

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA
RESOLUTION 2010-12**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA SUPPORTING THE
UPGRADE AND RETURN TO MEANINGFUL SERVICE OF THE SITKA RANGER
BOAT TO THE SITKA RANGER DISTRICT, U.S. FOREST SERVICE**

WHEREAS, the Sitka Ranger boat has faithfully served the U.S. Forest Service staff and cooperating agencies in the central Tongass National Forest for decades, providing reliable, safe, multi-day transportation, housing, meals, and project staging for diverse, lengthy projects, infrastructure development and maintenance, research studies, enforcement of special use permits and patrol activities, recreation management, and many other uses requiring access to the National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the Sitka Ranger District (SRD) is almost entirely outside the Sitka road system and accessible only by boat or plane (the portion of Sitka Ranger District within the City and Borough of Sitka alone spans 4,710 square miles and more than 300 miles of coastline); and

WHEREAS, the Sitka Ranger District has lost proportionately more staff and budget than other large communities in the Tongass, now including loss of the Captain position, and is losing the Sitka Ranger, the primary means to safely transport, house and support staff and equipment to efficiently care for the Sitka Ranger District, leaving staff unable to adequately perform their mission of managing and maintaining the Central Tongass with all its infrastructure and uses while other Ranger boats are retained elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, in the last eight years, there has been a significant decrease in the use of the Sitka Ranger boat due to decline in budgets and increased daily costs, which kept it unused and deteriorating despite the real needs by Forest Service staff to be able to afford to use the vessel to get out in the Forest away from Sitka for multi-day periods to do their jobs, and small "day boats or charters" do not meet all Forest Service needs which were met for decades while the Sitka Ranger was available, maintained, funded by the budget, and operated throughout the SRD; and

WHEREAS, the deferred maintenance costs of the Sitka Ranger boat now exceed \$100,000, which is a small budget item to renovate a vessel which has provided such great value to the Tongass National Forest and is still a required asset for the Forest Service to complete its mission; and

WHEREAS, no replacement vessel would be available to the Sitka Forest Service on a regular basis for a reasonable contract fee that has the resource capabilities of the Sitka Ranger; the reason the Sitka Ranger has been so well utilized for so long is that it is sturdy, seaworthy, capable of housing many staff and gear, fully outfitted for National Forest maintenance and transport work, and available for many diverse missions, until the Forest Service unjustifiably increased charges for the use of the boat and did not provide adequate budget to maintain and operate it on a sustained basis and later cited lack of use as a basis for its removal.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka,

Alaska, strongly supports the retention, upgrade, and return to full-time service of the Sitka Ranger boat as a wise long-term investment to permit the U.S. Forest Service to complete its mission in the Central Tongass; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the leadership of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service Alaska Region is requested to revisit its staffing, budget, and resources priorities to reinstate the Sitka Ranger vessel to full operational status as a budget priority to permit SRD and Regional staff to utilize the Sitka Ranger to safely and adequately perform their responsibilities in the Tongass.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka on this 13th day of April, 2010.

ATTEST:


Colleen Ingman, MMC, Municipal Clerk



Scott McAdams, Mayor