

IMPACT

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

Maritime Extension Project brings workshops, classes to remote Southeast Alaska communities

Issue

In Southeast Alaska, the communities are spread over hundreds of miles of islands and inlets, with no roads connecting them. With the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system's budget slashed, Sarah Lewis, the Juneau-based Home, Health and Family Development faculty member, started looking for ways to reach the communities. Traveling by plane is impractical, due to high costs and the amount of gear Lewis needed for COVID-safe workshops.

Response

On July 4, Lewis launched (literally) her first Maritime Extension Project at the helm of her family's 36-foot cruising trawler, the *JunieBell*. COVID-19 mitigation practices required tents, a portable kitchen, and propane cooking equipment to hold classes outdoors. She pulled cartloads of gear up low-tide harbor ramps and biked around each community pulling a trailer to transport gear and ingredients for her tent-covered classes.

She tested canner gauges, taught food preservation workshops, and met with existing and future community partners in Kake, Sitka, Angoon, Tenakee Springs, Haines and Skagway.

Impact

Lewis taught 10 food preservation workshops (a few workshops less than planned due to COVID-19 spikes in some of the communities); three food entrepreneurship/Cottage Foods classes; two 4-H/youth local food focused classes; six food preservation demonstrations at the Southeast Alaska State Fair in Haines; and tested more than 50 canner dial gauges for accuracy. Lewis noted that some of the gauges hadn't been tested in more than a decade and several needed to be replaced.



The JunieBell is anchored in calm waters in Southeast Alaska.

Lewis also visited a Haines farm to complete a complementary produce safety assessment with another member of the statewide produce safety team. "That was an awesome bonus," she said.

Lewis plans more maritime trips in 2022, with tentative routes to Kake-Petersburg-Wrangell, and Hoonah-Gustavus-Pelican. She also hopes to repeat the Haines-Skagway route to coincide with the Southeast Alaska State Fair

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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