



Application for Appointment to Boards, Committees, and Commissions
City and Borough of Sitka

Board/Commission/Committee: Sitka's Living With Bears Working Group

Name: Andrew Thoms Preferred Phone: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Alternate Phone: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED] Fax Number: _____

Length of Residence in Sitka: 16 years Registered to vote in Sitka? Yes No

Employer: Sitka Conservation Society

Organizations you belong to or participate in:

Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Art Change, Inc



Explain your main reason for applying:

I worked as part of the first Sitka Bear Working group and my education and professional experience is in the areas of natural resource management and community development
What background, experience or credentials will you bring to the board, commission, or committee membership?

I have a master's degree in conservation biology and sustainable development. I have 16 years of experience working on natural resource, wildlife and community issues in SE
Please disclose any potential conflicts of interest that may arise from your appointment. These may include but are not limited to:

- A substantial financial interest of \$1000 annually that could be influenced by your appointment.
- An immediate family member employed within the scope of this appointment.

none

Please attach a letter of interest, outline, or resume which includes your education, work, and volunteer experience that will enhance your membership.

→ *(To be considered, your application must be complete AND be accompanied by one of the above supporting documents.)*

Date: March 9, 2022 Signature: andrew thoms

Your complete application and resume should be returned to the Municipal Clerk's Office by noon on the Wednesday prior to an advertised Assembly meeting.

Please note: all information submitted will be made public and published online. Appointments are normally made during open session of an Assembly meeting, however, Assembly members may vote to discuss applicant(s) in closed executive session. In this case, do you wish to be present when your application is discussed? Yes No

Return to:

Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk/Records Specialist, 100 Lincoln Street
Fax: 907-747-7403 Email: clerk@cityofsitka.org

Andrew Thoms

Summary: Specialist in Conservation and Rural Development especially related to natural resource management, land management, forest management, collaboration as a means to overcome conflict, and developing and implementing innovative approaches to overcome long-term adversarial issues.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Executive Director 01/06 --- Present

Employer: Sitka Conservation Society
201 Lincoln Street, Sitka, Alaska

Supervisor: Local Board of Directors

- **Leader** of non-profit organization that works across all of Southeast Alaska with a focus on Tongass National Forest Land Management and Southeast Alaska Rural Development.
- Responsible for all **management, administration, leadership, strategy development and integration of multiple programs** being undertaken in a complex and constantly changing socio-economic panorama with the intention of meeting larger overarching organizational goals.
 - Supervises and manages a multidisciplinary staff of 5 to 15
 - Primary “face” of the organization, required to always display organizational ethics and values, assume responsibility, and deal with any controversy and conflict
- **Develops long-term strategy, strategic plans, yearly operational goals and plans, agreements with partners, management of various programs, staff and team management and capacity development, internal performance reviews, and is the primary contract for collaboration and work with partners (including federal, state, tribal, private sector, local government, and non-profit partners).**
- Responsible for yearly organizational budget of \$700,000 (which was grown from \$280K in 2006), management of internal investments and finances, direction of earned revenue business strategies (12% of budget is earned income), fundraising, and project budgets on collaborative partnership work of up-to \$1.5 million/yr.
 - Responsible for achieving organizational results to ensure continued or expanded funding from private sector donors and grants (fundraising expenses are less than 1% of budget—funding comes from proven results of work, demonstrated impact of work on stakeholders, and inspiration from results and leadership) and some public funds through partnerships and agreements with State, Federal, and Municipal agencies.

Applied Skillsets, Knowledge, and Accomplishments in this Position:

- Developed and implemented a **10 year strategy and had a key leadership role for developing collaborative partnership** work with Southeast Alaska stakeholders, Federal and State agencies, and municipal governments on management of public lands and natural resources. Founding leadership team member of the Sustainable Southeast Partnership. Initiated and managed over 12 formal **partnerships and agreements with US Forest Service/Tongass National Forest** focused on timber and forest management policy, Wilderness stewardship and monitoring, habitat restoration, performance metrics, recreational budgets and investment, and public affairs/communication/interpretation (partnership work authorized in a 2010 MOU with the agency and multiple subsequent

Partnership Agreements, shared staffing, and official appointments). Appointed to Tongass Federal Advisory Committee by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Partnerships with **Haa-Aani/Sealaska Native Corporation** on rural development strategies and programs; Partnerships with **Sitka Tribe of Alaska** include shared staffing on environmental monitoring projects, rural development, and subsistence policy. Partnerships with **National Park Service** have included education and public outreach programs; Partnerships with **City of Sitka** on "Living with Bears," energy policy and hydro-electric expansion, visitor industry planning, solid waste strategies; Experience working with **Alaska legislator offices** (State and Federal) on a variety of issues. Involvement in collaborative processes at a local, regional, and national scale for policy development and problem solving.

- **Extensive knowledge and experience on public lands management and protection** especially in the areas of governing legal and legislative policies, integration of science and best-practices, project/initiative development and implementation, public affairs, communication and interpretation, fundraising, and research and monitoring. Responsible for preservation and perpetuation of organizational cultural history and the integration of new members, cross-generational constituencies, and the integration of socio-economic diversity into organization's constituency.
- **Served on the State of Alaska's Citizen Advisory Committee for Alaska Roadless Rule Development--** worked with a wide-range of stakeholders to develop policy recommendations on a complex subject with divergent stakeholders and high-controversy
- Extensive knowledge of Southeast Alaska stakeholders, interest groups, socio-economic conditions, local networks and relationships, regional tribes, clans, and native corporations, and SE Alaska community character and priorities
- **Extension experience communicating complex issues to advocate for organizational/partner goals; extensive experience working on controversial issues and in conflict resolution around land and resource management**
- **Extensive experience supervising, managing, and leading a multi-disciplinary team of staff and contractors including management through program directors.** Responsible for all aspects of human resources and contracting. Implemented a strategy of recruitment, empowerment, and leadership development of local residents, women, Alaska Natives, and minorities.
- Extensive experience managing multiple programs to meet program goals and larger strategic goals. Experience evaluating programs, terminating programs, developing new programs. Responsible for fundraising and revenue generation for programs and reporting on all fiscal accounting and reporting.

Development Technician: 08/2005- 12/2005; 40 hours/week

Employer: Spanish Agency for International Development, La Paz, Bolivia

Served as a contractor embedded within a Bolivian sub-ministry working on issues related to gender and development and in the training and capacity development of concessioners working within protected areas of the Eastern Slope of the Andes and Bolivian Altiplano

Research Assistant/Geospatial Technician: 10/2004-12/2005; 13.2 hours/week

Employer: University of Wisconsin/ **National Park Service Midwest Region Geospatial Support Center**
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Supervisor: Pete Budde, National Park Service

Responsibilities in this position:

Provided geospatial/GIS support for Midwest region parks and programs. Followed protocol for data use and publication as per NPS standards.

Environmental Development Technician: 07/2003- 12/2003; 40 hours/week

Employer: Spanish Agency for International Development, Quito, Ecuador

Embedded within the National Council for the Development of the Tribes and Nations of Ecuador (*CODENPE—Governmental institution which focused on indigenous issues and indigenous involvement in governance—equivalent of a “Service” within USDA or Department of Interior*) with the role of **building capacity and training staff** in the use of Geospatial data in planning and project development.

Responsibilities in this position:

- Worked with representatives of over 30 tribes and nations of Ecuador in project development. Built capacity of program staff to develop and implement projects and programs.
- Member of teams that worked on on “interface” issues between protected areas and tribal homeland areas; forestry and community forest management.

Environmental Development Technician: 01/2002- 06/2003;

Employer: Spanish Agency for International Development, Guatemala Country Program; Municipal Development and Aid Projects

Supervisor: Irene Rodriguez, et al

Responsible for project implementation for potable water and land-use planning projects in rural communities within the Atitlan Protected Area and the green belt around Antigua, Guatemala. Specific role was to oversee projects funded by Spanish governmental aid following peace accords while building municipal capacity to govern democratically, corruption-free, and fully integrating rural and indigenous populations.

Responsibilities in this Position:

- Developed land management plans for municipal protected areas that also served as aquifer recharge zones; community forestry and forest management plan development; rural water supplies and cooperative use agreements; etc.
- Built partnerships and collaboration between central municipal government and rural communities within the larger municipalities; the division between the urban/municipal and the rural, indigenous communities was also the dividing line on opposing sides of the recent civil war. These projects served to build working relationships and peace across those divisions.
- Worked with rural water committees in indigenous mountain communities to communicate understanding of groundwater hydrology, aquifer recharge areas, and the importance of maintaining forested mountain slopes for water supply and slope stability to prevent land-use conflict and land and resource degradation
- Worked as part of a multidisciplinary team to meet agency and project goals

Coffee Farm and Visitor Center Complex Administrator: 02/2000- 12/2001;

40 hours/week

Employer: Finca Azotea, Jocotenango, Guatemala

Supervisor: Finca owner Ricardo Pokorny

Contracted to develop a land management plan for a 75 acre coffee farm to gain "Rainforest Alliance Certified Coffee" certification. Subsequently hired to administer coffee farm and implement that management plan by converting to majority organic farming, diversified "bird-friendly" shade canopy with agro-forestry outputs, training of staff, and oversee the final development and initial operations of a museum visitor center focused on coffee cultivation and traditional music and dress.

Responsibilities in this Position:

- Land management of a medium-sized Guatemalan Coffee farm with decisions on cultivation practices, nurseries, pest management strategies, fertilization, and conversion of shade canopy to a habitat enriched agro-forestry system. Oversaw construction and development of visitor center/museum/restaurant and training of Guatemalan staff to cater to "Western" visitors and clients. Managed 30-40 horse training and boarding stables.
- Worked with certifiers, neighboring farms, consultants, extension agents, clients, and tour operators to meet business goals. Liaison with Guatemalan military for event security for Central American Game's equine endurance race venue.
- Developed museum interpretive displays and scripts for guided tours; trained Guatemalan staff on visitor services and best practices for visitor services.
- Developed safety protocols and integrated safety practices into farm operations. Develop security protocols and security staffing. Worked with "shadow" accounting systems.
- Supervised and managed finca staff of 15-40 through subordinate supervisors in the areas of farm operations, visitor center, landscaping, security, accounting, restaurant, and stables. Trained and directed staff and built their capacity for implementation of management plan content and recruited their buy-in and investment.

Environmental Technician El Imposible National Park: 02/1999 to 12/1999

Employer: Salvanatura (subcontracted by El Salvadorian Ministry of the Environment for National Park Management)

Supervisor: Juan Marco Alvarez

Worked as part of USAID funded National Park Development Project. Conducted research within the park and on periphery areas on birds of prey and trained and built capacity of park rangers to collect monitoring data on birds of prey.

Responsibilities in this position:

- Developed a research plan for monitoring birds of prey within National Park Protected Area and adjacent areas on the peripheries of the park
- Trained park rangers on identification of birds of prey; developed program leadership on birds of prey monitoring and data collection; built capacity of park rangers
- Assessed areas of conflict and collaboration between protected area and surrounding community.

EDUCATION and TRAINING

Masters of Science, Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development; University of Wisconsin Madison, Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies, 2005; GPA 3.9

Bachelors of Arts, Environmental Sciences with a concentration in Anthropology; State University of New York at Plattsburgh, Center for Earth and Environment Science, 1998; *magna cum laude*; GPA 3.9

Extensive Professional Leadership and Management Training; Training Resources for the Environmental Community—corporate level leadership and management training, semi-annually 2006-2018

Wilderness First Aid, CPR, AED

VOLUNTEER WORK

- Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee, Secretary
- Art Change Board Member (treasurer)—non-profit based in Sitka
- SEATrails Board Member—2006-2010; Board member of regional organization that promoted tourism to SE AK communities through ferry travel and trails
- 4H program leader, Sitka —subsistence, woodworking, and leadership skills
- Mentor to various local youth especially on subsistence skills, life-skills, reading and scholarship, tutoring, etc.
- Care-giver for various elders in the community
- “Reading Buddy” at Sitka Public Library for 9 consecutive years

LANGUAGES

- English as a primary Language
- Professional Fluency in Spanish