Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act in Alaska
2001-2006

Jan Lerum, US Forest Service
Secure Rural Schools coordinator

March 2007
Background

- Secure Rural Schools in effect 2001-2006
- Temporarily replaced “25% fund” revenue sharing approach in states with national forests
- New legislation established stable amount of funds to states, based on historic amounts
Intent of New Legislation

- Restore predictability to annual federal payments to states for school and roads
- Improve cooperative relationships
Provisions of Legislation

- State distributes 80-85% of federal funds to counties/boroughs for schools and roads

- Distribution to boroughs directed by state statute.

- Special projects receive 15-20% of total funds in Title II or Title III

- Title II relies on citizen committees, called RACs, to recommend projects to FS; Title III funds distributed by boroughs
Below the Roofline
- The Shrub Layer -

Shrubs are woody plants less than 20 feet tall. Unlike trees, shrubs often have multiple stems. Rain and sunlight filter through the canopy to nourish this productive forest layer. Most Tongass shrubs produce berries, which serve as an important food source for both humans and wildlife.

Dense shrub thickets provide shelter for small mammals, food for deer, and nesting sites for birds.

- Alaska blueberry: Vaccinium alaskense
- Red elderberry: Sambucus racemosa
- Red huckleberry: Vaccinium parvifolium

Tongass National Forest
Funding to Alaska under Secure Rural Schools

- Average of $9.3 million annually to State of AK between 2001-2006
- $9.3 million based on high 3 year average of 25% FS receipts between 1986-99
- Of total, about $1.3 million annually to special projects funds (Title II and Title III)
Special projects in SE:
Title II “RAC” or Title III

- Local officials decide if special projects go to Title II or Title III

- Average of $400,000 annually to Title II, RAC projects

- Average of $900,000 annually to Title III, boroughs
Forest Service worked with SE Conference to notify local elected officials of new legislation and option to develop a RAC.

Local officials requested three RACs:
- Yakutat
- Wrangell-Petersburg
- Ketchikan
RAC Projects

Objective of RAC projects:

- Improve existing infrastructure,
- Enhance forest stewardship, and
- Improve land and water quality
$2.5 million total allocated to RACs
- $1.7 million to Wrangell-Petersburg RAC
- $525 thousand to Yakutat RAC
- $250 thousand to Ketchikan RAC

Roughly 50 projects approved through 50 meetings
Observations of a RAC Member: Bob Prunella, Wrangell

- RAC members contributed substantial time and energy to RAC

- FS district rangers provided a high level of support, allowing RAC to focus on projects

- Spirit of cooperation improved in many ways between communities
Observations of a FS Ranger: Mark Hummel, Wrangell

- Supporting the RAC took a lot of time: travel logistics, meeting preparation, and meeting follow-up

- Absolutely would do it again; one of the best things that has happened in working with communities
2006 Ketchikan RAC Members

- Dick Coose
- Kari Erickson
- Brad Finney
- John Galea
- Owen Graham
- Merle Hawkins
- Elmer Makua Jr.
- Jim Mitchell

- David Rettke
- Mike Sallee
- Jack Shay
- Paul Slenkamp
- William Thomas Sr.
- Gregory Vickery
- Rick Watson
- Kathleen Weichelman

FS District Rangers: Lynn Kolund and Jerry Ingersoll
2006 Yakutat RAC Members

- Scott Chadwick
- Rhonda Coston
- Loretta Eades
- Eileen Henniger
- Katherine Jacobson
- LaDonna James
- Rhonda Jensen
- John Matsko

List of 2006 Yakutat RAC Members:

- Larry Powell
- Judith Ramos
- Paul Sandhofer
- Raymond Sensmeier
- Suzanne Silvernail
- David Stone
- John Vale
- Ronald Wolfe

FS District Ranger: Tricia O’Connor

March 2007
## 2006 Wrangell-Petersburg RAC Members

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Anderson</td>
<td>Bob Prunella</td>
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<td>Neva Christensen</td>
<td>Paula Rak</td>
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<td>Scott Hursey</td>
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<td>Keene Kohrt</td>
<td>Paul Rushmore</td>
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<td>Leo Luczak</td>
<td>Stephen Todd</td>
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<td>Otis Marsh</td>
<td>Peggy Wilson</td>
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<td>Nancy Murrison</td>
<td>Woody Wilson</td>
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**FS District Rangers:** Patty Grantham, Mark Hummel, Chris Savage, Chip Weber, and Bill Messmer
Where We Are Now

- Secure Rural Schools legislation has expired
- FS revenue-sharing has reverted back to 25% fund approach
- Expected payments to state under 25% approach will be significantly lower than Secure Rural Schools levels
- Congress considering extension of Secure Rural Schools
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Forest Service website
http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/payments