



# Foundation Document Overview

## Sitka National Historical Park

Alaska



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Sitka National Historical Park Foundation Document*, contact: [SITK\\_Interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:SITK_Interpretation@nps.gov) or 907-747-0111 or write to:  
Superintendent, *Sitka National Historical Park*, 103 Monastery Street, Sitka, AK 99835

## Purpose

## Significance and Fundamental Resources and Values



**SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**  
*preserves and interprets, for public benefit, a culturally and historically significant landscape that tells the story of Southeast Alaska native peoples, signature totemic art forms, the 1804 Battle of Sitka, and Russian exploration and colonization.*



**Significance statements** express why Sitka National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

**Fundamental resources and values** are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.



**The Battle of 1804:** Sitka National Historical Park was the site of a significant major armed resistance of Alaska Native people to Russian colonization and is now the place where the conflicts between two rich and contrasting cultures are interpreted. Related fundamental resources and values:

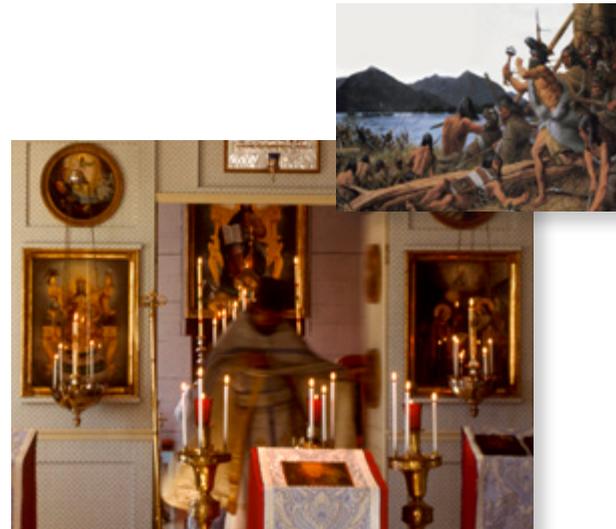
- Fort Site
- People
- Landscapes

**Totemic Art:** Sitka National Historical Park preserves and interprets totemic art that showcases the talents and cultures of native peoples throughout Southeast Alaska. Related fundamental resources and values:

- Totem Trail
- Brady Collection
- Civilian Conservation Corps Totems
- Contemporary Totemic Art

**Russia in North America:** Sitka National Historical Park features our nation's best example of Russian colonial architecture, the Russian Bishop's House, which stands as a symbol of the enduring influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on Alaska's history and communities. Related fundamental resources and values:

- Russian Bishop's House
- Collections and Artifacts
- Partnerships
- Historic Significance
- Cultural Significance



**Museum Collections and Partnerships:** Through relationships with local Tlingit clans and the Russian Orthodox Church, the park provides museum care, while supporting the traditional use of ceremonial and liturgical objects. Related fundamental resources and values:

- Tlingit Ceremonial Objects
- Russian Orthodox Ceremonial Objects

**Southeast Alaska Native Culture:** Sitka National Historical Park fosters the preservation and interpretation of Southeast Alaska native culture. Related fundamental resources and values:

- Clan Relationships
- Partnerships
- Cultural Programs
- Interpretive Programs

**Indian River Estuary:** The convergence of the Indian River, the coastal resources, and the sea provides an inspiring, biologically rich environment that is critical to understanding the events that took place here. Related fundamental resources and values:

- Salmon Migrations
- Water Quality
- Intact Landscape/Vegetation
- Healthy Intertidal Communities



# Description

Sitka National Historical Park is situated in the community of Sitka, Alaska, which lies on the outer shore of Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska, about 100 air miles southwest of Juneau. The park preserves historically and culturally significant sites and artifacts related to the 1804 Battle of Sitka between Tlingit and Russian forces, the Russian-American period in Alaska, and the native people of Southeast Alaska.

Much of the land now in the park was originally dedicated as a public park by President Benjamin Harrison on June 21, 1890. On March 23, 1910, President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation designating Sitka National Monument, which added several tracts of land. On February 25, 1952, President Harry S. Truman signed a similar proclamation that readjusted the boundary. In 1972 President Richard Nixon signed Public Law 92-510. This expanded the designated area, added the Russian Bishop's House, and changed the park's designation from a national monument to Sitka National Historical Park. The act emphasized preservation through public ownership of an area that illustrates a part of early U.S. history by commemorating czarist Russia's exploration and colonization of Alaska.

The park consists of two units comprising approximately 113 acres, including 49.5 acres of tidelands that are within the authorized boundary. The Fort Site unit includes the visitor center, which houses park headquarters. This unit also contains the Indian River Cultural Landscape, which includes the Totem Trail, adjoining trails, the site of the historic Kiks.ádi Tlingit fort, the battleground of the 1804 Battle of Sitka, the Survival March Memorial, the K'alyaan Memorial Totem, and the Russian Memorial.

The Russian Bishop's House unit, near Sitka's central business district, contains the Russian Bishop's House National Historic Landmark and two adjacent historic buildings: the Priest's Quarters and the Old School (formerly a school operated by the Russian Orthodox Church). The Russian Bishop's House is one of only four remaining examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

