

Indigenous-State Relations in Alaska and Beyond: Sustainable Livelihoods, Biocultural Diversity and Health since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)

In September 2007, the National Science Foundation, Arctic Social Science Program funded this three-year project under grant #OPP-0715461. The objective of the project is analyze how the creation of Alaska Native business corporations (spawned by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971) transformed institutional arrangements between Alaska Natives, state governments, ecosystems, and regional-global economies, and how these corporations have contributed to particular outcomes in indigenous groups' biocultural health as measured by the sustainable livelihood assessment model. The study will compare development and livelihoods in two separate biocultural regions: Bering Straits (Inupiat) and Southeast Alaska (Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian), which are served by two regional and more than a dozen village corporations. Professor Thomas F. Thornton (Portland State) is the Principal Investigator for this collaborative project, in partnership with Co-PI Professor Deanna Kingston of (Oregon State University) and Dr. Rosita Worl (Sealaska Heritage Institute).

Links:

Sealaska Corporation:

<http://www.sealaska.com/page/home>

Sealaska Heritage Institute:

<http://www.sealaskaheritage.org/>

Bering Straits Native Corporation

<http://www.beringstraits.com/>

Bering Straits Foundation

<http://www.beringstraits.com/bsf/bsfhome.htm>

Herring Synthesis: Documenting and Modeling Herring Spawning Areas within Socio-Ecological Systems over Time in the Southeastern Gulf of Alaska

Funded by the North Pacific Research Board, this project synthesizes information on the historical ecology of Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), a foundation and bellwether species for North Pacific marine ecosystems. Herring roe fisheries are among the most lucrative, competitive, and controversial in the region, often pitting commercial and subsistence users against one another. One reason for this is that productive spawning areas (and times) are limited and historical population dynamics of herring are not well understood. Yet many communities with local and traditional knowledge (LTK) of herring fisheries claim that historical stocks were larger and spawning areas more numerous, but that they

have dwindled due to factors such as over-harvesting, predation, disease, development, and climate change. While shifts in stocks and spawning areas have been reasonably well documented since 1980, no synthesis of the deeper archaeological, historical, and ethno-ecological records on herring spawning areas and their relation to local ecosystems has been carried out. Using existing records and community focus groups, we will build an historical and spatial database to: 1) identify the extent of historic and prehistoric herring spawning and massing areas; 2) link changes in herring spawn extent and intensity to environmental and human factors in the socio-ecological system; and 3) identify sensitive areas for protection and potential restoration of herring spawning. Professor Thomas F. Thornton (Portland State) is the Principal Investigator for this project, working with Professor Virginia Butler (Portland State), Professor Madonna Moss (University of Oregon), Fritz Funk (Alaska fisheries biologist), Jamie Hebert (Portland State graduate student), and Southeast Alaska Communities and Tribes.

Links:

Herring Bibliography (draft):

<http://www.refworks.com/refshare/?site=037971147244400000/RWWS4A660669/RefShare%20Herring>

Sitka Tribe of Alaska (Resource Protection):

http://www.sitkatribes.org/environment/traditional_foods.html

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Herring Sac Roe Fishery)

<http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/FedAidPDFs/fmr06-07.pdf>