

# Redoubt Falls Under Threat

Public access to Redoubt Falls sockeye stream could be lost without your support

Well over one hundred families fill their freezers with fish caught from the banks at Redoubt Falls every summer.

Under Sealaska policy, **anyone who is not a Sealaska shareholder would need special permission to continue to access this fishing.**

Sealaska also could sell the property and **public access would be lost forever.**



Public access to Redoubt Falls, the nearest sockeye stream to Sitka, could be lost if a pending conveyance to Sealaska Corporation goes through. The Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) has been coordinating an effort to keep this treasured spot in public hands, but your help is needed.

## Background

Sealaska claimed 11 acres immediately adjacent to Redoubt Falls as a "historical site" under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1975, but the conveyance was held up for decades by private claims to the property. All private claims have now been resolved, and the Bureau of Land Management is in the final stages of the conveyance process. If the Redoubt Falls site met the definition of "historical site" under ANCSA, and there were graves, petroglyphs or archeological evidence to suggest it was an important cultural site to Alaska Natives, the SCS would be sensitive to the Sealaska claim. However, Forest Service archeological reports show no evidence of a seasonal fish camp, nor any historical Native inhabitation on the site. Instead, archeological reports reveal the 11 acres claimed by Sealaska to contain one of the most intact Russian archeological sites in North America. SCS has submitted legal memos to the Forest Service and BLM arguing the site does not meet the legal definition of "historical," and that a "fisheries exception" in the code, which requires the Secretary of Interior to prevent conveyances which "could" result in the harm to a fish population or fisheries management, should prevent the conveyance.



A fisherman dips nets for subsistence sockeye at Redoubt Falls.

Sealaska has claimed in the past that public will continue to have access to Redoubt Falls, however is not written into ANY legal documents.

In fact, the only written legal stipulation is a Bureau of Land Management publication which states, "Do not hunt, fish, or trap on or from a 17 (b) easement unless you first get a permit and permission from the Alaska Native corporation who owns the private land."



Sitka Conservation Society

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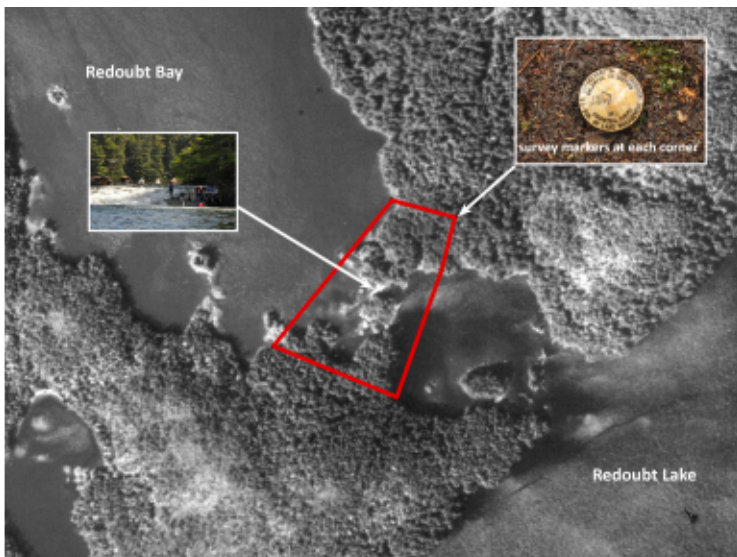
*Protecting the natural environment of the Tongass while supporting the development of sustainable communities in Southeast Alaska.*



Sealaska is moving forward with plans to take ownership of Redoubt Falls. Stakes have been placed, and opportunities for public comment on this divisive plan are limited.

## You can Help

The “fisheries exception” would seemingly make the Redoubt selection an open-and-shut case given that the Forest Service manages a fish weir on the site and the Forest Service needs to access the area for a fish enhancement project at Redoubt Lake. Unfortunately, the BLM has yet to be persuaded a conveyance could impact the Redoubt fishery or management of it. SCS is continuing its effort to persuade decision makers, and could use your help with letters to the editor and letters to officials in the BLM and Forest Service.



Sealaska has selected an area completely encompassing the falls. Non-shareholders will not be allowed access to enter the area outlines in red without permission.



Sitka  
Conservation  
Society

## Take Action Now

Currently the Forest Service is the agency with the standing to object to the transfer based on protecting the valuable fishery at Redoubt. A strong show of support for keeping Redoubt open to the public is needed through letters to the Forest Service. Write to Regional Forester Beth Pendleton.

Email: [bpendleton@fs.fed.us](mailto:bpendleton@fs.fed.us)

If you would like to take action, please urge the City Assembly to pass a resolution to keep Redoubt Falls public land.

Email: [assembly@cityofsitka.com](mailto:assembly@cityofsitka.com)

Let the Forest Service and Assembly know that Redoubt Falls must remain open to the public so that **everyone** can enjoy the beauty and bounty of Redoubt Falls.

▶ ***Please share copies of your letters with SCS so we can hand deliver them to decision makers in Washington.***

For more information or example letters, call SCS at 747-7509 or email [info@sitkawild.org](mailto:info@sitkawild.org).

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