

LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

**TEAM DRAFT
SEPTEMBER 2008**

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Long-Range Interpretive Plan – Team Draft

Prepared by the Department of Interpretive Planning
Harpers Ferry Center
and
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INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

Introduction

Sitka National Historical Park is situated in the community of Sitka Alaska, which lies on the outer shore of Baranof Island in southeast Alaska, about 100 air miles southwest of Juneau. The park preserves historically and culturally significant sites and artifacts related to the 1804 Battle of Sitka between the Kiks.ádi Tlingit and the Russians, the Russian-American period in Alaska, and the Alaska Native people of southeast Alaska.

Much of the land now in the park was originally dedicated as a public park by President Benjamin Harrison on June 21, 1890. On March 23, 1910, President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation designating Sitka National Monument, which added several tracts of land. On February 25, 1952, President Harry S. Truman signed a similar proclamation that readjusted the boundary. Public Law 92-510 expanded the designated area in 1972 and changed its designation from national monument to Sitka National Historical Park, emphasizing preservation through public ownership of an area that illustrates a part of early US history by commemorating czarist Russia's exploration and colonization of Alaska.

The park consists of two units comprising 106.83 acres, including approximately 49.5 acres of tidelands that are within the authorized boundary. The Fort Site Unit includes the visitor center, which houses park headquarters and the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center. This unit also contains the Totem Trail, other adjoining trails, the site of the historic Kiks.ádi Tlingit fort, the battleground of the 1804 Battle of Sitka, and the Russian Memorial.

The Russian Bishop's House unit, near Sitka's central business district, contains the Russian Bishop's House National Historic Landmark and two adjacent historic buildings: the Priest's Quarters and the Old School (formerly a school operated by the Russian Orthodox Church). The Russian Bishop's House is one of only four remaining examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

For visitors and residents alike, the Sitka experience crosses governmental, cultural, and jurisdictional lines. Most people experience the community as a whole, and the National Park Service sites are components of this whole.

Planning Background

The last long-range interpretive plan (LRIP) for Sitka was completed in September 2000. This plan was tied directly to the general management plan (GMP) and a gateway community plan. Since these plans were completed, many changes have occurred within the community and in visitation use patterns and levels, and some earlier issues were never resolved. In addition, new partnerships with Russia have opened doors to knowledge and resources previously unavailable.

Some of the main issues include:

Exhibits in the visitor center and Russian Bishop's House are in need of upgrading, and consideration needs to be given to interpretation for children and other underserved audiences.

Both park units need to introduce visitors to the key resources of the whole park.

Visitor circulation at both park units needs to be improved.

Historic furnishings in the Russian Bishop's House require more attention.

Wayside exhibits are outdated and require a comprehensive evaluation.

The park education program needs physical space as well as more curriculum-based programming.

Improvements are needed to reach visitors prior to and upon their arrival.

This LRIP will be a component of the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) as directed by National Park Service Director's Orders-6. This plan will provide long-term direction and focus for the interpretive program for the Sitka National Historical Park. Together with the park-produced annual interpretive plan and the interpretive database, it will form a complete CIP. The LRIP will describe the park's primary interpretive themes and visitor experiences, and recommend ways to facilitate those experiences through facility design, interpretive/informational media, personal services programs, and partnership endeavors.

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PLANNING FOUNDATION

Park Purpose

Purpose statements describe the reasons for which a park area was established. These statements are based on an area's enabling legislation and legislative history.

Sitka National Historical Park was established in 1890 as the first federal public park in Alaska. Its purpose was broadened under subsequent enabling legislation in 1910 and 1972. The park preserves, protects, and interprets its natural and cultural resources for the benefit and inspiration of the public. These resources include a battleground, the site of the Kiks.ádi fort *Shiskinoow* (the "village") and the Russian Memorial ("Russian graves") associated with the 1804 Battle of Sitka; a collection of Tlingit and Haida totem poles; the grounds and structures associated with the Russian Bishop's House ("Russian Mission"); and the Indian River, the tidal flats and temperate rainforest that give context to the historical events that occurred here.

Park Significance

Significance is summarized in statements that capture the essence of a site's importance to our natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements are not the same as an inventory of significant resources. While a resource inventory can be the basis, significance statements describe the importance or distinctiveness of the aggregate resources. Knowing a site's significance helps set resource protection priorities, identify primary interpretive themes, and develop desirable visitor experiences.

The resources of Sitka National Historical Park are significant for the following reasons:

- The park contains the site of one of the major armed resistances of Alaska Native people to Russian colonization.
- The park includes the Russian Bishop's House, which is the most intact structure of only four that remain from the Russian-American period in North America. The building represents the role and influence of the Russian Orthodox Church of the people of Alaska, which continues to the present time.
- The park contains totem poles, displayed in a historic context, that exemplify the cultures, art, and talents of Native peoples throughout Southeast Alaska.
- The park fosters an understanding and appreciation of Alaska Native culture through its partnership with the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, a nonprofit organization that since 1969 has sustained and perpetuated traditional art and culture for visitors and residents.
- The park has a long-standing role in the storage, preservation, and display of tribal owned artifacts that are still used by tribe members for ceremonial purposes.
- The convergence of the Indian River, the coastal rainforest, and the sea provides an inspiring biologically rich environment that is critical to understanding the events that took place here. The hydrologic processes of the river and tidal waters, along with good water quality, support important riparian and floodplain communities and intertidal wetlands and provide essential habitat for native fish and wildlife species.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas/concepts that are critical for achieving visitor understanding and appreciation of the significance of Sitka National Historical Park. Primary

themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do provide the foundation from which programs and media are developed. All interpretive efforts, through both personal and non-personal services, should relate to one or more of the primary themes. Effective interpretation results when visitors are able to connect concepts (intangibles) with resources (tangibles) and derive something meaningful from the experience.

The following interpretive themes are critical to visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's importance. The primary theme statements appear in bold followed by lists of supportive concepts.

Sitka is the homeland of the living cultural society of the Tlingit people and their way of life.

Interpretation of this theme will help visitors better understand and appreciate:

- The bountiful land and its use.
- The battle, survival march-their history and memorialization.
- The crafts and their uniqueness.
- The hunting and gathering that sustained their lives.
- The unique social structure and belief systems.
- The interactions with the foreign people.
- The vibrant culture in a changing society.
- The importance of trade.
- The use of evolving technologies.

The convergence of the Indian River, the coastal rainforest, and the sea creates a rich environment that helped shape historical events and provides a protected living landscape for enjoyment and education.

Interpretation of this theme will help visitors better understand and appreciate:

- Functioning ecosystems: how they worked and why (stream ecology, temperate rainforest and climate, intertidal zone and estuary).
- Ecosystem integrity (water quality, air quality, allow natural processes) and monitoring.
- Other natural processes that shape the land: geology/geomorphology (plate tectonics, volcanism, glaciation, isostatic rebound and beach processes, river and riparian processes (hydrology, etc.).
- Resources for inspiration and spiritual connection.
- Natural laboratory for learning
- Connection of natural resources to present and historical cultures (subsistence, world economics (i.e. fur trade, spirituality and art).

Sitka National Historical Park is Alaska's first federal park and it preserves layers of evolving history.

Interpretation of this theme will help visitors better understand and appreciate:

- Creation of a public park: Brady, Merrill, and the City Beautiful movement.
- Totem poles bring the carved history of Southeast Alaska to the park.
- Tourism in Alaska: Sitka an important early destination.
- Park neighbors: the cottage community

- Mission 66 and the park: the visitor center, NPS planning, etc.
- New ways of interpreting culture: IACB, ANB, ANS, SAEICC.
- Museum collections: new models for stewardship.
- Partnerships: sustaining living cultural connections (SEAICC, Tlingit Clans/Community, Russian Orthodox Church).
- The defenses in Alaska during World War II.
- The Alaska purchase which concluded in Sitka ended the Russian era.
- The value of archeological evidence and oral tradition.

Russia’s political, economic, and religious endeavors significantly influenced the history of Sitka, Alaska, and the United States.

Interpretation of this theme will help visitors better understand and appreciate:

- The proximity of Russia to Alaska.
- The striving for culturalization and education of others.
- The positive and negative results of cultural interaction.
- Some of the big decisions made here.

Visitor Experience Goals

Few visitors come to parks just to learn. While interpretive themes can be viewed as cognitive goals (things people should learn), visitor experience goals describe what physical, intellectual, sensory, and emotional experiences should be available. It is what visitors do, feel, think, and learn which includes knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and values. The overall visitor experience is affected by events prior to the visit and affects behavior after the visit.

Visitors come to parks seeking something of personal value and relevance. Since interpretive themes address the cognitive elements, visitor experience goals outline other available opportunities that visitors should be aware of as they interact with park and area resources, staff, and other visitors.

Visitors to Sitka National Historical Park will have opportunities to:

- Learn something about each of the primary interpretive themes.
- Plan their visit based on varying time commitments, interest levels, and abilities.
- Receive expeditious orientation to the park’s key resources.
- Get accurate and layered information when and where they need it.
- Choose from a variety of activities and programs.
- Discover that the park has a large museum collection.
- Discover and experience park trails.
- Learn about current research projects.
- See the best face of the NPS.
- Realize that the cultural center is a separate partner.
- Interact with artists at the cultural center.
- Easily find key park resources.
- Have a safe and enjoyable visit.
- Find intellectual and emotional connections in the resources.
- Develop a sense of stewardship.
- Realize the national and international importance of the park as a unit of the NPS.

- Experience the park in its cultural context.
- Have their needs met.
- Experience friendly and high quality visitor services.
- Experience authentic resources.
- Experience the park's natural environment.
- Experience aspects of the park even if they cannot visit in person.
- Access park resources in some manner.
- Learn a little of what it is like to live here.

Visitation and Visitor Use

The following information regarding park visitors and visitor use is derived from data maintained by the NPS Public Use Statistics Office (WASO) in Denver, a 1994 visitor survey, the GMP, the 2007 Servicewide Interpretive Report, the Sitka Visitors' Survey 2006, the 2006 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan, and discussions with park staff and partners. This information can be valuable in analyzing past and current park visitors and in developing interpretive media and programs for various audiences.

NPS Public Use Statistics

Table 1 shows the total number of recreation visits to Sitka National Historical Park over the last 10 years. This table clearly shows a steady increase in annual recreation visits until 2006.

Table 1

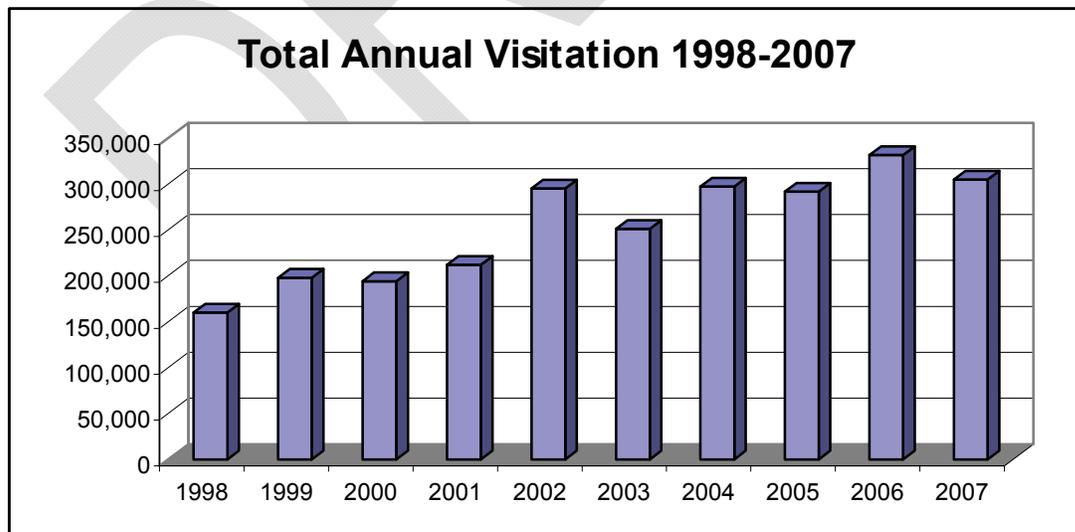
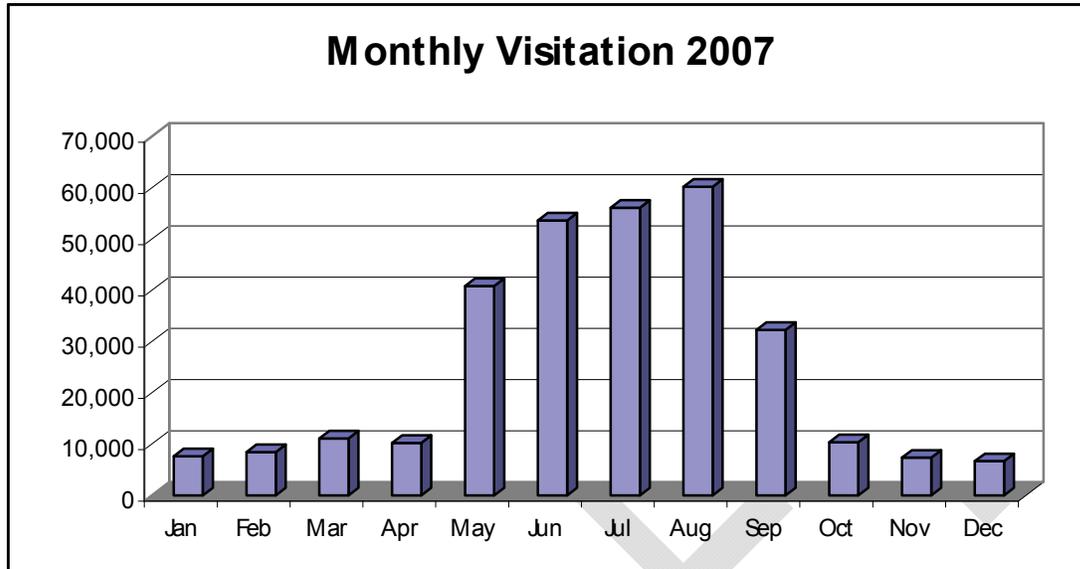


Table 2 below illustrates the total monthly recreation visits for 2007. The bell curve pattern with a peak in the summer clearly coincides with the cruise ship season in Alaska.

Table 2



Other cumulative data for 2007 from the park’s submission to the NPS Public Use Statistics Office include the following:

Visitor Center Visits	113,096
Visitor Center Conducted Tours	203
Visitor Center Tour Attendance	2,105
Russian Bishop’s House Visits	13,721
Russian Bishop’s House Conducted Tours	1,458
Russian Bishop’s House Tour Attendance	6,942
Russian Bishop’s House Education Programs	57
Russian Bishop’s House Education Program Attendance	683
Visitor Center Education Programs	56
Visitor Center Education Program Attendance	1,333
Off-Site Education Programs	347
Off-Site Education Program Attendance	8,320
Number of Live Talks (Matinee)	623
Live Talk Attendance	4,115
Special Events	16
Special Event Visitors	21,020
Total Tours	1,661
Total Tour Attendance	9,047
Total Education Programs	113
Total Education Program Attendance	2,016

2007 Servicewide Interpretive Report

The park’s 2007 submission to the Servicewide Interpretive Report revealed the following:

- 126,100 visitors were contacted at visitor centers/contact stations.

- 16,248 visitors were reached through informal interpretation.
- 8,782 people attended one or more of 1,649 formal interpretive programs.
- 55,983 visitors viewed interpretive demonstrations & performing arts activities.
- 112 children participated in the Junior Ranger program.
- 10,447 students engaged in one or more of 458 education programs.
- 32,571 visitors viewed the park AV program.

[Note: Some of the above figures should be checked against those submitted to the Public Use Statistics Office.]

1998 General Management Plan

The following information is excerpted from the 1998 Sitka General Management Plan. Please note that this information is now at least ten years old and may or may not reflect current conditions. This information, however, can be of value in documenting and assessing significant trends or sudden changes.

- Tourism is highly seasonal in Sitka, as for all of Alaska. Most visitors arrive from June through September, when the climate and weather are most favorable. Although tourism in Sitka is subject to predictable cyclical ups and downs, it is an important, viable segment of the local economy.
- The most important contributor to tourism growth in Sitka is the growing cruise ship industry; however, in 1997 cruise ship passengers accounted for only 20% of the park's total visitation.
- Visitation to Sitka comes in surges as the cruise ships come and go. These visitation patterns have resulted in sudden increases in both park units and have caused crowding in some areas. The presence of three or four cruise ships in port at Sitka means large numbers of visitors at a time, and no single attraction can adequately accommodate them all.
- Although most cruise ship passengers tour Sitka on their own, many elect to go on a guided bus or walking tour. Most of these tours begin at the lightering facilities and most include the park visitor center and surrounding forest as a regular stop. This results in large numbers of visitors arriving at one time which overburdens the facilities and park staff.

1994 Visitor Services Project (Survey)

The Cooperative Park Studies Unit of the University of Idaho conducted a visitor survey at the park from July 11-17, 1993. The results were published in 1994 and are summarized below. This survey is now 15 years old, and caution should be used in applying the findings to today's visitors. Caution also is advised is interpolating the results for visitors arriving at other times of the year. For complete results, readers should refer to the full survey.

The following is a summary of the survey findings:

- Visitors were often in family groups (51%) or in groups of two (51%).
- Fifty-eight percent of visitors were between 46-70 years of age; 6% were 15 years old or younger.
- Eighty-six percent of visitors were arriving for the first time.
- Most visitors (52%) spent up to one hour at the Russian Bishop's House.
- Sixty percent of the visitors stayed up to one hour at the park visitor center.
- Most visitors (67%) were not aware of the park's existence prior to their visit.
- Most visitors arrived to Sitka by cruise ship (51%).

- Most visitors (64%) walked to the park.
- The most often used source of information about the park was travel guided/tour books (36%); however, 24% of visitors stated that they had received no advance information about the park.
- Of those who visited the park, the most visited site were the visitor center (88%), Totem Trail (79%), Russian Bishop's House (65%), the 1804 battleground/fort site (60%), Indian River footbridge (46%), and the Russian Memorial (29%).

2006 Sitka Visitors' Survey

This survey was conducted in August 2006 by Union College, Schenectady, NY for the Sitka Tourism and Planning Committee. The following is a summary of the results that pertain to visitors to the park:

- Fifty-nine of the respondents were middle-aged or older (51 years +). A quarter (24%) of the respondents were between 36 and 50 years of age. Only 16 percent were under the age of 35.
- Eighty-six percent of visitors surveyed arrived by sea. The majority (70%) arrived aboard large cruise ships. Nine percent arrived on Alaska Marine Highway ferries. Five percent arrived on small cruise ships (i.e. fewer than 300 passengers), and two percent arrived by private boat. The remaining fourteen percent of visitors arrived by air.
- Nearly half (47%) of those surveyed were traveling in groups of two.
- Visitors not on cruise ships stayed an average of eight nights in Sitka. Those on cruises spent an average of five and one half hours.
- For 81% of those surveyed this was their first visit to Sitka.
- Most visitors got their information about Sitka several months in advance of their trip, and the most used sources of information were: travel agents (38%), cruise lines (35%), internet (34%).
- Nearly half (45%) of visitors surveyed indicated that they had not purchased and did not intend to purchase a guided tour.
- The most popular guided tours were led by Sitka Tours and Sitka Tribal Tours.
- Sitka National Historical Park was visited by thirty-six percent of the respondents and was the most popular attraction for people not on an organized tour.
- St. Michael's Cathedral and the Russian Bishop's House were the second and third most popular attractions, visited by 30 and 24 percent of survey respondents respectively.

2007 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan

This plan contains many observations, data, and strategies related to Sitka's visitor industry. Only a few items are summarized here as they relate to this LRIP. Readers should refer to the entire document for more in-depth information and recommendations.

Data regarding visitor arrivals is particularly applicable and is summarized below:

- Cruise ship visits to Sitka have grown slowly over the last 25 years; however, scheduled visits were expected to drop by about 30,000 in 2007 and even more in 2008. This is attributed to Sitka's location (off the main travel route with resulting higher fuel costs) and the market's desire for short trips.
- The community does have the option of encouraging a higher percentage of visitors to leave the ships, or for the ships to stay longer than 5.5 hours.
- Several cruise lines are no longer coming, but the number of ships remains relatively stable.

- The number of independent travelers to Sitka has remained relatively stable.
- The number of visitors arriving by ferry has dropped steadily over the past ten years, from 18,300 passengers in 1996 to 13,400 in 2006. The decline is attributed mainly to the decreasing quality of ferry service to Sitka.
- Operators of Sitka-based culture-based businesses state that the numbers of visitors coming for cultural activities has been stable.
- Three of the strongest attributes of Sitka as viewed by members of the tourism industry are (1) the authentic quality of Sitka as a “real community,” (2) the authenticity of the Native culture and the array of attractions (including Sitka National Historical Park and the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center), and (3) the Russian history and associated resources.

Issues and Analysis

The following issues and concerns were identified by the planning team during the two workshops conducted in Sitka. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can be used to help justify many of the plan’s recommendations.

- **Exhibit lighting in the visitor is still an issue.** The previous LRIP had stated that some displays and/or text are too dim for many, especially elderly visitors. The solution was to install extra ceiling lights that would be used only during periods of peak visitation. This extra lighting is harsh and potentially damaging to some artifacts, and it is not uncommon to find these lights on during non-peak times.
- **Visitor center exhibits are static, providing no options for interactivity.** The display cases are dated and difficult to access. This is especially important because some of the loaned items must occasionally be removed for use in special tribal activities.
- **Need parkwide orientation at key locations.** Visitors who arrive at the park visitor center do not receive adequate orientation to all key park resources, including the Russian Bishop’s House. Likewise, visitors to the Russian Bishop’s House do not find much to orient them to other park resources. Due to the character and current design of the two facilities, this is a sensitive issue at both locations. Better park orientation also is needed at the lightering and ferry facilities.
- **Exhibits are male centric.** The Native culture exhibits at the visitor center contain predominantly male images. Women and children are a significant and important part of Tlingit culture, but are under-represented in the current exhibits.
- **Improved interpretation is needed at the carving shed.** The carving shed, which is located behind the visitor center, often sits empty. Sometimes, even when a project is underway, the carver is not present. Current and past projects could be better interpreted, and better directions are needed to direct visitors from the Totem Hall exhibit.
- **Improvements needed for interpreting the exterior totem pole storage area.** Totem poles, too large for display in the totem exhibit room, are stored horizontally in a sheltered area at the side of the visitor center building. Few visitors ever find this display which must be viewed through a heavy wire mesh.
- **There is a shortage of archival storage space.** This is part of a larger issue of increasingly limited museum storage throughout Sitka.
- **Russian Bishop’s House exhibits are old, static, and offer no interactivity.** The exhibit cases on the first floor take up excessive space and contain lighting elements that compete with rather than focus attention to the items on display. The space is used for park education programs, but the exhibits offer little attraction for children.

There also is the need to present the greater Russian story here. The park owns a very large scale model of Sitka during the Russian colonial era, but it is far too big and fragile for display in this location.

- **Historic furnishings in Russian Bishop's House need to be updated or completed.** The initial historic furnishings plan did not have the benefit of access to resources in Russia. This has now changed, and the park has formed a strong partnership with their Russian counterparts. The current historic furnishings and the potential for new ones on the first floor need to be assessed with the aid of these new resources.
- **Need a place to show the new film being produced for the Russian Bishop's House.** Production of this film is underway, and the LRIP is charged with recommending a location for showing it.
- **Find ways to get more visitors to the Russian Bishop's House.** The building exterior does little to attract visitor attention and draw people inside. Operating the facility is very staff intensive, requiring 3-4 employees on duty at most times. Currently, visitors can only access the second floor via a guided tour, which is limited to no more than twelve people.
- **Need to improve how the story of the 1804 battle and survival march is told.** Although the 1804 battle and survival march may be key elements of personal services interpretive programs, the only interpretive media that interpret these events are two wayside exhibits (one in the wrong location) and one exhibit case at the visitor center. Since many visitors never make it to the battle/fort site, their only opportunity to learn about the battle is at the visitor center.
- **Visitor congestion at the Salmon River pedestrian bridge.** During cruise ship visitation days, especially during salmon runs, many tour guides take people to the pedestrian bridge that crosses the Salmon River. This is an excellent spot to view the river, but the large number of visitors and narrowness of the bridge creates a great amount of congestion.
- **Wayside exhibits are out of date and some inaccuracies exist.** None of the park wayside exhibits comply with current NPS graphic identity guidelines. Only a few of the poles on the Totem Trail are interpreted. Although a new totem pole interpretive publication has recently been published, many visitors may not have one in hand as they walk the trail. Some additional interpretation of these resources would be beneficial.
- **Need strategies for providing information, orientation, and interpretation for different audiences, including local residents.** This would also include providing quality experiences for the many visitors who only have a short amount of time to spend (i.e. cruise ship tour groups).
- **Find ways for the park, park partners, and the community to work together.** This will be especially important with the approaching NPS 100th anniversary. Also, many people interpret the park or address park themes besides NPS employees. Still other recommendations for working together were identified in the GMP and in the gateway community plan and have not yet been implemented.
- **Need to plan for the future of the park's education program.** The education program is ready to grow, and this requires more in the way of curriculum-based activities and adequate/appropriate space to conduct programs.
- **Improve directional signing to key park resources and services.** Signing deficiencies exists both within the park and at key locations in the community. Some of the issues and potential solutions were identified in the GMP and in the gateway community plan, but have not been implemented.

- **Need to better represent the roles of the Aleut people in Sitka's history.** The Aleut people were involved in some of the key events in Sitka's history, and their roles currently are not adequately portrayed in park's interpretive media and programs.
- **Need to find ways to get people to tell their own stories.** Oral history is an integral part of Tlingit culture. While the park has an excellent collection of recorded oral history, there is a need to more.
- **Better interpretation of the cultural and natural landscapes.** The rapid growth of the rain forest and the effects of isostatic rebound make interpretation of some cultural landscape elements difficult. Likewise, except for the salmon, there currently is little interpretation of the park's natural environment.
- **Park library and vertical reference file are in poor shape.** The park library is currently housed on the second floor of the Old School adjacent to the Russian Bishop's House. There is little organization to the books and vertical reference files, and there doesn't appear to be anyone in charge.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a description of program and media recommendations designed to further define, support, and communicate the park's mission, purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and visitor experience goals. Implementation of these recommendations will help ensure that visitors are well prepared and informed, and that they will be able to develop meaningful connections with tangible and intangible resources.

The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations, and sometimes suggests specific means of presentation. It is important to remember that the latter are only suggestions and should not in any way limit the creativity essential during the media and program planning and design processes. On the other hand, proposals will be specific enough to provide meaningful guidance, develop Class C cost estimates, prepare or update PMIS submissions, and define the parameters within which these creative energies can flow.

At least one of the primary interpretive themes makes direct reference to the Tlingit and other Native people and their associations with the land now in the park. It is essential that the park maintain a dialogue and active participation with tribal leaders during the planning, design, and production of theme-related media and programs.

Pre-Visit Information and Wayfinding

Pre-Visit

The park will continue to provide information and orientation through traditional means such as answering phone, mail, and email requests. Responses will continue to be tailored to specific inquiries, and pre-developed packets of material will continue to be used in handling more common requests. All printed information will contain appropriate phone numbers and addresses, including email addresses, and the park web site url.

All materials, including those produced by outside travel entities, will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain accurate, appropriate, and current. Since many people now use GPS navigation systems, the park should work with these system providers to ensure that they give accurate and most direct instructions for reaching the park.

The park web site contains many special features such as a virtual tour of the Russian Bishop's House and links to numerous oral history interviews. The park will continue to enhance its web site, especially the in-depth material and links to related and partner sites, in order to reach larger and more diverse audiences. Links or references to additional, sites, museums, and programs that deal with theme-related elements should be explored and developed.

Other, more specific recommendations include:

- Creating a virtual tour of the totem poles. This could include general information, plus more specific data regarding their history, carving, placement, and the stories they tell. This eventually could include features such as a video of activities in the carving shed.
- Provide various types of downloadable information so that people can place material on their Ipods, MP3s, CDs, or other devices for use at home, in route, or when they get to

the park. This could include an audio self-guiding tour of the park, site bulletins, and the official park brochure.

- Develop virtual displays of artifacts and additional photos in the park collection. This could include items both on and off exhibit, and it could be a valuable resource you general viewers as well as researchers.

Implementing some of these web-based recommendations may require assistance from current or potential park partners. The park should explore partnering with groups such as the Sitka Conservation Society which has already offered assistance in developing web tours. In addition, the park should consider using VIPs, temporary or seasonal employees, or perhaps internships with area schools to implement other web-based recommendations. However, an action plan should be developed first to further evaluate, organize, and prioritize the proposals.

Since the majority of park visitors are cruise ship passengers, opportunities should be explored to provide appropriate pre-visit information on-board. This is especially important for the majority of passengers who do not sign up for a guided tour, but rather opt to explore Sitka on their own. While most cruise ships do not want to distribute additional literature, they may be open to showing short films over their on-board television station or in their theaters. The former would be available for passengers to view at their leisure in their rooms. The park already has a script (ten minutes in length) for just such a film. Another option is to develop a film that links Sitka, Glacier Bay, and Klondike Gold Rush in a single presentation. These films, in addition to establishing a NPS connection, would help people plan their visit and not have to rely on a deluge of vendors when they arrive on-shore.

Effectively reaching cruise ship passengers and working cooperatively with cruise ship companies has been an issue for many years. The previous Sitka LRIP and those for Glacier Bay and Klondike Gold Rush all include recommendations for making better connections with this important audience. Any success will require continued communication with the cruise ship companies, the Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, the three NPS sites, and the regional office.

Wayfinding

The park, along with appropriate county, state and federal highway departments, will evaluate the overall directional sign system and initiate a sign plan request through the Harpers Ferry Center sign program. Regional Office signing officials and Harpers Ferry Center may also be consulted during this process. Directional and entrance signing should utilize the NPS graphic identity standards when feasible. Directional signing is not only critical for people in their own (or rental) vehicles, but also for the many cruise ship passengers who tour on foot. A lot of this was also addressed in the gateway community plan which should be consulted in developing any directional signing system with park partners.

Adequate and appropriate signing should begin at the cruise ship docks, and at the ferry terminal. Visitors need to be oriented visually and geographically. It is also important for them to know where and how far key destinations are, but also how long it will take to walk to various sites. Again, some possible routes were suggested in the gateway community plan. This would at least provide a starting point for further discussions on implementation.

With today's evolving cell phone technology, one of the key signs at the arrival points could be the display of a phone number for park information and optional self-guiding tours. Visitors could use this system to obtain pre-recorded information on reaching park facilities, current programs,

special events, etc. Self-guided tours could be tailored to individual interests, physical abilities, or available time requirements.

Visitor Center

Entrance and Lobby

Upon arriving at the visitor center parking areas, visitor attention is immediately captured by the collection of totem poles at both the upper and lower levels. Although some visitors on guided bus tours are initially taken on the trail to the Salmon River bridge, most proceed to the visitor center entrance.

Visitors enter a large open lobby area which contains numerous large Tlingit carvings. For most people who are unfamiliar with northwest American Indian culture the lobby is captivating and inviting. All displays and visitor services are located along the perimeter of the room, leaving a large circulation space in the center of the room. This large space is useful for periods when visitation is high in the building.

In the southwest corner of the room visitors may speak with a ranger at the information desk and pay the entrance fee; however, fee collection in this location is difficult during busy times. The desk is large and can accommodate multiple visitors, as well as those in wheelchairs. The front of the desk features glazed and lighted display cases, but they are difficult to view, especially when other visitors are standing in front of the desk.

Nearly all major access points for visitors are labeled with routed white-on-brown signs. The signs are neatly done and consistent in appearance. All signs can be seen from most locations in the room, which makes them effective for building orientation.

It is recommended that some of the wording on the signs change to improve visitor orientation. All cap letters should be changed to caps and lower case.

Location	Current Text	Suggested Text
Information desk and office	INTERPRETIVE OFFICE	Information
Theater entrance	THEATER	Theater
Hall to SEAICC and Totem Hall	CULTURAL CENTER	Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, Bookstore, and Totem Hall
Entry to exhibit gallery	EXHIBITS	Exhibit Gallery – The Tlingit
South door	-----	Totem Trail and Indian River

Adding a sign above the door to the trailhead should assist visitors in finding the trails more easily. Lobby identification signs should be well lighted. They can be designed to harmonize with the carved artwork elsewhere in the room, but produced using modern exhibit materials. Similar signs should be used along the corridor of the Cultural Center, and in the Totem Hall.

The shape of the room emulates the basic design of a clan house, and many of the carvings would have been used inside or outside such houses. As currently presented, visitors might not understand what they are seeing. There are few interpretive labels, captions, or identifiers for the

carvings. A large carving of a frog is not identified. It would be useful for the carvings to have information and interpretation associated with them.

A few temporary/changeable exhibits featuring items made in the cultural center also are located in the lobby. Although considered temporary, these exhibits seem to have grown roots. Objects from the cultural center do not need to be displayed in lobby cases, because there are numerous display shelves in the hallway outside the various studios which allow visitors to see the objects while looking into the studio spaces where they were created.

The lobby is a logical place for orientation to the park as a whole. There is a small low-profile wayside exhibit just outside the main entrance which introduces the park, but this provides only minimal information. The addition of the Russian Bishop's House as a park site in 1972 enlarged the park, and made more options available to visitors. While the current visitor center lobby might have been adequate for providing orientation to the park as it existed before the Russian Bishop's House opened in 1988, it does not help visitors distinguish the full range of park resources, or aid visitors in learning their options for activities in the park, or even at the visitor center site.

While almost everyone appreciates the artistic beauty of the lobby, the current and future use of the space is a point of contention among some of the park staff and partners. Some see it as a symbolic representation of a clan house and a place to display Tlingit art. In this regard these folks feel that little if anything else (even interpretive labels) should intrude on this setting and the feelings it creates. Others feel that as the lobby of the NPS visitor center, the space needs to orient visitors to all of the key park resources (including the Russian Bishop's House), and not just Tlingit culture. They also feel that the carvings would have even more meaning and impact if they were interpreted.

In consideration of both of these views, a number of potential solutions were developed and discussed by the planning team. Their feasibility, practicality, and affordability were generally not assessed, but will eventually need to be considered. The options include:

A. Develop and upgrade exterior media to provide orientation to key park resources. This would require a design and material that would stand up to weather and climate conditions, and provide shelter for visitors. Media likely would be limited to text/graphic panels and possibly some sculptural elements. During inclement weather, visitor would not be inclined to spend much time with these exhibits. The information provided in this location, however, would be available at all times, including when the visitor center is closed, and it would be useful for those not wishing to enter the building or pay the entrance fee.

B. Convert the theater into a lobby and main entrance. Use the current theater space to provide orientation to all major park resources and themes. The high ceiling area would allow for the display of large items, and the sloped floor could be retained for giving talks. The room also could include one or two video alcoves to preserve aspects of the current park film. Such a conversion would require some exterior landscaping to make the new entrance natural and obvious. From the new lobby visitors would walk down the hallway and enter the Tlingit art/clan house room (the current lobby) which could take on even more of the current ambiance and feeling.

C. Use part of the first floor of the Russian Bishop's House as the primary site for parkwide orientation. This would be a good location for pedestrian visitors who are not on a guided tour; however, limited parking would be a problem for bus tours and people with their own vehicles.

Also since the architecture of the building has little drawing power, something would need to be done, possibly at risk to the site's historic integrity, to attract visitors to the entrance.

D. Provide basic orientation at both the visitor center and Russian Bishop's House. This could be done under design criteria requiring minimal impact to either facility, but to provide sufficient information and media to adequately inform visitors of the key park resources. At the park visitor center, the use of some exterior media (see option A) could be included, and the information desk could be relocated closer to the building entrance to better accommodate entrance fee collection.

E. Lease/acquire a building on the Sheldon Jackson campus for use as the park visitor center. This option would allow both of the current facilities to retain their independent characters, but this option is beyond the scope of a LRIP and would likely be cost prohibitive. It would also probably require new legislation and an amendment to the GMP.

F. Construct a new rest room facility and utilize the existing space for parkwide orientation. This would require a redesign of the overall building circulation pattern and landscaping to define a new entrance. As with option E, this may be beyond the scope of a LRIP and would likely be cost prohibitive. This actually was an option considered (but not implemented) in the recent redesign of the visitor center.

G. Construct an open air shelter adjacent to the upper parking lot to assemble visitors, provide parkwide orientation, give interpretive talks, and possibly show the current film. The structure could be modeled on a clan house theme that would draw visitors in. It would be critical for the structure to be located on the main entry route and visitors would clearly need to see the value of stopping. During the off-season the facility could be used for park education programs. A facility in this location might serve bus tour arrivals well, but it would be out of the way for pedestrian arrivals and those using the lower parking lot.

H. Relocate the main entrance to bring visitors into the Totem Hall. This space could accommodate some parkwide orientation exhibits and a small information/fee collection desk. After viewing the exhibit, visitors could exit to the carving shed and Totem Trail, or they could proceed into the hallway of the cultural center and the rest of the building. This option would be seasonal, only operating during the cruise ship season. It would place a lot of visitor pressure on the cultural center studios, and space for orientation would be limited. It also might detract from the positive impact of the Totem Hall exhibits.

[Note: During the recommendations workshop, the planning team did not come to any consensus regarding any of these options. Perhaps the answer is still out there or lies in a combination of the above. This LRIP does not have to make a selection; however, it might be good if it did. That way you would have a recommendation from which to develop a PMIS statement and a LRIP to back it up. In either case, I think it would be good to preserve most or all of these options (perhaps with a little more elaboration on advantages & disadvantages) to document our thought process & the alternatives considered.]

Other "common to all" recommendations for the current visitor center lobby include:

- Moving the information desk closer to the entrance to better accommodate entrance fee collection.

- Revising the entrance fee information to let visitors know that it includes admission to the Russian Bishop's House. This could result in increased visitation to the RBH, as many would want to get their money's worth.
- Providing text and non-intrusive audio interpretation of the Tlingit carvings, preferably in the words of the clan or house that owns them. Visitors need to know what the items are and that they are still owned and occasionally used. This would require consultation.
- Removing the temporary cultural center exhibits and better utilize the display shelving in the studios, and in the Totem Hall.
- Assessing the value of the visitor register and whether it contributes to congestion on busy days. Consider removal.

Exhibit Gallery

Harper Ferry Center, in collaboration with the park and its partners, planned and designed the exhibits in the Visitor Center exhibit room in 1989. The exhibition focuses on the Tlingit at Sitka, and features images and objects related to their history and culture. For the most part, the exhibits do not interpret Russian and American history at Sitka.

This is a traditional museum exhibition which relies on images and objects to tell most of the story, supplemented by labels which identify and set some context. Although the exhibit elicits intellectual interactivity, it does not include physical interactive techniques such as flip books, touchable items, immersive settings, pushbutton activated displays, and visitor-activated AV elements.

Historic black-and-white photographs, some dating to the turn of the century, are of exceptional quality, and several of them are enlarged to make their impression even more powerful. It is possible for visitors to study the faces, costumes, and settings of these scenes to more fully appreciate the peoples being presented. Women are not equally represented in the photos. More recent color photos, again reproduced at large sizes, help demonstrate the continuity of Tlingit culture.

Artifacts help establish the concrete reality of historic sites and help visitors see historic events from a human perspective. The Tlingit artifacts are of high quality, and are displayed elegantly in artifact cases. A large central case allows elaborate costumes and regalia to be mounted on forms, accompanied by related smaller artifacts on pedestals. The Peace Hat is a premiere object and is displayed so that it can be viewed from multiple angles. The numbers of artifacts appear to be appropriate for the size of the room, and the cases do not look crowded. The park has done a great job in collaborating with partners on the display of loaned or culturally-sensitive artifacts and images, and in monitoring conditions in the gallery. It is recommended that these efforts continue as the exhibition evolves.

Many of the items on display are still owned by various Tlingit clans and houses, and they occasionally are used in special tribal events and ceremonies. This requires the removal and replacement of items from the cases, a task that currently is difficult, sometimes requiring several people. New or redesigned cases are recommended to better facilitate object removal without compromising security. Also, in addition to placing temporary labels indicating that items are currently being used elsewhere, some introductory statement is needed to let visitors know that many of the objects are owned and occasionally used by the Tlingit people.

The room has no windows and only one opening to the lobby, so it is possible to control light everywhere except at the exhibition's entrance. The low light levels and the buffering from

outside noise create a meditative environment that enhances a visitor's ability to appreciate the displays.

The black ceiling and black light fixtures work well in the exhibit hall, and focus attention on the objects and displays. However, it appears that there may not be enough fixtures to light the displays adequately. Newer compact fluorescent can fixtures are scattering unfocused light into the area which works against the track lights designed for the room. These fixtures should be used only for cleaning or other maintenance, or, the cans could be relamped with more appropriate lamps.

The entrance to the gallery is open to the lobby and the large window area on the south side of the lobby. Even though there is filtering film on the lobby windows, too much light is entering the exhibit room and is incident on the textiles along the north wall. This light will fade or degrade light-sensitive materials. Work is needed to determine a way to reduce this light spill, and also to provide a more gradual transition into the gallery space. Other artifacts in the gallery are exposed to light levels that will cause damage, and there are observable hot spots.

Labels are fairly concise and factual, and appear to be about the right number and length for the room. Most labels are white with color backgrounds. By today's standards, the labels could be more "interpretive." Some visitors may not see how the objects and images might be relevant to them.

A number of the labels are reproduced in font sizes which are too small in point size to be easily read, especially considering the low lighting in some areas.

The park has done an excellent job in maintaining this exhibition. Although decades old, it still has a fresh appearance. The park has made some adjustments where needed to display items and labels. In "The Battle of Sitka" exhibit the park has produced a new caption panel for Katlian's hammer.

In general, three options for the Tlingit exhibit gallery could be considered.

- 1) The exhibit remains as is, but with a small number of short-term changes to remedy problems with lighting, text revisions, cycling of artifacts, and minor additions and deletions.
- 2) The exhibit remains in place, but with substantial revisions to content and presentation. The short term changes mentioned above would be undertaken, but with some significant redesign to add some interactive elements, audiovisual elements, a new lighting system, and enhanced accessibility features.
- 3) Removal of the current exhibition and replacement with new exhibits. In this option the purpose of the exhibition and the themes treated could be revisited if desired. For example, new exhibits would create opportunities to expand interpretation of the 1804 battle, survival march, and the roles of the Aleut people in Sitka's history.

The Tlingit exhibition complements the studio areas visitors will see in the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center by providing historical context, and allowing visitors to see older objects that serve as models for objects being created in the cultural center by Native artists.

Totem Hall

Visitors walk down the central corridor of the cultural center to reach the Totem Hall. Double doors at the end of the hall open into the exhibit area. The space is not climate controlled but the objects are protected by walls and a high roof. A sign on the doors states TOTEM HALL; however, it becomes obliterated when there are a lot of visitors in front of it. This sign needs to be placed over the door so that it remains visible on busy days.

The focus of attention in the Totem Hall is obviously the display of authentic totem poles and house posts in a protected area where they can be viewed comfortably in all weathers, and with natural light supplemented by artificial light when necessary.

Exhibit panels in the room are in good condition, and feature excellent images, drawings, and label content. Compared to most wayside exhibits, which they emulate in many respects, they contain much content. The large numbers of words and images could be daunting for many visitors. Reading just one panel, such as the “Brady Pole Exhibit” and comprehending its graphics could take as much as eight minutes or more. A typical wayside exhibit takes about a minute to read, and consists of about 300 words. The Brady panel contains more than 1,500 words.

In addition to containing too many words, the Brady panel is located at the end of the exhibit hall where most visitors never see it. It is considered by some park staff as one of the more important exhibits in the room, but it often only receives attention when an interpreter uses it during a talk.

There are many fine features in the existing exhibit panels. Of particular value are the tactile, three-dimensional models showing formline carving and bowl carving. These communicate much, even if visitors do not read the text.

There are some issues with the positioning of the large wayside-style panels. The panel on the totem pole collection logically faces the display wall. The panel on formline art faces into a display case, and forces the visitor away from a close view of the items in the case. This unit also encroaches on the east exit door, which could be a safety issue. The panel on carving also faces display shelving. The very large titles above the display cases are redundant with respect to the exhibit titles. It is somewhat confusing to have large exhibits in the Totem Hall interpreting items from the cultural center studios.

More interpretation is needed of the principal totem poles in the Totem Hall. The current identifier labels are placed very low, like plant identifiers, and they contain minimal information and no interpretation. The type, because it is small and positioned about five feet away from a typical viewer, is challenging to read, and would be inaccessible for visitors with vision impairments. It is recommended that major poles in the room be interpreted with small wayside exhibits to provide basic identification as well as some interpretation. The panels should provide the age, origin, category, and condition of poles, as well as any distinguishing features or associated stories. These need not be large waysides, but scaled to accomplish the stated goals, and mounted at standard wayside or museum reader-rail heights. Providing adequate interpretation of the principal poles in the room will focus attention more logically.

The Totem Hall is another potential location for cell phone tour interpretation. Audio presentations could feature local clan members, rangers, historians, carvers, conservators, or curators, each providing their unique perspectives on the poles and the cultures they represent. Cell phone audio segments are easily updated from any phone.

The use of the glazed barrier wall and background photo mural is a good idea. The mural, due to the exposure to light, is losing some of its color components, and is getting a hazy blue

appearance. When it is time to replace the mural print, it might be good to consider if a new image could be chosen which shows the poles and house posts in a more logical relation to their original settings. A fine background image might be the one used as a background in the Brady Pole Exhibit panel located near the west door of the hall. This image shows the proper location of poles along the coast and in front of the houses.

The Sannaheit Pole exhibit, currently mounted on an easel, is quite well done in term of its content and graphics. This important artifact should not appear as a temporary display in a corner, but should be more prominent in the room.

Lighted display cases along the back wall of the room appear to be carry-over items from the cultural center studios. It is not clear to the visitor why these items are displayed here. In one of the cases there are three small-scale models of a totem pole in development. These might make fine tactile elements for an exhibit, but should probably be presented along the glass barrier where visitors see the full-scale poles.

The original intent of the visitor experience in the hall was for visitors to exit through the east door and proceed to the carving shed, the exterior totem pole storage area, and the Totem Trail. Currently there is no sign that directs people to do this. This, however, may not be desirable unless there is something worth seeing in the carving shed.

Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center

Recommendations for signing in the visitor center lobby state that the sign over the hallway leading to the cultural center show the full name, "Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center." Also, shortly after visitors enter the hallway there should be a panel that briefly but clearly identifies the center, its partnership with the NPS, and its role and mission as an independent entity. This and other signs should be in both Tlingit and English, and the center's logo also should be prominently displayed.

In addition to signs and interpretive panels, the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center site bulletin needs to be more prominently displayed at multiple locations. This is something that visitors can take home, and it can result in greater exposure, and potential support through increased membership and donations.

Visitors should be encouraged to enter the studios and interact with the artisans. It is recommended that some type of sign be developed at or just inside the entrances to the studios to identify the artist present, the hours of operation, and whether or not it is ok to take photos. These signs (which might also include the cultural center logo) would need to be changeable for use with different artists.

During busy times it also is recommended that the cultural center use a volunteer or hired temporary employee to serve as a host to control visitor flow, encourage people to enter the studios, and provide some narrative about the center and the work going on. Both signs and the host also would encourage visitors to go to the carving shed when an activity was in progress.

In addition to learning about the objects being made at the center, visitors should be made aware the center is a year round operation and that the experience is very different between summer and the rest of the year. Visitors also should be made aware that the studios are places for education and the development of artistic skills and not for retail sales. However, it should be made clear that some items produced by the center are available for sale through Alaska Geographic, the

park's cooperating association. In this regard, better ways of incorporating interpretive messages and connecting the center with the items (branding) need to be explored. Harpers Ferry can provide assistance in designing label templates in different sizes.

It is recommended that the cultural center explore forging connections with other related Indian cultural centers to share ideas, successes and failures, and to establish a network of common resources, assistance, and evolving technologies. In this regard, the center also should explore affiliation and possible membership in the National Association for Interpretation <<http://www.interpnet.com>>. This organization has a separate section titled the Council for the Interpretation of Native Peoples. National and sectional meetings are held annually.

Carving Shed

The park and cultural center staff need to work on improving the interpretive potential of the carving shed at the rear of the visitor center. This is not a problem when an activity is in progress and an artisan is present. Many times, however, there is no object being worked on, or the object is present but the artist is absent and there is nothing to help visitors understand what they are seeing.

The structure has good potential for some permanent and/or changeable interpretive media. Permanent displays could identify the purpose of the shed and illustrate some of the past projects. Changeable media would identify a current project, the artist or artists involved, the cultural significance of the item being made, and its eventual disposition.

It also would be good to have one or more objects that could be rotated in the carving shed when an active project is not underway. This would ensure that people would always be able to see something and it would provide some incentive for them to visit.

Exterior Totem Pole Storage Area

The heavy wire screen in front of the exterior totem pole storage area needs to be replaced with a barrier that provides better viewing, but retains adequate security. If visitors are to continue to have access to this area, they must have a better view and be able to take photos if they desire. The signing also needs to be improved so that visitors can actually find this display.

Bookstore

In light of the revised interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, the park staff and Alaska Geographic need to conduct a new scope of sales study. This process evaluates each sales item with regard to price, intended audiences, and interpretive theme(s) addressed. The study will identify areas of strength as well as areas that could be the focus of a revised publications program.

The bookstore is open for most of the peak visitor season, but it is closed for much of the remainder of the year. In the off-season park staff use a wheeled cart to display and sell a limited number of items next to the information desk. Some visitors are disappointed when they find that they cannot purchase some of the items they can see through the closed door of the bookstore. It is recommended that the park and Alaska Geographic explore ways to improve and expand the off-season display of sales items. For example, the new "Carved History" publication should be prominently displayed at all time of the year.

Park Trails

Routed wood directional signs along the trails are well designed and maintained, and may be retained, or replaced with newer NPS sign system components.

The new regulations sign at the head of the Totem Trail is a good example of a clear, concise, and well-designed sign that harmonizes with the forest environment.

The new standard NPS Arrowhead design should replace all older Arrowheads in place, including any plaques located indoors.

Wayside exhibit development at Sitka NHP has been episodic, and most of the units now in place are in need of replacement. Although well-conceived at the time, they do not appear as a unified and consistent system, information is not always current, and many panels are eroded, faded, or damaged.

An early series of wayside exhibits for the Sitka Totem Trail was planned in 1964 by the Western Museum Laboratory. These were seven (7) metalphoto panels interpreting the totem poles, fort, Russian memorial, and the Indian River. All of these have been removed.

Harpers Ferry Center completed planning of a second set of wayside exhibits for the Totem Trail area in 1984. These six (6) fiberglass-embedded units are still in place twenty-four years later. The 1984 waysides added needed interpretation to the site, and attempted to cover a broad range of information in a relatively small number of panels.

In 1991 Harpers Ferry Center assisted the park in the planning of a low-profile wayside interpreting Spanish claims to the area. This exhibit is prominently located along the shore just outside the south door of the visitor center. This topic is not listed in the park's interpretive themes, and should probably be removed. In 1992, an additional low-profile wayside was planned interpreting the significance of the park. This overview exhibit features a fine illustration by Lou Glanzman, and is located near the main entrance to the visitor center, facing the flagpole.

Additional outdoor exhibits have been planned and produced at different times, and using different materials, design layouts, and mounting options. These include a large orientation wayside at the bus drop-off point which is no longer legible, and large interpretive panels mounted on the fencing in the outdoor totem pole storage shed.

The 1984 waysides are in need of replacement for a variety of reasons. From a physical standpoint, their panels have eroded, dulling the text and images, and giving them a worn appearance. In the short term, the panels can be replaced at a nominal cost because Harpers Ferry Center has extra prints which can be sent for embedment. The LRIP team has already provided the park with information on how to obtain new panels.

There are also issues with the design and content of the 1984 waysides. In the last two decades new standards for wayside exhibits have been set related to panel design, typography, illustration, NPS templates, and many other specifications. The yellow background color on most units is obtrusive, especially in the muted forest environment. The style of the illustrations is outdated. The placement of some waysides should be changed to insure that the units are not seen from a distance.

By today's standards, there are probably too few waysides to tell the stories along the trails in the visitor center/Indian River area. The 1984 waysides tried to interpret everything in only six panels. A new comprehensive wayside plan for the area would probably call for more units, but less obtrusively designed, and more sensitively placed.

There is a great need for a wayside exhibit near the south door of the Visitor Center which introduces the trail system and provides important orientation information. This should probably be supplemented by a sign or panel inside the lobby. In addition, signs should help visitors quickly locate the Totem Trail leading off to the east and south.

Along the Totem Trail, totem poles are not identified or interpreted individually. The current waysides provide general orientation at a few spots, but it would be good to have at least a small wayside with each pole to give basic information on its category, age, origin, design, and story. Another way of getting this information would be a guided tour or to carry a guidebook or site bulletin. However, given the pulsing of visitors through the area during peak seasons, concise waysides could help insure that all visitors have an opportunity for basic information and interpretation at points of interest.

At the site of the fort and battle larger or multiple waysides could be used to provide richer interpretation. At the site of the Russian Memorial a wayside is recommended.

Except for the wayside exhibit interpreting salmon at the pedestrian bridge, there are no other trail exhibits interpreting the rainforest or other elements of the natural environment. This also could be made part of an audio component of future trail interpretation.

A study of current and potential waysides is recommended, and a comprehensive Wayside Exhibit Proposal will be prepared. The proposal would recommend the creation of a parkwide system of waysides related to the park's themes, and utilize up-to-date design and production techniques and standards. The older waysides have exceeded their expected life, and new waysides should be planned comprehensively, and not in a piecemeal fashion.

Consideration should be given to providing cell phone tour information keyed to wayside exhibit sites. While this interpretation will not reach all visitors, it can serve to supplement information on waysides, and provide it in an audio format which is accessible to visitors with sight impairments.

In new wayside exhibits tactile elements can be included which would benefit all visitors, especially those with sight impairments. A map of the trails could feature raised areas or lines to indicate shorelines and trail routes. Totem pole locations could be marked with raised symbols.

On selected waysides interpreting totem poles, wayside panels could feature small scale, three-dimensional half models of totem pole sections. This would allow a blind visitor to feel the shape of a figure at the top of a pole. An exhibit fabricator could make a durable casting from a miniature pole section carved at the SEAICC.

Potential park visitors disembarking in Sitka do not always easily find all the park sites they might wish to visit. Consideration should be given to providing park orientation waysides at locations near docks, major walkways, and other major decision points in Sitka. If it is not possible to place NPS waysides on non-NPS land, then the park might collaborate with city or tribal officials (perhaps using the gateway community play as a starting point) to assist them in designing waysides that properly identify park resources and visitor opportunities. The main part

of the park is not visible from downtown, and even the Russian Bishop's House, so impressive once inside, is not always seen as a main attraction.

Russian Bishop's House

Exterior and Entrance

One of the key issues with the Russian Bishop's House is attracting visitor attention and motivating them to come inside. The rather plain exterior of the building, although historically accurate, is not inviting and the current signing is not enough to draw people through the front door, which is usually closed for interior climate control. The park staff has long known that the presence of an interpreter outside or volunteer activity in the front garden does attract visitor attention and these people can often be encouraged to come inside. However, a staff presence is costly and not always possible, especially in inclement weather.

Other options for attracting more visitors without adversely impacting the historic scene include:

- Experiment with different types of signing outside (i.e. a professional sandwich board) to show photos of what can be seen inside. This could also be a component of the proposed parkwide wayside exhibit proposal.
- Emphasize that entry to the building is free of charge, or that the park entrance fee provides admission to both the RBH and the visitor center.
- Clearly show that the Russian Bishop's House is part of the NPS and Sitka National Historical Park and that parkwide information is available inside.
- Create appropriate displays, such as a cloth covered table with the samovar on it, on the front porch or in the yard.
- Utilize one or more of the first floor windows to display non-light sensitive objects or reproductions. Some historic photo evidence is available.

Orientation

Once inside, it is recommended that visitors be directed down the hallway to a larger area (possibly Room 2) for welcoming, fee collection, and orientation. The current space with the podium just inside the front entrance is inadequate and should be removed. Signing and barriers would clearly direct people down the hall and not up the stairway.

A small cooperating association sales area is recommended. It would carry mostly items directly related to the Russian Bishop's House and the Russian Colonial period; however, since parkwide orientation is also proposed, a few of the more general park items would also be appropriate.

The orientation area would contain a few parkwide orientation exhibits plus exhibits providing a brief history of the Russian presence in Alaska (and other locations in North America). This is important, as many people are unfamiliar with this part of American history, and it will help set the stage for the more site specific exhibits in the rest of the building.

Any major orientation exhibits should be well-lit—probably upright units and not low cases—which can be viewed by individuals or groups entering the space.

First Floor

The first floor of the Russian Bishop's House contains museum exhibits about the Russian occupation of Alaska, including the fur-trading activities of the Russia American Company and

the Russian Orthodox Church. These exhibits are self-guiding and currently available at no cost to the visitor.

The content, level of information, and choice of objects are strengths of these exhibits. However, the free-standing exhibits take up a lot of space, and the room feels very dark since the only lighting provided is in the cases, and some of the case lighting seems to be malfunctioning. The park would like to use the first floor exhibit rooms as a venue for a variety of special events. Redesigning the exhibits to allow more floor space in the middle of the rooms would help achieve this goal.

The current exhibit areas are relatively dark, except for the internal case lighting, with a limited amount of light coming through windows. The relatively dark atmosphere is somewhat meditative and church-like, which can be an advantage, but it also makes it hard for visitors to see the exhibition as a whole, so they can see the context of the exhibition.

Visitors would also benefit if the exhibits had more interactive components. A new touchable model of Sitka should be added to the orientation area. The park presently has a model of Sitka but it is too large to fit in any of the rooms and it is also fragile. A more robust but smaller scale touchable exhibit would universally accommodate the orientation needs of all visitors (including the sight impaired) and would provide an interactive component.

The reproduction Russian possession plaque could be removed from its case so visitors could touch it. Also, providing a variety of furs to touch would increase the visitor's understanding of the value of these objects.

Another opportunity for interactivity would be to provide furnishings vignettes in one or more of the rooms on the first floor. These vignettes would be supplied with reproduction furnishings so visitors could interact with them. One possibility would be to furnish part of a room as a classroom with desks or tables and copies of textbooks (including both the Russian pages and translations in English). Room 9 has shadows of desks on the wall, so this may be an appropriate room for this vignette.

Another potential area for a furnishings vignette or visitor interactive would be in the kitchen where a large barrier protects the area where the stove once stood. The barrier here seems superfluous. If the wall needs to be protected in this room, it should be covered with Plexiglas, which is the way these features are treated elsewhere in the house. An image of the stove could be placed on the wall to show visitors what it looked like. With the barrier removed, this space could be used for some other visitor interactive. Alternatively, the stove that originally occupied this space could be reproduced.

One of the rooms on the first floor needs to be identified for showing the new AV program currently in production. Originally intended for programmatic access to the second floor, the AV program has evolved during production into something appropriate for orientation for all visitors. To reduce the difficulty of moving wheelchair bound visitors over multiple tall, ramped thresholds, the AV viewing area should be located as close to the entrance of the house as possible. However, the new film has the potential to control or pulse visitors to the upstairs (see Second Floor section), and in this case having the viewing area closer to the back stairs might be preferable.

Another need that the park identified is for a classroom in the Russian Bishop's House. Since the need for the classroom is generally during the school year and the greatest general visitation is in

the summer (although there are some weeks of overlap), one possibility would be to use the theater area for student groups.

Second Floor

Upstairs at the Russian Bishop's House are fully furnished rooms that are available to visitors only on guided tours during the summer (cruise ship) season. At other times of the year, tours are available by special arrangement with park staff. Visitors must purchase tickets for tours, which are held every half hour and are limited to 12 visitors per tour. If no space is available, visitors may purchase a ticket for a tour later in the day. The tour consists of an approximately 15 minute introductory talk given to the tour group downstairs and approximately 15 minutes touring the furnished rooms upstairs (this naturally varies depending on the tour leader).

The two primary issues surrounding the historically furnished rooms are staffing and accuracy. It is felt that an inordinate number of staff is required to run the Russian Bishop's House compared to the number of visitors that see it. Also, staff question the completeness and accuracy of the historic furnishings installed in the late 1980s.

Currently, four to five rangers are required to staff the Russian Bishop's House: one or two downstairs to greet visitors, two to give tours, and one for relief. Because of the guided tour arrangement, these five rangers can only accommodate a maximum of 216 people per day (a larger number can view the exhibits downstairs if they don't wish to join a tour). The Russian Bishop's House used to have much larger visitation for many years after it opened, probably because touring the upstairs was free and self-guiding. At that time, two rangers staffed the upstairs, one in the reception room and one in the chapel. However, after a few years staff became concerned that the resource was in danger of overuse. With no limitations placed on the number of visitors allowed upstairs, as many as 35 people sometimes crammed into the reception room at one time, resulting in visitors being crowded off the pathway carpet and finding it difficult to view the objects in the rooms.

To try to control this situation (and also coinciding with the introduction of fees in parks), the park decided to restrict the upstairs to guided tours of 12 people each and to charge a fee for the tour. The result has been a large reduction in visitation to the upstairs. Part of the reason for this reduction is the requirement of the fee. However, probably an equal if not greater deterrent is the frequent need to book a tour later in the day.

Sitka's visitation is driven by the cruise ship schedule (approximately 90% of Sitka's visitors in the summer are from cruise ships). Many cruise ship passengers (estimates varied as to the percentage) book packaged tours of Sitka. These tours don't even stop at the Russian Bishop's House. The rest of the passengers who are touring Sitka on their own (by foot) are trying to pack many activities into their day. Many are probably discouraged from taking a guided tour of the Russian Bishop's House by the idea that they will have to interrupt their itinerary to backtrack to the house later in the day.

One goal of this LRIP is to propose a satisfactory compromise between these two extremes. This compromise would avoid the overuse and overcrowding of the furnished rooms that might lead to resource damage (including a greater potential for theft) without resorting to small guided tours that are labor intensive and serve the needs of only a small number of visitors.

This might be accomplished by returning to self-guided tours but limiting the number of people allowed upstairs at any one time. One way to restrict the number of visitors is to continue to charge a fee to visit the upstairs, although the park may want to consider lowering the fee slightly or providing a “suggested donation” box instead. Another (or additional) way to control the visitor flow would be to show visitors the AV program and “pulse” them upstairs at the end of each showing. Since much of the tour information is currently given by rangers downstairs, the AV program is a much more efficient way to impart this introductory information. Visitors can view the 12 minute introductory film (about 25 at a time), then be pulsed upstairs. Since even on guided tours visitors seldom spend more than about 15 minutes touring the upstairs rooms, this system would ensure that no more than 25 people are upstairs (spread throughout the rooms) at any one time. Using this system, as many as 100 people can tour the upstairs rooms in an hour (without overcrowding), instead of the 24 that can be accommodated on guided tours (a four-fold increase). Guided tours can still be provided at set times during the day; however, most visitors will view the introductory exhibits and film downstairs, then proceed upstairs to tour the rooms at their own pace. Providing both guided and self-guided tours meets the needs of visitors who would like an in-depth tour as well as others (especially families with children) who prefer to move through the rooms more quickly. Providing introductory information by a film presented to visitors who are comfortably seated assures that everyone will receive the same basic message.

If the park chooses to return to self-guided tours of the upstairs, sturdier, but less obtrusive barriers should be installed to insure the safety of the objects. These, in conjunction with electronic security where appropriate and stationing of rangers in both the reception room and chapel (for security and interpretation) should provide sufficient protection for the objects. Also, each room on the tour should be identified in some way. This could be by numbers keyed to a handout, identification signs in each room, or small interpretive panels that provide additional information and/or images. There also is the option of using cell phone or other non-intrusive electronic messages to supplement the interpretation.

The following is a suggested visitor flow sequence:

After the AV program, visitors would ascend the stairs to the second floor. Currently visitors use the stairs near the library, but if the AV program is shown near the ground floor entrance to the house, the tour route could be reversed so that visitors can go up the stairs closest to the A-V program location, which would put them in the chapel first. In either case, a 40” tall barrier should replace the rope that currently protects the library. This barrier should be transparent (glass or Plexiglas) and should be fastened to the wall or doorframe.

Visitors proceed into the dining room. One option, since almost all of the furnishings in this room are reproduction, is to allow free access to this room. Ideally, the table should be set for a meal, preferably with imitation food; however, it may be problematic to protect items on the table. If the dining room is freely accessible, a 40” tall transparent barrier should be affixed to the door to the “pantry” and some method of protecting the icon in the corner should be devised (electronic or physical). If free access to the dining room is not desirable, a barrier can be installed that runs from the corridor door to the reception room door. A mirror placed in the corner of the room can provide a view of the contents of the pantry. In this case, the pantry would not require its own barrier.

Visitors would proceed into the reception room which would be staffed by a ranger. Because this room is staffed, the current arrangement using the visitor pathway for control can be maintained.

Visitors would then be directed into the “guest room.” This room could contain exhibits, or it could be partially furnished in one corner with objects appropriate to its newly understood function as the bishop’s private sitting room. A barrier would be installed to protect the furnishings.

Passing through this room, the visitor would view the bishop’s study and bedroom from a large (approximately 3’ x 5’) step-in barrier located just inside the study at the door to the sitting room. A 40” barrier would also be installed across the doorway to the bishop’s bedroom.

Visitors would have to backtrack through the reception room. In fact, it might be better if they were directed by the ranger to go directly into the sitting room from the dining room, then view the reception room afterwards.

In addition to changes in the way visitors tour the furnished rooms, it is recommended that the Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) be revised. The author of the current HFR, which was written before the dissolution of the USSR, states that no assistance could be obtained from Soviet historians. In the last few years, contacts have been established with scholars in Russia, especially in the areas of Siberia closely associated with the colonization of Sitka. Records of the Russian-American Company are now accessible, and some have been translated. All critical previous translations used in the 1986 HFR should be checked for accuracy by a translator familiar with 19th century Russian language and material culture. Contacts should also be made with native Russian historians of the material culture of the Russian Orthodox Church and with native Russian specialists in decorative arts.

One of the goals of this research, in addition to checking the accuracy of the current furnishings, should be to attempt to fill out the rooms with smaller objects. Objects may need to be purchased or borrowed from Russia. Establishing contact with museum professionals who have responsibility for similar furnished structures in Russia will enable researchers to obtain information on Russian material culture in the mid 19th century. These museum professionals might also be able to suggest sources of reproduction items or provide prototypes for reproducing if reproductions are required either because originals are unavailable or the object would be vulnerable where displayed.

Education Program

The park currently uses the Russian Bishop’s House and the visitor center theater to conduct on-site education programs. Rest room facilities are inadequate at the Russian Bishop’s House (only the employee facility is available), and when education activities take place in the visitor center theater, any visitors present cannot view the park film.

While the indoor spaces will still be necessary, there is a need for an outdoor space where students can engage in a wider variety of activities, including those that may be messy. Because of the rainforest environment this would require a shelter of some type. Some options include:

- Using the carving shed behind the visitor center during the off-season and/or when carving activities are not in progress. This utilizes an existing structure, but it could create scheduling issues with the cultural center, and objects on permanent or temporary display may interfere with some education programs.

- Use the shelter proposed as one of the options for visitor orientation, if adopted (see option “G” under Visitor Center-Lobby). Except during the cruise ship season, this structure would be available for education programs; however, some off-season visitors might want to view the orientation exhibits inside while education programs are in progress.
- Construct a new shelter near the visitor center but outside the historic district. It could have a view of the water and could be used for interpretive programs in the summer and education programs during the school year.

Currently most teachers call the park and tell the education specialist what type of program they would like. Many teachers want programs related to the Russian Bishop’s House as the resource ties directly to Alaska history studies. Few requests are made for programs related to the 1804 battle, totem poles, or natural history. The park web site has one curriculum-based program titled *Russian Abacus Curriculum* that is aimed at students in grades K-5. This program, which can be downloaded, also is a part of the Alaska Region Park Wise program, a collection of education resources about Alaska’s national parks.

The park web site also offers general information about scheduling a field trip, provides a list of topics that can be addressed by guest speakers at area schools, and advertises the availability of “Beach Discovery Packs” which can be obtained on loan at the visitor center.

With the pressure of decreasing school budgets and more stringent curriculum requirements, many teachers need strong justification for talking their students on field trips. The park can help by working directly with educators, Tlingit leadership, the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, and others to develop theme-related education programs and lesson plans that clearly meet local, state, and national curriculum standards. Materials developed can be made available in hard copy and via the Internet to be used by schools and home schooled students through Alaska and beyond.

It is recommended that the park education specialist periodically attend workshops held by area schools to learn more about their operations and to share information about the park and its programs. Conversely, the park should develop educational workshops to include area educators and others in developing some of the materials mentioned in the previous paragraph and to train teachers in how to use the park to meet their needs.

The Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center wants to use the education program to further their goals. Programs at the center range from one-on-one apprenticeships to courses/programs at the college level. While their mission is “. . .to sustain and perpetuate the art and culture of Alaska Indian tribes. . .,” which is in itself heavily involves education, they would like the assistance of the park education specialist in the development of new programs.

Other recommendations for the park education program, some of which can relate to items mentioned above, include working with the park curatorial staff to provide virtual artifacts on-line to support curriculum-based education programs and to aid researchers, and developing adult and family-based programs.

The Junior Ranger program needs to be revised. The current program is little used. This may partially be due to the fact that program is currently displayed in the lower portion of the visitor center information desk where very few visitors see it, especially when blocked by people standing in front of it. Also, the program may be geared to the wrong age group. The park needs to experiment with various age groups and examine what other parks (including those with large

cruise ship visitation) are doing. A seasonal position could be established to serve as a Junior Ranger ambassador to review the program, test it, revise it, and display information about it to better serve young visitors. The new product might also include the use of modern technology and not just be limited to a printed publication.

Personal Services

A variety of personal services activities will continue to be an essential component of the overall interpretive program at Sitka National Historical Park. The park currently provides a good range of programs that attract large numbers of visitors. Current programming should continue and expand to include all of the revised interpretive themes. These programs have the unparalleled advantage of being inspiring, versatile, alive, and tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. An interpretive staff presence helps with the protection of fragile resources. Interpreters, whether behind an information desk, roving, leading a tour, giving a talk, or conducting a living history demonstration are the best of all interactive tools in enabling visitors to experience, understand, appreciate, and make personal connections with resources.

The diversity of the park's overall interpretive program presents almost limitless opportunities for both standard and innovative activities. Keeping within the parameters of the interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, park staff should continue to be given a high degree of creative freedom to explore and experiment with new programs. This will help to maintain a creative edge and attract new and returning audiences. Roving interpretation is important at Sitka, and it is recommended that this program be expanded at key locations such as the river, downtown (i.e. Building 12), Castle Hill, etc.

Personal services interpretive programs can provide more in-depth discussions, respond to individual interests and questions, and reinforce the NPS presence in Sitka. Formal and informal interpretive training is critical, and all park interpreters (including seasonals) should complete the 100 series modules of the Interpretive Development Plan (IDP).

Training also can benefit other businesses and organizations that provide interpretation at the park, or which relate to park themes. It is recommended that cooperative training programs be developed to insure that as many service providers as possible possess the resource knowledge and interpretive/communication skills that will result in more effective, accurate, and meaningful programs for visitors, and possibly increased rewards (i.e. larger tips) for tour guides. It is also suggested that some training could be held in conjunction with social events such as pot luck dinners to attract greater participation.

Since personal services interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, the activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify and improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful. The evaluation also should insure that there is a good balance in where programs are given, insuring that activities are conducted in places where visitors are present.

Personal services interpretive programs also are most easily affected by changing budgets, management styles, and the comings and goings of individual interpreters with special skills. Because of the need to retain flexibility, few specific personal services recommendations are presented in this document. Many of these decisions and recommendations are perhaps best left for incorporation into the Annual Implementation Plan component of the CIP.

Publications

It is recommended that the park periodically review all of the public literature and the web site for needed corrections and updates. Literature should be included in a changeable display of free materials so that visitors will know what is available. A small label stating “Available of request” will tell visitors that they can get copies of what interests them at the information desk.

As stated earlier, periodic reviews of all publications and related items sold through the cooperating association are recommended. This often takes the form of a Scope of Sales review, which evaluates all items in light of price, intended audiences, and interpretive themes addressed. This may be especially important now since this LRIP redefined the primary interpretive themes and established a list of visitor experience goals. The review can identify strengths as well as areas where the publications program needs to concentrate its efforts. A similar review also could evaluate how well publications key to the on-site experience are displayed.

The new “Carved History” publication needs to be prominently displayed in the bookstore(s), at the visitor center information desk, and on the park web site. This publication can be a great asset in informing visitors about the Totem Trail and motivating them to walk all of part of it.

The park also should review some of its key research and management documents to see if any could become potential sales items and help reach specific audiences. Two possibilities might include reprinting those titled “Totem Poles” and “Early Views.” **[Not sure if I have the full or correct titles here, but these were passed around & discussed during the recommendations workshop.]**

It is recommended that a self-guiding audio tour of the park be developed which could be utilized by a variety of hardware. This would not be marketed as the primary way of visiting the park, but as a supplement it would provide more in-depth interpretation on elements of specific themes.

Library and Collection Needs

The park library and reference files are located on the second floor of the Old School building adjacent to the Russian Bishop’s House. This valuable collection of resource material has lacked attention for some time. There is a strong need to assign a person/position to organize the items, update the cataloguing, and re-establish and maintain a checkout system.

Research Needs

The interpretive division needs to continue working closely with the resource management staff to keep up to date on research activities and results. Resource management specialists should be encouraged to present regular briefings on projects to the entire park staff, especially interpreters. Agency and contract researchers also should be encouraged to produce executive summaries and programs that translate research results for park staff and the public. Interpretive staff should identify research and information needs to the resource management staff as well.

Sitka National Historical Park needs to learn more about its actual and potential audiences: Who visits? What are their motivations, expectations, and satisfaction levels? What can be done to increase visitor stays and interaction with park resources? Who doesn’t visit and why? How do answers to these and other questions vary from season to season? Many other visitor service providers (including the cruise ship companies) would be interested in what we learn, and in turn, they may be willing to share some of their data.

Research also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and specialized programming. For example,

front-end evaluations would query potential users of programs, facilities, and media before products and activities are developed. This type of research is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. **Formative evaluations** would be conducted during conceptual design, and would test inexpensive mockups of interpretive media and programs before fully investing in final products. **Summative evaluations** are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs—i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people actually make use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected.

[Are there other specific research needs? Caution: This is not the place to list all of the park’s research needs, but it is the place to include those that have the most direct associations with the primary themes, visitor experience goals, and the overall interpretive/educational program.]

Staffing Needs

[Park staff will need to complete this section of the LRIP. This section should identify realistic staffing needs (in addition to existing personnel) for fully implementing the recommendations in this plan. This can be accomplished by reading through the document with an eye to what staff would be required to complete and maintain the various proposed actions. Be aware that staffing needs can be satisfied in a number of ways. In addition to paid NPS employees, volunteers, interns, employees from other agencies/institutions, etc. can be used to perform some tasks; however, relying solely on volunteers to conduct specific programs for example is rarely successful. If desired, I can provide examples of how others have completed this section. There are no firm rules regarding how to do it; the best way is what works for you.]

Special Populations

Most of the interpretive media at Sitka is old, and does not conform in many ways to current NPS accessibility guidelines and requirements. The content being presented, in most cases, is rich in terms of artifacts, display objects, photographs, artwork, and sounds. Today there are many successful techniques and technologies which can open up the waysides, AV programs, and interior exhibits to broader audiences, and can enrich the experiences of all. Planning and design teams assigned to future media projects at Sitka should refer to the new Harpers Ferry Center Accessibility Guidelines at <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm>.

Provisions will be made to accommodate the needs of special populations who visit Sitka National Historical Park. Special populations are identified as those with sight, hearing, learning, and mobility impairments; visitors who do not speak English; and the elderly and young children.

Public Law 90-480, the Architectural Barriers Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 establish standards for physical access. Other regulations, laws, and standards include Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Director’s Orders No. 42, and the Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs, Facilities, and Services. All newly constructed facilities, as a matter of course, will be designed for accessibility for physically disabled visitors and employees.

Every effort will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities, as well as people who do not speak or understand English, have access to the same information necessary for a safe and meaningful visit to Scotts Bluff National Monument. All new interpretive media will follow the standards for accessibility

as described in the NPS, October 2007 Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media.

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SUMMARIES

Summary of Products and Actions

The following is a summation of the action items and products proposed in this long-range interpretive plan. Each of these items is described in greater detail in the narrative sections of the document. This list is designed to help develop the implementation schedule, prepare annual and long-term priorities, assign responsibilities, and develop cost estimates.

It must be emphasized that the following list deals specifically with actions and products for media and programs related directly to information, orientation, interpretation, and education. Although new, restored, or relocated facilities are proposed or referenced, actions related to these structures will need to be developed in greater detail during specific planning, design, and construction processes. Staffing requirements to implement the following actions are identified separately in the Staffing section.

[Note: I probably forgot some things here, so be sure to cross check this list with the recommendations section.]

Parkwide

- Improve communications and partnership opportunities with cruise ship companies and their affiliates (ongoing). (Note: It is recommended that proposals be coordinated through the Alaska Regional Office.)
- Improve communications and partnership opportunities (i.e. training) with local and regional service providers (ongoing).
- Review tourism media to ensure that information about the park is accurate, appropriate, and current (ongoing).
- Ensure that employees have opportunities for IDP & other training (ongoing).
- Enhance park web site and links to related sites (ongoing).
- Evaluate & update directional and entry sign system.
- Develop & implement parkwide wayside exhibit proposal.
- Develop & implement self-guiding audio tour(s) for use in multiple formats.
- Expand education program in partnership with area educators, SAICC, and others.
- Conduct new scope of sales study in partnership with Alaska Geographic.
- Organize park library and reference files.
- Evaluate visitor use & media/program effectiveness (ongoing).

Visitor Center

- Redesign lobby & media to provide parkwide orientation (see options).
- Provide better interpretation of objects in lobby.
- Improve selection & display of sales items in off-season.
- Relocate temporary displays from lobby to cultural center.
- Improve interior directional signing and signing to external sites.
- Rehab, redesign, or develop new exhibit room displays.
- Improve exhibit lighting for visitors & object preservation.
- Rehab Totem Hall exhibits.
- Develop outdoor space/shelter for conducting education programs.
- Develop permanent & temporary exhibits for carving shed.
- Replace wire mesh barrier in totem pole storage area & improve signing.
- Develop permanent & temporary displays for Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center.

Russian Bishop's House

- Improve exterior media to attract more visitors.
- Relocate welcome, orientation, & fee collection to larger space.
- Develop new exhibits for first floor.
- Develop AV viewing room with seating and equipment.
- Design space that can serve education programs needs.
- Amend historic furnishings report.
- Develop supportive media for interpreting second floor.
- Develop barriers, alarms, & new circulation pattern for guided & self guided tours of second floor.
- Explore options for meeting accessible rest room needs of education groups.

Implementation Plan

[This section will be completed by the park staff. The aim is to prioritize the action items listed in the Staffing and Summary of Products and Actions sections. It is recommended that items be prioritized by “first, second, and third steps,” or by “short, medium, and long term actions.” Sorting action items by specific years is risky. Changes in staffing, external and/or political priorities, budget shifts, and other factors can easily throw specific year priorities off course. If desired, I can supply samples of how other parks have addressed this section.]

Planning Team and Consultants

[The following was taken from the sign in sheets at our two planning meetings. Please double check for incorrect spellings, titles, and for any omissions.]

Sitka National Historical Park

Mary Miller, Superintendent
Greg Dudgeon, Former Superintendent
Sandy Snell-Dobert, Acting Superintendent
Ralph Jones, Chief Ranger
Clarence Wadkins, Park Ranger – Interpretation
Gene Griffin, Chief, Resources Management
Kristen Griffin, Park Historian
Sue Thorsen, Museum Curator
Randall Rodgers, Chief of Maintenance
Kristi Neilson, Education Specialist
Julia Rosborough, Administrative Officer
Geof Smith, Biologist
Ramona East, Museum Specialist
Bonnie Brewer, IT Specialist

Park Partners and Consultants

Gail Johansen Peterson, Executive Director, Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center
Charlie Skuctka, Jr., Metal Artist, Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center
Sandy Lorrigan, Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau
Bob Medinger, Sitka Historical Society and Museum
Peter Gorman, Sitka Historic Preservation Commission (and Seasonal Park Interpreter)
Ray Wilson, Kiks.ádi Clan Leader
Woody Widmark, Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Helen Dangel-Lorrigan, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Pauline Duncan, [she listed herself as a “guest”]

Harpers Ferry Center

Carol Petravage, Historic Furnishings Planner
David Guiney, Interpretive Media Institute
Paul Lee, Interpretive Planner

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