Hello Ms. Firstencel:

The Douglas Indian Association is the federally recognized Indian tribe for the Tlingit People who come from Douglas Island, the Taku River and Stephens Passage shorelines (refer to the enclosed map for the Tribe’s Traditional Territory). Sometime in the 1880s, a tribal village was established in the vicinity of Sandy Beach on Douglas Island, and this became known as the Douglas Indian Village. When the Tribe registered their Constitution with the US Government in 1941, this was the tribal center of government and was also where they met as Camp 2 of the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood. There are many exchanges in written record of Tribal Leaders speaking to various government agencies, beginning in the 1800s. A census of the village, published in 1899, recorded the population of the village at 600.

Although the village was destroyed twice in fires (1926 & 1962), the area between the Mayflower School (built by the BIA for the village students) and Mayflower Island remains, today, as an area of considerable interest to the Tribe. This, of course, includes the site of the Douglas Boat Harbor. I am including an article that appeared in the Juneau Empire in 2002 which references an exchange that took place at that time with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the boat harbor. (Please refer to the last three paragraphs in this article.) I know that there have been other exchanges with the Corps before and since, but suffice it to say that there remains an interest and concern about the Douglas Boat Harbor.

The U.S. EPA has funded an Environmental Program at the Douglas Indian Association since 1997, and we have been investigating the environmental impacts to our membership since that time by employing environmental scientists. Currently, our Environmental Planner is Douglas Dobyns. We would like him to advise us on the technical aspects of the project (Ref. 2000-495) as the project review proceeds, and we would like to ask that this project receive a Public Hearing. For discussion of this request you may call Mr. Dobyns at (907) 364-3567.

Sincerely,

Andrea Cadiente-Laiti
Tribal Administrator
Tribal group seeks payback for land

BIA to review burning of Douglas Indian homes in '62

By ERIC FRYPH
THE JUNEAU EMPIRE © 2002

John Morris remembers watching the city of Douglas burn down his home in the Douglas Indian Village in 1962. The fire trucks were there to keep the fire in, not put it out.

Douglas, at the time an independent city with its own government, razed the village to build the Douglas Boat Harbor. The beach homes of Morris and other Natives were cleared to make room for material dredged from Gastineau Channel.

Juneau residents now play ball, barbecue and soon will ice skate on what some Douglas Natives consider to be stolen property.

"This was a piece of property they had to have and took it by hook or crook rather than the letter of the law," said Morris, 61.

The Douglas Indian Association, buttressed by a recent review of public records and federal law, has renewed its long-standing call for compensation from the federal government and the city. The tribal government says the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs had jurisdiction over the village and shouldn't have let the city burn it.

"There's never been a satisfactory answer to the questions we raise," said Harold Frank, acting tribal administrator of the 414-member Douglas Indian Association, a federally recognized tribal government. "There's been a lot of folks willing to say it's been 40 years ago."

The report by the Indian Law Resource Center, based in Helena, Mont., and publicly released by the tribe last week, said one member of the Douglas Planning and Zoning Commission was an employee of the BIA's realty office when the city was trying to acquire the tidelands and village site from the state and seeking to get a harbor built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Another zoning commission member worked for the Department of Interior, the BIA's parent agency, the report says.

Those employees eventually cited a conflict of interest and resigned from the zoning commission while the city was...