

**YUKON SCHOOLS FRY RELEASES AND HABITAT STUDIES
Final Report to the Yukon River Panel**

Project Number: 17- STE (was CRE 67)



**Submitted by: Streamkeepers North Society
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Acknowledgements:

Teachers at Yukon Schools provided class instruction and organized field trips. They were assisted on field trips by **parents and other volunteers. Fisheries and Oceans Canada** conducted the chum egg takes for the schools and assisted with facilitation of the Kluane fry release field trips.



Kluane Chum Fry Release (DFO photo).

Yukon Schools Fry Releases and Habitat Studies

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Abstract:

Yukon students from 3 schools in three Yukon communities (Beaver Creek, Destruction Bay and Haines Junction) participated in fry releases and aquatic studies field trips in the spring of 2012. These schools released chum fry back to the Kluane River. These field trips enabled students, teachers and volunteers to gain a better understanding and appreciation of Yukon River salmon and their habitat.

Introduction:

Conservation of Yukon River salmon runs depends on the maintenance and development of a stewardship ethic among those who live in the watershed. The Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) "Stream to Sea" program helps to foster this ethic in students by helping them to gain a better understanding and appreciation of salmon and their habitat requirements. The program provides online resources for teachers to use in guiding classroom and field studies. It also includes a classroom incubation component that engages students in the nurturing of salmon. Students' understanding of the connection between the scientific concepts learned in the classroom and the natural habitat of the salmon is strengthened when students are able to participate in field studies. Field trip funding enables students involved with classroom incubation of salmon to participate in fry releases and various aquatic habitat studies and activities. Although field trip funding was available, many schools were not prepared to organize field trips without the assistance of a DFO Education Coordinator. Also, due to the lack of a coordinator, most schools did not have salmon fry rearing or releases to carry out; these commitments commonly help to focus field trip activities on salmon life cycle and habitat studies. Only two classes took advantage of aquatic studies field trip funding in 2012.

Project Location:

Students from Beaver Creek, Haines Junction and Destruction Bay participated in field trips to the Kluane River to release fry.

Project Summary:

The primary objective of this project was to provide transportation funds to enable students involved with the DFO "Stream to Sea" program to participate in field trips that would enable them to better understand the nature of salmon habitat. St. Elias School, Nelnah Bessie John School and Kluane Lake School participated in a joint field trip to the Kluane River. St. Elias School also a DFO biologist provided facilitation support and parent volunteers assisted with

activities. Activities included fry releases, aquatic invertebrate studies, water quality studies and a dissection.

Fry releases and aquatic studies: The chum fry releases occurred in May 2012. (See Table 1.)

Students were bussed to the field trip sites. Volunteers drove to the sites to assist with class activities.

The highlights from 2012 are:

- Kluane Lake School and Nelnah Bessie John School released chum salmon that had been incubated at the McIntyre Salmon Incubation facility back into the Kluane River. Students released approximately 300 chum fry.



Kluane Chum Fry Release (DFO photo).

Chum salmon broodstock collection:

Kluane Lake School participated in a field trip to capture broodstock and take salmon eggs from chum salmon on October 2012. The Kluane area Salmon Stewardship Coordinator and DFO personnel assisted the students to collect an estimated 400 Kluane River Chum eggs on October 25, 2012. Eggs were fertilized and planted at Kluane School and at St.Elias School in Haines Junction. Conditions on the day of the egg take were very cold and windy.

Chum salmon are currently incubating at the Kluane Lake School. They will be released back to the Kluane River this spring.

Ongoing:

Teachers and Salmon Stewardship Coordinators at 15 Yukon Schools set up classroom aquaria to undertake the incubation portion of the "Stream to Sea" Program in the 2012-2013 school years. They will release their fry in the upcoming spring, with the guidance of the SSCs, funded under the Yukon River Panel R&E project NEW-STE-17.

It is anticipated that field trips will be scheduled for May and June 2013 for the release of Kluane River Chum, Fox Creek Chinook, and Tatchun River Chinook, Blind Creek Chinook, and Klondike River Chinook that are currently incubating in schools.

**Table 1.
Yukon Schools Salmon Fry Release and Habitat Studies Field Trips: Spring 2012**

School:	Community	Field Trip Date	Trip Destination
St.Elias Community School	Haines Junction	May 10, 2012	Kluane River
Kluane Lake School	Destruction Bay	May 11, 2012	Kluane River
Nelnah Bessie John Creek School	Beaver Creek	May 11, 2012	Kluane River
Kluane Lake School	Destruction Bay	Oct 25, 2012	Kluane River