

FAMILY FISH CAMP 2013



Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

Final Project Report

Family Fish Camp 2013

Ta'an Kwäch'än (Taa'an Män) Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pacific Salmon Commission (Yukon River Panel Restoration and Enhancement Fund) in partnership with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada provided funding for this project. Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, and The Yukon Literacy Coalition gave their time and shared their knowledge. TKC Lands, Resources and Heritage Department were primarily responsible for project coordination and implementation, with support from TKC health Department staff.

Special thanks to the Elders who shared their time, knowledge and experience.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Yukon River Salmon are highly valued by Yukon First Nation people as part of a healthy heritage, culture, environment and way of life. Chinook salmon (gyu – Southern Tutchone) is an important component of identity and figures prominently in stories, history, diet, traditional activities and conservation efforts. Educating citizens about selective fishing encourages people to continue fishing, while addressing conservation concerns and promoting a viable First nations fishery.

TKC is an urban based First Nation with a demonstrated need for structured programs, such as family fish camp, to teach the younger generation traditional ways in a modern context, in an environment where Elders, youth and families share time and learn cooperatively from one another.

In order to meet with TKC's mission and vision statements for the "preservation, balance, and harmony of our traditional territory" and to "honor, respect, protect and care for our environment, people, economy and traditional culture as practiced by our elders" the family fish camps are vital in order to fulfill this need.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Family Fish Camp took place over 5 days, August 12th – 16th 2013, at Helen's Fish camp, a traditional meeting place for Ta'an Kwäch'än people located on the west shore of Lake Laberge, north of Whitehorse in the Yukon River Upper Lakes Watershed.

The main focus of family fish camp was hands-on, experimental learning, with a formal education component. Activities included setting and pulling nets, cutting/hanging/smoking/jarring fish and the construction of a fish net to be used for future use by TKC citizens.

Other camp activities included traditional medicine making, archery, canoeing, and traditional art instruction rounded out the days spent at fish camp.

Formal education was delivered through brief presentations and hand-out packages containing information on how Yukon River Salmon is managed and the importance of in-season harvest data to date, Chinook salmon biology and life cycle, and fish identification cards showing the many different species, and which species migrate into the Yukon Territory.

Special guest Dennis Zimmerman from the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee participated throughout the duration of the camp. As well as providing information pertaining to salmon, he was also busy filming the camp participants as they carried out the fish related activities in order to gain an understanding of how TKC citizens not only deal with the decline in the salmon population but also the many ways they utilize fish in their daily lives. The outcome of this filming will be shown on the community channel (9) in the near future, as well as include this documented film to our fellow Alaskan's in the April meeting in Fairbanks, with the Per-season for Tribal citizens.

Youth and citizens of all ages attended the fish camp with a total of 30 youth participants and 30 community members' and the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Family Fish camp was well received by participants and successful in achieving all of the intended objectives. There is interest and acknowledged need to continue this type of on the land, family based programming.

The following recommendations highlight opportunities to improve the delivery, experience and outcomes of Family Fish Camp.

- Project planning should include representatives of the TKC Youth Council to explore opportunities to increase involvement of TKC youth in Family Fish Camp activities.
- Setting one net prior to the beginning of camp would provide more time for the smoking and processing of fish.
- Honorariums need to be kept to a minimum with the bulk of the Culture Camp delivery provided by TKC in an in-kind contribution format through its employees.