

EVOSTC Annual Project Report

Project Number: 080834

Project Title: Identification of Essential Habitat for Pacific Herring in Sitka Sound for Comparison to Prince William Sound

Principal Investigator: Heather Meuret-Woody, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, 456 Katlian Street, Sitka, AK 99835, (907) 747-3207, hwoody@sitkatribes.org.

Time period covered: October 1, 2007 – September 1, 2008

Date of report: August 2008

Report prepared by: Heather Meuret-Woody

Work Performed: The PI, Heather Woody attended the EVOS Herring Restoration Steering Committee in Anchorage October 18-19, 2007 and presented the funded project to the committee. On October 31, 2007 STA was informed that funding was approved for FY 08 Project No. 080834 – “Identification of Essential Habitat for Pacific Herring in Sitka Sound for Comparison to Prince William Sound” in the amount of \$23,500. The PI attended the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, January 20-23, 2008, in Anchorage. Attached is a complete 2007 adult and juvenile herring collection site map.

The PI coordinated a contract Dr. Nate Bickford at the University of Alaska Fairbanks for analytical services. Communication has been frequent between the PI and UAF on the coordination of analyzing herring otolith samples and providing data. Due to equipment problems and other untimely events, the results for the otolith chemical analysis are slow going and will not be available to include in this annual report.

The PI attended the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery pre-season meeting on January 31, 2008. The Sitka Sound sac roe fishery harvested 14,750 tons of herring this year, the largest harvest on record for Sitka. The PI collected and processed adult herring otolith samples during the winter bait fishery and the annual Sitka Sound spawning event. This year’s spawning event began at Shoal’s Point on Kruzof Island on 3/27, and continued through 4/23 in Salisbury Sound. These samples will be archived for future projects. The PI also received spawning herring samples from Hoonah Sound on 4/29, courtesy of ADF&G.

The PI worked closely with Sitka Tribe’s Herring Committee and Tribal Council to develop and submit Board of Fisheries proposals regarding commercial and subsistence herring issues in the Sitka Sound area.

Future Work: A no-cost extension was requested for the contract between STA and UAF, extending through September 30, 2008. UAF will finish analyzing core and edge

portions of otoliths by September 30, 2008. Dr. Bickford will then provide data interpretation and a report to the PI, so that a final report can be drafted. STA requested a no-cost extension from EVOSTC in August 2008 to cover the period from September 30, 2008 – April 30, 2009. The draft final report will be completed and submitted to EVOSTC by April 15, 2009. The PI plans to attend the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January 2009. Travel to a community or Tribal organization in Prince William Sound will be completed after all data is received and a presentation is prepared. The PI will also be attending the Regional Advisory Council meetings for the Federal Subsistence Board in September in support of STA's proposal to close the Makhnati Island federal waters to commercial herring fishing.

Coordination/Collaboration: Heather Woody and Dr. Nate Bickford continue to coordinate all the herring collection and the otolith sampling for chemical analysis. The PI worked with Sitka Tribal Council and UAF's grant and contract service department to coordinate a contract between Sitka Tribe and UAF for the chemical analysis of the otolith samples. Began recent communication and data exchange with Vince Patrick and Dr. Evelyn Brown on future project coordination and consultation. Communicated with Mark Carls, NMFS, on juvenile herring rearing areas in Sitka Sound during his review of the stock status of Lynn Canal herring. Also the PI was able to participate in humpback and gray whale research with Jan Straley (whale researcher) while collecting herring samples in April.

Community Involvement/TEK & Resource Management Applications: Sitka Tribe hosted its third annual community dinner on 3/25 in support of the Sitka herring stock. Special guests included the National Geographic film crew, and Dr. Tom Thornton from Portland State University. Sitka Tribe has a herring committee composed of subsistence herring egg harvesters. The herring committee and the Sitka Tribal Council communicate with other Alaska Tribes, community citizens, and federal and state agencies regarding the Sitka Sound herring regularly. Heather Woody meets frequently with the Sitka Tribe herring committee. Also once the results are finalized, the PI plans to visit a community or Tribal organization in Prince William Sound to share the research project and data collected in Sitka Sound, and how this information relates to herring in Prince William Sound.

Information Transfer: The PI attended the EVOS Herring Restoration Steering Committee in Anchorage, October 18-19, 2007 and presented the funded project to the committee. The PI attended the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, January 20-23, 2008, in Anchorage. During the Marine Science Symposium, the PI was able to meet with Dr. Tom Thornton to provide input into his North Pacific Research Board funded herring synthesis of Southeast Alaska.

Budget: Sitka Tribe's 2008 approved indirect rate is 29.78% up from 25.88% in 2007. To date, STA has spent \$98,000 of the total \$174,300 budget (\$152,700 for FY2007 and \$21,600 for FY2008). This leaves a balance of \$76,300. STA requested a no cost extension on August 14, 2008 to cover the period from September 30, 2008 – April 30, 2009. STA is awaiting the EVOSTC decision of this request.

