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2023 Annual Report

First Things First Alaska Foundation (FTFAF) has been active in 2023 by educating the public about economic development and sustainable resource management. FTFAF is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) educational foundation.

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Funding for FTFAF activities is through the generosity of its donors. FTFAF is exceedingly grateful to all its donors.

Priority Issues

The FTFAF focuses on six issues as priorities. The issues are Juneau Access, Mining, Roadless Rule, Solid Waste, Tourism, and Wants & Needs. FTFAF activities for each priority are summarized below.

Juneau Access

Juneau Access education and advocacy continued during the year. The focus was on integrating shuttle ferries with improved land-based road linkages. Implementing an integrated short-run marine highway and land-based roadway system throughout SE Alaska recognizes the aging and costly ferry system as an unsustainable transportation model.

A ferry terminal at Cascade Point is one piece of the Northern Lynn Canal integrated marine/land-based transportation system improvement that FTFAF has been working on. FTFAF advocacy success is illustrated by Gov. Dunleavy and Goldbelt Inc. signing an agreement to advance the Cascade Point Ferry Terminal in March.

Mining

FTFAF education and advocacy on mining issues include comments to state and federal permitting agencies and general public education.

FTFAF spent significant time and resources rebutting pseudoscience, as stated by the Friends of Admiralty's report entitled Evaluation of Stable Isotope Ratios and Lead Concentrates in Clam Shells Over Time in Hawk Inlet. FTFAF rebutted the Friends of Admiralty report through twenty-six findings questioning conclusions, data, interpretation, or methodology.

First Things First Alaska Foundation (FTFAF) is dedicated to preserving the economic viability and future of Alaska through education. There is a clear need to educate the public on the benefits of responsible economic development and natural resource management.

Involvement in the rebuttal was necessary as the Greens Creek Mine was in a tailings expansion permitting process, and educating the public on opinion masquerading as science is essential.

Roadless Rule

FTFAF holds that the 2020 full exemption to the 2001 Roadless Rule adopted by the USDA Forest Service correctly balances resource protection and responsible development.

FTFAF resists attempts by the Biden Administration to reimpose the 2001 Roadless Rule. To this end, in 2023, FTFAF remains involved with a coalition of like-minded organizations suing the United States Department of Agriculture, seeking relief from economic harm resulting from the reimposition of the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Solid Waste

FTFAF briefly investigated plasma arch incineration as a solid waste for Juneau. Technology advancement seems necessary to make a project feasible.

Tourism

Tourism brings new money into the Southeast Alaska economy, a significant piece of the local economy, and leads to new business investment. Unfortunately, segments of the public seek to decrease this essential industry by preventing tourism growth.

FTFAF used communications platforms such as Action Line to educate the public on tourism's role in the regional economy. Special focus was given to Huna Totem's Aak'w Landing dock development in the City and Borough of Juneau, a potential \$150 million investment. New investment is essential for maintaining Southeast Alaska's position as a premier visitor destination.

Wants & Needs

FTFAF used radio and social media to educate the public on potential adverse impacts to long-term economic growth due to local government overspending. Debt financing major capital projects without a long-term plan covering maintenance and replacement costs was the focus. Also, voters were educated on where and when to vote during the municipal election through radio and social media. Specifically, in 2023, FTFAF heavily engaged in public education on overspending through debt finance for a new city hall in Juneau, Alaska. Voters agreed, and the bond issue to finance the project was defeated.