

Yukon River Panel

Yukon River Panel  
**Project CC-02-15**

Yukon River Educational Exchange Program  
Final Report

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for:

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**Study History:** Starting in 1985 the United States (U.S.) and Canada engaged in negotiations to create a long-term agreement for the management of Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon spawning within the Canadian portion of the Yukon River drainage in the Yukon Territory. After 16 years of negotiations both countries came to a final agreement on how to share the salmon resource in March 2001. The *Yukon River Salmon Agreement* represents an international commitment to the restoration and conservation of salmon upon which Yukon River communities depend. Due to the nature of the Agreement, and the pressing need to protect Chinook salmon during the present stock decline, it is important for fishers and residents of the Yukon River drainage to understand its terms and regional and cultural differences. For these and other reasons the Education Exchange was created.

**Abstract:** The purpose of the Educational Exchange was to provide an opportunity for building cross border understanding between Alaskans and Canadians living along the Yukon River who share the salmon resource. In July of 2015, five Alaskans traveled from Alaska to Yukon Territory. From Fairbanks Alaska they traveled to Dawson City, on to Carmacks, Whitehorse and Teslin. The Alaskan participants came from the Native villages of Marshall, Huslia, Galena and Minto. The group was guided by Wayne Jenkins, Deputy Director of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA). After arriving by air in Fairbanks the Exchange participants were led by Mr. Jenkins with introductions, a review of the itinerary, purpose and goals of the trip, and a review of the present salmon stock projections and assessments by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). The group drove the road system from Fairbanks to the very headwaters of the Yukon River at Teslin Lake with numerous planned events along the way, including an exciting culmination at the Ha Kus Teyea Celebration hosted by the Teslin Tlingit Council. Meetings and outings were designed to provide opportunities for the Alaskan fishers to learn and experience the many layers of First Nation culture, Chinook salmon biology and management, historical and present threats to Canadian Yukon River habitats and fish stocks and the social implications and personal impacts of declined salmon runs in Canada. On our return trip we had many hours to discuss what was learned, how it might affect their individual fishing practices and the most effective ways for sharing their experience with their communities, families and friends.

**Key Words:** Alaska, Canada, Chinook, educational exchange, headwaters, salmon, United States, Yukon River, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), Yukon River Panel, Yukon River Salmon Agreement, Yukon Territory

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Educational Exchange Program was initiated in 2002 after the signing of the Yukon River Salmon Agreement (YRSA) to enable members of communities along the Yukon River, both in Alaska and the Yukon Territory, to understand drainage-wide needs and concerns for use of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon. The program was conducted with the ultimate purpose of building relationships to sustain the salmon populations for future generations. This would be carried out through an exchange program that brought Alaskans and Yukoners to each other's communities, homes, cultural centers and fish camps to learn firsthand about fishing, processing fish, sharing fish and the significance of salmon to Yukon River communities and cultures.

The purpose of the Educational Exchange was to provide an opportunity for building cross border understanding between Alaskans and Canadians living along the Yukon River who share the salmon resource. In July of 2015, five Alaskans traveled from Alaska to Yukon Territory. From Fairbanks AK they traveled to Dawson City, on to Carmacks, Whitehorse and Teslin. The Alaskan participants came from the villages of Marshall, Huslia, Galena and Minto. The group included the President of the Native village of Marshall, the tribal administrator of the Native village of Huslia, a Native wildlife biologist and member of the Alaska Board of Fish and two long-time Native subsistence fishers, one who is also a founding YRDFFA Board Director. The group was guided by Wayne Jenkins, Deputy Director at the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFFA). After arriving by air in Fairbanks the Exchange participants were led by Mr. Jenkins with introductions, a review of the itinerary, purpose and goals of the trip and a review of the present salmon stock projections and assessments by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). The group drove the road system from Fairbanks to the very headwaters of the Yukon River at Teslin Lake with numerous planned events along the way, including an exciting culmination at the Ha Kus Teyea Celebration hosted by the Teslin Tlingit Council. Meetings and outings were designed to provide opportunities for the Alaskan fishers to learn and experience the many layers of First Nation culture, Chinook salmon biology and management, historical and present threats to Canadian Yukon River habitats and fish stocks and the social implications and personal impacts of declined salmon runs in Canada. On our return trip we had many hours to discuss what was learned, how it might affect their individual fishing practices and the most effective ways for sharing their experience with their communities, families and friends.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Yukon River Education Exchange program has been in operation since 2002 and is based on other exchange models of creating people to people exchanges among professionals in similar disciplines from different regions. The Yukon River exchange is a multi-day trip alternating between Alaska and Canada with participants also alternating between Alaska and Canada. The trip participants are all from one country and usually represent various fisheries such as subsistence, commercial and/or sport, First Nations or Tribal Councils, state and federal agencies and non-governmental agencies. This group travels to different communities in the host country and interacts with the same type of various stakeholders to meet, share information, learn from one another, and see firsthand the way people live along the Yukon River. Participants gain

insight into understanding how people use the salmon resource, why it is important to them and how to sustain it for the future.

The trip is organized and hosted by YRDFA and funded by the Yukon River Panel in an effort to build relationships and understanding among the people who share the salmon resources. The Yukon River is the longest river in Alaska with headwaters in Yukon Territory, Canada. With a mixed stock fishery and Canadian origin Chinook and fall chum salmon migrating up the Yukon River and Porcupine River across the international border and on to their headwaters. The Yukon River is a vast river system with complex and varied management depending on what part of the river you live or fish on. In response to declining salmon stocks in Canada political leaders, concerned citizens and fishery managers along the Yukon River in Alaska and Canada engaged in sixteen years of negotiations and signed the Yukon River Salmon Agreement (YRSA) on March 2001. Once signed, the Yukon River Panel, a bi-lateral panel of U.S. and Canadians delegates decided that an exchange trip would help build understanding and support for the goals of the agreement.

Over the years there have been modifications to the program due to the scheduling of flights, the duration of time participants can be away from home and the ability of the host villages and organization to accommodate the trip. Year twelve of this trip, reported on here, continues to evolve and respond to changing times and challenges. This year, identifying good potential candidates, who also held current passports for traveling to Canada, proved especially difficult. We will adjust to this situation for the 2017 trip, by engaging communities earlier for identifying trip candidates and perhaps requesting funding for assisting with support and costs for procuring passports in advance.

## **STUDY AREA**

Yukon Territory areas of Dawson, Carmacks, Whitehorse and Teslin

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Plan and execute a trip bringing five Alaskans with strong ties to Yukon River fisheries to representative fishing spots in Canada to gain and share knowledge, both during and after the trip.
2. Build cross-border understanding and cooperation among Yukon River drainage individuals and communities.

## **METHODS**

Following on the experience and insights gained by assisting with planning and co-leading the 2014 Education Exchange, YRDFA's deputy director Wayne Jenkins assisted YRDFA's director Jill Klein in the planning and development of the 2015 education exchange trip to Canada. Mr. Jenkins led the 2015 trip to Canada. While this is a project awarded to YRDFA, in the spirit of cooperation with the Canadians, YRDFA collaborated with many folks in Alaska and Yukon Territory to plan and implement the trip. Additionally the trip is reported on at the Yukon River

Panel meetings as part of the Communications Committee agenda item. Specific tasks from the proposal were addressed as follows:

### Planning & Preparation

- a) YRDFA developed an itinerary based on past experience and on recommendations from the Yukon Salmon Sub Committee (YSSC).
- b) YRDFA with input from YSSC identified and contacted individuals, First Nations, organizations, and others that could assist with program goals and outcomes. Two annual First Nation events; Tr'ondek Hwech'en's bi-annual celebration at Moosehide and Teslin Tlingit's Ha Kus Teyea celebration came highly recommended from YSSC and others.
- c) YRDFA recruited participants through a direct mailing of a post card to Tribal Councils, an announcement on the YRDFA weekly teleconferences and by social media on YRDFA's Facebook page and Twitter feed. Direct calls and e-mails were made to YRDFA contacts in Yukon River villages, YRDFA board members, Tribal Administrators, local hires and other key village contacts as well as correspondence with the communications committee.
- d) Potential participants were interviewed by Wayne Jenkins for determining their role within their community, fishing knowledge and experience, fitness for travel, likelihood of sharing their experience in their communities and defining what they personally wished to gain from the trip.
- e) YRDFA staff researched and coordinated all travel from the U.S. to Yukon including per diem and lodging. YRDFA worked in collaboration with the YSSC, several First Nation's governments, Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans and several private outfitters for creating an educational, informative, interesting and meaningful experience for the Alaskan guests.

### Final Preparation & Trip Execution

- a) Jill Klein and Wayne Jenkins booked flights, lodging, outings and a rental vehicle for the road trip and determined petty cash, per diem and payments needed in Canada.
- b) YRDFA spoke with all participants ahead of the trip to provide them with information prior to the exchange to prepare participants for their visit, to alleviate concerns, and to clarify expectations and requirements of the program and to insure each held valid passports for the trip.
- c) Wayne Jenkins traveled with the group to the locations in Yukon Territory and guided the Educational Exchange trip.

### Post-Trip Follow-up & Reporting

- a) YRDFA's Deputy Director Wayne Jenkins led formal discussions the final morning in Canada. Lessons learned, new information garnered and how each participant would share their experiences once back home was discussed. Discussions continued on many associated topics. The Yukon Salmon Agreement, escapement goals, Alaska subsistence needs, Chinook biology and recovery and potential solutions to the Chinook decline were also discussed on the long drive back to Fairbanks.

- b) YRDFA staff member Wayne Jenkins emailed evaluation questions to four participants of the program and did a phone evaluation with two guests.
- c) YRDFA staff member Wayne Jenkins wrote and submitted the final report.

## RESULTS

The participants from Alaska for the 2015 Education Exchange were:

- Nicholai Duny: President of the Marshall Traditional Council, subsistence and commercial fisher
- Shandara Swatling: Tribal Administrator of the Huslia Tribal Council, subsistence fisher and mother of two
- Orville Huntington: from Huslia, wildlife biologist, Wildlife and Parks Director for Tanana Chiefs Conference and serves on the State of Alaska Board of Fish
- Christopher Sommers: member of the Louden tribe (village of Galena) and subsistence fisher for 50 years.
- Phillip “Jeep” Titus: lifelong subsistence fisher from the Native village of Minto and original YRDFA Board member.

## Travel Details

### Educational Exchange in Yukon: Itinerary

**July 19-27, 2015**

- **Sunday, July 19** Alaskan guests and guide Wayne Jenkins travel to Fairbanks, meet and discuss the trip itinerary, expectations and travel needs.
- **Monday, July 20**- Group departs Fairbanks at 9:30 am, driving the rough but scenic “Top of The World” highway to Dawson City YT, arriving in the evening, lodging at the Westmark hotel and sharing dinner and discussion of the next day’s itinerary.
- **Tuesday, July 21** – spend the day in Dawson – Activities include:
  - Visit the Tr’ondek Hwech’in Heritage Sites Danoja Zho culture center.
  - Lunch and discussion with Sebastian Jones-local commercial fisher and scientist and Natasha Ayoub-Manager, Fish and Wildlife for Tr’ondek Hwech’in First Nation.
  - 2:00 PM YRDFA teleconference.
  - 3:00– 5:00 pm Fishwheel Charter Service boat tour down the Yukon from Dawson to a traditional family fish camp and other sites.
  - Second night at the Westmark in Dawson.
- **Wednesday, July 22** - Drive to Carmacks.

- Meet with Russell Blackjack, Administrator at Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Deputy Chief Leta Blackjack and many First Nation members and Elders.
- Stay at the Coal Mine campground on the banks of the Yukon River near Carmacks.
- Visit the Yukon River's Five Finger Rapids recreation area near Carmacks.
- **Thursday July 23** – 8/9 AM drive to Whitehorse in the morning.
  - Meet with Department of Fisheries and Oceans for in-depth power-point presentation by Nathan Millar on Canadian Origin Yukon River Salmon and were their quests for lunch.
  - Visit the Fox Creek small-scale hatchery project.
  - Visit the Whitehorse Dam fish-way and hatchery.
  - Drive to Teslin to arrive in the evening. Stayed in Teslin in well provisioned wall tents (spruce boughs for sleeping on and small woodstove for warmth) supplied by the Teslin Tlingit First Nation on the shore of beautiful Teslin Lake.
- **Friday July 24** – Teslin Tlingit-Ha Kus Teyea Salmon Celebration; group attends workshops, meals and evening welcoming festivities; beautiful singing and dancing performances.
  - YRDFA deputy director Wayne Jenkins and fisher Jeep Titus from Minto are interviewed by Whitehorse public radio.
  - Group participates in welcoming ceremony and celebration of salmon flown in from the Taku River First Nation and some of the group help prepare the fish for smoking.
  - All stay over for second night on the shores of Teslin Lake, Teslin Tlingit territory.
- **Saturday July 25** – Teslin Tlingit-Ha Kus Teyea Celebration and tour to historical family fish camps with Dick Dewhurst.
  - Group members participate in various workshops offered at Teslin Tlingit-Ha Kus Teyea Celebration.
  - Drive to Whitehorse in the evening.
- **Sunday July 26** – Breakfast and begin discussion and debriefing in Whitehorse.
  - Mr. Dunny catches mid-day flights back to Marshall, AK (5 flights).
  - Remainder of group drives to Fairbanks, shares dinner, more trip discussion.

- **Monday July 27** – Remainder of the group catch their flights home.

### **Assumptions and Risks:**

The three primary risks discussed in the proposal were (1) participant dropout, (2) travel issues, and (3) participant health & safety. In our experience, good “vetting” of a potential participant is critical for finding “the right” participant and avoiding “dropping out” of the program. While there are many people along the Yukon River to invite, the criteria used for assaying the best candidates necessarily shrinks the pool of potential guests. These criteria are:

- 1) Are you involved in Yukon River fishery, in subsistence, commercial or both?
- 2) Do you have a valid passport for visiting Canada?
- 3) Are you interested in attending the Exchange now that you understand what is involved:
- 4) Do the proposed dates for the trip work for you?
- 5) Part of the responsibility that comes with the Exchange is the sharing of what you learn with your community, friends and family. Can you do that?

When the above criteria is met the instances of dropout are usually due to other factors such as illness or an event back home that needs immediate attention.

The travel issues we encounter on Exchange trips usually are related to when the flights and possibly buses, vans and personal cars can travel. As Air North no longer has direct flights to and from Fairbanks from Whitehorse and Dawson, necessitating a long and circuitous trip through Anchorage, Seattle, Vancouver and finally to Whitehorse and this after some Yukon River folks have taken multiple flights to get to Anchorage, we decided that this year’s Exchange would be a road trip using a rental truck, originating from Fairbanks which is centrally located on the Yukon River in Alaska.

We did not have any issues with participant health and safety. The drive was long on several days and by the end of the trip folks were pretty tired of being in the truck, but all felt great about what they had learned, the camaraderie of the group, the new places seen and people met and the opportunity to travel the full length of the Yukon River in Canada.

### **Measure of Success**

As noted in the detailed proposal for this project, there are three measures of success for this program:

1. Strong Participants.
2. Good interactions in host communities.
3. Sharing at home.

This year’s Exchange participants reflect a diversity of leadership, knowledge and village location and a selection process moving away from those already “in the know” concerning the Yukon River Agreement and associated issues, to key folks passionate about the Alaskan Yukon fishery, less knowledgeable than many Exchange alumni per the situation with Canada but very

willing to learn and share. We believe it is inevitable and critical that the Exchange matures beyond “singing to the choir” to educating and empowering an expanding cadre of messengers, from the local communities. It is heartening to observe the power of the exchange’s ‘people to people’ process, the learning of facts around the Yukon River’s salmon issues and the evolving understanding that the long term future for Chinook salmon will likely be determined by choices made by Alaskan fishers. Choices that directly affect the people and culture, very much like their own, of communities that are no longer unknown, therefore, out of mind, but now important, because they are known and their hospitality and vibrant cultures cannot be forgotten.

We believe that this is the strength of cultural exchange and perhaps, over the long term, the most cost effective way to support positive cultural change. We will likely not “enforce” our way out of the present Chinook salmon crisis, or even simply inform or educate our way to strong conservation measures but must, using multiple tools, such as the Education Exchange, YRDFA Teleconferences etc., assist and support the fishers in making the conservation choice today that will allow Chinook salmon to do what they do best; survive and spawn.

### **Financial Statement**

Due to the travel by vehicle, the travel line item was underspent. We did overspend in personnel and more time was needed by staff member Wayne Jenkins to run the trip instead of using the contractual line item originally budgeted. Canadian communities were gracious and did not charge for tour guides so YRDFA instead made donations out of the line item for tour guides to the communities that hosted us. Overall the travel line was underspent, as was the grant. It cost us \$31,236.14 to complete the project this year.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Educational Exchange trip brought together a diverse group of individuals not only relying on the Yukon River salmon resource, but also working to share and conserve it. Not only was it an exchange between Alaskans and Yukoners, but also between Alaskans as participants from the same country, but different communities, who got to know each other. While traveling to different parts of the Yukon River, participants interacted with people affected in various ways by salmon fisheries, thereby giving both parties the ability to appreciate the needs, concerns, and interests of those involved. Throughout the Exchange certain topics, such as the Yukon River Salmon Agreement, factors affecting salmon, management strategies, status of stocks, and the importance of the resource were stressed and discussed in informal and inspirational settings.

But measuring the effectiveness of the program has always been a challenge. Improving the state of the salmon runs themselves are the yardstick and the goal. Despite the incredible beauty, value and importance of the many cultures and communities along the full length of the Yukon River, their history, identity, and physical need, they cannot be returned to full vigor and deep experience without their iconic fish resource. They are salmon people. We believe that this year’s Education Exchange brings us one step closer to the goal.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We would like to thank the Yukon River Panel for providing funds to make the Educational Exchange program a reality. We thank the participants for joining us on this trip, taking time away from their families and duties at home to expand their worldview and advance their work to sustain salmon fisheries. We also thank the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the First Nations of Yukon territory for collaboration and support on this project.

## Appendices

### 1) Education Exchange survey from the 2015 Education Exchange trip:

Jeep Titus; Subsistence fisherman from Minto

1) Are you involved with fisheries in your community?

If so, how? Yes, Subsistence harvest. No commercial in the area. No permit holder now in the area.

2) Did the experience change any of your practices or ideas?

If so, how? Realize lot more Canadians had different issues, the managers seem to ignore the people. Our State and Feds listen more. Our guys have improved

3) Did you find your experience in Canada worthwhile?

If yes, how? Yea, definitely, not knowing how the Canadians fished. Interesting at Carmacks, how they wait for the fish, when fish run, fog in the hills.

4) What was the most valuable part or experience of your exchange trip? Seeing other fisherman and knowing we're going through the same thing.

5) What improvements to the exchange would you like to see? More time, felt rushed. Less stops perhaps.

6) How have you shared what was learned on the trip with others in your home community? Verbally shared with community and tribal council.

**Shandara Swatling; Tribal Administrator, Huslia Tribal Council**

**1) Are you involved with fisheries in your community? If so, how?**

Yes, right now I am coordinating with Gale Vick who works with the Tanana Chiefs Conference on using their extra funding on purchasing fish nets for families here in Huslia. Right now there are 45 fishermen and women that signed up to receive a net. Over 22 people signed up to hang the nets and assemble them. It is a slow process and the fisher folks will miss out on this year's catch but will have them for next season.

**2) Did the experience change any of your practices or ideas? If so, how?**

Yes it did. It was such an informational experience for me. I had never given much thought to how tribes can work towards helping the salmon until this trip. It has opened my eyes to how all of us living along the Yukon River & its tributaries that we all need to work together for the well-being and prosperity of the beings living in the river as well.

**3) Did you find your experience in Canada worthwhile? If yes, how?**

Yes most definitely! I almost did not go because of work but I am glad that things worked out to where I was able to go. Canadians are so similar to the U.S. people and Canadian Native American's are even more similar to the natives here. Or well the Athabaskan/Tlingit cultures that we did meet along the trip anyway. I am so grateful that I was able to take part in their culture, visit their tribal buildings, and interact with them. Our love for subsistence and cultural ways are strong on both sides of the border.

**4) What was the most valuable part or experience of your exchange trip?**

I would have to say the most emotional part of the trip for me was during our time in Teslin. They had a celebration and had to fly their salmon in from another nearby village (off the Yukon) because they haven't fished Chinook for 17 years. What a sacrifice not only to their bellies but it has also impacted them culturally and mentally. Salmon is a part of their being and when you take something that is a part of your life away then you feel like you are missing an important piece of yourself that you need back. The Salmon celebration in Teslin was educational, entertaining, and also warmed my heart because the love showed from one community to the other community.

**5) What improvements to the exchange would you like to see?**

I know we got to see one fish wheel in Dawson, but I want to go out on a boat and see how they set a net for either their summer or fall chum. I want to see if their practices are the same as ours and how they harvest the fish. I would like to go out and help bring in the fish in the net, then cut it up the way they usually do. So when I come back here I can share their ways here in my village.

**6) How have you shared what was learned on the trip with others in your home community?**

I taught others about how the Chinook (or Kings as we call them here) travel up to Canada to their spawning grounds & also a few other places once they reach their more mature ages. Then they make their way back down the Yukon. I taught them the different names like a Chinook is a King; a Silver is a summer or fall chum, and so on. I told them about the numbers needed by the fisheries that pass

through the sonar things that count the fish passing through. The larger the number the better on making it to the spawning grounds because this will help population increase. That is how the fisheries open or close the fishing season times. I taught them that many areas in Canada are making sacrifices like not fishing so that they are able to spawn and build their population up. I taught them that though the big corporate fishing boats are a huge factor in the number count for the Chinook, it is not the only thing affecting them. There are other factors that the biologists are trying to figure out but something along the coastal areas happens to them and they a lot of them don't reach the age to where they go out into the ocean. There is much more that I chattered about with folks here. Some asked specific questions and I would talk about that one certain topic area. For example, I talked about how there are spawning facilities to also help increase the fish populations. One of those that we saw was a facility that was trying to help with the fish numbers in an area that had a dam put in. Some or a good chunk of fish did not make it through and this decreased the population so they grew fish to help offset these numbers. There were other ideas like putting in a weir for the fish to go through instead of going through the dam. I believe that is what it was called, a weir.

**Chris Sommers; lifelong subsistence fisher, Louden Tribe, Galena**

- 1) **Are you involved with fisheries in your community? If so, how?** Yes, Subsistence fisher. Quit fishing for King salmon since 2013 because of the low numbers.
- 2) **Did the experience change any of your practices or ideas? If so, how?** The trip opened my eyes about the situation in Canada. What I'm trying to do now is spread the word. Sharing my experiences in Canada with interested folks in Galena
- 3) **Did you find your experience in Canada worthwhile? If yes, how?** Yes! Sure seems like the Canadians want to cooperate with Alaskans for what will help out with saving the King salmon. Cannot say the same for our side.
- 4) **What was the most valuable part or experience of your exchange trip?** People at Teslin have not been fishing for 17 years. Seeing pictures of what used to be was shocking.
- 5) **What improvements to the exchange would you like to see?** No, I felt it was well put together. No suggestions.
- 6) **How have you shared what was learned on the trip with others in your home community?** I'm sharing with folks one on one with fishers in the community

**Orville Huntington; subsistence fisher, Huslia**

- 1) **Are you involved with fisheries in your community? If so, how?** I communicate with Huslia and other Tanana Chiefs Conference Tribes on a daily basis to learn what they need from fisheries and regulations. I take what they need and help them create proposals, and or work to change existing regulations with the other Board of Fisheries members. We do not act as one board member in any case of regulatory actions, but as a whole or sometimes in committee with the public. And I sometimes just encourage and help fishers work within their State

Advisory Committees to utilize their local knowledge to create new proposals to meet their concerns.

- 2) **Did the experience change any of your practices or ideas? If so, how?** I found there is a big disconnect within the fishery management of the Yukon between managers, representatives and First Nations. It did not surprise me they are all conservation oriented but it did that they were not all on the same page. I see this as not a good thing as we rebuild stocks of Chinook and Fall Chum to normal healthy levels in the future.
- 3) **Did you find your experience in Canada worthwhile? If yes, how?** Yes, it was very worthwhile and goes along well with further fisheries work we have planned with NSF and University of Alaska system and federal partners. It also goes well with work with Northwest Boreal Forest LCC. I plan to use my connections with professionals in First Nations in Yukon to do more fishery work in the next decade.
- 4) **What was the most valuable part or experience of your exchange trip?** I think the most valuable part of the trip was working with First Nations and getting the perspective of DFO and their partners like Yukon College. It brings hope with changes to mining in the future. The information and see Lt. Governor Mallott there were encouraging but his words upon return are disturbing that the State Department cannot help us with mining concerns. So we have our work set out for us to keep with our fishery work.
- 5) **What improvements to the exchange would you like to see?** I would like to see better support and planning with more fishers on the Yukon side. I have no experience other than Board of Fisheries on the Alaska side, but find we did not talk to enough First Nations. We need to talk to all of them and provide support for their conservation work.
- 6) **How have you shared what was learned on the trip with others in your home community?** I will upon return to Huslia next week sometime. I have an entire month of moose hunting coming now. Thank you for a great experience and you have my support.