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Sealaska opposes Federal Subsistence Board decision

Juneau – The Federal Subsistence Board has reversed the rural status of the Southeast village of Saxman. Hunting and fishing opportunities will now be threatened by ending Saxman resident’s priority for fish and wildlife gathering on federal lands over other users.

The community lost its rural subsistence status as a result of being grouped with the neighboring community of Ketchikan. “It’s intolerable that a Native village lost its status because of urban sprawl,” said Dr. Rosita Worl, president of Sealaska Heritage Institute and vice chair of the Sealaska board. “It is still a Native village, and it is still very much dependant on subsistence for the fundamental maintenance of the culture, heritage and the community’s economic survival.”

According to Worl, Sealaska will request the Alaska Federation of Natives Subsistence Commission to make these changing rural and non-rural designations their highest priority.

“This is an erosion of our shareholder’s rights and we do not believe this was the intent of the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act to eliminate Native villages from subsistence protections” she said. “Sealaska will lend support to the community to reverse this unfortunate decision.”

Sealaska is the Regional Native Corporation of Southeast Alaska formed as a result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Sealaska’s primary investments include forest products, plastic injection molding and manufacturing, machining and prototyping, information technology, environmental services, aggregates, and financial markets. The corporation is the largest private landowner in Southeast Alaska and has over 17,400 shareholders.

Find Sealaska online: www.sealaska.com.

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