

4-H an Alaska way-of-life

The richness of the Tongass National Forest and the waters of the Outside Coast make Sitka unlike any other place. Fittingly our 4H Club is like no other.



Alaska way-of-life programs in 2012:

- tracking
- foraging for wild edibles
- hiking
- fishing
- food preservation
- gardening

Exploring the Wildness

The dense forests, towering mountains, and unpredictable waters of Southeast Alaska can be intimidating and humbling. They can also be a classroom where young people learn how to live in their environment. In Sitka we are fortunate to be surrounded by wild spaces--young people should not be sheltered from it—it should be a part of their lives. We strive to teach them skills to navigate these wild places while fostering leadership and building community.



Skill Building Across Generations

Many children in Sitka learn to hunt, fish, and forage at an early age. These are usually family activities, but not every child grows up in a household that hunts or picks berries.

Our 4H Club offers an opportunity for kids and parents alike to learn from each other while in the field, with parents and community members leading sessions on the skills needed to tap into the bounty of local foods.



unting, fishing, gathering, and growing foods are just a few examples of what we do together in 4H. There is nothing nothing sweeter than a carrot pulled out of the soil.



Sitka
Conservation
Society

www.sitkawild.org

Phone: 907-747-7509 Fax: 907-747-6105

P.O. Box 6533 Sitka, Alaska 99835

Protecting the natural environment of the Tongass while supporting the development of sustainable communities in Southeast Alaska.

Wild Berries, Mushrooms, and Venison

This isn't the ingredient list for an autumn recipe but rather the themes from three of our fall workshops. We dive in, learning by doing, all the while learning about traditional and modern uses of the food we harvest. Subsistence is at the core of what we do: everything from tracking, to tying on a lure, to identifying an edible berry, to processing a deer, to cooking our catch. Like all 4H Clubs, SCS strives to provide learning, leadership and community opportunities, while teaching the values of environmental stewardship.



Every part of the animal is used, here 4Hers learn how to skin and butcher a deer that was then processed into venison stew and shared with elders.

The Sustenance of Deer, a 4-H Activity

On an autumn Saturday afternoon, a group of kids huddled around a deer hanging in the Sitka Sound Science Center barn. At first they stood a few feet back, taking the deer in slowly with curious gazes. They got more comfortable as Jack Lorrigan, the father of one of the children, began to explain how to skin the deer.

Over the next two hours, Jack, the Subsistence Biologist with the Forest Service, demonstrated the various cuts and allowed kids and parents alike to wield the knife.

Jack also shared stories of how he learned to hunt from his mother, carrying on indigenous traditions, and he offered important ecological considerations from his work as a subsistence biologist. The very same deer was then followed to the dinner plate, as 4H members processed the deer into canned stew.



The Tongass is rich in wild edibles if you take the time to look. These 4Hers learned to identify edibles in the intertidal, finding goosetongue: a salty and delicious favorite!



We are lucky to call the Tongass home, one that gives us unlimited opportunities to explore and recreate.



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