



Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the Sitka Community Land Trust and Announce a New Name for Sitka's Affordable Housing Community on Halibut Point Road

“Our Tlingit People have used the ancient place names since Time Immemorial, and they should still be used. It’s because of our local elders, like Charlie Joseph Sr., Ethel Makinen, Vida Davis and Anne Johnson, that we have these place names documented and preserved through the support of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska.”

– STA Culture and Community Liaison, *Daanax.ilséik* Chuck Miller

Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) and the Sitka Community Land Trust (SCLT) are proud to announce the renaming of SCLT's new affordable housing community located at 1306 Halibut Point Road with the Tlingit name “S’us’ Héeni Sháak Community.” With staff support from STA Culture and Community Liaison, *Daanax.ilséik* Chuck Miller, and STA Tribal Community Elder Coordinator, Xannie Borseth, the name was discussed and recommended by STA's Cultural Resource Committee (CRC), a group of Tlingit elders and culture bearers who gather for regular monthly meetings. S’us’ Héeni Sháak refers to the watershed area around S’us’ Héeni (Harlequin Duck Creek/Cascade Creek) on which the SCLT land is located.

Utilizing the entire Tlingit name for this property was suggested by one of the elders attending the CRC meeting. “It’s important that the whole name is used to describe the area, because without the whole name, the concept of the location is not properly conveyed,” *Daasdiyaa* Ethel Makinen - commented. The STA CRC often receives requests from organizations wanting to give Tlingit names to different locations and programs in Sitka, and elders and culture bearers often point out that full names are given but not often utilized.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska’s Tribal Council Chairman, KathyHope Erikson, reflected on this renaissance of Tlingit place names in Sitka and Southeast Alaska: “Sitka Tribe of Alaska is pleased that people and organizations are open to having Tlingit names associated

SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



with properties, and in general that Tlingit is used more by the community. It's important to remember that all these places we lay our eyes upon had Tlingit names that had been used for thousands of years prior to Russian and American colonization. STA invites all who have requests for naming a building, a street, a property, or simply to know the name of an item to please reach out to our Cultural Resources Department. STA staff and elders will be more than happy to offer their expertise" The original idea for the proposal of a Tlingit name came from an elder attending one of STA's elders events, and SCLT was enthusiastic and open to the idea. STA and SCLT hope to see a rise in both affordable housing and the use of Tlingit place names and language in Sitka — connecting past to present, and present to future, with equitable and historically minded stewardship of this land.

For more information contact Tristan Guevin at tristan.guevin@sitkatriben-sn.gov or (907) 738-5415 and Chuck Miller at chuck.miller@sitkatriben-sn.gov or (907) 738-4025.

###