparisons between how far away you can hear ship vs. other sounds; an inflatable with 15ft outboard can be louder than a cruise ship, for example. It's a big massive complex report – cruise ships do make sounds, but they're not seen as harmful or disturbing.

Small boats disturb as much as large, and they're more likely to come within 100 yds. of wildlife.

Matthew asks the SH to process what Ken has presented with the following questions:

*Everyone understand what's been presented here?*

Yes

*Regarding the question "What is the environmental impact of the cruise industry," is there anything in Ken's report that we should strike in order to do our work?*

No.

*Is there anything we need to add as far as things to retain, things he presented that weren't included in the report?*

Air pollution isn't covered very well

Ken's committee asks if both of Ken's reports are being considered. (Ken originally wrote a longer report, but revised it into a shorter one. His committee comments that the longer report included some information about concerns they wanted to address.) Matthew replies that no, the longer report is not being considered, only the one that Ken submitted as his final.

Question from Ken's committee: We had a lot of discussion in this group – there's a lot of material that could be covered in this topic. One thing I was hoping would come from his presentation tonight is direction from the SH about what issues they want to hear more about. People have asked questions about air quality and bilge water. Is that enough – those two topics, or do you want more?

Matthew acknowledges this as a good question, and asks the group to hold onto it for a second. Then he proceeds to express some of his concerns about where we're at in this process. He reminds them that at this stage we're trying to come to a common understanding about what's happening now with regard to Sitka's visitors. Once we've come to a common understanding, we can develop reasonable strategies to get where we want to go. We're coming up on summer, where the frequency of meetings is going to change. Sometime in September we're going to come back, assimilate all the information we've heard and consider strategies. He says he's nervous for this group if what's going to be required under each of these pieces of information is a stack of reports. He encourages the group to again consider the bulls eye metaphor he introduced at the last meeting— does *every* information item need to hit the bulls eye? He asks the group to consider how much information each individual Stakeholder needs to know about each topic that's being presented to make decisions on a long-range tourism plan. Ken knows a lot about cruise ship discharge now – do we all need to know a lot about discharge or is it good enough to have Ken in the room? Another thing to think about – do we need answers to all the questions that come up during a presentation, or is it enough to make note of what else we'd like to know?

“So,” Matthew asks the group, “what does the SH group need to know about the environmental impact of the cruise industry for us to move on, knowing that this topic in and of itself could be a seminar we could hold every week through the summer? What's a strategy for us to get past this? Keep in mind we're trying to come to a common understanding – so we can get to the visioning and strategizing.”

SH response: We need to agree on some key points. It seems to me those key points are that yes, industry has impacts on air, soundscape, and water quality, and there have been some violations but no documentation of environmental damage. That seems like information we can hold onto, and beyond that, it's getting into strategy.

SH comment: I have some remaining questions about how it's been impacted in other places, but then there's the question about if we need to know that now, or if the answer to that can wait.

Matthew says he's not putting any parameters on going back and getting more information during strategy phase as needed.

Ken: My angle was to present the current standards; there's not much data out there yet about impacts, these are fairly new legislations.

SH Comment: if the purpose is to gather all the information now that we need to strategize later, then I'd need more information on this topic before we move on; but if we're going to open this up again, then we can call this a good start.

SH: I don't want to discourage the process, and I've missed a couple meetings, but I'm struggling with the time frame – are there limits on presenting? If we spend this much time on each one, we'll never get done.

Matthew says yes, we have put a 5-minute time limit on presentations, but we needed to work through some of this processing stuff tonight.

SH comment: Going back to the question – I'd like to know if there are any studies on people that come to Alaska on a cruise and experience AK and then go home and treat their environment better.

SH: I suggest we keep Ken's long report instead of the short report. Lots more information and resources that we could follow up on later and then we move on.

Matthew asks again, regarding the question "What is the environmental impact of the cruise industry," Do we have enough information on this question right now to close it – Is anybody opposed to giving it a red dot?  
No one is opposed, provided they can gather more information later if they see that as necessary to future decision-making.

Ken's presentation also covered the question: *Environment impact comparison: large ship to small*  
Matthew asks the SH if they understand what he presented for that question. They all say yes.

He asks if the group would like to strike anything from Ken's report in order to answer that question. They don't.

Is there anything that needs to be added in order to adequately answer that question?

Q: Does your report include fishing boats, etc.?

A: No, passenger vessels only for this question, but that includes ferries.

Ken comments that Sitka gets the most small cruise visits of any SE port.

Q: number of small v. large – we should quantify how many of each we get in Sitka

A: cruise ship group will address that in their presentation.

Matthew asks the group if anyone is opposed to closing this area of inquiry and giving it a red dot. No one is opposed.

### **Presentation from Tory O'Connell and Bob Chadwick**

*Requested information: What are the various positions on the visitor – charter/ subsistence/ sport/ commercial fish allocation. What is the effect of "visitor fishing" on fish allocations in Sitka area?*

Linda Behnken introduces the topic, saying that the Steering Committee suggested putting together a panel to address this question. As Linda talked about the question within her committee, they decided to change the wording from "various positions" to "various trends and status of impacts." Matthew asks the SH if anyone is opposed to that word altering – no one is.

Tory is a biologist with the Department of Fish and Game. She introduces her presentation as an overview of some of the resource allocation decisions that have been made and why. She focuses primarily on lingcod and rockfish and how local fisheries have been affected in Sitka Sound and outer Baranof Island.

[see presentation handout]

From Tory's presentation:

*Lingcod* was the first species we hit a wall on in terms of allocation.

Longline fishery – got very good at catching fast, became concerned about stock management – we did a closure in the winter,

Management wasn't effective – we hadn't incorporated recreational catch into the big picture – we tend to minimize the effects of rec fishing on stocks, but the charter catch was 40%, and a lot of that was coming from areas we had closed, this was something we hadn't considered.

Asked board of fish for help to include rec fishing in the divisions

They took it another step – looked at it regionwide through advisory committees

Came up with a 5-year harvest history average the divided by who took the fish. Those percentages determined the allocations for the users (%s in handout).

This % varied by management area – depended on where it had been fished.

Current management is complicated – it's divided by how fish are caught.

It has improved since we implemented these.

Since we put in these quotes, the commercial harvest has been low – easier to control

Sport fish harder to control – not actually controlling effort, in fact they've overharvested their allocation.

*Rockfish:*

Cannot be released (lingcod can), also habitat specific, don't migrate much. They live a long time, hard to manage.

Commercial – managed by est. total takes from all fisheries, if there's room, allow for directed fishery.

Board of fish – about to hit max;

Bycatch: could shut down other fisheries also.

We want to reduce catch of all these species and accurately document.

Asked board of fish to help – they decide to look at 5-yr harvest history, 84% of rockfish assigned to all commercial, 16% to charter.

Unlike lingcod, can't release – need to be spot-on in data we're collecting,

Not easy to know how many fish there are and what's too much – can't ignore extraction.

Tory directs SH to a National Academy of Science report.

Allocation is important to stock assessment.

Bob Chadwick is a sportfish manager biologist

From Bob's presentation [also see handout]:

Additional tools we're implementing through DSR – reduction in bag limits, annual limits on yellow eye, area closures as needed

Also added creel person to program,

New requirement in log books for charter – included space for yelloweye catch and release; also record by angler's license number

Other fisheries regulated: king salmon, halibut (federal)

3 ways we track harvest mortality effort: statewide harvest survey – subsample # of license holders through mail, they report their catch for the year

Creel program – estimate king stocks, expand for coho, halibut, rock, ling

log books required by charter and freshwater guides

also sometimes we have remote onsite creel – 2000-2001 at Redoubt; others.

Statewide survey: harvest for Area D Baranof and Chich; majority in Sitka

Marine angler days – not talking about freshwater.

In 1993 – started asking residency

Q: you send out a survey to people that get licensed?

A: we subsurvey all licensees.

Q: the %s in your report – do they include subsistence?

A: only sportfish.

Board of Fish – King Salmon report (handout)

# of registered charter vessels – 291 in Sitka area, includes freshwater boats

Q: broken down by resident and non-residents?

A: I'll try to find that answer for you.

Next page: active vessels

Every vessel required to log when it charters – if they turn in at least one log from 1/2 day, they're considered active – there were 214 active vessels in Sitka.

- 16% fished 1-5 days;
- 27% 6-25 days;
- 36% 51-100 days;
- 5% over 100 days per year.

Q: Is this info submitted voluntarily?

A: it is enforced – they are required to fill it out daily, send it in weekly. We managers have been directed to walk the docks and check log books this summer. It's not to their benefit to not send them in. Fines if they're late. Can cross-check with creel.

Re: Residency for charter boats – we don't ask that, the only way we can determine would be their mailing address, but that doesn't necessarily mean anything – trying to cross reference with other lists.

Clarify: By resident, you mean resident of Alaska?

A: yes.

Matthew then refers back to the requested information item that these presentations address. He asks if everyone understands what's been presented.

Q: did the change in the boundaries have an effect – gain/lose activity?

A: lost Elfin Cove – 12-13 boats during that time. Little drop in # of registered vessels.

Q: There's two different numbers for the number of sport fishing vessels - 291, 214?

A: 291 registered, only 214 operated.

Q: Do you have any problem with reporting? Are the lodges honestly reporting?

A: I'd like to assume everyone is honest. There's always that question on any fishery, in any walk of life. If someone tells us or it doesn't make sense we follow up on it.

Q: Are sport fishers allowed to fish everywhere?

A: for the most, yes

Q: no matter the size?

A: rod limit of 6 rods – charter can't fish

Q: how does it work when commercial boat has IFQ, also takes on charter people? Allowed to take commercial and charter? Laws on that?

A: can't have sport caught and commercial caught of the same species

Q: But you can for different species? I've heard of boats selling one-day crew license and taking tourists out

A: certainly anyone can buy crew license

Q: Guided sport fishers are required to turn in log; how do you know what commercial fishers retain and catch?

A: Other ways beyond enforcement offices – there's the transfer of product to processor, there's a secondary check at the dock. In terms of discard – for the most part self-reported, also have regs on that. Vessels over 60 ft have mandatory observer. Also there's a very intensive sampling – generally there are biologists on the dock counting fish. Not perfect, but we've had mandatory log books, for at least 20 years. There are severe penalties for not reporting.

Q: How is charter halibut fishing managed inside LAMP?

A: Vessel limit of 35 ft. No fishing in LAMP during summer; shoulder season under 35 ft allowed in Sitka Sound with limit; over 35 never allowed.

Commercial IFQ fishery, very time regulated. More micro-managed.

Q: Was there a reassessment of rockfish habitat that happened recently?

A: In this area, there was an increase in available habitat; SE overall there was a decrease. Expected to continue changing – hard to predict.

Q: Halibut – selling just halibut on the boat; does 10% of their weight come off the bycatch of yelloweye – every pound of halibut 1/10<sup>th</sup> is yelloweye?

A: look at halibut survey data, that they're just looking for halibut – over the course of a season, not every catch – don't have micromanagement skills to fine tune that yet – in next year or two, hoping to just use fish count; think we overestimate harvest and impacts halibut, but it's better for the fishery in the long run to overestimate the harvest.

Q: Are subsistence takes incorporated?

A: even harder to get a handle on those numbers – no reporting requirements. That is an issue and will affect resources. Subsistence has priority – rather than being spot-on in our

estimates, probably overestimate in other areas. Cannot manage fisheries without being able to account for fish coming out.

Q: Bycatch for halibut and rockfish – not for sport fish?

A: that's one of the reasons the board decided to make this allocation. Just like in halibut, problem with angler responsibility – if you're in a high bycatch area you should move – it will affect your fishing in the future if there's a lot of bycatch.

Tory recommends to the SH that they should look at Pacific Fisheries website – lots of information there.

Q: If the charter operators have log discrepancy and the operator says it's my the client – do you buy that?

A: It's hard to buy that; charter is the guide and aid

Q: For subsistence fishing – don't we have to turn in a clear report of our take? Why not required for halibut, etc.

A: Halibut is a federal fishery.

Q (to Bob): Does your log book provide enough definition that you could pinpoint high areas of bycatch to steer charters away from that area?

A: it strikes fear in charter fleet to talk about closing areas; should be able to curtail and reduce mortality; I've promised charter fleet that before we close, we will talk about ways to do that with them.

Q: What about the education part for charters – we've worked a lot with longliners to recognize those areas and stay out them

A: We're providing rockfish ID pamphlets in log books for charters now.

At this point, Linda Behnken comes forward to present some information on the subsistence angle of this question (another expert was scheduled to present, but unable to attend, so Linda is providing some of his information).

[see subsistence handout]

Overall picture of subsistence: Average subsistence take is 209 lbs per person per year; includes venison, plants, kelp, eggs, plus seafood

20% of households participate

Halibut – never defined as subsistence species until 2003; considered sport for personal use in federal language – new measures implemented to liberalize what kind of gear could be used; Sitka is in area 2C for halibut – 16.8% of total halibut in 2C taken in Sitka; 2C reports 60% of state total.

2003 – change in how subsistence halibut monitored – resulted in estimated double of sub halibut take – probably not huge increase, just better estimate.

LAMP area – defined by local residents through collaborative process – less people than this process, but it took 5 years.

Q: how do you know where they're subsistence fishing?

A: recording in survey process – for Sitka LAMP they try hard to get better estimates.

Q: decrease from 2003-2004 in LAMP; why?

A: no change in gear; may be result of effectiveness of fishing? Certainly concern about allowing skates of gear and that affect – collaborative group met to talk about LAMP – through consensus, agreed to limit hydraulics in summer, and number of hooks on skate – should come into effect sometime this summer – should further control

LAMP = Local Area Management Plan – something the fishers of Sitka (all groups) met after concerns that this area was depleted; started before subsistence was defined as “subsistence.” When subsistence definition came in and skates of gear allowed, the group reconvened, worked on further restrictions for subsistence gear in 2C and specifically in LAMP;

LAMP covers Sitka Sound to Biorka, and part of Salisbury Sound. Sitka is the only town that managed to do a local plan like that.

Q: Do you know trends before 2003 for halibut?

A: Don't have that with me. No huge trends – status quo.

Matthew focuses SH attention to the first half of the question on the board:

What are the various positions on the visitor – charter/subsistence/sport/commercial fish allocation?

Everyone indicates they understand what has been presented.

He breaks down the debriefing based on the three presentations:

Anything on the commercial report to be stricken?

- The line about how availability of data from sport fish resulted in fishery closure – is that to say the sport fish harvest is to blame?
  - Tory – availability of the data from the sport fishers did make a difference; not to say that it's their fault, just that we could include that information.

Any points on that report, in addition to what's on the record, important to retain, to show we have a common understanding?

Sport presentation – anything to strike? No.

Any additional key points to retain?

- Right now, they're not able to determine residency of charter operations.
- Careful about speculation on numbers – make sure our information includes the numbers of days the vessels fished.
- Other presenters are working on some of these issues.

Q: The people who have asked questions about resident v. nonresident – you're asking about charter guides, but don't we also need that information for commercial and other fishing?

A: We're looking at local v. nonlocal business in general

Comment (from charter guide): I'm feeling kind of put under the gun – if one sector is being put under the gun...if we're trying to get info for all sectors about fisheries and the extraction of a resource that affects us – if we're asking questions about residencies about

guides; shouldn't we also want to know about commercial nonresidents and how much they take away?

Another SH indicates she has that information.

SH comment: My recollection is that asking that question about residency was not about fish, but about Sitka economy, wanting to know on a broader scale what revenues leave the community.

Back to sport presentation – what do we need to retain:

- Halibut est and yelloweye est – stocks are up, but availability close to town is down, especially with halibut
- We haven't been presented information on what's happening currently as far as potential charter boat moratorium; fleet has gone from 2/day unlimited annual to 2/day with limit of 5 annually.
  - Presentation on second half of the question will address that

Anything from subsistence report to be stricken?

- Do we need to keep all the information about poundage outside of Sitka area?
  - Gives perspective – worth knowing. Helps to see how LAMP area figures in.

Anything additional to add to report to close the first half of this question?

- Trends on halibut – parked and moved into part 2 of the question.

The Stakeholders close the first of the two question on this card – 1/2 red dot.

We'll pick up on part 2 of this topic on May 22, as well as polishing up any other remaining loose ends on questions that have been presented but not closed.