

**Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in  
First Fish Final Report  
2010**

**CRE-07-10**

Submitted to:

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

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### **Acknowledgements**

Māhsi 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 2008. We would like to thank them for their contributions and efforts on behalf of this event.

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- Yukon River Panel

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.

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### **First Fish 2010**

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Fish Culture Camp 2010 was held at Moosehide Village from July 8-12<sup>th</sup> 2010 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 commercial and subsistence salmon fishing and salmon habitat. The youth learned about cleaning, smoking and drying methods, checking nets, receiving instructions and directions in boat safety, bear safety, fry life cycles, and had numerous discussions about respect for the salmon.

This camp was created to teach safe ethical 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 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 the camp there were four Elders on hand to help with processing salmon and assisting with youth programming. While the youth were involved in gutting, cleaning, and cutting the salmon, Angie Joseph-Rear taught the youth some old salmon protocols and stories about salmon.

### **Planning**

This is the third year the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department has organized the First Fish Culture Camp. As with previous years, the Heritage Department set-up and organized an ad-hoc planning committee including individuals from the Heritage Department, Fish and Wildlife Department, and Youth Enhancement. The planning committee's role was to provide direction, guidance, help, and advice to the organizers. Every committee member was given tasks to complete before the following meetings and 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 Department assisted by providing boat transportation and 4 student workers to get equipment and supplies to Moosehide. The Fish and Wildlife Department also ensured that the required infrastructure was in place and operational before the camp started. On the first day of the First Fish camp, the Fish and Wildlife Department and the Moosehide Caretaker provided boat transportation for youth participants, supervisors, volunteers, and visitors. They also continued to provide transportation for groups for the duration of the camp.

The youth stayed in the school house and in cabins along with chaperones. All other participants either stayed in user cabins or stayed with their family.

### **Participants**

This year, the planning committee set the limit of 20 youth participants for the camp to maintain an enriching experience for the youth. However, this year only 11 youth registered for First Fish. There were 4 male and 7 female participants. There were approximately 10 – 15 supervisors, 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 that did visit 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 were chaperoned by 2 - 3 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, then they would also have to gut their catch. The Elders provided instruction on how to clean, gut, and cut the salmon. All youth had to do the different phases of salmon processing. At times, the youth would be at the smoke shack until lunch. And then would be back to work 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 situation. 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 complete each day, and some of the chores required adult supervision, such as sweeping the eating area and reloading the facilities with toilet paper. Many of the youth didn't enjoy these activities, but it is important for them to know what it takes to keep a clean and maintained 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 Moosehide slough. There were 3 supervisors, including one certified lifeguard, at the slough.

Some of the other activities at the camp included salmon cycle talks, setting fry traps, and Nature Hike, crafts, carving, campfire time. The youth also played games such as capture the Flag, camouflage, red rover, musical chairs and Indian Bingo.

### **Fishing**

There were 2 fish caught and processed on the second day of camp. Usually, the camp would catch approximately 60 salmon, but because of the low count of salmon coming upriver, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in voluntarily limited their catch by half this year, and didn't even get that. We were able to thaw and process fish left over from last years catch. There were 2 net locations to check each day. One boat would check the furthest net location, and the other boat would check the other closer one. The nets were left in after we received the 2 salmon so that the Fish and Wildlife Department could fish further for the Elder's programming. With the help of supervisors and Elders, the youth gutted, filleted, stripped, and smoked the caught salmon.

There was additional work at the smoke shack that included collecting alder and poplar wood for smoking, collecting sticks to hang salmon with, cleaning the work station, getting water for the salmon, dumping any grey water, properly disposing of salmon parts that were not edible. The youth had to help with all aspects of caring for the salmon.

After the camp, the supervisors and Elders took over the care of the salmon. The salmon was cut up, bagged and placed in freezer storage until the First Fish feast. As part of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in tradition for the First Fish camp, the salmon has to be shared with Elders and the community. The youth and their families also received salmon for doing an excellent job of caring for the salmon.

### **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 barbequed salmon.

### **First Fish Feast**

The First Fish Feast was held on August 6, 2010. The feast is an event that is held after the feast to honour the youth for all their hard work and eager learning abilities to encourage them to return next year. The same cooks were hired for this event as from the camp and they prepared salmon that was caught from the camp. The feast is open to the community, the youth bring their families, Elders attend and other community members. The Coordinator says thank – you’s, we show a slide show of all the photographs from the event, then we honour the participants and thanks the supervisors and give gifts. Usually the youth take small bags of the Salmon strips that they made and distribute it to the people, who attended the dinner, but this year was the Bi-annual Moosehide Gathering and we had a mini-honouring ceremony for the youth, where they handed out the bags to the Elders at this event.

### **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 cutting the salmon. The Elders 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 Elders praised the youth whenever they did an exceptional job of cutting and cleaning their work stations. The youth also felt comfortable with the Elders once they got to know them.

Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in provided a safe learning environment for the youth. The sleeping areas were comfortable to afford good rest. There was enough food at the camp to feed the youth. 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.

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, checking nets, salmon processing, and some of the talks. Everything else was shuffled to happen 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. This year proved to be a lot of fun for the youth as opposed to last year when they had to work a lot more because of the lower number of participants. Therefore, this reflected in more time off because of more youth.

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. Even with the amount of work that had to be done, there was not enough space for more than one youth to cut a salmon at a time, which left the rest in the group with little to keep them busy. Next year, it should be recommended to have two work stations and two experienced supervisors to help with cutting and cleaning of the salmon. The work load would be completed faster to afford more time for other activities, and the youth wouldn't be standing around waiting for their turn to cut a 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. It is possible that more stories could be shared at the campfires about the history of Moosehide, and relationships some of the youth might have with past families of Moosehide.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Fish and Wildlife staff spent time with the youth teaching them how to determine the health of salmon by looking at their harvest. DFO staff shared knowledge of the life cycles of salmon and our responsibility of taking care of salmon habitats.

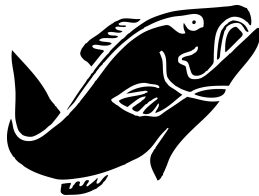
Each year, the camp gets better and the planning committee is an integral part to provide feedback and recommendations to improve the camp for community youth.

Appendix A

## First Fish Camp 2010

### 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 5, 2009**

**Mähsi Cho!**

**If you have any questions or comments please contact  
Madeline deRepentigny 867-993-7153  
or  
Victoria McLeod at 867-993-7129**

- What:** First Fish Camp  
**When:** Thursday July 8 – Monday July 12, 2010  
**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 8th at 1 pm with all of their belongings packed and ready to go. We will be returning to town after lunch on the 12th. 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 kilometres 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 12th 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 Heritage Department 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.

**Youth that are registered for the camp are required to attend Moosehide Gathering any time between July 30-31, 2010. The time is not yet decided and you will be updated closer to the event.**

### **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 Wednesday July 7, 2010 at 12pm at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Youth Centre next to Bonanza Market on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 8 - 12, 2010. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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? \_\_\_\_\_

**I agree to attend Moosehide Gathering to distribute salmon to Elders: \_\_\_\_\_**