



# ORGANIZED VILLAGE OF KASAAN

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May 12, 2009

Chris McNeil, President  
SEALASKA Corp.  
One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 300  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**RE: Karta Historical Site**

Dear Mr. McNeil:

The Organized Village of Kasaan tribal members and Sealaska shareholders are requesting Sealaska's assistance and cooperation in reestablishing our traditional Haida village fish camp activities at the mouth of the Karta River in Kasaan Bay, just northwest of the village of Kasaan.

The tribal members of Kasaan have for several hundreds of years lived in Kasaan Bay, and had established traditional village fish camps at Karta Bay; to put up their sockeye and other fish that are in the Karta River, as well as various other resources from the nearby beaches, streams, woods and even had established garden sites.

The Peele family, who possess a deed signed by the governor of Alaska, maintained a fish camp; cabin and smokehouse at the mouth of the Karta River until about the late 1950s when the U.S. Forest Service removed the camp structures.

The Kasaan tribal members continue to use this site today; during the sockeye season, hunting season, crabbing season, and to gather berries, devils club as well as other resources. These traditions have been handed down from generation to generation.

It has come to our attention that in 1975 Sealaska had identified and filed an application for the Karta River Village and Petroglyph site as an ANCSA Historic and Cemetery Site. This site was determined by the Bureau of Land Management to be eligible for conveyance and has been conveyed. Then in 1990 with the enactment of the Tongass Timber Reform Act, the federal government designated the Salmon Lake and Karta Lake drainages the "Karta River Wilderness Area", which has greatly restricted our customary and traditional use of that area.

The tribal members of Kasaan want to reestablish their customary and traditional use of the Peele Camp at Karta (and the surrounding area) as it was our summer village site. We've been considering several locations within Karta Bay, but the Peele fish camp is our first choice as it is at the mouth of the Karta River and gives easy access to many resources. This site is now designated AA10446 and after discussions in 2008 with the BIA ANCSA 14(h)(1) Project Office, Ken Pratt; the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office, Stephanie Ludwig; and the U.S. Forest Service, Terry Fifield; we believe that it is possible to establish modern customary and traditional uses of the historical site (AA10446) while protecting the buried cultural materials that constitute the record of the historic traditional Haida uses of

the site. We feel the two value sets are inherently compatible as we see our proposed uses of the site a part of a customary, traditional and historic continuum. Working within the protective covenants attached to Sealaska's title to this site we are advised that our uses might be designed so as to achieve a "no adverse effects determination" as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. We would achieve this determination and SHPO concurrence through the design and placement of the camp structures, teaching our tribal members the requirements to use the area, and the implementation of a monitoring plan.

The BIA ANCSA 14(h)(1) office, SHPO, and the U.S. Forest Service have agreed to work with us to look into possibilities for reestablishing our customary and traditional uses at the Karta River. We ask that Sealaska support its Kasaan shareholders and assist with a plan to allow the Kasaan tribal people to use our customary and traditional land for customary and traditional uses and we see the proposed uses as consistent and compatible with historic values at the site.

As you well know, the tribal members of Kasaan have a respect for this sacred site and will protect that which has always been a part of their lives.

Thank you for your consideration and support. If you have any questions and/or need any additional information, please feel free to contact the Organized Village of Kasaan.

Respectfully,

Richard J. Peterson  
Tribal President