

2003 Yukon River Panel R&E Program Support

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**CRE-DFO-03
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
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Abstract

This is the final report of project CRE-DFO-03. The purpose of this project, in an agreement between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Yukon River Panel, was to provide Departmental technical support to the implementation of the Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund.

The project involved the hiring of one biologist and one senior technician to assist the Habitat and Enhancement Branch and the Stock Assessment/Fisheries Management Unit respectively. Technical staff worked in a support role with proponents and the Yukon River Panel in a collaborative effort to meet the goals of the Restoration and Enhancement Fund.

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1.5 Assist Proponents with the Development of 2004/05 Workplans

Upon successful approval of detailed proposals by the Yukon River Panel, the StAD technical support liaised with proponents to develop workplans and budget payments schedules. The support also assisted the proponent in securing the required government permits (e.g. navigable waters, collection permits, and scientific licenses).

1.6 Assistance to DFO – StAD/FM

This position provided direct and in-direct assistance to the general management of DFO's contribution to the Yukon River Panel's R&E program, thereby enabling DFO StAD management to deal with other Yukon River strategic issues.

1.7 Other R&E Related Tasks

- General point of contact for R&E related questions
- Attended meetings with respect to R&E related projects/issues
- Liaised with various US partners to plan/implement projects of mutual interest (e.g. sonar)
- Completed outstanding reports that StAD/DFO was the primary lead on (e.g. 2002 and 2003 Whitehorse Rapids Fish Hatchery Coded Wire Tag reports - CRE-63-02 &03)
- Assisted in a technical capacity for projects that were operating during the 2003/04 season, including the CWT application at the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Hatchery and the subsequent release of fry.
- Development of recommended protocols for stock assessment related R&E projects (in-progress).

R&E Technical Support - Habitat and Enhancement

2.0 Yukon River Panel R&E Program HEB Biologist Position

The Habitat and Enhancement Branch (HEB) of Fisheries & Oceans Canada created a term position, based on funding provided by the Yukon River Panel's Restoration & Enhancement Program, through a funding agreement between the Panel and DFO to provide support by the Department to the implementation of the Panel's R&E program.

The position was initially staffed on a part time basis in December 2003, with ongoing staffing occurring January 2004.

2.1 YRP R&E Manual

Funding for a related Panel R&E project (CRE-104N-03) involving Fisheries Field Technician Program training fundamentally altered the progress and content of the

technical manual to be produced as the primary product of this position. All students of this course provided by Yukon College in concert with Malaspina College of Nanaimo, BC used this manual.

This was an opportunity to 'Yukonize' the instruction of this course in Yukon by Malaspina College, incorporating the information developed for the Yukon River Panel R&E program manual by the R&E position funded by the Panel. Further development of this training manual is being developed cooperatively with Malaspina College.

2004/05 Training Plans:

- to provide further course material for providers of the 2005 course, while seeking an evaluation of 'how understandable and useful' the students found the new information;
- continue to 'fine tune' the new course information to make it more understandable and useful by the students; and,
- advance understandings of the effects of beaver dam obstruction, and management of upstream migration of juvenile chinook salmon.

A review of previous R&E projects resulted in the identification of several areas where application of techniques and reporting were inconsistent between projects. Development of Panel Protocols was proposed to the Panel's Executive Secretary, which have been accepted. Related protocols were developed for management of obstructions (dams), juvenile chinook salmon sampling, and deployment of data loggers.

2004/05 Project Plans:

- to implement existing protocols on behalf of the Panel; and,
- evaluate the protocols and modify as appropriate.

2.2 Review of 2004 YRP R&E Conceptual and Detailed Proposals

The Panel provided DFO funds to assist with the review of 2004 R&E CPs and DPs. Due to staffing and work assignments it was necessary to rely on existing DFO-HEB staff to conduct these reviews.

2004/05 Plans;

- It is anticipated that DFO-HEB staff funded by YRP project funding will support the review of 2005 CPs and DPs by DFO staff.

2.3 2003 YRP R&E Project Monitoring

Monitoring of Yukon River Panel R&E projects was provided primarily by DFO-HEB permanent staff, with limited support by Panel R&E funded project staff.

2004/05 Plans

- R&E funded staff will assume a greater role in 2004 R&E project monitoring, and review of 2005 R&E projects.

2.4 2004 YRP R&E Project Report Review

Due to DFO-HEB staff transition during the period when the draft final 2003 reports were being submitted, the HEB term position was not able to contribute substantively to the review of 2003 R&E project reports; which, were handled by the senior DFO-HEB position.

2004/05 Plans

- The YR Panel funded DFO-HEB position will assist with the review of the 2004 project reports

2.5 Salmon Management Planning

The position funded by the Panel is contributing to ongoing Yukon River basin stock and habitat planning, including participation in the Yukon River Joint Technical Committee (JTC) planning projects.

2004/05 Plans

- This position will continue to provide assistance to the development and implementation of various Yukon River Salmon Plans. These include but are not limited to Watershed R&E Plans, the Canadian Sub-basin Salmon Management Plan, the YR JTC Research Plan

2.6 Assistance to DFO-HEB

This position provided assistance to the general management of DFO's contribution to the Yukon River Panel's R&E program, thereby enabling DFO staff to deal with other Yukon River strategic issues.

2004/05 Plans

- 2004/05 will see a continuation of this important technical assistance to Panel R&E program matters. Greater responsibilities will be proved to this position as the incumbent becomes more familiar with the bio-physical and socio-economic considerations involved.

Financial Contribution

The Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund contributed a total of \$85,000 (Canadian Funds) in support of this project. This funding was split equally between the two positions staffed in support of the R&E Fund.