

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Fish
CRE-7-14
Final Report



Prepared for: Yukon River Panel
Restoration and Enhancement Fund

Prepared by: Roberta Joseph, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

September 2014



**Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
First Fish Final Report
2014**

CRE-07-14

Submitted to:

**Yukon River Panel: Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Fish and Wildlife Department
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Health and Social Department**

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The 2014 First Fish has been dedicated in Memory of Nicholas Close, during his school years; he was an avid participant of several First Fish camps.



August 24, 1993 - July 11, 2013

Acknowledgements

Mähsi Cho everyone who made the First Fish Culture Camp possible, to those who planned, to those who worked at the camp, to those who supported the project and to those Youth who attended and participated in the many activities offered. The following are some of the people, organizations, and departments that took part in First Fish 2014. We would like to thank them for their contributions and efforts on behalf of this event.

- Lee Whalen
- Georgette McLeod
- Erika Scheffen
- Ryan Peterson
- Roberta Joseph
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- Bonnie Rear
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- Mikaila Blanchard
- RJ Nagano
- Leanne Dickson
- Brenda Ellis
- Ronald Johnson
- Julia Morberg
- Joshua Moses
- Trix Tanner – Fisheries and Oceans, Yukon Region
- Kirby Miester – Yukon Government, Conservation Field Operations Dawson Area
- Indian and Northern Affairs: Science & Technology Program
- Yukon River Panel
- Tr'ondek Hwech'in

If we have missed mentioning anyone, we apologise and assure you that your contributions were welcome and helped us to deliver our program on time and in an efficient manner.

Table of Contents

First Fish 2014	pg. 3
First Fish Teachings	pg. 4
Planning	pg. 4
Camp Set-up	pg.7
Participants	pg. 7
Activities	pg. 8
Fishing	pg. 9
Food and Cooking	pg. 9
First Fish Feast	pg. 10
Feedback and Recommendations	pg. 10
Financial Report	pg. 12
Appendix A	pg. 13
Appendix B	pg. 14

First Fish 2014

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Fish Culture Camp 2014 was held at Moosehide Village from July 14-18th 2014 and it is a fish camp geared towards salmon conservation and stewardship hosted by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for Dawson City youth and their families. During the camp, the youth were exposed to many issues and practices associated with conservation and subsistence salmon fishing and salmon habitat. The youth learned about smoking and drying methods, demonstration on how to set, check and pull a net, receiving instructions and directions in boat safety, bear safety, fry life cycles, juvenile g-trapping and they had numerous discussions about respect for the salmon along with many valuable stories shared by Elders.

This camp was created to teach safe ethical and respectful fishing practices to our young community members. First Fish also helped youth gain the self esteem and skills that they need to make healthy, safe, positive lifestyle choices, and a chance to learn about Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture and heritage.

First Fish Teachings

The historical significance of Moosehide Village added heritage value to the experiences gained while at the fish camp. The First Fish camp is about passing on traditional knowledge and skills to the younger generation by supervisors, volunteers, and Elders. During this year's camp there was one elder on hand to help with processing salmon and assisting with youth programming. The elder was very generous in sharing her child-hood stories of fish-camp at Dawson Shipyards. While the youth were involved in cutting the salmon, Roberta Joseph taught the youth some old salmon protocols and shared the conservation concerns and adaptation if fish food.

Planning

This year, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department organized the First Fish Culture Camp. As with previous years, the Department set-up and organized an ad-hoc planning committee including individuals from the Heritage Department, Fish and Wildlife Branch, and Youth Enhancement. The planning committee's role was to provide direction, guidance, assistance and advice to the organizers. Every committee member was given tasks to complete prior to next meetings, as well provide updates to ensure that tasks were

getting completed in a timely fashion.

Meetings were held every two weeks and then beginning in July the committee met every week to plan transportation and set-up for equipment and people.

Camp Set-up

Camp set-up was coordinated by the Heritage Department and the Fish and Wildlife Branch assisted by providing boat transportation and 1 student workers to get equipment and supplies to Moosehide. The Fish and Wildlife Branch also ensured the required infrastructure was in place and operational prior to the commencement of the camp start date.

On the first day of the First Fish camp, the Fish and Wildlife Branch provided boat transportation for youth participants, supervisors, volunteers, and visitors. They also continued to provide transportation for groups for the duration of the camp. During their stay, the youth stayed in the school house and in cabins with chaperones. All other participants either stayed in other cabins or stayed within family units. An orientation was conducted by the event Coordinator and the youth were separated into groups, to ensure the youth remembered names of various salmon and fish in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory, each group had a name such as Chinook, Chum or Grayling. As well it made it easier to coordinate the youth and supervisors when specific activities were scheduled.

Participants

This year, the planning committee set the limit of 15 youth participants for the camp to retain an enriching experience for the youth. However, this year only 8 youth registered for First Fish. There were 8 boys and 2 girls participants, although two youth departed early due to other already scheduled circumstances. There were approximately 6 – 7 supervisors including 3 Summer Youth Students, volunteers, and Elders to chaperone and teach the youth and share their knowledge of fishing and other land-based activities. A Camp Cook was also hired to work at the camp to provide meals and snacks to keep the participants well-fed, so the fishing activities could take place and remain an integral part of the camp. Families and other people were welcome to stay at Moosehide during the First Fish, and there were families who visited during the day.

Activities

The planning committee made a schedule of activities to happen at the camp, but salmon processing at the smoke shack would take precedence over any of the other activities if the processing was not complete. It was the most important aspect of the entire camp. Salmon needed to be taken care of immediately to prevent the meat from spoiling. The youth knew that all salmon fishing duties had to be completed before any other activities could take place.

Throughout the camp the youth were split up into three groups. Each group was chaperoned by 1 - 2 supervisors at most times. Two groups would go fishing while one group stayed at camp to do the salmon processing. All the groups would be rotated to ensure all youth participants had equal amount of time fishing and doing salmon processing. The group that stayed at camp cleaned and cut the fish, and hung them up for smoking. When the other two groups returned from checking the nets, they would also have to process their catch. The Elders provided instruction on how to clean, gut, and cut the salmon. All youth had to do different phases of salmon processing. At times, the youth would be at the smoke house until lunch. And then would be back processing for at least 2 more hours to complete the work.

Every year, the youth receive instruction about boat safety, medical or environmental emergencies, and bear safety. These activities are reminders that there are inherent risks when living in any camp setting. The youth should be aware and be prepared to know what to do if any potential incidents happen while at the camp.

Another part of camp life is doing chores. Each group had assigned chores they had to be completed each day, some of the chores required adult supervision, such as cleaning the eating area and sleeping quarters. Many of the youth didn't enjoy these activities, but it is important for them to know that they need to keep a clean camp.

The youth did have opportunities to do some fun and educational activities as well. The soap berry ice cream was a hit. They received instruction from an Elder to teach them what berries to look for and how to properly whip up some ice cream. Many youth sampled their ice cream with mixed results. Soapberry ice cream is an acquired taste for some.

The weather was nice for a couple of days during the camp, so the youth had a chance to do some swimming at the Tr'ochëk Beaver pond, which is a location up-river from Dawson.

Some new activities were introduced this year, a tour of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Culture Centre presentation on traditional salmon harvesting and a tour of the traditional fish camp of Tr'ochëk (3.5 miles up-river from Moosehide). There were 3 supervisors in attendance during this time, the youth really enjoyed these activities.

Some of the other activities at the camp included salmon cycle talks, setting two fry traps, traditional medicines in the riparian area hike, crafts, carving, and campfire time. The youth also played games such as capture the flag, archery, red rover, water slide, and Indian Bingo.

Fishing

This year's fishing was put on hold due to an expected low run of the Chinook salmon. It was explained to the youth in attendance that we're trying to rebuild the Chinook salmon population through conservation. Teaching younger generations the importance of conservation should help with future stocks.

We're fortunate enough to have some Chinook salmon donated for processing from local citizens, from their 2013 harvest. Additionally, we were able to have some chum salmon donated that was also used in the processing.

The youth were able to go out in the boats and have a net setting demonstration completed by the Tr'ondek Hw'echin Fish and Wildlife Steward, Ryan Peterson.

Also, all the youth went down river to visit a family fish camp belonging to the Kormendy family. RJ Nagano explained the importance of their camp, showed various locations of hanging and cleaning salmon. The youth did part take in some rod and reel fishing for grayling, in which, one grayling was caught!

Food and Cooking

The food was provided for all participants at the camp. A cook is hired for this event to

ensure that all youth and staff are properly fed over the week and so the focus of the camp can remain on programming. This year we had a well known cook and assistant with us. Having a fully functioning kitchen and eating area is of huge benefit to all participants. The cook also cooked up the first salmon caught at the camp for a feast at Moosehide. Many Elders and visitors were in attendance to enjoy fresh baked fillet salmon.

First Fish Feast

The First Fish Feast was held on August 14, 2014. The feast is an event that is held afterwards to honour the youth for all their hard work and eager learning abilities as well as to encourage them to return the next year.

This year's feast, Nicolas Close's family was invited, to honour him for his contributions as a strong and dedicated youth. A small speech was given by Ryan Peterson to the family and a small gift was given to them to honour Nicolas.

The same cooks were hired for this event as from the camp and they prepared salmon harvested from the camp. The feast is open to the community, the youth bring their families, Elders attend and other community members. All participants and youth are acknowledged, in addition a slide show is presented from photographs taken at the First Fish event, then the youth and supervisors as well as facilitators are honoured and thanked with a gift.

Usually the youth take small bags of the Salmon strips that they made and distribute it to the people in attendance at the feast as part of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture.

Feedback and Recommendations

The most positive aspect of the program was having knowledgeable persons on hand all the time to care for the salmon and teaching the youth proper technique of processing the salmon. The individuals who were directly working with the youth showed patience when youth were learning how to cut the salmon and they allowed for error to provide a perfect teaching opportunities about the proper way to care for the salmon. The individuals praised the youth whenever they did an exceptional job of processing and cleaning their work stations. The youth also felt comfortable with the individuals once they got to know them. During the last day, the youth processed salmon and cleaned with little supervision, although it was the last day they were still eager for more processing well after the last salmon was done.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in provided a safe learning environment for the youth. The sleeping areas were comfortable to afford good rest. There was sufficient food and snacks to ensure the

youth never felt hungry. Furthermore, the supervisors and chaperones were good role

models for the youth. In the evenings, there were times where the adults and youth could enjoy time together without the pressures of sticking to a schedule and taking the time to get to know one another. Some good storytelling was shared by all at a camp fire.

Most of the activities took place at the camp, but the schedule never really went as planned because salmon processing took precedence. The only time we followed the schedule was for meals, salmon processing, and some of the talks. Everything else was shuffled to take place the day they were scheduled or shifted to another day. This seems to happen every year because you never know when you will have salmon to process and how much to process. It is inevitable to continue that way for future fish camps.

The biggest challenge is to keep a balance between fun and work for the youth. Once again, this year proved to be a lot of fun whether the youth were salmon processing or any other activity, the youth were great and very enthusiastic to the end. Another challenge was not having a large enough workstation and limited number of knowledgeable supervisors to help the youth learn to clean and cut the salmon. There were plenty of opportunities for the youth to learn about Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage, but the camp will need more citizens involved in the camp to share stories and knowledge about life in fish camp and living on the land. More stories were shared while salmon processing about the history of Moosehide, and relation connections some of the youth might have with past families from Moosehide. As well, information was shared about the present Chinook salmon run and it's decline and how important it was to be conservative.

DFO staff shared knowledge of the life cycles of salmon and our responsibility of taking care of salmon habitats. Each year, the camp gets better and the planning committee is an integral part to provide feedback and recommendations to improve the camp for community youth. The best part is the end of the camp, when you know that everybody had a great time, when the youth are wondering around saying they wish the camp was longer and are not in a rush to go home and that they had more fish to take care of.

Recommendations from the youth participants this year were to ensure that we continue to coordinate the First Fish program every year. Another highlight, is that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has been successful in negotiating school credits towards youth participant report cards for all Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in out-door camps, including First Fish.

TR'ONDEK HWECH'IN
First Fish
12 Periods Ended 31/10/2013

Unaudited

	Current Month	Year to Date	Total Budget	Free Balance
REVENUE:				
Yukon River Panel		9,000.00	10,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL		9,000.00	10,000.00	1,000.00
EXPENDITURES:				
Materials & Supplies		2,097.67	1,350.00	747.67
Groceries		2,099.50	3,200.00	1,100.50
Gas		1,338.96	1,350.00	11.04
Contract-cook		2,450.00	2,500.00	50.00
Honorarium		1,122.57	1,600.00	477.43
,TOTAL		9,108.70	10,000.00	-891.30
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES		-108.70	0.00	108.70

First Fish Camp 2014

Information and Registration

Tr'ondek Hwech'in
FIRST FISH



Please read the following information. Then complete and submit to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department or Youth Centre ASAP!

Deadline for Registration: July 11, 2014

Mähsi Cho!

**If you have any questions or comments please contact
Georgette McLeod 867-993-7100
or**

Ricky Mawunganidze at 867-993-7129

- What:** First Fish Camp
- When:** Monday July 14 – Friday July 18, 2014
- Where:** Moosehide Village
- Who:** 11– 17 year old only (younger youth are welcome to attend with a parent and/or guardian) and maximum limit of 12 youth can attend
- Why:** To learn about traditional salmon fishing, cutting and smoking methods as well as learn about environmental effects, life cycles and many other exciting workshops.

What is First Fish Camp?

First Fish Camp is hosted by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for youth and families. It is a way for people to learn about the heritage and traditions of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, as well as the importance of the river and modern day environmental pressures on this important part of the culture. It is an opportunity for the community to have fellowship with one another; families, youth and Elders. An escape from town is good for everyone!

Start packing your gear!

When is it happening?

Youth will meet at the boat launch on July 14th at 12 pm with all of their belongings packed and ready to go. We will be returning to town by 3:00 pm on the 18th. Only youth who have completed the registration in advance and who meet the eligibility requirements will be permitted to board the boats. Youth who are not registered that show up the day of departure for Moosehide will not be permitted on the boats.

Where is the First Fish Camp?

The camp will take place three kilometers downriver at Moosehide Village, on the Yukon River. Boat rides will be provided for registered participants.

Who is camp for?

All Dawson youth aged 11 to 17 years old are invited to attend under the care of our highly qualified staff and supervisors. Younger youth are more than welcome to attend with their families. To ensure high quality programming and attention to the youth, the maximum limit is 12 youth. There is no fee for this camp.

When can families attend?

Families are welcome to attend the First Fish Camp. However youth who haven't registered for the camp will have to be under direct supervision of the parent and/or guardian. This year's camp partly runs over a weekend to maximize parent and/or guardian participation. Transportation can be provided on the weekend to take families aboard. Youth registered for camp will still be under the direct care of our staff and supervisors whether their family members are present or not. We are providing workshops through out the week that can be enjoyable for all ages. There is also a closing ceremony on the early afternoon of the 19th that would be of special interest to parents.

Please note: If any adult family members are willing to volunteer to be a supervisor at the First Fish Camp, please contact the Youth Enhancement Coordinator in advance to receive a schedule and guidelines for supervisors. Mähsi.

What activities are planned?

The main theme of this camp is catching, handling, cleaning and smoking salmon. Although this uses up a lot of time, that doesn't stop us from providing tons of other activities. Some activities will include Salmon Cycle Talk and setting fry traps in Moosehide Creek, Bear Safety, Boat Safety, etc. Don't forget evening programs too. There will be lots of activities and programs provided for the youth. Upon departure, parents and/or guardians will be given a basic schedule of the week so they can plan when they want to drop by.

What about safety?

Safety is the number one priority of all camp participants and supervisors. To ensure this Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have taken the following precautions:

1. High staff/supervisor to youth ratio
2. Staff/supervisors in sleeping areas with youth at night
3. Satellite/cell/radio phone at Moosehide for emergency use
4. A boat will be stationed at Moosehide 24 hours for the duration of the camp
5. Zero tolerance for bullying and swearing
6. At least one medical personnel on site 24 hours. Dawson Ambulance Attendants are notified of the camp and will be ready for any emergency calls
7. Knowledgeable staff and supervisors who have ample experience working with youth
8. Boat safety seminar on the first day of camp for all participants, staff, and supervisors
9. Swimming will only be permitted under the supervision of a lifeguard
10. Youth are required to wear life jackets in the boats at all times

What are the expectations?

Youth participants are expected to attend and participate in all workshops, activities and talks. This includes chores, curfews and meals. We are living in a team setting; therefore everyone's actions will have either a positive or negative affect on the team. I'm sure that we won't have any problems with that though! Youth are to understand that they are under the care of the staff and supervisors and must listen carefully when being given direction. As is the nature with all camps, youth are required to be flexible when it comes to the schedule. The fish are our first concern, and other workshops and activities are secondary.

And their health?

If youth require any medication, please ensure to make note of that on the medical form as well as personally give to a staff member and/or supervisor before departure. Label medication clearly including what it is, the dosage and frequency. We are not permitted to administer any over the counter medication to youth. In the event where medication is required that the youth does not have with them, parents will be contacted immediately and appropriate measures will be taken. Portable showers are an addition to this year's camp; the youth will have scheduled shower times at the camp.

What do Youth need to bring?

***The items below are not suggested, they are mandatory, if youth fail to bring any of the following items, their experience at the First Fish Camp could be adversely affected (i.e. forgetting rain gear and getting soaked). Youth will have to bring their bags to orientation for an equipment check to ensure youth have everything on the checklist.**

****Discman, radios, game boys, cell phones and all other electronics are strictly forbidden! They will be confiscated and returned only upon the conclusion of camp. Parents and/or guardians, please ensure that electronics are left at home. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in will not be liable for any damages or loss of electronics during the First Fish Camp.**

***** Parents and/or guardians, please label everything! Lost and found will go to the thrift store if left unclaimed for a week!**

Orientation/Equipment Check Day

Youth registered in the camp are required to bring the supplies listed below that are necessary for attending a summer fish camp. The Gear Check day will be held on Thursday July 11, 2013 at 12pm at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Youth Centre next to Bonanza

Market on 2nd ave. If any of these supplies are over looked, the youth will not be attending camp. A draft schedule will be provided to youth and parents during orientation.

List of Supplies

- Sleeping bag and pillow**
- Foamy or air mattress**
- Pajamas**
- Extra clothes** - one for handling fish and one or more for other activities, lots of extra socks and long and short sleeve shirts and pants and shorts.
- Rain gear** - we're outside rain or shine!
- Warm fleece jacket** or sweater - it can be cold at night!
- Extra** pair of sturdy outdoor **shoes** – need to change if feet get wet!
- Rubber Boots**
- Bathing suit and towel**
- Sunhat/baseball cap and sunglasses**
- Bug spray and sunscreen**
- Toiletries** - toothpaste, toothbrush, medication, etc (soap will be provided for showers)
- Life jacket**/PFD - if you have one, if not one will be provided
- Mess kit** – bag of unbreakable dishes with cup and cutlery
- Water bottle** (with personal label) – need to keep hydrated
- Good **back pack** for carrying lunches for hikes and while on boat trips.

First Fish Consent Form

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that certain risks of injury are inherent to participation in recreation and sport activities, including First Fish Camp on July 14 - 18, 2014. I understand that certain activities require a minimum level of fitness and health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) and that each person has a different capacity for participating in these activities. I hereby warrant my son or daughter is fit to participate in the camp and understand the choice to participate brings assumptions of risks inherent to this activity.

I agree that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, their employees or volunteers shall not be liable for any injury, damage or loss of property incurred to my person or that of my son or daughter arising from or in anyway resulting from participation in the above mentioned camp.

I declare, having read and understood the above informed consent agreement in its entirety, and hereby give my consent to participants acknowledging all of the foregoing.

Signature of Participant _____ Name of Participant _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

Witness _____

Medical Form

Name of Participant _____ DOB DD/MM/YY

Participants' Yukon Health Insurance # _____

Please list any known injuries, allergies, or medical conditions we should be aware of including: asthma, diabetes, back pain, etc: _____

List any special diet requirements: _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge all given medical information to be accurate in its entirety.

Signature of Participant _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

How many times have you attended First Fish? _____

