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Economic Impact of the USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investment Spending 2024



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R10-TP-167

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Economic Impact of the USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investment Spending 2024

This economic impact analysis of the USDA’s Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy investment funding in calendar year 2024 was performed by Southeast Conference in partial fulfillment of Challenge Cost Share Agreement 22-CS-11100100-004, Sustainability Strategy Investment Economic Monitoring.

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Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investments: 2024 Economic Impact Summary

In 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) would be undertaken in Southeast Alaska and on the Tongass National Forest with \$25 million committed for initial investments. Through an engagement and selection process, funding for 59 projects was awarded to partners across Southeast Alaska for multi-year natural resource, infrastructure, community capacity, and Tribal-focused projects.

The USDA Forest Service partnered with Southeast Conference to measure the overall economic impact of SASS investments on an annual basis. Southeast Conference subsequently partnered with Rain Coast Data to develop an intake tool (see Appendix A) to collect 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) data to estimate annual direct, indirect, and induced economic benefits. Rain Coast Data developed a survey to gather qualitative data about SASS investment benefits. This data is provided in Appendix B.

In 2024, the third year of the initiative, SASS partners reported spending \$7.4 million of the total USDA funding, for a combined 3-year spending of \$13.4 million. The combined 2022-2024 expenditures catalyzed \$19.8 million in economic activity, created 164 jobs (after converting all full, part-time, and temporary positions into year-round equivalents), and paid \$7.9 million in local wages to Southeast residents.

Category	2022 Impact	2023 Impact	2024 Impact	Impact-to-date
Direct spending reported by SASS partners	\$1,311,374	\$4,651,757	\$7,388,801	\$13.4 million
Indirect and induced economic activity	\$597,710	\$2,222,612	\$3,649,400	\$6.5 million
Total Impact of SASS Investment Spending	\$1.9 million	\$6.9 million	\$11 million	\$19.8 million
Year-round equivalent direct jobs	14.3	82.5	123.6	124
Year-round equivalent indirect and induced jobs	7.5	31.5	40.9	41
Total Direct, Indirect & Induced Annualized Jobs	22	114	164.5	164
Direct annual wages	\$529,110	\$2,094,428	\$3,257,127	\$5.9 million
Indirect and induced wages	\$216,617	\$779,978	\$1,019,539	\$2.0 million
Total Wages, Including Multiplier	\$745,727	\$2,874,406	\$4,276,666	\$7.9 million

Project Background

On July 15, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) to help support a diverse economy, enhance community resilience, and conserve natural resources in Southeast Alaska. A key element of the strategy included identifying short- and long-term opportunities for investments that reflect the diverse opportunities and needs in Southeast Alaska. USDA made a commitment of \$25 million for such investments. A OneUSDA team comprised of the Forest Service, Rural Development, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service engaged Southeast Alaska partners, communities, Tribes, and Alaska Native corporations using a process to pair investment dollars with local priorities inclusive of the values and peoples in the region.¹ More than 270 investment proposals, amounting to more than \$276 million, were submitted. After a rigorous proposal evaluation process, 59 projects were selected and assigned to the USDA agency with authority to award funding and support project partners.

Strengthening agreements were formed with three regional organizations:

- Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Southeast Conference
- Spruce Root

Together, these three strengthening agreements provide pass-through funding for 25 of the projects. These 25 projects are funded through a sub-award system managed by the respective organizations. The remaining 34 projects are administered directly by the partner organizations responsible for implementation.

Approximately half of the initial SASS funding was awarded to Tribal and Indigenous organizations for projects focused on workforce development, food security, and cultural use of forest products. A quarter of the funds focused on natural resource management, while the final quarter was invested into community infrastructure, capacity, and economic development:

- Tribal and Indigenous interests - \$12.5 million (50%)
- Natural resources - \$6.25 million (25%)
- Infrastructure - \$3.125 million (12.5%)
- Community capacity - \$3.125 million (12.5%)

To evaluate the economic benefits generated by the SASS investments, USDA partnered with Southeast Conference to develop a regional economic impact model to quantify the impact of SASS investments over time. Project-level spending from SASS investments is being collected annually from partners to develop employment and wages multipliers. Southeast Conference is the state- and federally designated regional economic development

¹ For more information about the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy see the project website: www.fs.usda.gov/r10/natural-resources/forest-management/southeast-alaska-sustainability-strategy

organization for Southeast Alaska. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Rain Coast Data collaborates with Southeast Conference to conduct regional economic impact modeling and economic analysis. Rain Coast Data is a Juneau-based research and consulting firm specializing in Southeast Alaska economic analysis, socioeconomic impact studies, survey research, and public outreach.

Rain Coast Data and Forest Service Alaska Region staff developed an intake tool to monitor projects. The tool is based on a questionnaire that is sent to partners annually to track the economic impact of each project selected for funding over their 5-year duration. It consists of a quantitative section on economic outcomes of SASS spending and a qualitative section with an open-ended question where partners describe their impacts using their own voice and lens. All SASS funding recipients are required to respond to the intake tool as part of their annual reporting. Project-level annual monitoring can inform discussions about both market and non-market benefits arising from federal investments across the region. Appendices A and B contain the intake tool and the responses to the open-ended questions.

Methods

Estimation Approach

To conduct a full economic analysis of public-sector investment programs like the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, a systematic analysis of the economic impacts should be completed at the regional level. Regional input-output multipliers are useful tools for regional economic impact analysis. A multiplier analysis accounts for the interindustry relationships within Southeast Alaska because these largely determine how an economy responds to public investments. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) developed a method for estimating regional input-output multipliers known as RIMS II (Regional Industrial Multiplier System), which was used to determine the full economic impact of the SASS investments. RIMS II multipliers can be estimated for any region composed of one or more counties or boroughs and for any industry or group of industries.

To effectively use the multipliers, detailed project-level spending is being gathered from SASS partners regarding changes in output, earnings, and employment associated with their SASS funding on an annual basis. Once collected, the data are analyzed using RIMS II multipliers to estimate the total economic impact of SASS investments in Southeast Alaska.

Data Collection and Model Development

2024 SASS Projects: The 2024 economic monitoring intake tool was sent to all SASS partners on March 24, 2025, to align with annual performance reporting deadlines. The intake form is an online tool developed to gather and compile all necessary data to perform the economic impact analysis (see Appendix A). Each of the 32 partner organizations managing the 59 projects, including the original pool of sub-awardees embedded in the three regional strengthening agreements, received the intake tool. Of these, 7 projects reported no

expenditures of SASS funding in the study year 2024. Projects with no expenditures were excluded but will be included in the 2025 analysis.

U.S. Benchmark Input-Output (I-O) Data Codes: U.S. benchmark I-O data codes are the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. To estimate the regional input-output impact, project activities conducted in 2024 were assigned an industrial category before being input into the economic impact model. SASS funding recipients were asked to describe the work completed in calendar year 2024 so that it could be assigned an I-O data code. Based on analysis of SASS investments and communications with SASS recipients, 17 industry categories were selected (Table 1). In 2022, only 12 industries were represented, which demonstrates the increasing breadth of work being accomplished using SASS investment funds.

Table 1. SASS investment industry categories, 2024

U.S. Benchmark I-O Data Codes	Description
7	Construction
52	Administrative and support services
54	Educational services
60	Recreation industry
111400	Greenhouse production
113000	Forestry and logging
114000	Fishing and hunting
115000	Support activities for agriculture and forestry
541610	Management consulting services
541700	Scientific research and development services
561300	Employment services
562000	Waste management and remediation services
5416A0	Environmental and other technical consulting services
5419A0	Other professional, scientific, and technical services
711A00	Promoters of arts
813A00	Grantmaking, giving, and social advocacy organizations
813B00	Civic, social, professional, and similar organizations

Results

After receiving 100 percent of responses to the intake tool from partners, data were compiled and input into the economic impact model. Results are as follows:

Projects Included

The SASS-funded projects with expenditures in 2024 are presented in Table 2 below, organized by project name. The three strengthening agreements and respective sub-awards are listed first, followed by individual projects administered directly by partner organizations responsible for implementation. USDA agencies are comprised of the Forest Service and its State, Private, and Tribal Forestry, Rural Development, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Table 2. SASS investment projects reporting SASS spending in 2024

Project name	Partner	Project location	Investment category	USDA agency
Regional Strengthening Agreement Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (administration)	Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Takshanuk Watershed Compost Project	Takshanuk Watershed Council	Haines	Infrastructure	RD
Subaward Lynn Canal Food Network	Northern Lynn Canal Agri Producers Assoc & Chilkat Valley Food Hub	Haines/ Lynn Canal	Natural resources	RD
Subaward Environmental laboratory for the SEAK Tribal Ocean Research Network	Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Tribal garden to increase food security	Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Sitka	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Food security/ sovereignty/ community smoke houses and fish camps and Kayaani Network	Sustainable Southeast Partnership	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Regional composting network	Sustainable Southeast Partnership	Southeast	Infrastructure	RD
Subaward Restoring Tlingit potato gardens in traditional sites	Sustainable Southeast Partnership	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Food security/ sovereignty/ Kayaani Commission	Sustainable Southeast Partnership	Sitka	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Chief Shakes Tribal House improvements	Wrangell Cooperative Association	Wrangell	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD

Project name	Partner	Project location	Investment category	USDA agency
Subaward Tribal smokehouses and education	Wrangell Cooperative Association	Wrangell	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Subaward Yakutat Tlingit Tribal greenhouse and compost facilities	Yakutat Tlingit Tribe	Yakutat	Tribal and Indigenous interests	RD
Regional Strengthening Agreement Southeast Conference (admin + microgrants)	Southeast Conference	Juneau	Community capacity	RD
Subaward Shellfish Hatchery internship and training program	Oceans Alaska Shellfish Hatchery and Marine Science Center	Saxman	Natural resources	RD
Subaward Commercial fishing crew apprentice program	Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust	Southeast	Community capacity	RD
Subaward Regional Seafood Access Assessment	Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust	SEAK	Community capacity	RD
Subaward Local fish fund	Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust	Southeast	Community capacity	RD
Regional Strengthening Agreement Spruce Root (admin + additional sub-awards)	Spruce Root	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Subaward Fisheries Science Education	Hoonah Indian Association	Hoonah	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Subaward Sharing Our Knowledge	Wrangell Cooperative Association	Wrangell	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Tongass Young-Growth Transition	Alaska Division of Forestry	Southeast	Natural resources	USFS
Forest Products Industry Input and Expertise for Young Growth Transition	Alaska Forest Association	Southeast	Natural resources	USFS
Generations Southeast Prince of Wales Campus (was VOCTEC)	CCTHITA	Prince of Wales Island	Community capacity	USFS
Alaska Youth Stewards	CCTHITA	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Seacoast Indigenous Guardians Program	CCTHITA	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Wildland Fire Program	CCTHITA	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Wrangell Area Trail Improvements	City and Borough of Wrangell- Student Conservation Association	Wrangell	Infrastructure	USFS
Wild Blueberry Thinning Project	City and Borough of Wrangell	Wrangell	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS

Project name	Partner	Project location	Investment category	USDA agency
Snow Pack Monitoring and Deer Strategy	Hoonah Indian Association	Hoonah	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Tourism and Visitor Products	Juneau Economic Development Council	Juneau	Community capacity	USFS
Cultivating Ecotourism Opportunities	Kootznoowoo, Inc.	Angoon	Infrastructure	USFS
Cooperative Development, Planning, and Implementation of Watershed Restoration Projects in Southeast Alaska	National Forest Foundation	Southeast	Natural resources	USFS
Kake Alaska Youth Stewards Enhancement Project	Organized Village of Kake	Kake	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Keex' Kwaan Community Forest Project Enrichment	Organized Village of Kake	Kake	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
The Teqe'heit Stewardship Program	Organized Village of Kasaan	Kasaan	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Klawock Indigenous Steward Partnership	Shaan-Seet, Inc.	Klawock	Natural resources	USFS
Alaska Native Heritage Signage Juneau	Sealaska Heritage and Trail Mix, Inc.	Juneau	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Storytelling and Public Engagement	Sitka Conservation Society	Sitka	Community capacity	USFS
SEAK Youth Education 4H Expansion Project	Sitka Conservation Society	Southeast	Community capacity	NRCS
Sitka Area Trail Development	Sitka Trail Works	Sitka	Infrastructure	USFS
Invasive Species Management on the Sitka Road System	Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Sitka	Natural resources	USFS SP&TF
Sitka National Forest Partnership Collaborative Program	Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Sitka	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Special Forest Product Plan Development, Implementation and Monitoring	Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Sitka	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS
Watershed Restoration Workshop and Capacity Exchange	Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition	Juneau	Community capacity	NRCS
Investment Focused on Watershed Restoration	Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition	Southeast	Natural resources	USFS
Investment Focus on Capacity Building Sitka	Sitka Trail Works	Sitka	Community capacity	USFS
Hoonah Legacy Roads to Trails	Hoonah Indian Association	Hoonah	Natural resources	USFS
Brown Bear Co-existence	Defenders of Wildlife	Southeast	Infrastructure	RD

Project name	Partner	Project location	Investment category	USDA agency
Aquatic Farmers' Offloading Pier and Packing Facility planning	Alaska Oyster Cooperative	Prince of Wales Island	Infrastructure	RD
Craig High School Biomass Project	Craig City School District	Craig	Infrastructure	RD
Investment Economic Monitoring	Southeast Conference	Juneau	Community capacity	USFS
Regional Biomass Strategy and Pellet Mill	Southeast Conference	Ketchikan	Infrastructure	USFS SP&TF
Southeast Alaska Farmers Summit	Spruce Root	Haines	Natural resources	NRCS
Community Forest Projects	Spruce Root	Southeast	Tribal and Indigenous interests	USFS

Note: Shading denotes regional strengthening agreements and sub-awards managed within them
USFS = Forest Service Alaska Region, SP&TF = Forest Service State Private and Tribal Forestry, RD = Rural Development, and NRCS = Natural Resources Conservation Service

Total Project Spending Impact

Overall Spending and Output

SASS funding recipients were asked how much of their organization's SASS investment funding was spent in 2024, and what percentage of that funding was spent within the region. A total of \$7.4 million was spent across all projects in 2024. Partners reported that 87 percent of SASS funding was spent directly within the Southeast region.

Table 3 shows the impact of the \$7.4 million in direct SASS project spending in 2024 by industry sector. Direct spending by recipients resulted in an additional indirect and induced impact of \$3.6 million in economic activity throughout all businesses and industries in the region. Therefore, the total SASS-related investment across all industries had a total economic impact of \$11 million in 2024.

Table 3. Total output impact of SASS investments, 2024

U.S. Benchmark I-O Data Codes	I-O Data Code Descriptions	Reported Spending by Partners	Final-demand Output Multiplier	Total output
7	Construction	\$761,632	1.402	\$1,067,807
52	Administrative and support services	\$44,733	1.42	\$63,521
54	Educational services	\$1,197,253	1.4641	\$1,752,897
60	Recreation industry	\$295,118	1.4106	\$416,294
111400	Greenhouse production	\$737,759	1.417	\$1,045,405
113000	Forestry and logging	\$959,391	1.7949	\$1,722,011
114000	Fishing and hunting	\$1,865	1.1979	\$2,234
115000	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	\$907,756	1.4509	\$1,317,063
541610	Management consulting services	\$888,263	1.4811	\$1,315,606
541700	Scientific research and development services	\$206,304	1.4341	\$295,861
561300	Employment services	\$268,135	1.4088	\$377,749
562000	Waste management and remediation services	\$45,500	1.3757	\$62,595
5416A0	Environmental and other technical consulting services	\$374,942	1.49	\$558,663
5419A0	Other professional, scientific, and technical services	\$116,900	1.5016	\$175,536
711A00	Promoters of performing arts	\$210,000	1.4276	\$299,796
813A00	Grantmaking, giving, and social advocacy organizations	\$151	1.4231	\$215
813B00	Civic, social, professional, and similar organizations	\$373,099	1.5142	\$564,947
	Totals	\$7,388,801		\$11,038,201

To explain the overall wages multiplier analysis, the scientific research and development sector is used as an example. The *final demand* output multiplier for scientific research and development is 1.434, so for every dollar spent on scientific research and development projects, an additional 43.4 cents of economic activity was generated.

Total Employment Impact

Employment data gathered about SASS projects include the job titles of positions created with funding and employees hired by month. These were input into the economic impact model to estimate total employment impacts.

All Jobs Created

SASS funding recipients were asked to describe jobs created through their SASS projects. In 2024, 207 positions were created through SASS partnership project spending. Some were short-term, temporary, or began near the end of 2024. For this reason, the “year-round equivalent” number of jobs created was 124, or 164 with the multiplier effect. The full list of jobs created through the SASS initiative in 2024 appears in Table 4.

Table 4. Jobs created from SASS investments, 2024

Crew Members	23	Fish Biologist	1
Forestry Technicians	19	Foreman	1
Thinning crew members	9	Future Leaders Catalyst	1
Cultivator	8	Garden coordinator	1
Community Catalysts	7	Grant Manager	1
Consulting Foresters	7	Green Energy Consultant	1
Regional Catalysts	7	Habitat Supervisor	1
Restoration Biologist	6	Hatchery Algal Specialist	1
Administrative Assistant	5	Hatchery Technician	1
AYS Crew	5	HIA Community Catalyst	1
Carving Apprentices	5	Kayaani Commission Coordinator	1
Crew Lead	4	Living with the Land Building Community Coordinator	1
KKCFP Field crew	4	Manager	1
Trail Worker	4	Master Carver	1
Executive Director	3	Natural Resources Director	1
Guide Academy Trainees	3	Natural Resources Technician	1
Guide Academy Trainers	3	Policy Coordinator	1
Habitat Crew	3	Professional Coach	1
Program Coordinators	3	Program & Outreach Coordinator	1
Stewardship Crew members	3	Program Analyst	1
Coordinator	2	Program Associate	1
Director	2	Project Coordinator	1
Environmental Director	2	Project Forester	1
Program Director	2	Regional Resource Coordinator	1
Program Manager	2	Resource Protection Department Director	1
Restoration Crewmember	2	Restoration Crew leader	1
Youth Coordinator	2	Senior Advisor	1
Alaska Coexistence Representative	1	Senior Director of Native Lands & Resources	1
Archaeologist	1	Senior Ethnologist	1
AYS Coordinator	1	Senior Project Coordinator	1
Boat Captain	1	Sitka Sustainable Community Catalyst	1
Co-Stewardship Coordinator	1	Special Projects Coordinator	1
Communication Specialist	1	Special Projects Manager	1
Community Garden Coordinator	1	Stewardship Crew leader	1
Compost Program Manager	1	Storytelling Specialist	1
Consultant	1	TEK Specialist	1
Contractor	1	Watershed Scientist	1
Curriculum Developer	1	Website Designer	1
Deputy Director	1	Wildland Fire Manager	1
Director of Native Lands & Resources	1	Workforce Development Coordinator	1
Economic Analyst	1	Workforce Development Manager	1
Electrical install	1	Youth Community Catalyst	1
Environmental Education Coordinator	1	Youth Program Coordinator	1
Environmental Lab Specialist	1	Youth Program Director	1
Executive Assistant	1	Total	207

Employment by Month

Recipients were asked how many workers were employed through SASS funding agreements during each month of the 2024 calendar year. Jobs were counted and measured by month to account for the seasonal trends where workers were hired on a seasonal or part time basis. Peak employment occurred in July, when 179 unique workers were employed using SASS funds (Figure 1). This result is intuitive given the seasonal nature of jobs where field work is performed in the summer.

Figure 1: Number of workers funded by SASS investments in 2024, measured monthly

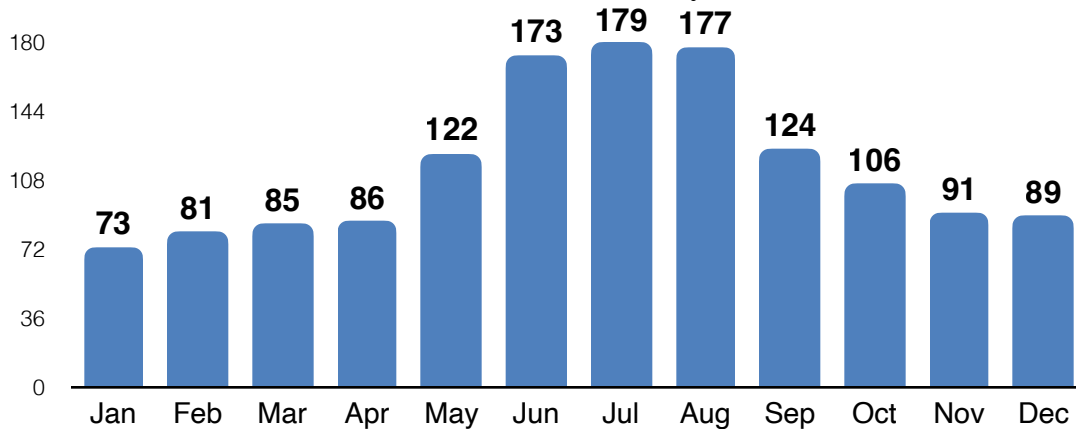
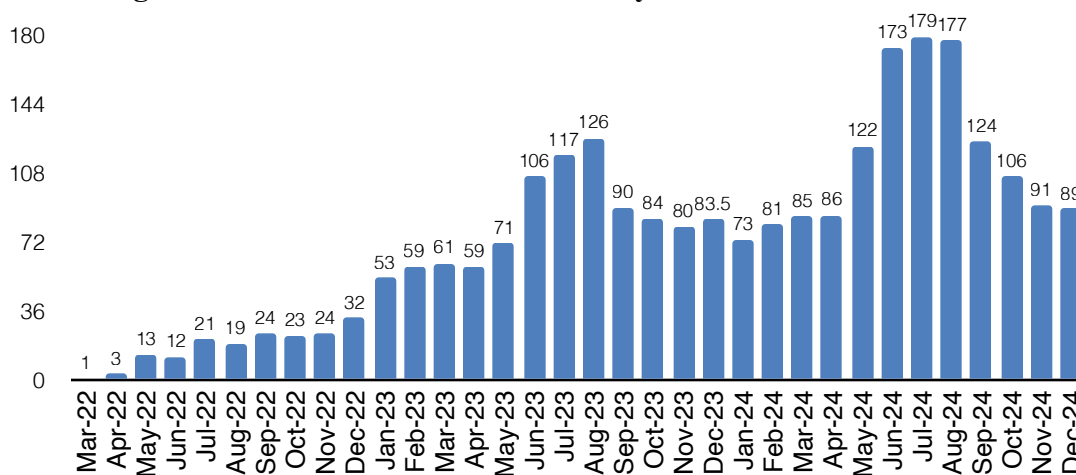


Figure 2 shows monthly SASS direct employment 2022-2024, showing both the seasonal nature of SASS funded projects, as well as the continued employment growth over time.

Figure 2: Number of workers funded by SASS investments 2022-2024



Employment Impacts

To determine the overall impact of SASS investment on employment in the region, monthly totals were annualized for 2024. Jobs were annualized by adding the jobs in each month and dividing by 12. An average of 123.6 direct SASS jobs were generated in 2024 (Table 5). Using direct-effect multipliers, the 123.6 jobs had an overall impact of 164.5 year-round equivalent jobs across the regional economy in 2024.

Table 5. Employment impact of SASS investments, 2024

U.S. Benchmark I-O Data Codes	I-O Data Code Descriptions	Direct Annualized Jobs Reported	Direct-effect Jobs Multiplier	Total jobs
52	Administrative and support services	3	1.3372	4.5
54	Educational services	14	1.2087	16.9
60	Recreation industry	10	1.2026	11.4
111400	Greenhouse production	9	1.3152	12.1
113000	Forestry and logging	11	1.9186	21.1
115000	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	28	1.1084	30.5
541610	Management consulting services	16	1.3274	21.2
541700	Scientific research and development services	3	1.6974	4.7
561300	Employment services	10	1.319	13.0
562000	Waste management and remediation services	2	1.6554	3.3
5416A0	Environmental and other technical consulting services	8	1.3652	10.5
5419A0	Other professional, scientific, and technical services	4	1.6056	5.9
711A00	Promoters of performing arts	3	1.2834	4.0
813A00	Grantmaking, giving, and social advocacy organizations	1	1.3706	1.8
813B00	Civic, social, professional, and similar organizations	3	1.3558	3.7
	Totals	123.6		164.5

To explain the overall jobs multiplier analysis results, the scientific research and development sector is used as an example. The direct-effect *employment* multiplier for the scientific research and development sector in Southeast Alaska is 1.697. This indicates that for each job created in the scientific research and development, another 0.697 jobs were created in other businesses and industries in the region. Since the total number of jobs created is known from reporting from funding recipients, the direct-effect metric was used.

Total Wages Impact

Investment recipients reported that 44 percent of all spending was utilized directly for wages to employ staff to implement the SASS projects. Wages disbursed through newly created jobs established to implement SASS projects were reported by funding recipients. In 2024, total direct wages were reported at \$3.3 million (Table 6). Applying the multipliers, the total regional income impact of SASS investments amounted to \$4.3 million in 2024.

Table 6. Wages impact of SASS 2024 Investments

U.S. Benchmark I-O Data Codes	I-O Data Code Descriptions	Direct Wages Reported	Direct-effect Earnings Multiplier	Total earnings
52	Administrative and support services	\$16,800	1.37	\$23,045
54	Educational services	\$560,776	1.29	\$724,691
60	Recreation industry	\$196,492	1.34	\$263,554
111400	Greenhouse production	\$190,552	1.39	\$264,982
113000	Forestry and logging	\$135,155	1.65	\$222,924
115000	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	\$557,761	1.22	\$680,692
541610	Management consulting services	\$888,263	1.29	\$1,146,925
541700	Scientific research and development services	\$126,099	1.42	\$179,199
561300	Employment services	\$83,349	1.28	\$106,662
562000	Waste management and remediation services	\$27,655	1.46	\$40,313
5416A0	Environmental and other technical consulting services	\$232,063	1.31	\$304,490
5419A0	Other professional, scientific, and technical services	\$73,397	1.29	\$94,351
711A00	Promoters of arts	\$22,625	1.46	\$33,069
813A00	Grantmaking, giving, and social advocacy organizations	\$95,655	1.30	\$124,352
813B00	Civic, social, professional, and similar organizations	\$50,485	1.34	\$67,417
	Totals	\$3,257,127		\$4,276,666

To explain the overall wages multiplier analysis, the scientific research and development sector is again used as an example. The direct-effect *earnings* multiplier for the fishing and hunting sector in Southeast Alaska is 1.42 (rounded). This indicates that for every dollar paid

as wages in fishing and hunting projects, an additional 42 cents in wages were created in other businesses and industries in the region.

Total Economic Impact Model Results

Table 7 provides the full economic impact of Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy investments in calendar year 2024. The model developed specifically focuses on the larger Southeast Alaska economy using the RIMS Type II multipliers from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (US Department of Commerce 2024). Total 2024 economic impact, including the multiplier effect, was 164 year-round-equivalent jobs and \$11 million in total economic activity, including \$4.3 million in wages. The majority of 2024 economic impacts, in terms of direct spending, wages, total output and earnings and number of jobs created, occurred in educational services; forestry and logging; support activities for agriculture and forestry; and management consulting services. These results are largely driven by hiring for forestry technician activities (19 jobs) and managing individual projects and the regional strengthening agreements (16 jobs).

Table 7. 2024 SASS investment total economic impact by industry

U.S. benchmark I-O data codes	I-O data code descriptions	Direct spending by partners	Direct annualized jobs reported	Direct wages reported	Final-demand output multiplier	Direct-effect earnings multiplier	Direct-effect jobs multiplier	Total output	Total earnings	Total jobs
7	Construction	\$761,632	-	\$ -	1.402	1.32	1.5005	\$1,067,807	\$ -	0.0
52	Administrative and support services	\$44,733	3	\$16,800	1.42	1.37	1.3372	\$63,521	\$23,045	4.5
54	Educational services	\$1,197,253	14	\$560,776	1.4641	1.29	1.2087	\$1,752,897	\$724,691	16.9
60	Recreation industry	\$295,118	10	\$196,492	1.4106	1.34	1.2026	\$416,294	\$263,554	11.4
111400	Greenhouse production	\$737,759	9	\$190,552	1.417	1.39	1.3152	\$1,045,405	\$264,982	12.1
113000	Forestry and logging	\$959,391	11	\$135,155	1.7949	1.65	1.9186	\$1,722,011	\$222,924	21.1
114000	Fishing and hunting	\$1,865	-	\$ -	1.1979	1.25	1.1754	\$2,234	\$ -	0.0
115000	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	\$907,756	28	\$557,761	1.4509	1.22	1.1084	\$1,317,063	\$680,692	30.5
541610	Management consulting services	\$888,263	16	\$888,263	1.4811	1.29	1.3274	\$1,315,606	\$1,146,925	21.2
541700	Scientific research and development services	\$206,304	3	\$126,099	1.4341	1.42	1.6974	\$295,861	\$179,199	4.7
561300	Employment services	\$268,135	10	\$83,349	1.4088	1.28	1.319	\$377,749	\$106,662	13.0
562000	Waste management and remediation services	\$45,500	2	\$27,655	1.3757	1.46	1.6554	\$62,595	\$40,313	3.3
5416A0	Environmental and other technical consulting services	\$374,942	8	\$232,063	1.49	1.31	1.3652	\$558,663	\$304,490	10.5
5419A0	Other professional, scientific, and technical services	\$116,900	4	\$73,397	1.5016	1.29	1.6056	\$175,536	\$94,351	5.9
711A00	Promoters of performing arts	\$210,000	3	\$22,625	1.4276	1.46	1.2834	\$299,796	\$33,069	4.0
813A00	Grantmaking, giving, and social advocacy organizations	\$151	1	\$95,655	1.4231	1.30	1.3706	\$215	\$124,352	1.8
813B00	Civic, social, professional, and similar organizations	\$373,099	3	\$50,485	1.5142	1.34	1.3558	\$564,947	\$67,417	3.7
	Totals	\$7.4 million	123.6 jobs	\$3.3 million				\$11 million	\$4.3 million	164.5 jobs

Conclusion

Summary of Results

Between 2022 and 2024, 26 partner organizations reported spending SASS funds for 50 of the 57 total projects across Southeast Alaska, using \$13.4 million of their SASS funding. The total economic impact of that spending was \$19.8 million. Although 207 job positions were created, due to jobs being temporary, the total direct, indirect and induced jobs created on an annualized basis was 164. Overall, 2022 through 2024 SASS spending accounted for 54 percent of the entire planned investment of \$25 million with 87 percent of spending occurring in the region.

Economic impacts of the SASS investment program are summarized in table 8 below:

Table 8. Economic impact summary of SASS investments project spending

Category	2022 Impact	2023 Impact	2024 Impact	Impact-to-date
Direct spending reported by SASS partners	\$1,311,374	\$4,651,757	\$7,388,801	\$13.4 million
Indirect and induced economic activity	\$597,710	\$2,222,612	\$3,649,400	\$6.5 million
Total Impact of SASS Investment Spending	\$1.9 million	\$6.9 million	\$11 million	\$19.8 million
Year-round equivalent direct jobs	14.3	82.5	123.6	124
Year-round equivalent indirect and induced jobs	7.5	31.5	40.9	41
Total Direct, Indirect & Induced Annualized Jobs	22	114	164.5	164
Direct annual wages	\$529,110	\$2,094,428	\$3,257,127	\$5.9 million
Indirect and induced wages	\$216,617	\$779,978	\$1,019,539	\$2.0 million
Total Wages, Including Multiplier	\$745,727	\$2,874,406	\$4,276,666	\$7.9 million

2024 Reporting Challenges

Because the report was developed earlier in the year than previous years, the updated multiplier data estimates have not yet been released by the federal government, so last year's multipliers were used.

Appendix A: 2024 Project Intake Tool

Rain Coast Data reached out to all SASS funding recipients with an intake tool asking the following questions:

1. What is the name of your project?
2. How much of your organization's USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy Investment funding did you spend on your project in 2024?
3. What percent of this above amount was spent directly in Southeast Alaska?
4. Which of the following categories best describes the work primarily completed for the project in 2024?
5. How many workers were employed through this project's agreement funding during each month of the 2024 calendar year?
6. Please list the job titles of the jobs described above.
7. How much did you pay in wages for the above workers in calendar year 2024 (excluding benefits)?

Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Question 1: In your own words, please describe the economic impact of the project in 2024.

In 2024, projects funded through the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) delivered significant and diverse economic impacts across Southeast Alaska, with both immediate and long-term effects. These projects generated local employment by supporting hundreds of full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions, including Tribal citizens, youth crews, carvers, biologists, fire managers, and educators. Many wages circulated directly in rural communities with high unemployment, such as Angoon, Kake, and Hoonah, bolstering local economies. Investments in cultural preservation, tourism, fisheries access, and food sovereignty contributed to regional economic revitalization—such as Wrangell’s totem carving project. Natural resource stewardship programs restored salmon habitat, developed biomass and compost infrastructure, and improved human-bear coexistence, all contributing to long-term ecological and economic sustainability. Capacity-building efforts, such as youth job training, farmer retreats, and Tribal workforce development, laid the foundation for future job creation and economic independence. These efforts were supported by successful leveraging of federal and philanthropic funding, including new multi-million-dollar grant applications. Across the region, project collaborations improved local services, built institutional knowledge, expanded access to fisheries and land, and demonstrated how targeted investments can catalyze resilient, community-driven economic growth.

Open-ended responses from partners are provided here unedited except for defining acronyms used in the narratives and removal of personally identifiable information of any individuals mentioned by name.

- The economic impact of the project in 2024 is reflected in its contributions to resource management, conservation, and potential future revenue streams. The Firewood Project's completion provides immediate benefits, such as reducing heating costs for local communities. The Biomass Research at Three Mile Creek explores the feasibility of biomass production and biochar opportunities, which could lead to long-term economic benefits by increasing wood production, enhancing wildlife access, and mitigating low water levels. Additionally, while the John Darrow Trail Project saw limited activity due to severe weather, efforts to maintain pedestrian access help support ecotourism and local accessibility. The Good Neighbor Authority initiative, though still developing, represents an opportunity for increased Tribal management of ancestral lands, potentially leading to greater economic self-sufficiency and job creation. Finally, the completed Regional Workshop contributes to capacity-building, fostering future economic development through knowledge sharing and collaboration. Overall, these activities promote both immediate and long-term economic benefits, including sustainable resource use, job creation, and potential new revenue opportunities for local communities.
- The economic impact was 4 FTE field crew that kept the dollars in the community for 7 months.
- The economic impact was primarily on the town of Juneau through the infusion of wage income for professional services provided to the US Forest Service. ASFT accomplished the project goal to publish a regional seafood equity assessment that educates on the region's seafood and mariculture industry's equity needs, gaps, and priorities. In 2024 ASFT released an RFP to conduct a full SE seafood infrastructure assessment. ASFT awarded the contracting firm AKWA-DC to complete the report. Please see the final and full report at <https://thealaskatrust.org/fishery-access>. The fishery access survey and report provided vital information to assess the interest of Southeast rural residents in fishing, including the fisheries these residents wanted to access, and the obstacles to that access. With consistency, rural residents identified the halibut fishery as one they wanted to access and the cost of quota as the obstacle to participation. ASFT has continued to use the data from this and other reports to develop the CQE. ASFT leveraged SASS funding in 2024 and was awarded a \$25,000 capacity building grant for the CQE project from the Rasmuson Foundation. Additionally, the Rasmuson Foundation has invited a PRI request for \$1.5 million for the CQE project due in June 2025. ASFT will continue to seek additional funds with partners for the CQE project in 2025. ASFT's purchase of fishery access recaptures assets that had been sold out of the region and in most cases out of state. All of 2024's purchases of A shares were from out-of-state residents. By providing resident/Alaskan fishermen with access and ensuring their harvest is delivered

and processed in the region, economic activity has increased along with social health. ASFT secured Young Fishermen Development Act funding to expand crew apprentice training curriculum to include additional skill and safety training and conduct multi-day workshops in Sitka and 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, we are also increasing local jobs, building the resident workforce, and providing for the future health and prosperity of the region. Since all our host skippers and apprentices are operating in Marine Stewardship Council certified sustainable small-scale fisheries, ASFT is also contributing to the ecological health of the region.

- Defenders of Wildlife's (Defenders) bear coexistence work in southeast Alaska strives to conserve bears by reducing human-bear conflicts. Numerous direct and indirect economic impacts stem from successful human-bear coexistence. These include but are not limited to the following: 1) Bears support ecosystem health and help sustain biodiversity through seed dispersal, distribution of marine and other nutrients, aerating soil, providing scavenging opportunities and introducing a flush of nutrients into soil from bear kills. All these benefits contribute to the ecosystem services provided by healthy ecosystems, which contribute economically to local communities and beyond. Seed dispersal, distribution of nutrients and soil aeration, for example, all contribute to healthy watersheds, which provide clean drinking water, support abundant fish and wildlife and provide opportunities for recreation and tourism, among other economic benefits. 2) Human-bear conflicts can result in property damage and significant economic losses to Tribes, communities, homeowners, livestock owners and farmers, among others, and loss of food security. Successful human-bear coexistence alleviates these types of economic losses. 3) Human-bear conflicts can also result in human injury or fatalities, which can result in significant economic losses to people and communities. 4) When bears eat inappropriate foods, such as domestic livestock, pathogens can be passed onto bears which can result in bear fatalities and lower reproductive success, impacting ecosystem services. 5) The costs of managing human-bear conflicts once they arise also can be significant. Bear euthanasia, relocations and repairing damaged city, village or individual property are all costly. In 2024, Defenders subsidized 50% of the cost of 12 electric fences in southeast Alaska, making direct contributions to individuals and a Tribe that totaled \$3,054.00 These fences included an electric fence for the Chilkoot Indian Association (CIA) that surrounds CIA's community garden. The fence helps CIA maintain food security for their community, which results in significant economic benefits for their community. Similarly, the other 11 fences helped contribute to food security and livestock and crop protection, among other items, for individual property owners in the communities of: Sitka (1 e-fence), Haines (7 e-fences), Petersburg (2 e-fences), Tenakee Springs (1 e-fence) and Juneau (1 e-fence). Coexistence tools, such as electric fencing, result in significant, positive economic impacts for individual property owners, businesses and communities. The full economic impact of Defenders' bear coexistence project has yet to be realized, and we look forward to augmenting the economic impacts of our project in 2025.

- Forest inventory crews from three different SE AK Native villages were trained and periodically employed during the calendar year.
- Four Angoon crew members received wages that supported their families. Angoon has a very high rate of unemployment, and crew members have expressed pride and gratitude for being employed through this project. Travel expenses to the remote location of Cube Cove were also spent locally, which included boat operation, food, and fuel. The project employed one restoration biologist at SAWC in 2024 and provided a major source of income for a commercial boat captain based in Angoon. This project also had indirect benefits of improving fish and wildlife populations that are utilized by community members. More information on the project can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kedWA7rgJE>
- Helping the Visitor Industry in Southeast Alaska to continue to have a positive impact on local communities in a sustainable manner.
- In 2024, SAWC supported watershed restoration projects on the Tongass National Forest and adjacent lands in 7 communities. This work restored salmon habitat and trained and employed locals to steward their watersheds. A summary of the project accomplishments can be seen on this story map: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3f4723c970b74b0f84e4cc247a818cbd>
- In 2024, the Wildland Fire Program supported one full-time Grant Manager position and provided training to Tribal citizens in fire response and mitigation. While no additional hires were made under the grant, the program built local capacity and laid the groundwork for future job opportunities, contributing to long-term economic and community resilience.
- In 2024, Wrangell's totem carving project significantly bolstered the local economy by intertwining cultural preservation with tourism development. This project not only revitalized traditional carving methods, but also attracted a surge of visitors, enhancing economic activity in Wrangell. Cultural Preservation and Skill Development Master carvers led the replication of historic totem poles, mentoring five local apprentices at the Wrangell Cooperative Association's Carving Shed. This endeavor aimed to replicate three totem poles, each taking approximately four months to complete. The initiative not only preserved Tlingit artistry but also fostered intergenerational knowledge transfer and skill development within the community. Tourism Growth and Economic Impact The return of large cruise ships to Wrangell in 2024 marked a pivotal moment for local tourism. With 122 scheduled port calls from 21 ships, the town anticipated between 27,800 to 34,700 visitors, depending on ship capacities. This influx was projected to generate \$5.5 to \$6.5 million in visitor spending during the summer season. The totem carving project was an attraction and many tourists visited the carving shed to view the historic project. Wrangell's 2024 totem carving project exemplifies how cultural initiatives can drive economic growth. By preserving cultural knowledge and attracting tourists, the project fostered community development and economic revitalization.

- In addition to supporting part-time, full-time, and contractor positions in rural villages, the project developed long-term capacity in community members who attended over 15 community engagement events and educational workshops in 6 villages. These community members gained knowledge, skills, and experience that will be valuable in future economic prospects for growing these potatoes and other produce.
- In addition to the employment that was supported through this award, three small tour ships visited Angoon in 2024 that brought approximately 120 new visitors who spent money at the local store and purchased local artwork. The Guide Academy also supported the local float plane operator by booking several flights; the local grocery store by purchasing food and supplies; and the local fuel station by purchasing boat and vehicle fuel.
- In January the Sitka Ranger District informed STA that it had a funding shortfall for operating the Redoubt weir. The Tribe took the lead on organizing community stakeholders in lobbying local, state, and federal governments regarding the shortfall. All three governments stepped up to with funding and the weir was operational. The sockeye harvest from this system is managed on a sliding scale with the weir providing in season escape numbers. When in season weir data projects an escapement of 40,000 fish it triggers: a more liberalized subsistence harvest (25 fish -100 fish), the Tribe's community harvest permit (CHP), and a commercial fishery. In 2025 subsistence harvesters were able to harvest 100 sockeye, the Tribe was able to operate its CHP, and commercial fishers harvested over \$500,000 worth of fish from this system.
- Measuring and reporting the economic impact of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) is critical for demonstrating the tangible value of federal investment in the region. This analysis provides a data-driven understanding of how public funds are being translated into local jobs, wages, and economic activity. It also ensures transparency and accountability, showing stakeholders — including policymakers, community leaders, and the public — that the USDA's investments are creating real benefits on the ground. By documenting both direct spending and the broader ripple effects across Southeast Alaska's economy, this report helps build trust in the SASS program and informs future funding decisions. It supports evidence-based policy by identifying which types of projects generate the most significant returns, guiding future resource allocation. Furthermore, capturing this information over time allows for the evaluation of long-term outcomes, including increased regional resilience, improved community capacity, and strengthened Tribal partnerships. In short, this work not only validates the impact of past investments — it actively shapes the case for continued and expanded support of sustainable economic development in Southeast Alaska.
- Southeast Alaska Farmers Retreat Achievement in February 2024. Spruce Root and Farragut Farm hosted the first bi-annual Southeast Alaska Farmers Retreat at Eagle River Methodist Camp in Juneau. The three-day event, held entirely in person, included 18 participants representing 13 farms and one composting business. Outcome Highlights: This retreat was structured for farmers to network, share lessons learned, and

envision the future of farming in Southeast Alaska. This was accomplished through various activities, including farm presentations, a “Hive Mind” problem-solving session, and discussion groups focusing on marketing, financial sustainability, crops, techniques, tools, and more.

- Project is still in the design/implementation phase.
- SASS funds aided us in securing long term leases on State of Alaska land to allow for the construction of our combined shellfish shipping facility. This laid the groundwork for the actual construction that is now underway.
- Since the Special Forest Product Plan is still in the development phase and hasn't been implemented there was no immediate economic benefit realized in 2024.
- Sitka Trail Works (STW) is employing a phased, multi-year approach to ensure the planning is inclusive of local perspectives, is well vetted by land management agencies, and results in thoughtful and feasible investment opportunities. Sitka Trail Works focused on planning and design for two recreation projects in 2024. First, Sitka Trail Works and contractor Fjord Landscape developed a conceptual design for the restoration of the Goddard to Redoubt Trail after several field work trips, including time on site with Forest Service archeologists. Second, Sitka Trail Works advanced planning for a Marine Trail Network in Sitka Sound by convening a local stakeholder group, confirming goals of the project, surveying and identifying the best sites in the field according to agree upon criteria, then developing and refining maps of the proposed routes.
- Southeast Conference’s impact includes administering subawards, funding a microgrant program, convening and coordinating with SASS partners, and communicating the success and impacts of SASS. Administering Subawards: Southeast Conference (SEC) supports four subaward recipients—Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust, Craig City School District (CCSD), Alaska Oyster Cooperative (AOC), and Oceans Alaska—in advancing their projects and maximizing their impact on mariculture, fishing, and biomass in Southeast Alaska. We assist by connecting them to resources and expertise, guiding strategic shifts in project scope and budgeting, and reducing administrative burdens. Coordination, Communication, and Gatherings: We coordinate regularly through monthly SASS Office Hours, SASS Steering Team Meetings, and Southeast Sustainability Partnership Meetings, keeping partners informed and identifying opportunities for collaboration, resource-sharing, and coordinated outreach. Additionally, SEC organized two in-person conferences in Juneau and Ketchikan that had sessions dedicated to SASS, strengthening connections among partners and showcasing the achievements of SASS projects. In late 2024, SEC published a comprehensive narrative report highlighting our work through Summer 2024. SEC also supported Sitka Conservancy Society with its “Sharing SASS Successes” project by gathering and writing stories for a website that engages the public and highlights SASS programs, accomplishments, and opportunities. SEC’s Executive Director, Robert

Venables, has also traveled to Washington D.C. and throughout our region and state, meeting with the Alaska delegation, federal agency leaders - including the USDA Secretary and Undersecretary -industry partners, and community members to spread awareness of SASS and coordinate across all high levels of both public and private sectors. Microgrant Program: SEC is administering 15 capacity-building and project development microgrants across Southeast Alaska. The microgrant program builds the 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. So far, the microgrants have strengthened organizational capacity through staff training and development, catalyzed collaborative working groups, sparked new revenue streams and additional grant funding, and better positioned organizations to execute future projects.

- Success storytelling is not directly correlated to economic impact, but stories, communications, and coverage helps drive momentum around projects, initiatives, and the Sustainability Strategy that allows them to gain continued attention, support, and funding. The story outputs from this position are likely leveraged by partner organizations, individuals, and collaborators to secure additional funding for projects and initiatives related to the Sustainability Strategy. This added capacity in SASS storytelling also allows for a variety of communications services to be applied to the Sustainability Strategy that might otherwise not be pursued or be inaccessibly expensive — be it graphic design, videography, writing, or photography. Funding for this position also allows for one full-time employee to live, work, and contribute to the economy of the community of Sitka and Southeast Alaska
- The 2024 season consisted of another successful 10-week Kake AYS program. The AYS program worked with local teens to provide hands-on experiences working in data collection and scientific methodology, habitat monitoring and restoration, invasive plant management, red cedar surveys and more. The work aims to promote the next generation of natural resource management, with an emphasis on building localized workforces within the region. Additionally, this year was the first that a year-round Crew Coordinator was hired by the Organized Village of Kake. The Crew Coordinator is the only FTE position funded by this SASS agreement. Additionally, this agreement supports the salaries of five part-time employees for five pay periods. These crew members averaged 32 hours of work per week, for ten weeks. Given the rural and localized nature of the program, most income generated by the program is cycled back into the Kake community. Crew members attend an eight-hour training on responsible spending and financial literacy. For most, this is their first job and OVK works hard to facilitate learning in onboarding paperwork, tax documents and savings.
- The Cultural Interpretive Training Program produced measurable economic impact through intentional investment in Tribal workforce capacity and culturally grounded training infrastructure. A central aspect of this investment was supporting four internal positions within Tlingit & Haida to focus on this project, separate from their current

capacity in the Tribe. These roles were dedicated to the planning, development, and delivery of the training program, with responsibilities that included curriculum design, place-based interpretive planning, cross-sector coordination, and the facilitation of workforce development and support opportunities for Cultural Ambassadors. This staffing structure directed wages to Tribal citizens with specialized knowledge in Indigenous education, employment, and training, while also enhancing the operational capacity of multiple Tribal departments. The funding of these positions ensured that the expertise required to support future program cohorts is retained in-house over multiple seasons. The work performed by these staff contributes directly to the growth of a tribally operated workforce development system. The program is being structured to provide accessible training and employment pathways for a broad range of Tribal citizens—including youth, college students, adults re-entering the workforce, and elders serving as cultural mentors. Each of these groups stands to benefit from targeted supports and skill development strategies that are informed by the expertise of the internal team. In addition to internal staffing, the program invested in contracting with Tribal citizen consultants to support the development and delivery of key training content. These contractors were compensated for their work in specialized areas such as language, plant identification, traditional healing practices, and cultural facilitation. This contracting model directed economic benefits to local Native professionals and small businesses, while also enriching the training content with community-based knowledge and lived experience. These combined investments—salaried positions, contractor payments, and interdepartmental collaboration—represent a significant economic strategy. The program not only circulates funding within Tribal systems and Native-owned enterprises but also builds the foundational infrastructure needed to support long-term employability in cultural tourism, land stewardship, and public engagement roles. As this work continues into future phases, the program is expected to expand its economic footprint by supporting job creation, strengthening regional partnerships, and opening new revenue opportunities tied to Tribal-led interpretation and visitor education on public lands.

- The funds provided by the project supported continued development of the desk reference document as well as the completion of a workshop between AFA/USFS personnel. The funding for the project supported AK-based consultant business.
- The goal of this project is to develop the next generation of natural and cultural resource conservation stewards, who are critical to the long-term sustainability of our public lands legacy. In partnership with land management agencies, Sitka Trail Works provides education and hands-on experiences for local youth and young adults to help maintain and protect public lands.
- The network provided travel funding for community compost leaders to attend trainings that they needed to effectively carry out their operations. This travel funding provided cost-savings while also enhancing the longevity and capacity of these employees/business operators. The network also provided an opportunity for participants to provide

support, ideas, and resources to each other through virtual meetings. The effect was also to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of these employees/business operators.

- The position supported .17 fte for planning and implementation of the community garden
- The preservation of the compost house to have it moved, was able to secure a storage space to cover the tractor. The tractor helps with berm building. The biggest impact was the structures being built. The tractor purchase, berry berms, the drainage structure and the 5 tunnels built.
- The SASS funding has been able to pay wages we would not be able to support otherwise to increase capacity of our community in weather data collection and increasing our voice in deer management issues.
- The Tlingit & Haida Wildland Fire Program has significantly contributed to the economic development of Southeast Alaska in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. As part of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS), the program focuses on stewardship and cultural education, among other areas, and has been instrumental in creating employment opportunities. In 2023, Tlingit & Haida's initiatives under SASS, including the Wildland Fire Program, resulted in the creation of over 30 jobs across various communities. These employment opportunities not only provide income for individuals and families but also enhance community resilience by building local capacity to manage and respond to wildland fires. This proactive approach aligns with regional economic development strategies and supports the sustainability of local economies. <https://tlingithaidaceds.com> FY 24 presented some significant hurdles for the T&H Wildland Fire Project, with development challenges and now the vacancy in the Wildland Fire Manager position. Given the importance of this role in overseeing operations, securing funding, and ensuring fire response preparedness, filling it quickly will be critical.
- There is no immediate and direct impact of this project. Invasive species mgmt. provides for a healthy and productive forest ecosystem free of non-indigenous species.
- This project brought together watershed restoration practitioners from around the state. It directly employed 4 people who helped organize and plan a week-long workshop. The workshop increased the capacity of approximately 60 watershed professionals from around the region.
- This project did not have an economic impact.
- This project helped support wages in Hoonah to do the capacity-developing work for the roads to trails project. The work/position would not be possible without the SASS funding.
- This project provides key workforce development services in STEM to Hoonah youth. Three High Schoolers successfully completed a dual enrollment course (3 college

credits, 1 high school credit), BIOL101: Introduction to Biological Research Techniques. For two of the students, the skills they practiced in class supported their summer work for the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership.

- This project was not designed for commercial or economic impact.
- This project will divert organic waste away from the landfill and lengthen the life of that facility. It will turn many tons of sawmill waste into fertilizer, benefiting sawmill owners. It will take waste from both the distillery and the brewery, waste from restaurants, grocery stores, the fish processing plant, and households. It will reduce waste disposal fees for many business, individuals, and organizations. It will remove bear attractants of all sorts from back yards and other community spaces. And all these waste products, instead of clogging up our landfill and other commercial and industrial spaces, will be composted and turned into necessary fertilizer for small gardeners and for our fast-growing commercial farming sector (the largest farm in all Southeast Alaska is at Mosquito Lake).
- This RD agreement powered 12 projects from Yakutat down to Wrangell.
- This SASS investment and project has supported healing, food sovereignty and economic wellbeing in 2024 in the community of Sitka, Alaska in a variety of ways. The jobs continued through this funding are all local positions and therefore resulted in secondary impacts with all wages available to circulate in the local economy. All the jobs provided significant services to the community and were responsible for executing the SASS project activities in 2024. The project completed significant work in 2024 to build out the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) digital archive of materials relating to the history of smokehouses and fish camps in the traditional territory of the Sheet'ká Kwáan. Work was done to collect new materials at STA, to collaborate with the United States Forest Service on their knowledge, and to research, organize and make digitally accessible existing materials at STA. This work will provide significant opportunity for the community at large to deepen the understanding of historical events and current circumstances, to create space for improved institutional and community relationships, and to learn traditional and customary practices that can support stewardship, food security and economic wellbeing for generations to come. In 2024 the project created and delivered direct educational services that invested in youth wellbeing, health, and skills, thereby supporting their long-term economic outcomes. The educational programming supported skill building, food security, safe access to lands and waters, leadership development and workforce development. Camps and programs supported by this funding and benefiting the community included Harvest Camp, Drum Camp, Water and Survival Skills Camp, Salmon Processing Workshop, Wild Edibles Camps, Supper Clubs/Community Potlucks, Mushroom Walk, Berry Picking, Pacific High School Harvesting & Processing Classes, Pacific High School Outdoors Skills Classes, Hiking Camps, Backpacking Camps, and an Overnight Kayak Adventure. In 2024 foundational work was done to prepare for further project activities in 2025, including concept development of an educational film series on traditional and customary use of

smokehouses. Preparatory work included testing the smokehouse, conversations with elders, and developing the list of topics and film elements to include. In addition to the jobs reported here, two other local jobs were supported to continue through the project funding, at less significant rates, with those workers also contributing to project deliverables and economic impact.

- To contract trail maintenance and construction, the work completed by the SCA crew would have cost approximately \$100,000, while the SCA crew cost half of that and the SCA crew provided multiple indirect benefits such as positive visitor contacts, job training, and skill building.
- We had fourteen interns at our April workshop that were mainly from Southeast Alaska although four were from Kodiak. This year also saw Alaska Sea Grant joining UAS Fisheries Technology as cohosts of the workshop. NOAA representatives also participated. This workshop is laying a foundation for shellfish farming in Alaska. The State's goal of a \$100 million mariculture industry in 20 years includes \$84.3 of shellfish and invertebrates of which this hatchery training program is aimed at. Long-term economic diversity is a slow burn, whose immediate impact pales in comparison to better future.
- We hope that upon completion, the biomass heating project will empower Southeast Alaskan communities by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, significantly lowering heating costs, and supporting local forestry businesses. In addition, repurposing wood waste is expected to improve air quality which will benefit our community as well as environment.
- With the positions funded we were able to apply for 2.3 million in funding that includes funding for the next three years of Gatherings for the guardians. Partnered with Ocean Conservancy to do beach clean ups around the region with other partners including, Sealaska, HIA, CTA, ACA. So the funding allowed us to multiply the funding in the area 10 times of what the salaries provided.
- With the support of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) funding, Sitka Conservation Society's Alaska Way of Life 4-H Project has made progress on the deliverables as articulated in the NRCS agreement. We have continued to circulate the report, titled Youth Development in Southeast Alaska: Best Practices and Lessons Learned from Programs Across the Region. This report is the culmination of program visits, in-depth conversations, and desk research. It includes a synthesis of best practices, case examples of a subset of programs, and recommendations for policy, funding, program components, and training, derived from research and discussions with youth development programs. We have circulated our publications with project and program developers, policy makers, funders, corporate boards, Tribal governments throughout the region, USDA leadership, program implementers, and other entities interested in doing this work. The team at Sitka Conservation Society and our partners at UAF Cooperative Extension Services have been working on formulating SMART goals and articulating

our vision behind our youth programming offerings and focus areas for 4-H camps and projects for the next year. Throughout this process, we have focused on how we are incorporating the ideals and values gathered throughout the researching and writing of the report into our programming and projects over the next year. We will continue to work with partners across the region to disseminate our learnings and approach and the values and ideals behind it. This SASS project funding also supported the expansion of programming beyond Sitka with regional exchanges this spring. In late March and early April of 2024, we brought youth from Sitka to Juneau over two separate weekends to collaborate with the Douglas Indian Associations' Indigenous Youth Snow Camp. These 4-H members had the opportunity to practice new skills and form relationships with other youth in their region, practice the Tlingit language, as well as build skills and competencies for safe recreation in colder weather. We plan to invite youth from outlying communities around the region to attend our summer camps in 2024 to continue building on those relationships.

- Alaska Youth Stewards creates a pathway to post-high school career and educational opportunities by investing in the skills and knowledge of young community members, enhancing their capacity to address environmental changes. By providing training in areas such as environmental monitoring, data collection, and sustainable practices, AYS empowers youth to actively contribute to community resilience now and in the future. Specific project outcomes during the 2024 season included: Angoon: 6 crew members hired by Chatham School District; 1 AYS coordinator (4th season), 1 crew leader (1st season); 4 trips, ~3 weeks of work on the Tongass (10 weeks total). Cleared roughly 250 pounds of marine debris and accumulated trash along 3 miles of shoreline from the surrounding Angoon community as well as Mitchell Bay and Hood Bay. Data collection and research projects included: Vegetation Mapping with USFS, Collecting data on cedar trees for cultural use, and Tree Coring in partnership with the College of Wooster. 3 campsites, recreation site, and structures monitored in Mitchell Bay and Hood Bay. 100 hours of solitude monitored in Wilderness. Cleared 1 mile of Kanalku Lake Trail which had not been serviced in almost 5 years clearing 25+ downed trees with the USFS Trail Crew. Worked with USFS Heritage team to monitor ancient fish weir. Proxy fished Basket Bay by beach seine with USFS Wildlife Biologist. Hoonah: 6 crew members hired by the Hoonah Indian Association; 1 AYS coordinator (3rd season), 1 crew leader (2nd season); ~3 weeks of work on the Tongass (9 weeks total). Participated in a Vegetation Mapping Project where the objective was to create a comprehensive “census” of the trees and vegetation on Northern Chichagof Island. This involved comparing satellite, aerial, and LiDAR imagery with on-the-ground surveys. Maintained 8 campsites. Performed trail maintenance and U.S. Forest Service recreation site clean-up at locations such as Whitestone Harbor and Freshwater Bay. Treated 1 acre for invasive species including the Oxeye Daisy. Surveyed 0.5 miles of stream with the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership conducting minnow surveys, where traps were placed to survey for fish and measure characteristics of the stream. If more than two coho were found, the stream could be added to the “Anadromous Waters Catalog” for protection

Maintained 2 fish ladders: the Suntaheen Fish Ladder and the Pavlov River Fish Ladder. Worked with U.S. Forest Service Archaeologist learning the importance of accuracy in scientific measurements, and careful observation. Lydia also gave a talk on the significance of archaeology, anthropology, and the shared history that each crew member has with Hoonah, emphasizing the importance of preserving this heritage. Kake: 5 crew members hired by the Organized Village of Kake, 1 AYS coordinator & lead (3rd season), 1 crew leader (1st season) ~4 weeks of work on the Tongass (10 weeks total) Treated 2 acres for invasive species Japanese Knotweed around Kake. Removed over 250 pounds of trash from 7 miles of shoreline surrounding the Kake community. Restored trails and tended to ancestral graves on Grave Island. Bent Boot Creek Site Fish Habitat Restoration project which was a cross collaboration between the Keex Kwaan Community Forest Partnership, US Forest Service, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition and AYS. 1 recreation site maintained - Portage Bay Cabin clean up where the crew cleared brush, cleaned bunkbeds, floors, and installed a new oil filter. 5.25 miles of trail maintenance at Cathedral Falls, Hamilton Creek, Big John Bay & Goose Lake. Prince of Wales Island: 6 crew members hired by Craig Tribal Association, 1 AYS coordinator (9th season), 1 crew leader (1st season), 1 assistant crew leader (1st season), 5+ weeks of work on the Tongass (11 weeks total). 6 structures built or maintained – two along the John Darrow Trail on Klawock Heenya land (new 20' bridge & replace 12-foot bridge). One bench and three short foot bridges on Sealaska land along Five-Mile Trail. Over 3 miles of trail improved or constructed, restored or maintained and 10 plus downed trees removed along the John Darrow Trail, Five-Mile Trail, Swan Song Trail 1 mile of stream surveyed and restored of critical sockeye salmon spawning habitat within the Klawock Lake Watershed and Upper Steelhead Creek with the Klawock Indigenous Stewards Forest Partnership. Spent 2 days at Eagles Nest Campground on an all-AYS crew project to identify trees for cultural use on USFS managed lands. Collected over 3,000 pounds of trash along several beaches including Suemez Island, San Juan Bautista Island, and Maurelle Islands Wilderness. Data collection and research projects included: Silviculture Surveys (Reforestation; Regeneration Plots – seedling survival, species/tree count, competing vegetation) Maurelle Islands invasive plant species extraction Invasive Green Crab molt surveys Goshawk Surveys (wildlife) Bat Surveys (wildlife) El Capitan Cave exploration tour Red & Yellow Cedar tree coring and traditional Indigenous data collection on USFS lands (various locations).

Question 2: In addition to what you have written above, please share your 2024 accomplishments and success stories.

In 2024, significant accomplishments across Southeast Alaska spanned diverse sectors, including youth workforce training, tourism enhancement, cultural revitalization, fisheries development, environmental stewardship, and community capacity-building. Notable successes included the Angoon Youth Guide Academy's second successful season, training local youth in outdoor guiding and laying groundwork for new eco-tourism ventures. The Alaska Youth Stewards program expanded regionally, providing extensive training, employment, and leadership opportunities for youth, while also delivering impactful environmental restoration projects. Wrangell's totem carving project revived traditional skills, engaged intergenerational learning, and boosted tourism. Fisheries initiatives by Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust secured critical quota purchases, provided hands-on commercial fishing training, and expanded local fisheries access, driving sustainable economic outcomes. Defenders of Wildlife successfully expanded their bear coexistence program through extensive community outreach and subsidy support for electric fencing, significantly reducing human-bear conflicts. The Cultural Interpretive Training Program developed by Tlingit & Haida enhanced Tribal workforce capacity and established culturally grounded employment pathways. Additionally, community gardens, composting infrastructure, biomass research, and sustainable forestry initiatives delivered both environmental and economic benefits, while region-wide collaborative networks and innovative storytelling enhanced stakeholder engagement, transparency, and sustainability efforts. Together, these initiatives strengthened regional resilience, economic sustainability, cultural vitality, and environmental stewardship throughout Southeast Alaska.

Here are the description of 2024 successes in the words of those who did the work:

- In 2024, the Angoon Youth Guide Academy operated for its second season and trained three participants as local outdoor guides through a summer-long training program. Training partnerships were developed with several tourism and outdoor guiding organizations in SE Alaska. This three-month outdoor training academy will provide an intensive and well-rounded training in a full menu of outdoor hard and soft skills including: first aid, kayaking, safe wilderness travel, low impact camping, safe bear viewing, fly fishing, trip planning and logistics, and customer relations. The goal is to recruit and hire 4-5 young adults to participate in the Academy in 2025. Several partnerships were developed with tour operators in the region, with the goals of providing training to our youth guide trainees and establishing the groundwork for developing tour operator partnerships in the future. Alaska Dream Cruises sent three small tour ships to Angoon and their clients participated in a youth-led Walking Tour of the community. Southeast Alaska Expeditions from Haines provided staff to lead the two cross-island paddling trips as a training experience for the youth guides. Above and Beyond Alaska provided training in planning, logistics, and day tours in 2024. The staff

from Salmon State provided program development assistance for youth guide training and for the upcoming 2025 Guide Academy. Staff from the US Forest Service’s Alaska Youth Stewards program assisted in planning the 2024 Angoon Guide Academy. 2024 saw the ongoing evolution of both a guided, and phone-app based walking tour. The guided walking tour was offered to clients from three Alaska Dream Cruise boats that visited Angoon. The phone-app based walking tour is being developed by the non-profit See Stories in partnership with local youth. Development of the phone-app tour will be completed in 2025. Kootznoowoo once again collaborated with SEAK Expeditions to complete the 4-day “Cross-Admiralty Canoe Route” in 2024, with Guide Academy students participating as guides. The Route has been a popular visitor activity in the past and follows a traditional overland route from Mitchell Bay/Angoon to the east side of the island at Mole Harbor. The goals of these cross-island trips were to generate local interest and enthusiasm in cross-island canoe route by reintroducing the tour to the community through the eyes of youth; to continue gathering information about what it would take to offer locally guided, commercial trips in the future; and to begin generating a cohort of Angoon-based guides. In 2024, Kootznoowoo continued to investigate potential bear viewing sites close to Angoon. We recognize that the process of bears habituating themselves to neutral human presence will be a multi-year process with continued partnership with the US Forest Service and others. Youth guides spent 8 days in the field at Pack Creek and in locations near Angoon to observe bear behavior and learn safe bear viewing practices. The salt flats of Favorite Bay have been identified as likely the best place to establish a commercial bear viewing location. Land to access the area is already owned by Kootznoowoo, Inc. ANILCA legislation grants the right for Kootznoowoo, Inc. to construct structures within the 660-foot shore buffer in this part of Mitchell Bay. Project activity in 2025 will include constructing a trail and bear viewing platform. A gear shed was constructed in 2024. The shed will be used to safely store camping and paddling equipment. Eight hard body kayaks were purchased in 2024. These new kayaks will be used to start a kayak rental business and as part of the Guide Academy training.

- There are three keystone accomplishments in the last year for sharing successes of the Sustainability Strategy, which are: 1) Shooting, editing, and releasing the second volume of the SASS highlights video (<https://usda-fs.wistia.com/medias/ng8pk19f1w>) 2) Building and hosting a website to serve as highly visual one-stop resource to communicate SASS and investments (sharingsassalaska.net) 3) Produced an annual year end reflection article featuring quotes from regional strengthening partners and other voices on the collaborative momentum of the SASS approach (<https://www.juneauempire.com/news/woven-peoples-and-place-u-s-forest-services-tongass-collaboration-a-promise-to-the-future/>) There are many other small-scale accomplishments during 2024 that include creating and sharing on-the-ground video and photo content from projects that have been used by local partners, USDA, and regional strengthening partners in reports, presentations, and other communications related to SASS. Anecdotally, the SASS highlight video from 2023 has been leveraged heavily

throughout 2024 by partners and agency staff to demonstrate what is possible through collaboration and partnership.

- **Active Engagement:** Maintaining strong relationships with Southeast Alaska tour operators, consistently listening to their needs and collaborating on innovative solutions to industry challenges. **Guest Speakers Program:** Hosting experienced voices from Iceland, Italy, and Alaska to share insights on tourism product development and innovation, inspiring sustainable and culturally grounded ideas. **Visitor Product Permit Holders on the Tongass:** Facilitating dialogue with operators and the USFS team to improve clarity on permitting processes and lay the foundation for better trail and infrastructure planning. **Wilderness Training Accessibility:** Establishing local Wilderness First Aid and First Responder training in Juneau, eliminating the need for guides and operators to travel for certification. **Mobility Data in Tourism:** Developing a tool to monitor visitor movement across the region to help businesses and communities make informed, data-driven decisions. **Ongoing Industry Dialogue:** Ensuring efforts remain relevant and responsive through continuous discussions with stakeholders, shaping a dynamic and adaptable approach to tourism. **AYS crew alumni getting hired to work locally-** Supported Yakutat Tlingit Tribe's pilot youth stewards program engaging youth with 1 week of in-town projects and 1 week shadowing the AYS crew in Hoonah. Hosted the first ever regional all crew AYS training at Eagles Nest Campground on Prince of Wales Island. 9 AYS crew and 9 leaders attended the annual American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference in San Antonio, TX.
- Convened progress meetings with Forest Service and Trail Mix to discuss project status, sign content, sign list, sign template, and priorities for sign locations. • Developed a list of potential sign locations. • SHI provided a list of topics for 30 signs and draft text for each. SHI completed text for 5 signs. • SHI developed a sign template to assist in providing consistent information across signs. • Agreed that partners and Forest Service will have an opportunity to comment on sign draft content/design before sending it for final rendering. • Confirmed that some sign content will be developed to be applicable to other Southeast communities that might want to adopt the sign. • There will be 20 signs prepared under this agreement. • We have completed drafts of the following signs: Point Louisa Shaman, Land Acknowledgment, Devil's Club, The Áak'w K̄wáan of Juneau, and one berry sign (in progress).
- **1. Creation of Four Internal Tribal Positions:** Tlingit & Haida utilized four Tribal citizen staff members to lead the development and implementation of the Cultural Interpretive Training Program. These positions brought together expertise in education, language, cultural revitalization, and workforce development, forming the core team behind the program's launch and long-term vision. **2. Development of a Culturally Grounded Curriculum and Training System:** This internal team designed a tribally led training curriculum rooted in Indigenous pedagogy, language, storytelling, and place-based learning. The curriculum emphasized mentorship, public engagement, and cultural protocol—delivering content that reflected both community values and professional

readiness. 3. Strengthening of the T&H Workforce Development System: These four positions now serve as foundational assets for building a long-term workforce pipeline. The program is expanding its reach to include Youth in need of early career exposure and mentorship College students pursuing culturally relevant fields Work-ready adults seeking new employment pathways Elders and knowledge bearers, who will be formally integrated as mentors, trainers, and cultural advisors 4. Cultural Sensitivity and Allyship Training for Federal Partners: The internal team co-designed and delivered original cultural sensitivity and allyship training for Forest Service staff. This training strengthened agency partnerships while modeling how Indigenous expertise can shape institutional practices in public service. 5. Engagement of Tribal Citizen Contractors: The program invested in multiple Tribal citizen contractors to co-develop training components, including traditional plant harvesting, medicine-making, trauma-informed facilitation, and curriculum design. These contractors were compensated for their expertise and helped deepen the cultural integrity and hands-on relevance of the training. 6. Intergenerational Learning and Employment Pathways: The curriculum and program design intentionally created opportunities for intergenerational learning—connecting elders, adults, and youth in meaningful ways. Planning is underway for a youth-focused track that will support high school students in accessing paid training opportunities and inspire future careers in cultural tourism, natural sciences, and Indigenous governance.

- 10 guardian communities signed up and funded in pass through. Planning for Guardians gathering in 2025. successful funding application for gathering funding. Beach clean ups in partnership with Ocean Conservancy and AYS.
- 2024 interns included four oyster farmers and two kelp farmers., which is a testimony to OceansAlaska's ability to bring educators and industry into collaboration.
- A big success story in 2024 were the fantastic new educational programs offered to youth to strengthen their skills, abilities, safety and access to traditional and customary foods and the lands and waters of Sheet'ká Kwáan. To highlight two examples, in June 2024, Sitka Conservation Society and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Sitka Native Education Program partnered to offer a Harvest Camp, and in July 2024, those entities and many additional partners offered the first "Splash Mountain Camp," a water and survival skills camp. At the Harvest Camp, 27 youth learned about plants and harvestable foods from the Tongass. Youth were able to harvest, process and cook/bake with berries and plants while building community with each other. At Splash Mountain Camp, 18 youth built their skills and confidence being in and around the water and build community with others through outdoor adventure. Youth got hands on experience with personal floatation devices, kayaking, troubleshooting skiff problems, the seven steps of survival and how to prepare and prevent accidents while harvesting, recreating and working out on the water. Both camps invested directly in youth wellbeing and helped to build skills to support social, environmental and economic benefits now and in the future. A major project accomplishment in 2024 was the development and signature of a formal project agreement between Sitka Conservation Society and Sitka Tribe of Alaska to collaborate

on the Smokehouse and Fish Camps in Sheet'ká Kwáan project. This supports the first objective of this project to strengthen and build healthy institutional relationships in Sheet'ká Kwáan and beyond to support the project vision and collaborations that benefit traditional and customary food access, restorative justice, healing and youth empowerment. As the sovereign Tribal government in Sheet'ká Kwáan, STA is a powerful leader and partner in ensuring that the project goals and activities are aligned with the project purpose and that the project is accountable to the community. STA and SCS team members have diverse knowledge, experience and skills that together can strengthen the project, create opportunities for reciprocal support and help deliver positive impacts for community members. The project agreement we developed laid out a strong scope of work, created new opportunities that wouldn't have existed otherwise, and brought many hands to bear to do the work collaboratively.

- Accomplished all that was set to do in the work plan. The grooming of the properties has been completed, and the storage area.
- Accomplishments: • 20 acres of riparian forest enhanced for stream health and wildlife habitat. • 18 streams surveyed for hand tool restoration. • Over 50 culverts and sections of road in wetlands evaluated and blasting plans developed. • 367 data points collected on road condition and riparian forest condition.
- Administering Subawards: • With SEC's support, AOC received approval from the Forest Service to use a neighboring strip of land to access their leases. • Through changes, inflation, and adversity, the CCSD wood-fired boiler 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, making the project more feasible to complete. Microgrants: • Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) purchased a set of field cameras that will allow them to begin their research into deer habitat and forest restoration. The funding catalyzed the creation of a collaborative working group focused on wildlife habitat restoration and monitoring, which consists of more than 30 members from state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, Tribal governments, universities, and private consultants. • With support from the SASS micro-grants, ALFA identified and applied to renewable energy RFPs to expand seafood industry decarbonization in Southeast Alaska, worked to advance hybrid boat pilot projects to demonstrate cost savings, safety, and marketing benefits; and worked to increase regional renewable energy workforce capacity through training/education • Haines Huts and Trails launched their website which features a reservation system for Tukga Hut, information about trails and conditions around Haines, and volunteering opportunities to support trail and hut maintenance. On the website's launch day, the hut was fully booked for every weekend from January to April. As of January 2025, HHT received \$9,000 in Hut Booking fees, \$2,000 in donations and membership dues, and had over 50 people sign up for their email newsletter or volunteer programs through the new site.

- Administrative Infrastructure. Established key roles, including the Sustainable Southeast Partnership's Deputy Director, who coordinated implementation and maintained community relationships. Built administrative capacity to manage fund distribution, track expenditures, and ensure compliance with federal requirements. Equitable Fund Distribution Framework. Developed a strategic planning process to ensure transparency, accessibility, and equity in fund distribution. Used a hybrid Appreciative Inquiry and "strategic doing" methodology to identify strengths and innovations. Created multiple pathways for project requests and reporting to accommodate diverse communication preferences. Established clear eligibility criteria while maintaining flexibility for community-specific needs. Incorporated stakeholder input from the Steering Committee, host organizations, and community representatives. Created a phased implementation plan with 2-3 pilot projects by Q4 2024 and full implementation in early 2025.

Community Engagement & Partnerships. Represented at the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition's 20th Annual Meeting. Shared experiences at sessions on "Non-governmental Support of Tribal Natural Resources Management Highlighted the Sustainable Southeast Partnership as an effective model for NGO-Tribal collaboration. Advanced specific projects, including: Hoonah Legacy Roads to Trails project (collaborative effort with HIA, US Forest Service) Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects addressing habitat restoration and sustainable resource management. The report referenced above demonstrates significant progress in establishing equitable, accessible processes for community forest partnerships while building capacity for Tribal partners and rural communities to engage with forest stewardship opportunities.
- ASFT trained and placed 18 young apprentices on commercial fishing vessels in 2024 and trained 14 new skippers. Additionally, 12 crew participants who were trained through the expanded training opportunities (25.5 hours of training for each of the 12 participants) held in both Sitka and Petersburg for a total of 30 young fishermen trained in 2024. In summary, ASFT has received over 100 applicants on average each year. Over the last several years, 65 skippers in total have been provided a comprehensive training in order to host deckhands, 35 Skippers have hosted new crew and interns, 38 new Crew Trainees completed the program in 2023 and 2024 have gained experience on commercial fishing boats, 90 total Crew member Applicants received curriculum and on-shore training, 20 Emerging Crew members contributed to fisheries management process through written or oral testimony.
- ASFT was able to advance the project's goal of securing halibut or sablefish A share ownership to anchor fishery access in Southeast by paying quota loans to start the leasing program. In 2024, 4 purchases of A shares were made with SASS support (1 purchase of sablefish A Shares and 3 purchases of halibut A shares). All A shares purchases were bought from residents out of state. 2024 purchases included: 3A Halibut A shares for 5,024 pounds, 3A Halibut A Shares for 526 Initial IFQ pounds, 3A Halibut for 1633 lbs. and West Yakutat, Sablefish 1,688 Initial IFQ pounds. In summary, ASFT's Quota Bank currently holds over 86,000 pounds of sablefish A shares and over 7000 pounds of Halibut A shares. In 2024 six Alaska boats harvested ASFT quota, with each

paying market lease rates to the Trust and paying 3-4 crew from the retained portion. Shares were leased in 2024 to resident rural Alaska fishermen who delivered their catch to Alaska, Pelican, and Yakutat.

- Continued developing business plan; oversaw delivery of first round of equipment; re-published RFP for site work/construction; received quotes for auxiliary equipment.
- Defenders' 2024 accomplishments and successes regarding our bear coexistence work include the following: I. Promoting bear coexistence through community outreach and education: This past year we continued to build relationships with communities and expand our outreach efforts in southeast Alaska to educate the public on the importance of utilizing coexistence strategies to safely share the landscape with bears. Through numerous workshops, presentations and events we were able to share information about bear safety, the benefits of coexistence strategies and information about how to participate in Defenders' subsidy program. In preparation for these events, we developed multiple outreach and advertising products, including radio and print ads and Facebook posts, to boost awareness and participation. In the summer of 2024, we provided presentations on bear coexistence strategies in southeast Alaska at the "Living with Bears" event in Haines and at the Alaska Bearfest in Wrangell. Both presentations focused on the importance of bear coexistence strategies and the resources Defenders offers to prevent human-bear conflict (i.e. our electric fencing incentive program). In addition, Defenders helped to organize a "Bear Awareness Day" in June 2024 at Fortress of the Bear, an educational bear rescue center in Sitka. During this event, Defenders and Alaska Department of Fish and Game provided presentations on bear coexistence strategies and Defenders contributed two bear-resistant garbage cans for a demonstration with the rescue center's bears. Events and Workshops: In Southeast Alaska: 1. Think and Drink at Harbor Mountain Brewing, Sitka, April 18th, 2024, a) Defenders joined a panel of individuals whose work centers around bears. The panel answered questions about bear biology, bear behavior, and how to live and recreate safely in bear country. 2. Bear Awareness Day in Sitka, June 18th, 2024, a) Hosted by Fortress of the Bear. The free event aimed to continue educating the community about bears and how to live and recreate safely in shared landscapes. Defenders of Wildlife provided two bear-resistant garbage cans for a demonstration at the event. 3. "Living with Bears" event in Haines, June 5th, 2024, a) Organized by Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Takshanuk Watershed Council. Hosted by the Haines Library, this event included a presentation from ADFG on bear biology, behavior, and safety, followed by a presentation from Defenders of Wildlife on electric fencing and the Electric Fence Incentive Program. 4. Alaska Bearfest in Wrangell, July 24th-29th, 2024 a) Defenders of Wildlife will have a booth at the festival and host an electric fencing workshop on the last day of the festival. 5. Southeast Conference, September 27th, 2024, a) Defenders of Wildlife presented information regarding our bear coexistence project during the Southeast Conference, including the results of a survey we completed in 2024 regarding the efficacy of our bear coexistence project. Other Location: 6. Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management, March 26 – 29, 2024 a) Presented in Anchorage to Tribal Environmental

Management staff from across the state of Alaska on the benefits of bear conservation and the importance of bear coexistence infrastructure, including electric fencing. Expanding our Electric Fence Incentive Program: With the support of our SASS grant, Defenders subsidized 12 electric fences in southeast, AK in 2024. These fences included an electric fence for Chilkoot Indian Association which surrounds CIA's community garden. These fences have helped communities and individual property owners with food security and provides other benefits.

- During calendar year 2024, the STA Kayaani Commissioners, STA staff, and Forest Service partners built upon the outline for the SFP Plan that was started the previous year. The Kayaani Commission Coordinator facilitated seven SFP-dedicated work sessions in addition to nine general Commission meetings which also included SFP discussions. The Kayaani Commissioners and STA staff collaborated with partners across the Tongass to create the most well-informed draft plan for the Sheet'ká K'wáan Territory/Sitka Ranger District. The draft SFP plan (as of 12/31/2024) is ten pages long, with an additional nine pages of appendices including a glossary, permitting procedure, and draft permit application. It outlines the background of the project, purpose, coverage area, harvestable locations, restricted species, best harvest practices, enforcement, monitoring, and the plan revision process. As of December 2024, the Kayaani Commission felt the SFP plan was in its final stages of drafting.
- Each component of this grant built new relationships and partnerships or expanded upon new relationships and partnerships. Advancing at the speed of trust with all partners included and considered has been challenging but also extremely rewarding. We had hoped to have a fishery catalyst hired two years ago and helping to inform fishery access work by this point, but since that collaborative process is moving slowly, we are now using the fishery access assessment to secure the information we need in the near term while continuing to work with SSP partners to establish the catalyst position. Meetings with Sealaska and Spruce Root leadership during the SSP scenarios planning also provided a breakthrough on the regulatory and governance structure for expanded fishing community access, highlighting for us the importance of in-person gatherings. Finally, our fishery assessment identified the fisheries that are culturally compatible with rural and indigenous life ways, the obstacles currently preventing or limiting participation, and the necessary actions to overcome obstacles.
- Funding was used to test 534 shellfish samples for biotoxins that produce paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Results of the PSP testing was shared with the communities that provided the samples to ensure safe access to the resource. The lab also analyzed over 700 discrete ocean acidification (OA) samples provided by partnering communities while also conducting continuous OA monitoring in Sitka.
- Honestly, taking over the project after it was already underway under the previous school district administration came with a huge learning curve. A key lesson was understanding the value of patience in overcoming unexpected obstacles, learning about

past decisions, troubleshooting issues, and making improvements without disrupting progress.

- In 2024 we completed the community prioritization of trails and created a documenting the options to work with landowners (Huna Totem, Sealaska, USFS) based on the feedback we received. In 2025, we are completing selection of the trail and beginning construction of the opportunity identified. Progress from 2024 into 2025 is documented on our website. <https://www.hia-env.org/2025/03/20/its-time-to-vote-for-a-new-local-trail-in-hoonah/><https://www.hia-env.org/2024/04/02/hsc-march-2024-meeting-looks-at-fundable-work-on-community-activities/><https://www.hia-env.org/2024/03/12/community-survey-results-on-trails-and-community-projects/>
- In 2024, the project achieved several key accomplishments that supported both environmental stewardship and economic sustainability. The completion of the Firewood Project provided direct benefits to the local community by ensuring access to a renewable heating resource, reducing reliance on external fuel sources. The Biomass Research at Three Mile Creek marked a significant milestone by assessing the feasibility of biomass production on multiple sites. This research not only supports sustainable resource management but also opens doors for future economic benefits such as biochar production, which can enhance soil quality and support long-term agricultural and forestry initiatives. The maintenance of the historic John Darrow Trail, despite weather challenges, helped preserve access for both residents and visitors, supporting outdoor recreation and potential ecotourism opportunities. The collaboration under the Good Neighbor Authority, while still in progress, represents a step forward in advocating for Tribal stewardship of ancestral lands, which could lead to increased economic and environmental benefits. Additionally, the successful completion of the Regional Workshop strengthened knowledge-sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, fostering future opportunities for economic growth and environmental conservation. Although engagement with TSCAN (Tribal Soil Climate Analysis Network) remains pending, efforts continue to establish connections that could support future research and resource management. These accomplishments reflect the project's ongoing commitment to enhancing local economies, preserving natural resources, and supporting indigenous-led environmental initiatives.
- In 2024, Wrangell's totem carving project sparked both cultural revitalization and economic growth. Through the return to the traditional master-apprentice model, the project employed two master carvers and mentored four local apprentices, reviving traditional carving techniques while creating paid training opportunities for emerging artists. This intergenerational effort extended beyond the carving shed: our elders guided the process with their knowledge, and our children and youth participated in learning the stories of the poles. One of our goals was to have our children and youth once again know how to "read" our Tlingit "story books" (our totems). By restoring these poles, we are not only revitalizing our culture but reawakening the Tlingit worldview for the next generation. This visible revitalization was a part of the experience of thousands of

visitors to Wrangell throughout the summer, helping to reestablish the town as a meaningful destination for cultural tourism. The project helped fuel a significant increase in visitor spending, supporting local businesses and deepening respect for Lingit traditions across all who came to witness history being restored. When the poles are raised in July 2025, it will be the first totem raising in Wrangell in 38 years.

- In addition to facilitating a dual enrollment class (<https://www.hia-env.org/2024/05/13/an-award-winning-rasor-class/>), environmental education activities were planned with elementary and middle school classes. Activities carried out in other classes included: · Planting seeds with 4th graders (14 students) · Facilitating zoom call with professionals for “International Day of Women and Girls in Science” with 6th graders (6 students) · RASOR lesson with middle schoolers on mussel filtration (12 students) · Animal pelt & bones show and tell with 1st and 2nd graders (18 students) · Shellfish Biomass Survey with visiting college students (9 students) 2023 BIA Tribal Climate Resilience Program proposal was awarded and will help continue program sustainability. Salary time was also used to coordinate the Alaska Youth Stewards program before the summer season started.
- SAWC's match for this project was \$234,014.41 and included employing 5 heavy equipment operators and construction workers for 4 months at the Skannaxheen and Shorty Creek restoration project. This work also enhanced approximately 2 miles of salmon habitat.
- Staff met with Baranof Island Housing Authority (BIHA) to identify a suitable 1-acre location for a garden on BIHA property. After a selection was made staff sought and received BIHA Board approval. Next steps are for the Tribe and BIHA to enter into a long-term joint project agreement where BIHA is the property owner, and the Tribe would manage the garden. We will also work with a local contractor to come up with a cost for development. Simultaneously we'll be working secure a USACE permit for development in wetlands (muskeg).
- Staff were able engage with Forest Service invasive species managers and organize public outreach during the year. More agency and public engagement on invasive plant mgmt. is in the works for 2025.
- Succeeded in securing more funding for a feasibility study which includes engineering work needed to proceed with the project.
- The 2024 reporting period marked another successful year for the SASS Coordination, Navigation, and Visioning project. Collaborative relationships between Spruce Root, One USDA, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and Southeast Conference have strengthened to advance a shared vision of economic diversity, community resilience, and responsible natural resource stewardship in Southeast Alaska. SSP Program Director emphasizes that this work centers on building relationships: "Some of the most important work doesn't look like work at all. It looks like being present. It looks like bringing a casserole to a potluck when someone passes

away, supporting a fundraiser for the basketball team in the darkness of winter...That's where the relationships and trust come from—engaging with and being part of community.” In 2024, the project expanded to address growing climate change challenges. The Climate Adaptation Catalyst joined to support communities facing increasing climate-related hazards, including the recent landslides in Wrangell and Ketchikan. Key initiatives through the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) included: Supporting local stewardship crews across Southeast Alaska, including the Angoon Stewardship Crew that restores previously clear-cut areas, creating jobs for locals while improving fish and deer habitat through collaborative partnerships. Partnering with Tribal governments like the Organized Village of Kake to strengthen local decision-making in land management, supporting healing of traditional homelands and sustainable local administration of programs. Strengthening mariculture initiatives through the work of the SSP's Mariculture Catalyst who advocates for Indigenous leadership and local decision-making in the growing "blue economy." "I feel a responsibility as both a husband and father to protect our oceans and pass down traditions of sustainability." Advancing the development of local food systems in the Upper Lynn Canal region, with Regional Food Sovereignty and Security Catalyst leading efforts to strengthen community resilience through sustainable food production, mariculture initiatives, and improved supply chains. SASS funding has effectively catalyzed additional investments, enabling the maintenance of key positions, including the SSP Director and Deputy Director, Communications Catalyst, and specialized roles in climate adaptation, economic development, and workforce development. This team of dedicated professionals has been instrumental in coordinating efforts across Southeast Alaska communities and amplifying collective impact. The partnership remains committed to the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy's core principles: fostering economic diversity, enhancing community resilience, and promoting collaborative natural resource stewardship, ensuring that management of the Tongass National Forest benefits the ecosystem, bolsters rural economies, and puts local hands to work on their local lands.

- The Alaska Way of Life 4-H Project, housed within Sitka Conservation Society, has worked to create opportunities for youth to participate in camps and workshops within Sitka and continued region wide expansion. During 2024, we hosted or facilitated nine (9) camps in Sitka or regional exchanges with other communities in Southeast Alaska. These camps ranged from 2-8 days and included day camps and overnight camps, with an average of 6 hours of programming/day. We offered 8 monthly series for two different age groups of 2-4 days, averaging 1.5 hours of programming per club meeting. During the Summer of 2024, we served over 120 youth ages 5-18 in Sitka. The Youth Development in Southeast Alaska Report developed for deliverable 1 identifies “building a relationship with place” as a key protective factor for youth in the region. Connection with the natural environment can produce positive outcomes for youth, including improved mental health, immune function and social relationships (Portner, 16). The content of our 4-H programs served to connect youth to the natural

environment of the Tongass National Forest through experiential place-based learning, while building the skills and competencies required to lead in a world impacted by climate change. Through our programs, youth learn about the natural resources of the lands and waters of the Tongass, and build relationships with the land, each other, and community members. Our Community Supper Clubs, one of the new 4-H events we are hosting, exemplifies this approach. Youth learn how to identify, harvest and process edible wild plants and animals here on the Tongass, as well as experience a variety of activities designed to increase life skills such as food preparation and community building through the act of preparing dinner and sharing it with members of the wider community of Sitka. Building respect, knowledge and familiarity for the surrounding natural environment through the harvesting of wild edibles is essential for Southeast Alaska youth to develop a desire to care for and protect these lands in the future and preserve the Alaska way of life.

- The crew participated in eleven trainings related to Workforce Development & Job Training, four projects related to Data Collection & Community Science, ten community involvement initiatives and seven Restoration and Land Management efforts. Every crew member received their Wilderness First Aid certification during the all-AYSCrew Training on Prince of Wales Island. Throughout the summer season, we maintained 5.25 miles of trail, participated in 32 hands-on projects, donated 100 gallons of traditional foods, collaborated with 50 mentors, completed 50 hours (per member) of trainings and distributed 186 sockeye salmon to elders and families. We spent 35 days engaged in work on Forest Service Public Land. This work largely took place on Kupreanof Island, with short stints on Prince of Wales and Baranof Island. A key project, that we will continue in 2025, is the BentBoot Habitat Restoration. The AYS crew worked alongside Fish Biologists to re-establish fish habitat on a previously logged stream. This effort was joined by the Keex' Kwaan Community Forest Partnership and the SE AK Watershed Coalition.
- The KKCFP field crew has been a valuable team that other communities have utilized in field work. USFS field staff from Petersburg were very invested in the work and development when they'd come to Kake and assist and guide where needed. All are chainsaw certified and other OVK Programs have utilized their skills.
- The main objective of this team's season was to clear corridors, brush overgrown trails, and maintain outdoor spaces for local and touristic purposes. Our efforts for the season were built off the foundation of growth, exposure, leadership. An experience to explore new areas of our communities and work alongside those that maintain many of our great outdoor spaces. Depending on the location, treeless muskeg bogs, coastal spruce-hemlock forest, or alpine tundra, we would approach each project site with a new frame of mind. Each local trail, community park, or backcountry trek required its own preparation and approach. The bulk of the work that we did over our summer season consisted of using tools that could brush back or clear a trail corridor. Project locations had copious amounts of rainfall throughout the year, so vegetation quickly starts to

encroach. Being able to open and keep the trail open and visible is inviting and keeps the trail safe. After two weeks of SCA member training, we departed with knowledge that would let us tackle different and difficult obstacles. Deep in the wood's backcountry, paving-the-way, trail building is often thought about when a trail crew is mentioned but being able to keep these spaces accessible and safe is another vital part to trail work. Staple gunning netting on boardwalks keeps footing stable is often overlooked. Building bog bridging keeps footwear dry and alleviates human traffic off sensitive habitats. Leveling trail and filling holes gives access to those that require wheelchairs or very flat surfaces to walk on. Our team worked on various projects on both project sites, but they both benefitted greatly from the work we were able to do. Over 70,00 feet of trail was improved by our Roving Team, and approximately 170,00 sqft. of recreational area was cleaned up. This work was done with tools ranging from garden shears to chainsaws. We were trained in proper chainsaw usage prior to setting off and this let us perform specific and necessary work to accomplish our goals for our partners. Since our work was in small, populated towns, our efforts were immediate and positively recognized. Small communities feel the impact of tourism heavily, so when their local trails are congregated towards for pristine and upkept presentation, they can thrive. The local community members commonly walk those trails daily and seeing the improvement overnight for them is rewarding and fulfilling for both parties.

Summary of Accomplishments: • # Feet of Trail Improved: 70,092 • # sqft Visitor use (recreational) area maintenance: 173,763 • # Visitor use (recreational) building maintenance: 9

- The number of youth served increased by 400% from 2023. Trail Works offered 6 individual summer camps for 1-2 weeks each. Youth ages 8-18 from diverse communities in Sitka were served at these free, place-based camps. Funding from this agreement allowed us to reduce barriers to families who cannot afford the high tuition fees of other camps.
- The Sitka Tribe's Resource Department worked with Forest Service staff to combine funding for a contract with the State's limnology to determine the productivity in relation to run strength of both systems. The Tribe continues to discuss Co-Management/ Stewardship or Redoubt with the Sitka Ranger District.
- The Wildland Fire Program continued to build momentum by providing targeted training in fire mitigation, preparedness, and response to Tribal citizens. These efforts have increased community awareness and readiness, while laying the groundwork for future fire crew development. The program also strengthened partnerships with regional and state agencies, further integrating Tlingit & Haida into the broader wildland fire network. Continued investment in program infrastructure and management has positioned the Tribe for long-term leadership in wildfire response and land stewardship.
- We have completed facility construction, and acquired the essential foundational equipment, a loader and a dump truck. A food waste handling pilot programs in 40 local households is underway utilizing table-top dehydrator/composters. The compost program manager has completed training and national certification.