

An obvious case of concern

To The Editor:

I am responding to your editorial entitled "An Obvious Lack of Concern" because it directly concerns me. The editorial was based entirely upon a published Associated Press correction of an earlier A.P. article, which in turn was based upon a lengthier one that had been published in the *Ketchikan Daily News*.

I would like you to know that I have a great respect for the reverence that Native people share regarding their heritage. I care deeply about the feelings of the Native people regarding cultural resource management, not only on Federal lands, but in general.

My commitment is reflected by the fact that I have worked with various organizations in Southeast Alaska and northern British Columbia, including (but not limited to) Sealaska Heritage Foundation, Sealaska Timber Corporation, Saxman, consultants for Kasilco, Inc., and Ayuukhl Nisga'a.

I have also volunteered to conduct archeological surveys for local governments to ensure that archeological sites would be discovered in a timely manner.

And, as an agency archeologist, I have surveyed untold miles of land and have found many significant sites prior to project development. In several cases, proposed unit boundaries and roads have been realigned to avoid destroying or irretrievably damaging sites where conflicts existed.

In specific regard to the cooperatively sponsored USDA Forest Service-Ketchikan Community College Field school that was tangibly supported by Sealaska Timber Corporation, we had consulted with several Native organizations during the planning stages.

Upon discovery of the human skull, I flew into Ketchikan for the sole purpose of consulting with David Katzeek, President of Sealaska Heritage Foundation. I believed it was important to discuss with him the nature and the condition of the

find and to determine whether or not the Foundation concurred with the idea of removing it. Had the Foundation objected, the project would have left the skull in place.

Because the discovery was made near the end of the field school, and we had only two working days left, time constraints precluded directly contacting each of the other organizations until we returned. Therefore, my primary objective for telephoning A.P. was to correct their statement that we had waited for several days to obtain permission from different groups before we had proceeded with the excavation.

My immediate reaction, upon reading that, was that everyone involved knew that had not been the case, and I was concerned about what these people would think. The person at A.P. with whom I talked was brusque and said that I was nitpicking; he asked a lot of questions and then proceeded to distill a rather lengthy conversation by taking some statements out of context and making assumptions about others.

This resulted in the erroneous A.P. "correction". In retrospect, I wholeheartedly agree that I should have let sleeping dogs lie, but I did not perceive A.P. as being like an unpredictable canine.

In conclusion, the Forest Service, Ketchikan Community College, and Sealaska Heritage Foundation have worked together at one time or another in southern Southeast Alaska to achieve mutual goals. It is distressing and personally humiliating that one such endeavor has been misconstrued and cast in such a negative light.

At the risk of entirely defeating the purpose of this letter, I will repeat that careworn phrase: don't believe everything you read.

Sincerely Yours,
Chris Rabich Campbell