

Performance Report 2014

Title: Collection and Analysis of Yukon River DNA Baseline Samples in Alaska and Canada

Project Number: CRE-78-14B

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- 1. Project Objectives and Results:** The objective was to collect a minimum of 50 tissue samples from spawning Chinook salmon in the Salmon Fork River, Alaska. No samples were collected in 2014, as the sampling event was cancelled. Heavy rainfall in the interior this summer didn't allow for sampling to occur. We monitored the situation closely, and waited for the right conditions. However, we continuously received reports from pilots and local residents stating that the water was too high and too murky to be able to see any fish in the water, and that all the gravel bars were under water. These water conditions persisted throughout the run and ended any chance of a successful sampling event.
- 2. Consultations:** TCC Wildlife and Parks Department Director, Orville Huntington, and fisheries biologist, Brian McKenna, met with the USFWS Fairbanks Field Office biologists, Gerald Maschmann, Jeff Melegari, Jeremy Mears, and Jeremy Carlson, to discuss the potential for success of this project given the abnormal water conditions. After reviewing the current conditions, weather forecasts, and reports from pilots and local residents, all parties agreed that trying to sample in these conditions would be unsuccessful and dangerous. We all agreed that delaying the sampling to 2015 was the best strategy. Therefore, we made the decision to forgo sampling efforts this season, as we felt that it would have been a serious misallocation of money to pay for the flights and attempt sampling giving the poor water conditions.
- 3. Methods and Schedule:** We had a charter flight scheduled for July 20th, 2014 with Shadow Aviation to fly Ryan Adam and Brian McKenna from Fairbanks to the Salmon Fork River three miles below the US/Canada border. We were to be dropped off, and would use a Soar ProPioneer inflatable kayak to float the Salmon Fork River while collecting tissue samples from spawning Chinook salmon. We scheduled a 6 day float to allow us ample time to collect samples. We were scheduled to get picked up at the confluence of the Salmon Fork River and the Black River on July 26 via Jonas Carroll's riverboat. Water conditions delayed our schedule, and never receded to a safe level to allow for a successful sampling event. The flight out and the scheduled pick up were both cancelled.
- 4. Budget:** The original operating budget contracted to TCC was \$15,000.00. We spent \$2,851.71 purchasing sampling gear and equipment and making field preparations. The remaining budget is \$12,148.29. A majority of the money spent in 2014 on sampling gear and equipment will be able to be used next year in 2015 should the project be extended. Furthermore, the remaining balance should prove adequate, and will allow for sampling to occur in 2015.