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# Raven Radio

**Location:**  
Raven Radio  
Sitka, AK

**Contractor:**  
Southeast Cedar Homes  
Sitka, AK

**Project:**  
Parking Lot & Patio  
5,600 Sq Ft

**Solution:**  
VAST Composite  
Pemeable Pavers

**Completed:**  
2010



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## VAST Composite Permeable Pavers Solve Challenges for Patio and Parking Area at a Public Radio Station in Alaska

Raven Radio, Sitka, Alaska, operates from the historic Alaska Cable House. Built in 1908, the Cable House served as one of the first facilities for bringing telegraph service into the territory.

The Cable House is situated on the Sitka Sound waterfront and sits right next door to a fuel depot. Changes to local building codes required the station to add a proper parking area for its thirteen parking spaces.

*"We had been parking cars on more or less unmaintained gravel with pot holes that filled with water and mud in the rainy season," said Ken Fate, general manager, Raven Radio. "The Cable House is next to the fuel depot, and the property slopes down to the ocean. We found out that stormwater management would be challenging."*

In addition, a garage that was added in the late 1940s has been converted into an artist studio and gallery. As part of the renovation of the garage, a patio was planned for a 400 square-foot area under a new pavilion structure extending from its roof.

The aesthetics of the project were important to the radio station. The Cable House is historic and a prominent architectural landmark on the Sitka waterfront. As custodians of the property on behalf of the community, Raven Radio wanted the paving project to enhance its appearance. Strength to hold up under truck traffic, durability and maintenance were key considerations as well. The project required a material that can withstand repeated freeze-thaw cycles without cracking. The radio station also wanted a low-maintenance alternative.

For the driveway and parking area, two alternatives were considered: poured concrete and asphalt. Concrete pavers and clay brick are generally not



## The recycled materials used in the pavers for the project diverted 2,800 car tires and 84,000 plastic containers from ending up in U.S. landfills

considered for large paving projects in Alaska since their heavy weight makes them expensive to ship up to the state.

Asphalt would have cost less than a concrete slab but would need annual sealing. Concrete would last longer than asphalt, but cracking was a concern. Neither would have been especially visually appealing.

But those considerations were pushed to the side when the stormwater impact of an impervious surface became evident. Runoff over a solid asphalt or concrete surface would tax the capacity of the next-door fuel depot's containment system and oil/water separator.

*"The problem of grit, sand and debris carried along by stormwater was as much a concern as the amount and speed of runoff. The fuel depot advised that their system could get clogged up,"* said Fate.

Marcel LaPerriere, owner of Southeast Cedar Homes, is a local contractor in Sitka. He presented a solution to Raven Radio: VAST Composite Permeable Pavers.

VAST Composite Permeable Pavers (4x8 inches) reduce runoff by infiltrating 4.9 gallons of rainwater per square foot per minute. Like all VAST products, these permeable pavers are manufactured in VAST's engineered composite of 95 percent recycled tires and plastic containers. VAST pavers are cradle-to-cradle green.

*"I'd used VAST on other projects, including my own driveway,"* said LaPerriere. *"I was confident that these permeable pavers were the answer for the station's requirements."*

According to LaPerriere, VAST's composite material is tough enough for the traffic load. It does not absorb water so it stands up to repeated freeze-thaw cycles. At one-third the weight of concrete pavers, they can be shipped to Alaska at a reasonable cost. VAST Pavers do not require annual maintenance.

*"VAST could work for both the patio and parking area for a unified appearance. And the environmental advantage is a bonus,"* he said.

*"Marcel and I talked about colors and patterns,"* said Fate. *"We installed three colors in a herringbone pattern, and the result complements the Cable House."*

### Installation on Display

The Raven Radio installation of VAST Composite Permeable Pavers was unusual in that it took place "on-stage."

*"Locals and tourists kept walking by during the project, asking questions and commenting on the pavers. I must have talked about the pavers with visitors from half the Lower 48 and Europe, too,"* said LaPerriere. *"And there are fewer than 9,000 people in all of Sitka, so everyone knows everyone. Dozens of people have stopped me at the lumber yard and grocery store to chat and comment on the attractiveness of the results."*

Will Raven Radio use VAST Composite Pavers again? *"We've had plenty of rain and no runoff problems. Everyone likes the way the pavers look,"* said Fate. *"We're fund raising for a second phase project, and we want to use VAST for walkways."*



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