

# **COAL CREEK STREAM STUDY**

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Prepared for: Yukon River Commercial Fishing Association  
&  
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

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# COAL CREEK STREAM STUDY

## INTRODUCTION

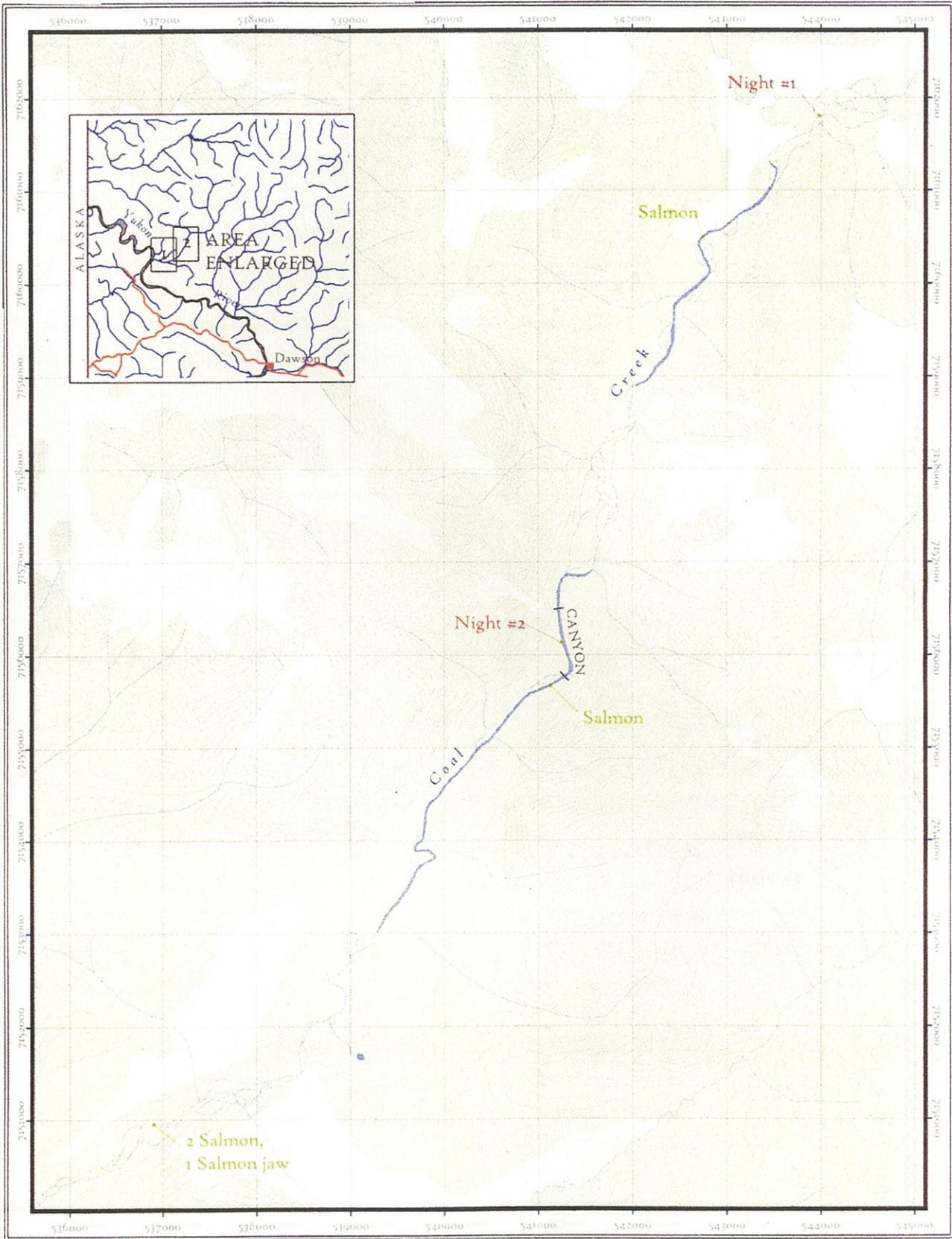
The stream study was designed to prove the findings of the restoration project's archival and traditional knowledge study. Present day information regarding the distribution and abundance of salmon was sought by aerial and ground survey methods.

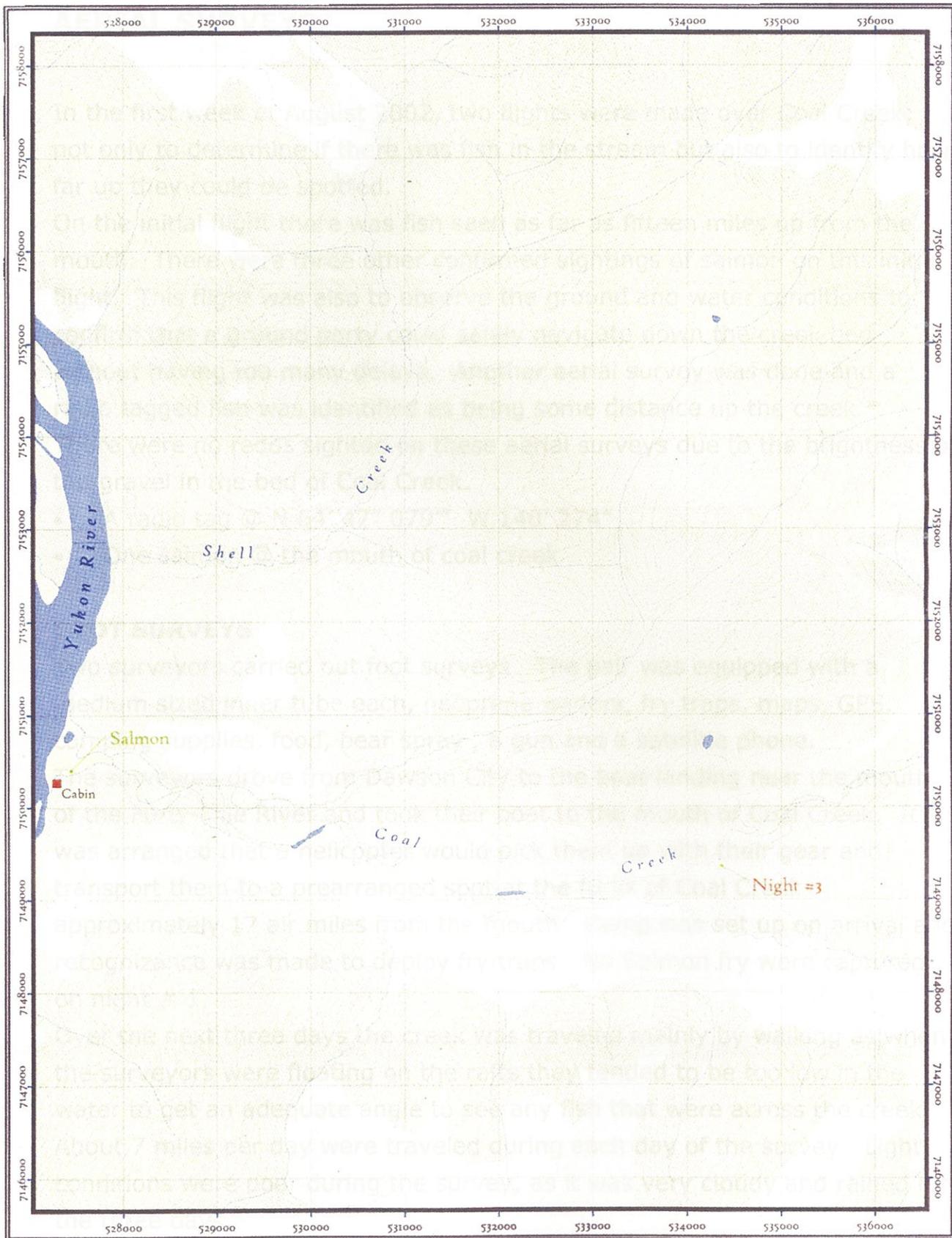
Early in the archival and traditional knowledge study the Chandindu and Fifteen Mile Rivers and Coal Creek were identified as candidates with restoration potential. These streams were determined by researchers as having significant historical spawning populations of salmon.

Salmon were observed in significant numbers on both the Chandindu and the Fifteen Mile Rivers to indicate that they should have priority in study and immediate action should be taken on one or both streams. Subsequently a counting weir has been installed on the Chandindu River with further study as to the placement of a weir on the Fifteen Mile River.

In the initial study, salmon were not observed in Coal Creek and further consideration as a candidate stream was postponed. Only one flight was made over the creek in less than ideal conditions. Despite these findings there is much evidence that Coal Creek has had a significant salmon populations in the past.

There is references to Coal Creek in the pamphlet compiled by Jake Duncan titled "Summary of Streams in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Area." It was decided that 2002 was the time to do a more thorough search for salmon in Coal Creek.





## **AERIAL SURVEYS**

In the first week of August 2002, two flights were made over Coal Creek; not only to determine if there was fish in the stream but also to identify how far up they could be spotted.

On the initial flight there was fish seen as far as fifteen miles up from the mouth. There were three other confirmed sightings of salmon on this initial flight. This flight was also to observe the ground and water conditions to confirm that a ground party could safely navigate down the creek bed without having too many delays. Another aerial survey was done and a radio tagged fish was identified as being some distance up the creek.\*

There were no redds sighted on these aerial surveys due to the brightness of the gravel in the bed of Coal Creek.

- \*A radio tag @ N 64' 47" 079" W 140' 274"
- \*One salmon @ the mouth of coal creek

## **FOOT SURVEYS**

Two surveyors carried out foot surveys. The pair was equipped with a medium sized inner tube each, neoprene waders, fry traps, maps, GPS, camping supplies, food, bear spray, a gun and a satellite phone.

The surveyors drove from Dawson City to the boat landing near the mouth of the Forty-Mile River and took their boat to the mouth of Coal Creek. It was arranged that a helicopter would pick them up with their gear and transport them to a prearranged spot at the forks of Coal Creek approximately 17 air miles from the mouth. Camp was set up on arrival and reconnaissance was made to deploy fry traps. No Salmon fry were captured on night # 1.

Over the next three days the creek was traveled mainly by walking as when the surveyors were floating on the rafts they tended to be too low in the water to get an adequate angle to see any fish that were across the creek. About 7 miles per day were traveled during each day of the survey. Light conditions were poor during the survey, as it was very cloudy and rained for the three days.

## **SUMMARY**

Salmon was identified on both aerial surveys with one radio tag being positively picked up. No redds were seen.

With the foot survey, salmon was spotted along the entire length of the creek from 1 ½ miles from the fork\* to the very mouth of the creek (see map). All in all there were 5 Chinook salmon identified, one jawbone (as per photo), one redd identified and 14 juvenile caught during the survey. On all three nights, 3 fry traps were deployed using salmon roe for bait. No fry were captured on night # 1. Five fry on night #2 and nine on night #3. (See map)

\*N 64' 34" 40''' W 140' 05" 00'''

## **CONCLUSION**

Coal Creek is a salmon spawning and rearing stream and consideration should be made for this fact!



Setting up camp – day #1



Coal Creek



A misty day on Coal Creek



Morning of day #2 - rapids on Coal Creek



Shadow of Chinook salmon underwater



Photograph of a Chinook salmon taken underwater



Coal Creek



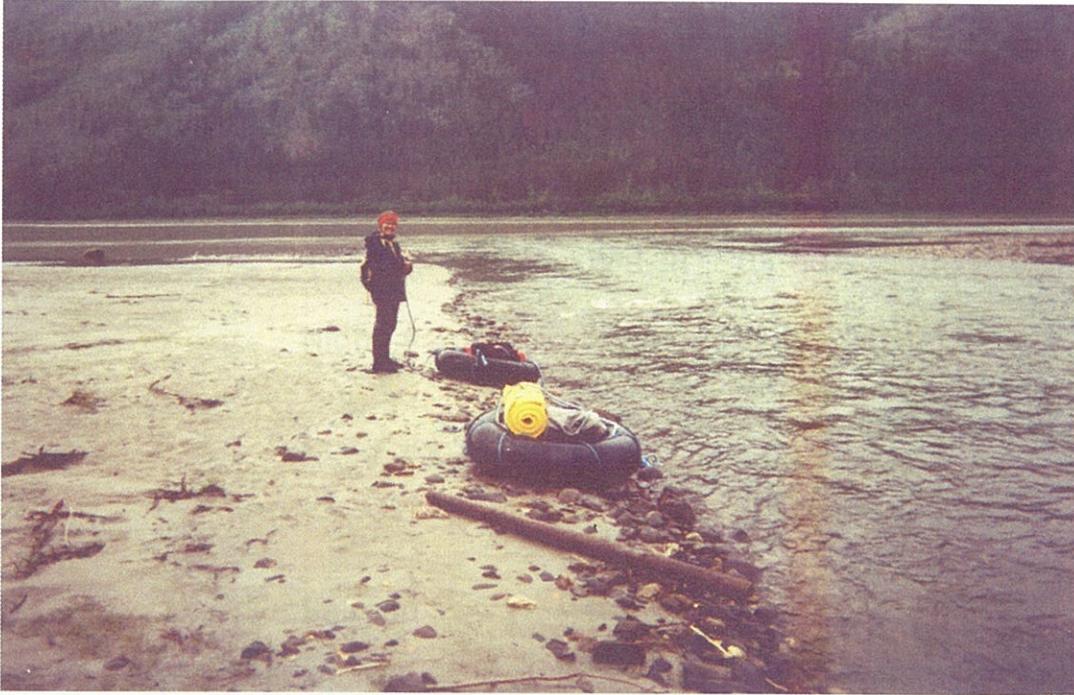
Mel on inner tube



Our Transportation



Salmon Jaw



Marcia at the mouth of Coal Creek



Mel at the mouth of Coal Creek

## LIST OF COORDINATES

Night #1	N 64 ° 34.40' W 140 ° 05.00'
Night # 2	N 64 ° 31.00' W 140 ° 06.30'
Night #3	N 64 ° 28.00' W 140 ° 17.00'
Salmon	N 64 ° 34.00' W 140 ° 06.30'
Salmon	N 64 ° 31.30' W 140 ° 08.30'
Salmon jaw	N 64 ° 28.55 W 140 ° 14.00'
Salmon	N 64 ° 28.30' W 140 ° 25.30'