



Sealaska Heritage Institute

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FY 2002

Sealaska Corporation/Sealaska Heritage Institute NAGPRA Grant Project Summary and Results

FY 2002: Project Title/Name: "Three Day Seminar of NAGPRA, Museum Operations Involving NAGPRA, Contamination Issues, Traditional Property Law, and Repatriation Strategies." NPS Grant Number: 02-02-GP-323

The conference was held December 5, 6, and 7 of 2002 in Juneau. The participants were:

Presenters: Patrick Anderson, J.D. (Sealaska), Ana Maria Osorio (EPA), Rosita Worl (SHI), Tim McKeown (National NAGPRA), Charles Smythe (National Park Service), Scott Carrlee (Alaska State Museum), Sorrel Goodwin (SHI), Kathy Miller (SHI), Anne Marie Victor-Howe, Eric Morrison (Tribal Liaison, USDS Forest Service), Harold Jacobs (Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians)

Official Tribal Representatives: Viola Burgess (Hydaburg), Irene Jimmy (Sitka), Della Koburn (Kasaan), Christine Collison (Ketchikan), Irene Dundas (Cape Fox), Paul Rushmore (Wrangell), Fred White (Yakutat), Lani Hotch (Chilkat), Johanna Dybdahl (Hoonah), Leonard John (Angoon)

Other Attendees: Robert Sam (Sitka), Joe Leahy (Huna Heritage Foundation), Marlene Johnson (Huna Heritage Foundation), Richard Dalton (Smithsonian NAGPRA Committee, Hoonah), Jean Lampre (UAS), Nora Dauenhauer (Chilkoot, Haines), Ray Wilson (Kiks.ádi, Sitka)

The topics and issues presented and discussed at this conference were:

NAGPRA Overview, NAGPRA Information and Resources, NAGPRA Standards, Model Claims, Repatriation Claims Process and Successes, Summary of SE Alaska Claims and Inventories submitted to NPS (as of 2002), Harvard NAGPRA Project with Sealaska Corporation, Tlingit Property Law and At.óow, Rights of Possession and the Dispute Process, Museum Conservation, Physiological Aspects of the Curatorial Process, Understanding Museum Documentation, What Museums Look For in a NAGPRA Claim

Workshops: Reviewing Museum Inventories and handling museum objects, Strategy Planning Session/Regional Resolution Discussion

The issues brought up at this conference have been discussed at length since the conference, especially the issue of object contamination. What we decided to do to address the contamination issue is that now in our formal claim letters, we request any information that the museum might have on what that object were treated with. The exact language follows:

"We further request that you advise us whether these objects were treated with known pesticides or contaminant agents and the possible effect to handling or using these objects."

We now specifically inform the clan caretaker of the objects, or the family who will be caring for it, of the possibility of contaminants, and make sure they are comfortable with this potential problem.



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FY 2004

Sealaska Corporation/Sealaska Heritage Institute NAGPRA Grant Project Summary and Results

FY 2004: Project Title/Name: NAGPRA Identification and Consultation on Tlingit Clan Hats
NPS Grant Number: 02-04-GP-382

Summary of Results

The more tangible results of this product for SHI include: the locating of 121 Tlingit hats in museums; the locating of 78 Chilkat Robes, tunics and aprons in museums; a very comprehensive, cross-referenced hard copy NAGPRA reference library; a sequence of searchable electronic databases of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian pieces in museums; the repatriation of one Chilkat Tunic; the recording of clan histories including migration histories and the history of crests being obtained; and approximately 70 items identified for further research and/or future repatriation. Our database now includes information about items in over 100 museums that are cross-referenced in the following ways: by museum, by item type, and by location of original acquisition as known. This is the start of the largest and most comprehensive cross-referenced library of Tlingit items in museum collections.

As mentioned above, not all museums have responded or have only partially responded to our requests for NAGPRA information. Also, SHI repatriation staff has a minor backlog of museum responses that have not been fully logged into our databases and reference library, and is still in the process of organizing items in museums by the additional categories of object type (rattles, armor, etc) and by location or original acquisition (Klukwan, Yakutat, etc.). This project will be an ongoing one as relationships with museums develop. The numbers of items listed in this report are therefore only preliminary. An example of this is that during the writing of this report, one museum was 'discovered' as having at least one significant piece (a Chilkat Robe) and was therefore just contacted for further information. Through the research performed on this grant we also have a much better idea of which museums should be visited in the future.

An additional result of this project was that through the information obtained during our museum visit to the Phoebe Hearst that was funded through this grant, an object of cultural patrimony has been repatriated to the Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Clan (Federal Register Notice, FR Doc #05-10807, page 31530, June 1, 2005: see also Final Report for NAGPRA Repatriation Grant 02-06-GP-83R submitted September 2006).

Detailed Processes and Methods

1) Museum Review, Research and Contacts

The project director reviewed all information SHI had received to date from other museums to assess documentation materials on clan hats and contact museums to request supplemental information, such as inventory lists and photographs that clearly depict the clan hats and their crests. The review of the NAGPRA museum files was an ongoing process over the course of the grant. For each museum the following protocol was followed as we reviewed each museum file:

1) re-house and color-code files for immediate priority recognition; 2) find additional/more current information about each museum; 3) look up museum in National NAGPRA database for museum's repatriation history; and 4) do an internet search for the museums' website, check for

any mention of NAGPRA, and check for any S.E. Alaska online collections.

When museums were contacted, the project director asked them for information about all of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian items in their collections, rather than only Tlingit hats. SHI staff also contacted all museums with known or probable collections including Tlingit items, not just museums known or assumed to have Tlingit hats. We have included a sample letter of request for NAGPRA information to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

The following points summarize the steps followed and the subsequent results of the museum file review process as of September 2006:

- SHI was contacted between 1993 and 2006 by 146 museums, as required under NAGPRA
- SHI then contacted an additional eleven (11) museums in 2004-2006 that (according to our records) had not contacted us
- SHI initially reviewed materials from 157 museums
- SHI initially eliminated 26 museums from our review
- SHI requested additional information (digital pictures, accession sheets, donor information, etc.) from 131 museums.
- After the second round of reviews an additional 11 museums were eliminated
- Resulting in 120 museums that SHI is currently working with or still trying to obtain information from
- Approximately 36 museums have not acknowledged SHI's requests for information, or have failed to provide requested NAGPRA information
- Not all museums have responded fully to our requests, and some museums have just responded and not all materials have been processed

2) Museum Visits

The museums visited through this grant had been targeted due to the high number of Tlingit hats estimated to be in their collections. The museum visits to the Oakland Museum and the Phoebe Hearst Museum for Activities One and Two occurred during the same week in November of 2004. 44 items at the Oakland Museum and 69 items at the Phoebe Hearst were videotaped and photographed. SHI staff also reviewed the museums' documentation files on these items and photo-copied information as needed. A museum visit to the Harvard Peabody Museum had already occurred in November of 2003 via a NAGPRA Grant for that Museum (25-02-GP-316), and for this project this museum video footage and photographs of their 36 Tlingit hats were edited and additional documentation on these items was obtained from the Harvard Peabody. The Project Director was also able to visit the Maxwell Museum at the University of New Mexico while traveling there and obtained video footage of the Tlingit items in their collections. Please see the attached museum video footage and enclosed Power Point presentations that incorporate the museum photographs and accession documentation.

We have organized the information obtained from the museum communications and visits into a cross-referenced library of museum pieces organized three ways: 1) by museum, 2) by item type and 3) by location of original acquisition, as known. This information is available both electronically and as hard copies. Our resulting 'booklet' consists of hard copies of museum information organized by all three categories in binders. Our electronic files are organized the same three ways (folders by museum, by item type and by location of original acquisition) including photographs and all collection information obtained from the museums filed in triplicate. This information was then consolidated electronically into the following Power point presentations: Wooden Hats, Woven Hats, Headdresses, and Chilkat Robes. Electronic copies of all four of these Power points are available online.

3) Consultation

Our consultation evidence is still coming in to fulfill the products in our second category. We were able to consult twice with our Council of Traditional Scholars on this project, in both November

2005 and June of 2006. During these meetings we obtained specific information about numerous objects, discussed numerous repatriation related topics and concerns, and during which the Chilkat Tunic mentioned above was identified. We visited Yakutat in July of 2006 with information from this project and had two days of consultation with 10 elders and clan leaders in this Tlingit community. We are waiting for additional information from other elders and clan leaders about specific items we found during our museum searches.

We held two expanded Council of Traditional Scholars meetings and then one visit to the Tlingit community of Yakutat. We held the first meeting of clan leaders, elders and the Council of Traditional Scholars in November of 2005 and the second in June of 2006. Multiple representatives of the following communities attended: Kake, Klukwan, Angoon, Sitka, Juneau, Yakutat, Hoonah, Tenakee, Wrangell and Hydaburg. We showed these elders some of the primary items in museums as a preliminary consultation and also discussed with them the overall goals of this grant project. It was during the first meeting that the Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Chilkat Tunic at the Phoebe Hearst Museum was identified by Klukwan Kaagwaantaan clan leader Joe Hotch. At the second meeting showed them the video footage from all four museums (Maxwell, Oakland, Phoebe Hearst and the Harvard Peabody), then we showed them the 121 Tlingit hats that we found through our above described processes, and we finished by showing them some of the 78 Chilkat Robes, tunics and aprons in museum collections.

Other results from these meetings included: an extensive discussion of Tlingit shamanism and how to deal with the shaman's paraphernalia now in museums, the histories of several clans' more recent shaman, the identification or clarification of clan crests on several specific items, the telling of histories of clan crests being obtained by various clans, 20 items in museums targeted for repatriation, numerous crests being identified on specific items, distinguishing features on shared clan crests being defined, clan histories being told, clan migration histories being shared, ancient Tlingit words and phrases being remembered and recorded, and a resolution being passed on how to deal with the discovery and reburial of human remains here in Southeast Alaska. Broader discussions that resulted from seeing these collections included: the discussion of traditional Tlingit property law regarding clan owned items (*at.óow*), traditional Tlingit property laws and inheritance practices and how to translate these into modern American laws, the possibility of doing regional claims for large collections of Tlingit items, and the need for clans to catalog the *at.óow* still in their possession to make sure the histories are recorded for future generations.

SHI staff then visited Yakutat in July of 2006 for a trial village meeting about NAGPRA objects. We had two days of meetings with 10 elders and we showed them the Power point of the 133 items we had found that were known or suspected to have come from the Yakutat area and places from where the current Yakutat clans have migrated. These items included clan hats, Chilkat tunics, human remains and associated funerary objects. We also showed the elders the Power points of wooden and woven hats in museums. Results of this meeting included 50 items that were identified by the Yakutat elders for future repatriation and extensive discussion on items from the Harvard Peabody Fast Collection that are from Yakutat territory. In January of 2007, a consultation meeting was held in Wrangell by the Project Director where 20 community members were shown the Power Point presentation of items in museums known to have come from Wrangell. Ten (10) items were identified as of interest at this meeting.



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FY 2006

Sealaska Corporation/Sealaska Heritage Institute NAGPRA Grant Project Summary and Results

FY 2006: Project Title/Name: Repatriation of a Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Brown Bear Chilkat Tunic. NPS Grant Number: 02-06-GP-83R

The final grant results were the successful physical and legal repatriation of the Brown Bear Chilkat Tunic to the Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Clan, and obtaining the results of the heavy metals testing at the Burke Museum. Because of legal issues arising in other NAGPRA claims and transfers on a National level, Sealaska wanted to ensure that the Phoebe Hearst title transfer document met the requirements of a legal title before it transferred the object to the Kaagwaantaan clan. Our counsel confirmed that this was legally binding transfer, and that information was transferred up to the Clan Leader and caretaker, Joe Hotch. This document will be used as a model for future repatriation transfers.

The entire consultation and repatriation process for this object of cultural patrimony took under one year to accomplish. This is due not only to the relative clarity of this 'case' but also to the efficiency with which Phoebe Hearst Museum staff processed our claim. The museum's documentation of the Brown Bear Chilkat Tunic was clear that the donor reported that the Tlingit seller was well aware of the fact that she was selling the tunic illegally under traditional Tlingit property laws. Nonetheless, the tunic had been sold, and it eventually ended up in the care of the Phoebe Hearst Museum in Berkeley California.

Sealaska Heritage Institute [SHI] NAGPRA staff first photographed and videotaped the tunic on a museum visit in October of 2004 [funded by NPS NAGPRA Grant #02-04-GP-382]. Later that year, SHI held a meeting of our Traditional Scholars Council, where pictures of several items were shown to these elders, including pictures of this tunic. The Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Clan Leader, Joe Hotch, was in attendance at this meeting and immediately recognized this tunic as being part of his clan's *at.óow* [clan owned ceremonial property] that they knew to be missing. Mr. Hotch returned to Klukwan and assembled the documentation including historic photographs of the tunic in use at a traditional *koo.éex'* [potlatch] in Klukwan in the early 1900's. He came back to Juneau in January of 2005 with the documentation and a Resolution from the Chilkat Tribe authorizing SHI to pursue repatriation of this tunic on their behalf, and we co-wrote the Repatriation claim for this object of cultural patrimony. This was submitted to the Phoebe Hearst Museum in February of 2005, and their Board approved the repatriation in April of 2005. We then began discussing the potential contaminants on the tunic, and solicited input from several experts in this field on possible solutions. This resulted in our contacting the University of Washington's Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences about testing the garments for heavy metal contamination. Over the next few months, we worked to schedule the combined trip to repatriate the tunic as well as to run the necessary tests.

The project director, Klukwan Kaagwaantaan Clan Leader [Eagle moiety] and a Raven moiety representative [as required under Tlingit rules] flew to Berkeley for the official legal and physical transfer of this garment. During this 2 hour transfer event, Joe Hotch told the museum staff the full history of this tunic, and explained the oral history of the tunic's crest designs. He also

thanked the museum staff for their care of this tunic over the years, as he was amazed that it still looked new. After the tunic was brought out, the Klukwan Raven moiety representative brought out Raven moiety *at.óow* to balance that of the Eagle moiety. Immediately after the museum director signed the tunic over to Sealaska, Sealaska staff signed the tunic over to Joe Hotch as the caretaker for the clan owned tunic [copies of both documents enclosed].

We then took the Chilkat tunic to the Burke Museum at the University of Washington for heavy metals testing. Their staff determined that not all of the tests that they had initially recommended were necessary, so it did not take as long as we expected to have the tests performed. Upon the tunic's return to Alaska, Sealaska Corporation held a welcoming ceremony for the tunic at our offices in Juneau. We brought in the Kaagwaantaan clan leader from Sitka, as well as clan leaders and elders from the L'eeneidí, Kiks.ádi, and Tsaagweidí clans. Many members of the Kaagwaantaan clan also attended this reception. Later that day, the tunic was also brought out at the Grand Camp meetings for the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood, and the history behind the tunic and its repatriation were shared there as well.

The next day the project director traveled to Klukwan with Joe Hotch, and the tunic was welcomed back to its home village after being gone for at least half a century. The community was waiting for us at the traditional clan house, and their dancers sang the Brown Bear song to welcome this Brown Bear tunic back home. We had the tunic displayed on a table in the clan house for everyone to see, and local leaders and clan members were able to welcome the tunic back individually as well as a group. Joe Hotch and the project director then took the tunic around to each and every clan house in the town of Klukwan, whether they were still standing, or to the site of former clan houses. He did this so all the ancestors would know that this item was finally back home. We ended the day with a luncheon at the Klukwan Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall, where Joe Hotch and project director told the community all about the processes involved in the return of this tunic. The children from the elementary school were at this luncheon, and Joe made sure that they were all very clear on the significance of this repatriation event.

In November 2005 we received the final test results on the heavy metals on the tunic. The bottom line of the testing indicated that there were heavy metals present on this tunic [DDT, mercury and arsenic], but at extremely low levels. University staff suggested that if the tunic was to be worn for ceremonial occasions that it should not be worn directly next to the skin, should not be worn for extended periods of time [over 1-2 hours], and the wearer should wash thoroughly shortly after wearing the tunic. The tunic was worn by Joe Hotch at a November 2005 traditional *koo.éex'*, where it was brought out and re-affirmed as a clan owned ceremonial item [*at.óow*]. Joe Hotch did wear four shirts underneath the tunic as a precautionary measure due to the contaminant concerns.