

Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy

Southeast Conference Report
Fall 2022 to Summer 2024

North Kuiu Island
Lee House, Sustainable Southeast Partnership

Prepared By



With Funding Support From



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Table of Contents



- 3. Letter from the Executive Director
- 4. Southeast Conference SASS Projects
- 6. Coordination
- 6. Gatherings
- 6. Overview
- 8. Metrics
- 12. Subaward: Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust
- 18. Subaward: Alaska Oyster Cooperative
- 22. Subaward: OceansAlaska
- 26. Subaward: Craig City School District
- 30. Pellet Mill Demonstration Project
- 32. Capacity Building & Project Development Microgrant Program



Letter from the Executive Director

Southeast Conference (SEC) is a regional strengthening partner within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (OneUSDA) Southeast Alaska Sustainable Strategy (SASS) initiative. We are incredibly grateful to be working with our partners at OneUSDA, Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and Spruce Root on our shared mission to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska.

What makes the SASS initiative so unique, and impactful, is the focus on locally driven projects. SASS empowers its regional strengthening partners to lead and coordinate projects that sustain and strengthen local economies.

We are excited to be a part of this game-changing shift represented by SASS and its innovative, flexible approach to sustainable economic development and building community capacity. Together we are seizing the moment when priorities are more aligned than ever to create a model that we hope becomes the “new norm” and overcomes long-standing barriers to equity and prosperity.

SEC's activities as a SASS regional strengthening partner are described in this report. These investments build on the foundation of the state and federally recognized regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which prioritizes the most impactful initiatives to strengthen Southeast Alaska's economy and communities.

Our SASS efforts help inform place-based models of collaborative regional economic diversification and make it easier to assess progress, build the capacity of local organizations, and support sustainable economic growth.

These on-going efforts include convening key partners, conducting targeted research, developing application and award materials for sub-awardees, conducting final due diligence on sub-awardee projects, making sub-awardee decisions, and collecting annual sub-awardee reports and monitoring progress.

- Robert Venables, Executive Director

About Southeast Conference

Formed in 1958, Southeast Conference (SEC) is the state and federally recognized Economic Development District for Southeast Alaska. Our mission is to support activities that promote strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska. Our members include over 240 organizations and individuals from our 35 Southeast communities and 19 Tribes, with support from multi-jurisdictional business and government partners.



Subaward Projects

1. Alaska Oyster Cooperative – Aquatic Farmers Offloading Pier & Packing Facility
2. Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust – Fisheries Quota Program
3. Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust – Crew Apprentice Program
4. Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust – Fisheries Access Equity Assessment
5. Craig High School – Wood-Fired Boiler
6. OceansAlaska – Shellfish Hatchery Internship & Program Development

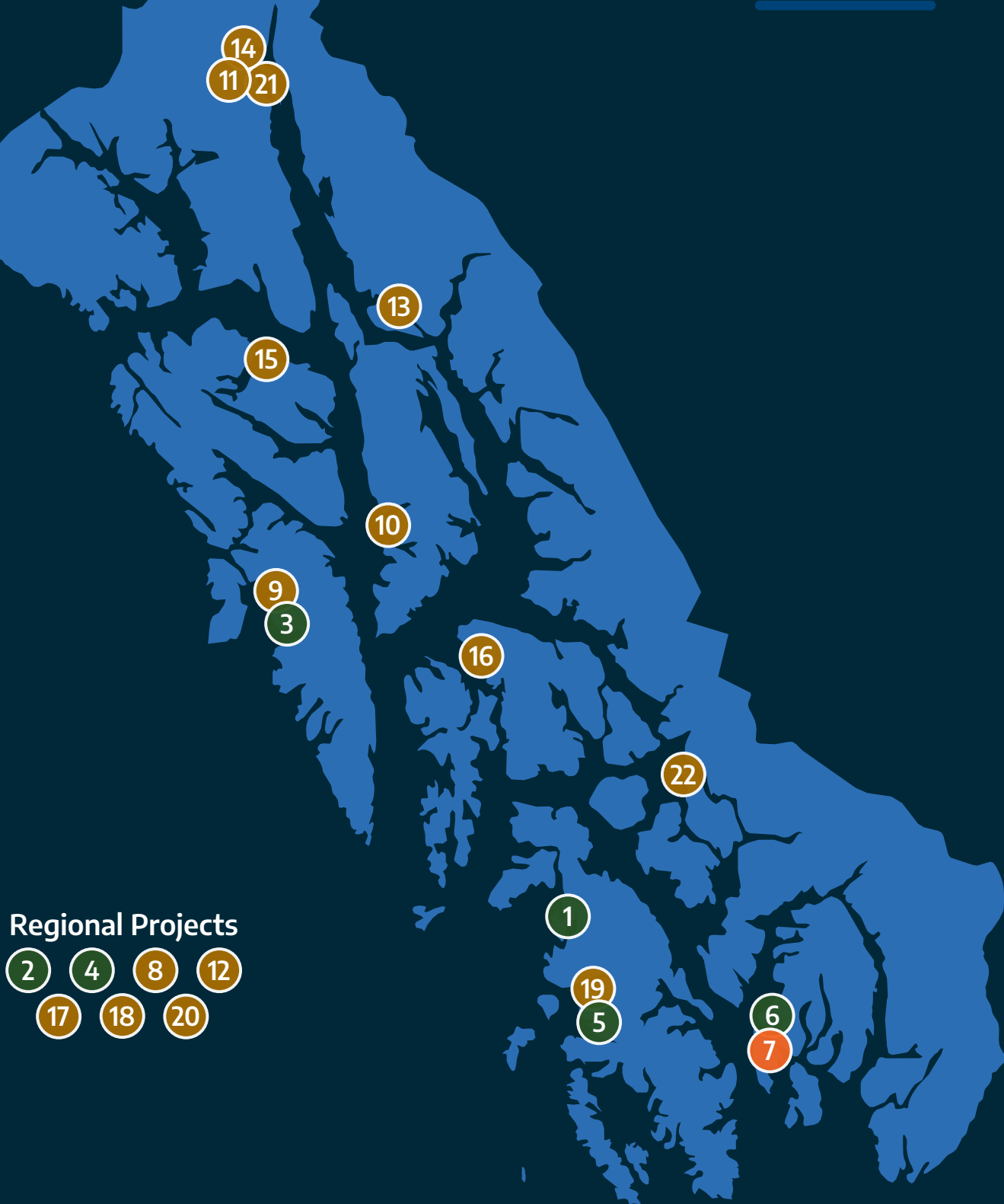
Southeast Conference Project

7. Pellet Mill Demonstration Project

Capacity Building & Project Development Microgrants

8. Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association – Renewable Energy Initiatives
9. Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust – Improvements to Financial Systems
10. Angoon Alaska Youth Stewards – Travel to AYS Gathering
11. EcoTrust – Community Garden Program Development
12. EcoTrust – Regional Training
13. Haa Tóoch Lichéesh Coalition – Leadership Development
14. Haines Huts & Trails – Website Development
15. Hoonah Indian Association – Local Foods Program Development
16. Kake Tribal Heritage Foundation – Youth Internship Program
17. Mule Deer Foundation – Wildlife Research Equipment
18. SEARSMA – Seafood Marketing Program Development
19. Shaan Seet & Klawock Indigenous Stewards Forest Partnership – Excavator Operator Training
20. Sitka Conservation Society – Large Cultural Cedar Management Planning
21. Takshanuk Watershed Council – Composting Program Development
22. Wrangell Cooperative Association – Program Management Workshop

Southeast Conference SASS Projects



Regional Projects

- 2
- 4
- 8
- 12
- 17
- 18
- 20

Coordination

Active and engaged partnerships are key to SASS. OneUSDA’s approach empowers Southeast Conference and its fellow regional strengthening partners - Spruce Root and Tlingit & Haida - to coordinate with agencies, communities, funded organizations, and each other on SASS project implementation.

SEC participates in regular meetings, including the SASS Steering Committee, SASS Office Hours, and Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) Hangouts.

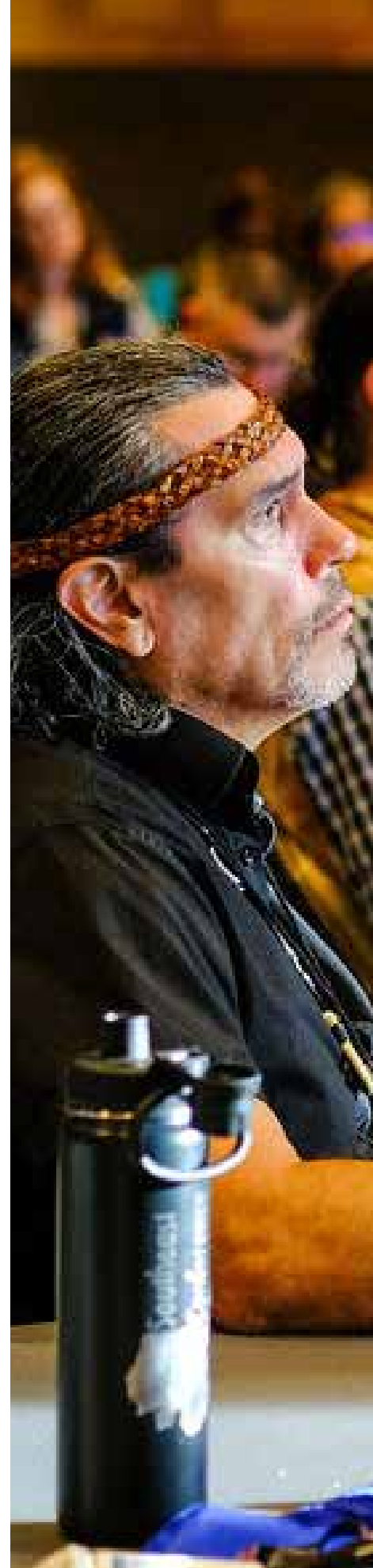
Coordination is essential to achieving goals and capturing lessons learned. SEC and SSP are working to increase awareness of SASS through collective storytelling efforts, website developments, and Story Maps that will share SASS success stories more widely.

Additionally, SEC Deputy Director, Dan Lesh, and staff communicate regularly with OneUSDA staff and others to track progress, share insights, and enhance overall SASS implementation. Stemming from this coordination, SEC and OneUSDA staff have finalized a comprehensive list of all SASS subawards’ budgets, project descriptions, and media coverage for sharing with the wider SASS network.

Gatherings

SEC hosts two large gatherings annually to convene SASS partners, as well as attends and contributes to events hosted by other regional strengthening partners. These are important events for building consensus, facilitating new partnerships and relationships, and growing the equity component of our work.

- September 2022. . . . SEC Annual Meeting, Ketchikan**
- February 2023. . . . SEC Mid-Session Summit, Juneau**
- April 2023 SSP Spring Retreat, Sitka**
- September 2023. . . . SEC Annual Meeting, Sitka**
- January 2024. Transformative Scenario Planning**
- February 2024. . . . SEC Mid-Session Summit, Juneau**
- March 2024 SSP Spring Retreat, Sitka**
- July 2024 SASS Roundtable, Ketchikan**
- September 2024 . . . SEC Annual Meeting, Ketchikan**





2023 Annual Meeting in Sitka
Rachel Deehan, for Southeast Conference



2024 Annual Meeting in Ketchikan
Kaa Yahaayí Shkalneegi Muriel Reid, Tlingit & Haida



Metlakatla Clan House
Cindy Jimenez, Southeast Conference



Farah Ahmad, USDA RD Under Secretary
James Poulson, Sitka Sentinel

Overview

Metrics

Economic Impact of SASS Spending

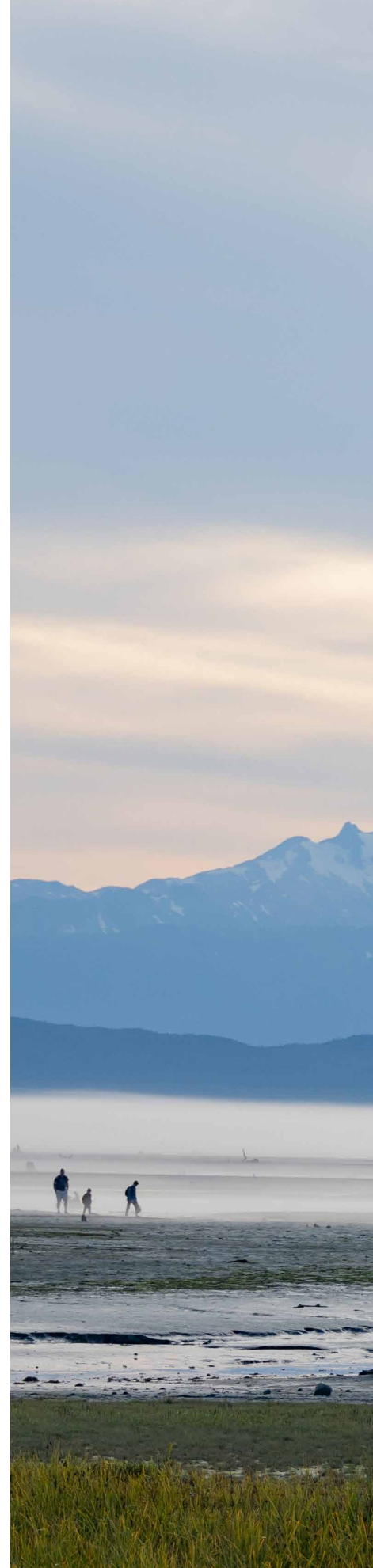
The USDA Forest Service partnered with Southeast Conference (SEC) to measure the overall economic impact of SASS investments on an annual basis. SEC and Rain Coast Data collected quantitative and qualitative information from SASS funding recipients about the benefits arising from SASS funding. Rain Coast Data developed a regional economic impact model from the quantitative data using Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) to estimate annual direct, indirect, and induced economic benefits.

SEC has published SASS economic impact reports covering 2022 and 2023 (see inset images) and a 2024 report will be published in summer 2025.

In 2022, the first year of the initiative, SASS partners spent \$1.3 million of the total USDA funding, representing five percent of the total \$25 million. In 2023, the second year of the initiative, SASS partners reported spending \$4.65 million of the total USDA funding, for a combined 2-year spending of \$6 million. The combined 2022 and 2023 expenditure catalyzed \$8.8 million in economic activity, created 114 full time equivalent jobs, and paid \$3.6 million in local wages to Southeast residents.

Since many projects are in early stages, more economic impacts are expected in 2024 and 2025. We also expect increased accuracy. Reporting has been challenged because: 1) some partners used in-kind resources and leveraged funds rather than seeking reimbursement through invoicing for SASS funds; 2) the reporting requirements and data intake form were unfamiliar to several partners with recently started projects; 3) agency staff turnover.

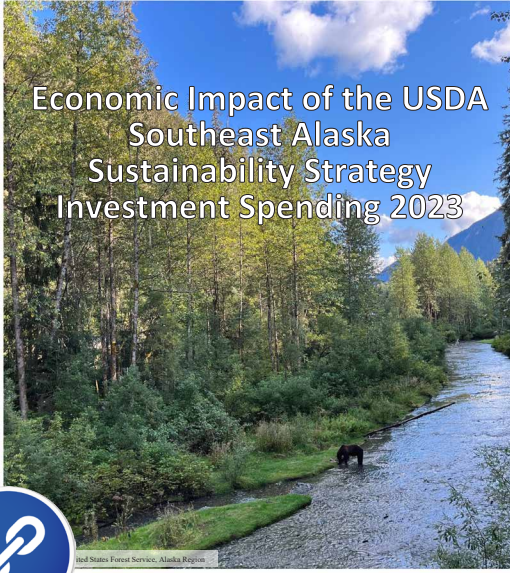
Category	2022 Impact	2023 Impact	Total impact
Total direct spending reported by SASS partners ⁵	\$1,311,374	\$4,651,757	\$6 million
Indirect and induced economic activity	\$597,710	\$2,222,612	\$2.8 million
Total Impact of SASS Investment Spending	\$1.9 million	\$6.9 million	\$8.8 million
Year-round equivalent direct jobs	14.3	82.5	82.5
Year-round equivalent indirect and induced jobs	7.5	31.5	31.5
Total Direct, Indirect & Induced Annualized Jobs	22	114	114⁶
Direct annual wages	\$529,110	\$2,094,428	\$2.6 million
Indirect and induced wages	\$216,617	\$779,978	\$1 million
Total Wages, Including Multiplier	\$745,727	\$2,874,406	\$3.6 million⁷



Economic Impact of the USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investment Spending 2022



Economic Impact of the USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investment Spending 2023





SASS Field Trip, Prince of Wales Island
Kaa Yahaayi Shkalneegi Muriel Reid, Sustainable Southeast Partnership



Metrics

CONTINUED

Southeast Conference SASS Projects

As a regional strengthening partner, Southeast Conference is administering a variety of SASS projects that support and encourage economic diversity and resilience in Southeast Alaska.



4 Subaward Recipients



44 Partner Organizations



15 Capacity Building Microgrants



22 Total SEC-funded SASS Projects



8 Regional Projects



24 Jobs Catalyzed in 2023



11 Communities w/ Projects

Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust

Vision Statement

Support rural and indigenous residents in regaining access to local fisheries.

About ASFT

The Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust (ASFT), a Sitka-based non-profit, exists to protect and support local fishing businesses, promote sustainable fishing practices, and revitalize fishing communities in Alaska. ASFT is a SASS subaward recipient leading three (3) projects described below.

Project 1: Fisheries Quota Program

Project Overview

The high cost and risk involved in buying into Alaska's quota share fisheries has discouraged young coastal residents from entering fisheries, driving a rapid erosion of fishery access from rural and particularly indigenous communities. This loss of quota undermines a community's economic sustainability and workforce opportunities, in addition to subsistence access and food security.

Launched in 2019, ASFT's Local Fish Fund (LFF) is designed to reverse this trend by supporting rural and indigenous residents in regaining access to local fisheries. The LFF extends loans to new entrants and community-based vessel owners seeking to finance quota share purchases. The loans use a revenue participation approach that provides borrowers with competitive interest rates, reduced down payment options, and a variable repayment structure that is based on fish landings rather than fixed payments.

In 2019, with philanthropic support, ASFT purchased \$800,000 of "A share" quota, as it is called, from a retiring fisherman deeply committed to ASFT's work. This quota is leased to generate revenue for ASFT while keeping permits and fishing activities anchored in the state's rural communities.

SASS Success

With SASS support, ASFT was able to pay off the A share loan and pursue additional A shares from the same seller. With debt obligations fulfilled, ASFT



SASS Field Trip, Sitka
Lee House, Sustainable Southeast Partnership



Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust Field Trip
Lee House, Sustainable Southeast Partnership



Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust

CONTINUED

is deploying A shares to support entry level opportunity for rural and indigenous residents of Southeast Alaska.

ASFT's purchase of halibut and sablefish quota recaptures assets that had been sold out of the region and in most cases out of state. By providing resident fishermen with access and ensuring their harvest is delivered and processed in the region, economic activity has increased along with social health.

Project 2: Crew Apprentice Program

Support Southeast residents in securing entry level fishing opportunities.

Project Overview

The seafood industry is Alaska's largest private sector employer and is vital to the socioeconomic health of coastal Alaska. Numerous studies identify that the fleet is greying with fewer young people entering Alaska's fisheries.

ASFT's Crew Apprentice Program is working to provide vocational training to at least 500 rural residents in Sitka, Angoon, Kake, and other communities as resources allow.

SASS Success

ASFT worked with the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA) to train and place twelve (12) young apprentices on commercial fishing vessels in 2023. Eight (8) apprentices from the previous season also fished on ALFA host boats as they continued to expand their skills and experience.

Additionally, ALFA/ASFT secured Young Fishermen Development Act funding to expand apprentice training in Sitka and offer trainings in additional communities both in the region and in other parts of the State.

By training crew and offering young people safe pathways into commercial fisheries, ASFT is also increasing local jobs, building the resident workforce, and providing for the future health and prosperity of the region.

Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust

CONTINUED

Project 3: Fisheries Access Assessment

Study how permits are leaving rural native communities and potential solutions.

Project Overview

ASFT worked with SEC, Sealaska, Tlingit & Haida, and others to complete a study examining barriers to fisheries access and a multi-decade decline in fisheries participation in some coastal, mostly Tribal, Southeast Alaska communities.

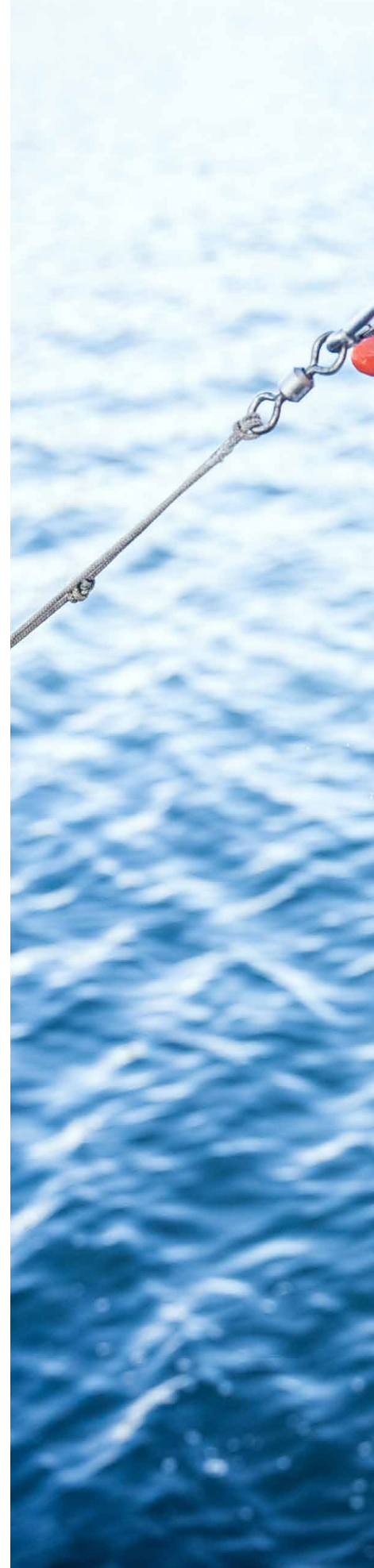
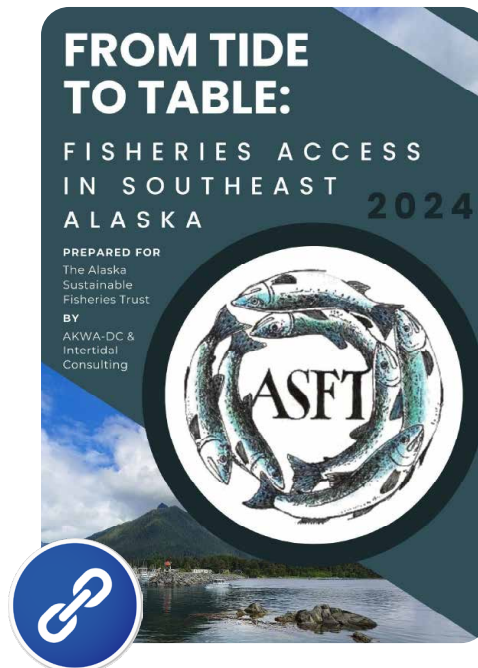
SASS Success

In June 2024, the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust released the report, “From Tide to Table: Fisheries Access in Southeast Alaska.” The report summarizes findings from a regional survey that ASFT distributed to community members in collaboration with the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) and offers recommendations for addressing barriers and issues.

The fishery assessment identified fisheries that are culturally compatible with rural and indigenous ways of life, revealed obstacles that are currently limiting participation, and proposed potential solutions.

With regional Tribal partners and others, ASFT is working to implement programs to overcome these obstacles, including supporting funding for a fisheries catalyst through the Sustainable Southeast Partnership.

ASFT is working with these partners to set up a regional community quota entity (CQE) for Southeast Alaska to add a key tool to anchor fishing quota in underserved communities. Once the regional CQE is established, ASFT and partners will be actively working to secure funds to purchase halibut quota for use by rural residents.





Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust Field Trip
Lee House, Sustainable Southeast Partnership

Alaska Oyster Cooperative

About AOC

The Alaska Oyster Cooperative (AOC) is a for-profit cooperative comprised of five shellfish farmers in Naukati, Alaska on Prince of Wales Island.

Vision Statement

Invest in infrastructure to support expansion of the regional oyster industry.

Project: Aquatic Farmers' Offloading Pier & Packing Facility

Formalize plans for the development of oyster handling capacity in Naukati.

Project Overview

A significant percentage of Alaska's aquatic farm production is transported through Naukati, a small community on Prince of Wales Island. While there have been recent investments in a new marina and road improvements, dedicated mariculture infrastructure is needed to support the developing oyster industry.

In 2008, a feasibility plan for a shellfish processing facility, including detailed engineering documents, was commissioned by the Naukati Bay Community with funding from the State of Alaska. However, no facility was built at that time.

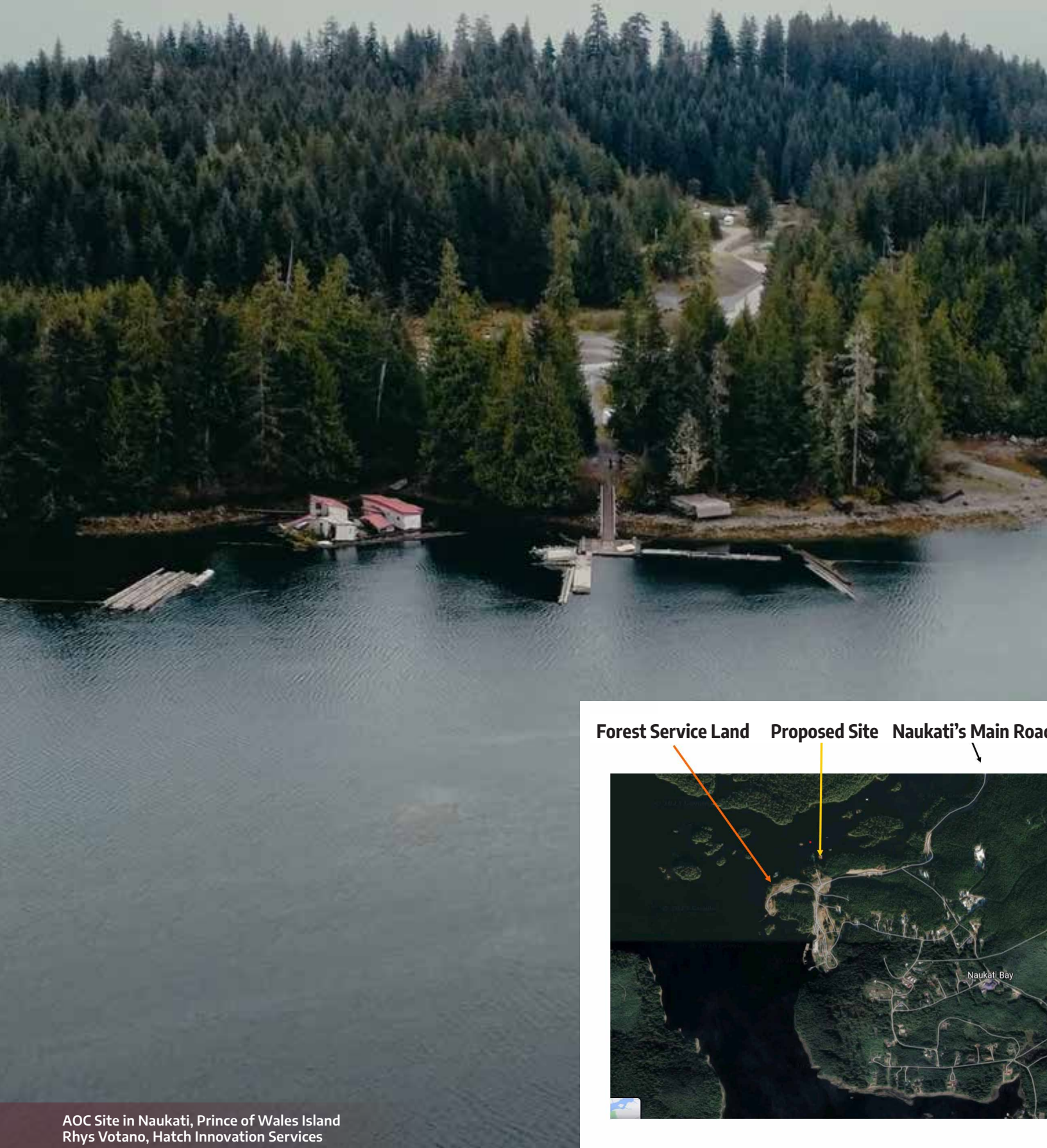
AOC farmers have invested in equipment and expanded their operations to increase harvests and meet growing demand. However, the farmers still have to offload their oysters from boats to trucks by hand, which is labor intensive and limits their ability to scale.

To resolve the distribution bottleneck, the AOC is constructing a mariculture facility with a floating dock, offloading pier, and shore-based processing and packing facility. This facility will streamline operations, improve safety, and allow the industry to flourish.

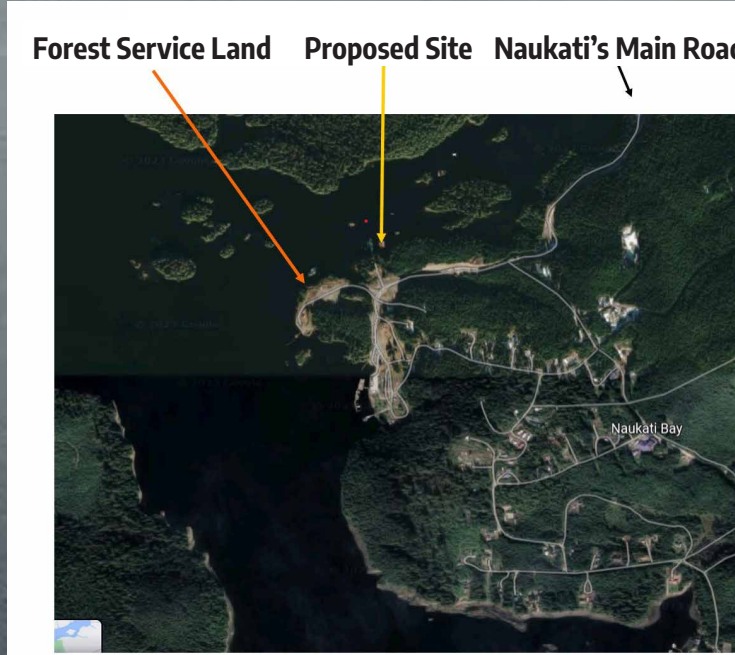




AOC Site in Naukati, Prince of Wales Island
Rhys Votano, Hatch Innovation Services



AOC Site in Naukati, Prince of Wales Island
Rhys Votano, Hatch Innovation Services





Alaska Oyster Cooperative

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SASS Success

With SASS support, the AOC has contracted with McCarty and Associates to coordinate coalition building, public outreach, and prepare reports and planning documents.

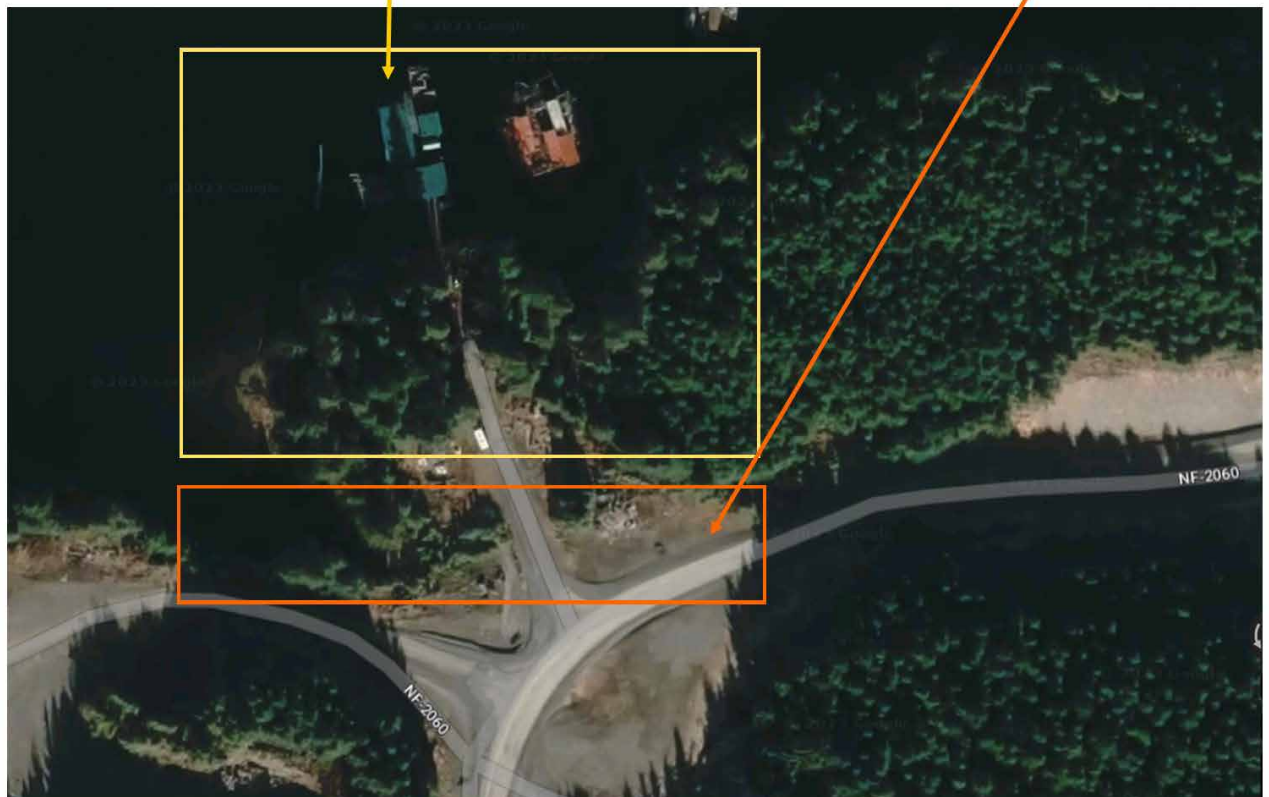
In November 2023, as part of their increased outreach efforts, the AOC held an informational session with Naukati community members about the project. The meeting was positive, and the AOC gained additional letters of support and social license.

In spring 2024, the AOC secured leases from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for the tidelands and uplands where they plan to construct the distribution facility. With the assistance of Southeast Conference, the AOC also received approval from the Forest Service to use a neighboring strip of land to access their leases.

Building on the SASS driven progress, the AOC has received over \$200,000 in additional grant funding, including from the Alaska Mariculture Cluster grant managed by Southeast Conference. With their remaining SASS resources, the AOC plans to begin site preparations, install a new ramp, and complete any required environmental reviews.

Closeup of Proposed Site

Forest Service Land



SASS Sub-Award Recipient

\$454,250 SASS Funding

OceansAlaska

About OceansAlaska

Formed by Alaskan educators, scientists, fishermen and business leaders, Oceans Alaska (OA) is a non-profit corporation and aquaculture facility in Ketchikan, Alaska, dedicated to the promotion of shellfish as an economic driver for Southeast Alaska. OA's efforts seek to expand mariculture and wildstock enhancement in Alaska by making commercial quantities of seed available.

Vision Statement

Contribute to shellfish mariculture industry growth in Southeast Alaska through hands-on training opportunities in a state-of-the-art shellfish hatchery.

Project: Shellfish Hatchery Internship & Program Development

Improve the OceansAlaska shellfish hatchery to support ongoing hands-on workforce training and expand technical capabilities to address industry research needs.

Project Overview

The shellfish hatchery is the first step in aquatic farming, an industry witnessing significant growth as a sustainable economic driver for local communities in Southeast Alaska and beyond. A skilled workforce capable of operating hatcheries is essential for the long-term success of Alaska's mariculture industry.

In 2022, OA conducted outreach in Metlakatla, Hydaburg, Klawock, Craig and Sitka and provided hands on training in shellfish hatchery techniques and practices. Participants of the workshops included students and members of Native communities, providing them with engaging exposure to mariculture and highlighting potential career opportunities in the field. Outreach efforts also included collaboration with Metlakatla High School to facilitate a school oyster farming project.

Looking to expand on their success, OA envisions growing the number of workshops and trainings. To do so successfully, OA is focused on making improvements to the hatchery that will further support the hands-on workforce training, increasing the technical capacity of the Alaskan hatchery system, and working with partners to boost the outreach and frequency of their workshops.





Oceans Alaska Shellfish Hatchery Internship Visit
Lee House, Sustainable Southeast Partnership



OceansAlaska's Algae Room (Oyster Food)
Rhys Votano, Hatch Innovation Services

OceansAlaska

CONTINUED

SASS Success

Embracing partnerships with organizations like Alaska Sea Grant and the University of Alaska Southeast to promote and coordinate workshops, OA hosted three 12-person trainings in 2023 and 2024. Participants included Tribal members from Southeast and Southcentral Alaska and residents from Prince of Wales, Wrangell, and Sitka, including young adults from shellfish families. Additionally, OA delivered training to staff from NOAA Fisheries, Sea Grant, and the UAS Applied Fisheries Program (Sitka campus), and continued its work with students from Metlakatla, chartering boats to bring the high school class to a workshop at the hatchery.

OA has continued to enhance Alaska's mariculture technical capacity. Retaining two hatchery techs from Premium Aquatics Inc. and engaging consultant Provan Crump for expert consulting for spawning and setting, OA has developed new techniques to spawn and raise more oysters in a small footprint. In 2023, seed oysters were successfully delivered to the Blue Starr shellfish nursery where about 290,000 grew and were distributed to farms. OA staff plans to refine production methods and expand production in 2024. Additionally, OA staff has mentored interns that have gone on to pursue advanced degrees at UAF, work on a kelp farm, and manage a large shellfish farm on Prince of Wales.

Behind the scenes, OA has completed necessary repairs and installed a variety of hatchery equipment additions and upgrades. With the flexibility of SASS funding, OA was able to move its barge hatchery from Saxman to Ketchikan during a harbor reorganization. In the future, OA and UAS are exploring plans to move the barge to the UAS campus in Sitka and continue to operate it as a hatchery research and training platform.



Craig City School District

About Craig City School District

Craig is the largest community on Prince of Wales Island with a population of 1,023. Craig City School District (CCSD) has elementary, middle, and high school buildings.

Vision Statement

Reduce heating costs and increase local economic impacts and sustainability through renewable heating of Craig City School District buildings.

Project: Craig High School Wood-Fired Boiler

Utilize a local, renewable, sustainable energy source to provide 85% of the annual heating energy needs for Craig High School.

Project Overview

Communities on Prince of Wales Island are conscious of high energy costs stemming from the island's geographic isolation and limited energy infrastructure. Working to ensure its buildings are heated from local, sustainable, and renewable energy sources, the CCSD is constructing a wood-fired boiler system at the Craig High School that will reduce overall heating costs to the district and the need to combust fossil fuels. This project will further integrate the island's long-standing forest products industry with the heating needs of the community's public facilities.

In 2020, CCSD secured a \$500,000 grant through the Denali Commission. At the time of the SASS funding request in 2022, the project design was complete and ready for construction. Similar in scope to other successful biomass heating projects in Craig, the project includes a wood chip fuel delivery system, biomass boilers, and heat exchangers integrated into the existing hydronic heating system. The installed boilers will provide 85% of the annual heating energy needs for the 53,319 square foot high school using wood chips from a local lumber mill.





Craig Waterfront
Long B. Nguyen



Craig Waterfront
Long B. Nguyen

Craig School District

CONTINUED

SASS Success

Through changes, inflation, and adversity, this project is advancing because of SASS's flexibility. After CCSD put the project out to bid and only one bid \$600,000 over budget was received, SEC, Denali Commission, and CCSD divided the project into a series of subprojects to be managed in house at CCSD and executed with local sub-contractors. Funding was reallocated to different subproject areas, and SEC's SASS funding is now primarily for building a new woodshop. The old woodshop is being vacated for the project's wood chip boiler.

This project promotes economic and environmental health for Craig and other Prince of Wales communities. Using clean-burning byproducts of the local sawmill industry, Craig High School's wood chip boiler will bolster the local timber industry and save 360,000 gallons of heating oil from being burned over the next twenty years.

The project increases demand for wood chips as a heating source on Prince of Wales Island and in Southeast Alaska. Developing a cluster of wood energy projects in the area is beneficial to growing the industry and lowering cost barriers. Additionally, by utilizing local wood biomass as energy, the district can ensure that money spent on heating remains in the community, supporting local economies.



Southeast Conference

Pellet Mill Demonstration Project

Southeast Conference is developing a pellet mill facility that will create jobs, reduce energy costs, mitigate environmental concerns, and utilize forestry byproducts and other municipal solid waste for a renewable and sustainable biomass energy solution.

Project Overview

It has long been a priority to produce wood pellets in Alaska. To support this State and regional goal, Southeast Conference (SEC) has begun the development of a Pellet Mill Demonstration Project on Gravina Island in Ketchikan, Alaska. This demonstration project will make pellets from a variety of waste streams, potentially including discarded pallets, forest residuals, discarded lumber, and other Municipal Solid Waste items. Currently, it is anticipated that the Pellet Mill will produce up to 300 tons per year to meet local demand. This project is intended as a demonstration project, and the desired outcome is that other communities and businesses could duplicate this model in their region.

SASS Success

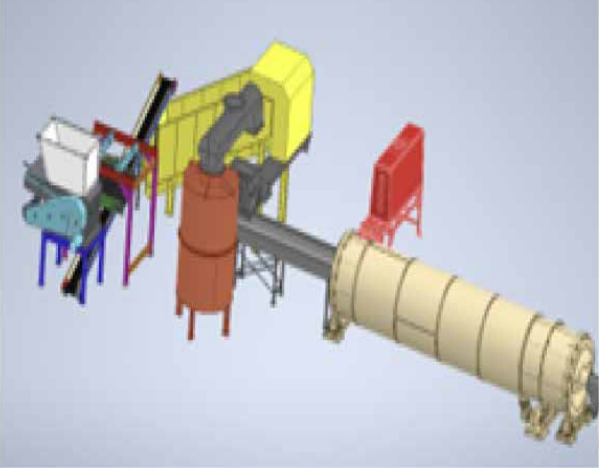
Southeast Conference has identified multiple waste streams that will enable the pellet mill to turn unused biomass into affordable and efficient pellet fuel. One of these feedstocks includes the use of pallets, and in Ketchikan alone the pellet mill will prevent 70,000 pounds of wood pallets from being discarded at the local landfill. Nearby Prince of Wales Island serves as home to a majority of the small sawmills in Southeast Alaska. These mills produce large amounts of wood waste in the form of chips and sawdust, which are discarded or burned. The pellet mill will be able to transform this wood waste into pellets.

Through the use of SASS funding, Southeast Conference has been able to adjust its business plan, scaling, and feedstock supply needs to overcome unplanned challenges and obstacles throughout the development process. Our team of energy and biomass experts have been able to use existing contacts to procure competitive quotes for equipment through local sourcing and pre-existing relationships. This includes contractual work, equipment, feedstock, planning, and operations.

Timeline

Winter 2024	Containerized Pellet Mill ordered
Spring 2024	Developed draft Business Operations Plan
Fall 2024	Site prep and ancillary equipment purchasing
2025	Pellet plant and building arrive; assembly occurs; pellet production begins with start-up training support





Pellet Mill Examples, Designs, & Project Area
Unsplash & Southeast Conference



Sealaska Heritage Institute, Downtown Juneau
Griffin Quinn, Unsplash

Organization Capacity Building & Project Development

\$200,000 Microgrant Funding Pool

Overview

As part of SASS, Southeast Conference was awarded \$200,000 to partner with regional organizations to build organizational capacity and fund preliminary project development.

SEC collaborated with Spruce Root to advertise a microgrant RFP to Southeast Alaskan organizations and entities conducting work aligned with the SASS initiative goals. A total 33 applications were received and the scoring committee funded 15 projects with wide distribution throughout Southeast Alaska.

Although administering numerous small grants is challenging, small investments in promising ideas can provide the momentum needed to ready projects for future grant or revenue generation opportunities.

The microgrant program also builds capacity of local organizations to become more efficient, deliver on existing funding, and maximize the impact of available human capital, which is often limited in Alaska.

Entities Receiving SASS Microgrants from SEC



Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association

Regional Impacts - \$15,000

This project funds renewable energy initiatives to address climate change, rising costs, and market challenges in Alaska fisheries through a decarbonization program, hybrid boat pilot projects, and workforce training.



Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust

Sitka, AK - \$15,000

This project funds work by the Foraker Group to improve ASFT financial systems, support programmatic expansion, and conduct staff training to help maximize the impact of this rapidly growing organization.



Angoon Alaska Youth Stewards

Angoon, AK - \$15,000

This project funds travel expenses for the Angoon Alaska Youth Stewards (AYS) to attend the in-person all-crew AYS gathering in Gustavus and Glacier Bay in 2025, enabling valuable job training and cultural education opportunities.



Ecotrust

Haines - \$15,000

This project funds a community garden coordinator to develop and manage an underutilized 3.2-acre agricultural site, facilitating community engagement and collaboration to increase local food production and prevent site deterioration.



Ecotrust

Regional Impacts - \$15,000

This project funds a regional training, site visits, and ongoing coordination for a network of Southeast Alaska community leaders to explore composting household and fish waste, enhancing economic development and food security in areas with poor soil quality.



Haa Tóoch Lichéesh Coalition

Juneau, AK - \$15,000

This project funds capacity-building support for leadership development and attendance at the Nonprofit Storytelling Conference, to enhance its mission of fostering community resilience, health, and racial justice.



Haines Huts & Trails

Haines, AK - \$15,000

This project funds the creation of a website with integrated hut rental, membership management, and marketing tools, with an emphasis on ease of use, expansion, and partnerships.



Hoonah Indian Association

Hoonah, AK - \$15,000

This project funds a local foods coordinator position and its efforts to enhance community food security, promote sustainability, and oversee educational workshops and greenhouse construction.



Kake Tribal Heritage Foundation

Kake, AK - \$15,000

This project expands a youth internship program, strengthens community partnerships, and promotes food security, youth nutrition, and climate resilience through traditional foodways education.



Mule Deer Foundation

Regional Impacts - \$15,000

This project funds camera equipment to monitor Sitka black-tailed deer and assess the impact and effectiveness of habitat enhancement activities.



Shaan Seet & Klawock Indigenous Stewards Forest Partnership

Craig, AK / Klawock, AK - \$10,000

This project funds specialized excavator training with an emphasis on instream restoration activities for local restoration specialists.



Sitka Conservation Society

Sitka, AK - \$15,000

This project funds consultation services to draft a Large Cultural Cedar conservation and management plan, which can also be integrated into the Tongass Forest Plan revision.



Southeast AK Regional Seafood Marketing Association

Regional Impacts - \$15,000

This project funds the initial steps necessary to establish a Regional Seafood Development Association (RSDA) in Southeast Alaska, including administration, research, outreach, and facilitation.



Takshanuk Watershed Council

Haines, AK - \$15,000

This project funds a commercial composting operation that provides drop-off services to rural communities, hosts educational workshops, and fosters community participation in recycling and composting.



Wrangell Cooperative Association

Wrangell, AK - \$15,000

This project funds a comprehensive training event about effectively managing federal grants and programs in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and other federal guidelines, enabling staff, council members, and outlying tribes to effectively manage federal grants and programs in Southeast Alaska.

Keex' Kwaan (Kake) Alaska Youth Stewards
Shaelene Grace Moler, Sustainable Southeast Partnership



Thank you for reading our Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy report.

For more publications, please visit our website seconference.org

SOUTHEAST ALASKA by the Numbers 2024

CHANGES 2022 TO 2023

- LABOR FORCE** INCREASED BY 1,439 JOBS TO 45,853 (+3%)
- TOTAL WAGES** INCREASED BY \$120 MILLION TO \$2.76 BILLION (+5%)
- TOURISM JOBS** INCREASED BY 20% WAGES INCREASED BY 44% TO \$15,108 PER HOUR
- VALUE OF SEAFOOD** INCREASED BY 20% TO \$60 MILLION CATCH WENT UP BY 74 MILLION POUNDS
- REGIONAL POPULATION** INCREASED BY 708 TO 71,077
- CARE JOBS** INCREASED BY 100

2023 Southeast Alaska's economy is growing. In 2023 jobs were up by 7% and wages were up by 5% over 2022. All but two communities gained workers as 1,400 new jobs were added across the region. However, the region's two top private sector industries, seafood and tourism, experienced very different outcomes. Seafood was the top private sector industry in 2022 and brought in a massive harvest in 2023. But while the catch was the largest in more than a decade, it had one of the lowest catch values on record, \$44 million less than the smaller catch from the year before. Wages fell 25% as global markets drove down prices. Other sectors were mostly up. The government, healthcare, retail, construction, finance, and mining sectors all added workers to their payrolls. Total government grew by 7%. Regional GDP was up by 3%. New communities saw double digit wage growth. But not all indicators were up. State jobs continued to decline, social services were down along with professional & business services.

2024 The economy of 2024 is strong and diversified. Two-thirds of Southeast business leaders are optimistic looking forward, with 35% saying their prospects will be even better over the next year. The regional economy has finally fully recovered from the pandemic. Tourism is having another strong year as 1.68 million cruise passengers are expected to visit. The construction industry is responding to \$334 million in infrastructure bill investments in Southeast. Inflation has normalized. Wages are on the rise. Seafood continues to be a concern. While prices are up slightly from 2023 levels, the catch is down significantly, although the season is ongoing. While jobs continue to grow in 2024, so do concerns about the lack of a sufficient workforce in the region. Compared to 2010, when the population was nearly identical aged, the region now has 1,700 more jobs and 5,600 fewer workforce-aged residents. In 2024, regional business leaders were asked where the focus needs to be over the next five years. The top two answers were clear: 1. Housing initiatives, and 2. Attracting and retaining a workforce aged population. We need more young people in the region, and in order to attract them, we need more housing and strong economic development.

Recent Publications

Southeast Alaska 2025 Economic Plan

Southeast Conference's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025

Tlingit & Haida

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

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