

FINAL DENALI REPORT JANUARY 2006
BIORKA ISLAND PANABODES PROJECT – GRANT #06-4-C-5012

Financial Breakout:

Freight: *	
Planning & Design -	\$4,202.76
Materials:	\$195,919.56
Construction Labor: *	
Project Administration: *	
Other: *(Construction, etc.)	<u>\$423,570.86</u>
Total	\$623,693.18

* Total for these four categories is \$423,570.86 including the '05 labor amount provided by certified payrolls. These amounts are part of a lump sum construction contract which is not provided as specified breakouts in the bid.

BIORKA ISLAND CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
NARRATIVE

Overview & background information

The Raven's Way program was established in 1989 to provide residential substance abuse treatment services to youth from around Alaska. Since its inception over 780 adolescents from 115 Alaska communities have attended this unique and effective outdoor experiential treatment program.

Raven's Way was one of ten programs recognized in an August 2000 U.S. Department of Justice publication entitled, "Promising Practices and Strategies to Reduce Alcohol and Substance Abuse Among American Indians and Alaska Natives." The Raven's Way program was also the first Indian Health Service funded adolescent residential treatment program in Alaska to receive national accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Raven's Way is an innovative program that effectively blends conventional treatment with adventure-based therapy. The 40-day program is based in Sitka and at wilderness sites in the Sitka area. It utilizes a cohort model, in which 10 students enter and participate in the program as a peer support group in a family-style environment. The therapeutic community participates in a two-week wilderness expedition, challenging ropes activities, family oriented living, and various cultural-based activities. Individual, group, and family counseling, academic instruction, and behavioral interventions are also provided.

One key to the effectiveness of the Raven's Way program is the use of Biorka Island as a treatment site. Biorka is a magnificent island that allows program staff to use the natural environment to foster treatment progress in a remote setting that does not have the distractions of an in-town treatment facility. In this interpersonally intensive phase of

treatment, staff and students live together in a contained and safe wilderness environment, establishing closer relationships while treatment issues emerge.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Description of existing service delivery plan

The Raven's Way program focuses on developing each youth's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual strengths, as well as their communication and problem-solving skills. Graduates have the tools to choose a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. Raven's Way integrates these components into its treatment program:

- Individual and group counseling
- Substance abuse assessment and education
- Academic education
- Hazelden "Step" work and relapse prevention
- Wilderness expedition and ropes course activities (in Sitka and Biorka Island)
- Activities relevant to Native cultures
- Peer support groups
- Home-like residential living
- Aftercare planning and follow-up contacts

The program is open to Alaska youth ages 13-18 who have a primary diagnosis of substance abuse and/or dependence. Since Raven's Way is a voluntary program, participants must be willing to engage themselves in an intensive, substance-free treatment program. Referrals may be made by parents, community service providers, health councils, probation officers, schools, and others. The cost of treatment for most students is covered by the Indian Health Service, Medicaid, or insurance coverage.

Students begin the treatment program in Sitka with an initial phase that includes a comprehensive medical and behavioral health assessment. The next component of the program is spent at Biorka Island where students receive intensive treatment and prepare to embark on the wilderness expedition. The final phase of the program is in Sitka as students prepare to return home and are connected to aftercare resources.

There are many ways to quantify the success of the Raven's Way treatment approach. Since 1989, Raven's Way has had an 84% treatment completion rate. This is significantly higher than most residential treatment programs across the country. Similarly, 94% of student who entered the program reported that they were satisfied with their treatment (including students who were discharged prior to completion). 86% of program graduates reported reduced or no alcohol use one year after discharge. 85% reported reduced or no drug use one year after discharge. 68% reported improved legal situations one year after discharge.

Demonstration of Need

In 1990, SEARHC received a special use permit from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to utilize Biorka Island. Since that time, Biorka Island has become a critical element for the adolescent's treatment process. Each group spends 10 days at this remote location prior to embarking on their wilderness expedition. Until 2001, Raven's Way utilized three cottage-like facilities on Biorka that were originally constructed in the mid 1940s to support the air navigation system located on the island. With the automation of the FAA navigation

system, these residences were abandoned and eventually turned over for use by Raven's Way staff and students. In addition to the three cottages, the Raven's Way program also utilizes a small school building, recreation/dining hall, caretaker's house, and shop. SEARHC has invested over \$250,000 to upgrade and maintain these facilities.

The harsh weather and high winds that scour the island took their toll on the Raven's Way cottages. SEARHC and the FAA recognized the deplorable state of the buildings. In addition to being structurally weakened by rot, they were contaminated by lead and asbestos making any significant renovation prohibitively expensive. The FAA required that the three buildings used to house the students and staff be demolished, which occurred in April 2001. Soil remediation was done with the understanding that SEARHC has permission to construct a new facility once the housing area was cleared.

SEARHC has secured funding for the construction of new housing for staff and students. Without housing, Biorka has not been used by the Raven's Way program. Consequently, this important treatment component was missing from the program. The decision was made to construct cabins using Panabode log construction. Panabode cabins utilize a link-n-log construction technique that can be erected quickly on-site using supervised unskilled laborers. Panabode cabins are used almost exclusively by the U.S. Forest Service for cabin construction in Southeast Alaska because of the utility of construction in remote areas as well as the durability of the structures in the Southeast Alaska environment.

The Raven's Way program made the decision to construct Panabode log cabins on the existing building site. These cabins serve as housing for staff and students. Floor plans were selected to meet the program needs to house staff and students (Cabin #1 – 1,310 sq feet, Cabin #2 – 1,069 sq feet, Cabin #3 – 948 sq feet).

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTEGRATION AND CONTINUUM OF CARE

In the Raven's Way program substance abuse, mental health services, and primary care are fully integrated to provide comprehensive care to the youth participating in the program. The program starts out on-campus in Sitka using a more traditional medical model and assessment process and then moves off-site to address students' needs through a more holistic treatment model. During the initial phase, students' medical and behavioral health needs are assessed and any unmet medical needs are addressed. Mental health needs are integrated throughout the treatment program. The Biorka Island phase is an especially intense opportunity for well-trained staff to address both mental health and substance abuse issues.

The Raven's Way program is an important component in the continuum of care for adolescents in the State of Alaska. Raven's Way provides the intensive inpatient treatment component necessary to have a high quality continuum of care available for adolescents from across the State. Raven's Way works with referral agencies involved in outpatient or day treatment and detox programs prior to youth admission to the program. During treatment, Raven's Way staff keep in touch with the referral agencies and ensure they are part of the after care planning. In this way the Raven's Way program is well integrated into the continuum of care for adolescents.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENT STATUS

Cost Share Match

SEARHC provided the 50% cost share match to complete this project. Cost share match funding included cash from SEARHC reserves, in-kind labor, and some materials.

Site Control & Permits

The FAA has provided approval for Raven's Way to use Panabode construction on the existing building sites. Available upon request is documentation of FAA permission to construct new facilities.

Design

The project utilized Panabode cabins that came as "kits" ready to construct and did not require an extensive design process. The kits were delivered to the island ready to assemble.

Sustainability

SEARHC has included a Biorka Island component in the Raven's Way program for the past thirteen years. SEARHC has demonstrated a commitment to the operation and maintenance of facilities on Biorka Island during this time and will continue to maintain the new facilities along with the existing facilities on the Island. Maintenance and repair of the facilities will be done by the Raven's Way program and SEARHC facility management staff.

The Raven's Way program receives operational funding from a variety of sources including Federal and State grants, Indian Health Service, Medicaid, and private insurance. The program has been recognized for its successful treatment model, this will help ensure adequate funding for continuation in the future.