

Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Culture Camp CRE-128N-10 Final Report



Culture Camp participants assist TKC Community Stewards sample juvenile Chinook salmon.



Yukon River Panel
Restoration and Enhancement Fund



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Yukon River Panel, Restoration and Enhancement Fund provided funding for this project. The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC), Lands Resources and Heritage Department was primarily responsible for its implementation. Thanks to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff, Sean Collins and Bonnie Huebschwerlen for their presentations on the life cycle of Chinook salmon and for showing us the salmon migration game.

Special appreciation goes to the TKC Elders who spent time with the youth, sharing their stories, experiences and knowledge.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Yukon River Chinook salmon has always been an important part of the seasonal diet of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council people and to cultural identity. Chinook salmon features prominently in stories, history, traditional activities and lifestyle.

TKC is an urban based First Nation with a demonstrated need for structured programs such as Culture Camp to teach the younger generation traditional values in a modern context. Children and youth participate in activities on the land in an environment where Elders, youth and families share time and learn cooperatively from one another.

Recently, the need to provide activities and education appropriate for the increasing number of adolescents participating in Culture Camp was identified as a priority, with emphasis on facilitating opportunities to teach hunting and fishing skills.

With low Chinook salmon runs in recent years, teaching youth about management and conservation of Yukon River Chinook salmon at Culture Camp takes on higher priority and meaning. We believe we are helping to instill the value of stewardship and in doing so, ensure the future health of our salmon resources, and the cultural and spiritual health of Ta'an people.



Checking nets on Lake Laberge.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The TKC Summer Culture Camp took place August 9th-13th, 2010 at Helen's Fish Camp, a traditional meeting place for Ta'an people. This week coincided with the Chinook salmon travelling through Lake Laberge. The project was a tremendous success despite the very low Chinook salmon run.

Thirty youth participated in setting and checking nets (7 fish harvested, 3 large females and 4 jack males), cutting and smoking fish.

Due to the poor Chinook salmon run this year, TKC purchased 200lbs of sockeye salmon from the Taku River. This fish was used for demonstration and participation in Culture Camp activities.

The TKC Community Stewards (CRE- 54-10) assisted with the camp. They spent two mornings with the kids demonstrating bio-physical sampling of juvenile Chinook salmon at Fox Creek. The kids participated in setting and checking minnow traps and walked the creek to investigate suitable juvenile Chinook habitat. The Stewards also presented information about the Community Stewardship Program.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff, Sean Collins and Bonnie Huebschwerlen delivered information about the salmon lifecycle during a lunch hour presentation. Afterwards, we played the salmon migration game. This interactive game teaches participants about the dangers and challenges that migrating salmon face.

Conservation Officer Larry Bill was scheduled to teach Bear Aware but unfortunately cancelled at the last minute as he had to attend to a problem bear in Carcross.

Other activities included camp chores, stick gambling and traditional storytelling.



Stick gambling



RECOMMENDATIONS

We strongly recommend this type of educational, hands-on community programming continue. While we had initially hoped to increase the duration of summer Culture Camp as a means to build the salmon and fishing components of the program, limitations with staff, funding and other resources reduced our capacity and resulted in us focusing our efforts on one week culture camp.

Ta'an Kwäch'an Council hopes to build from this program and CRE-127N (Viable Fisheries) by coordinating a Family Fish Camp, an amalgamation of both projects, which would create opportunities for families to work together to set nets and to learn collectively about sustainable Chinook salmon harvesting.

There is opportunity to increase the salmon education component of Culture Camp. Salmon educational materials and curriculum should be researched and compiled by staff of the LRH Department. A more structured educational program could include games such as the migration game we played this year with DFO, field trips to the fish ladder, hatchery and incubation facilities, demonstration and participation in bio-physical monitoring at Fox Creek with the TKC Community Stewards and numerous other activities.



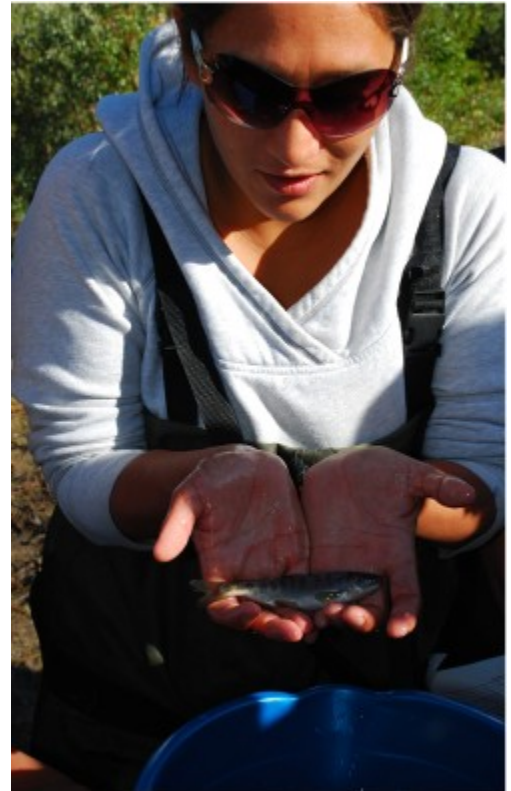
7 Chinook salmon were harvested at Culture Camp.



FISHING FOR CHINOOK SALMON



COMMUNITY STEWARDS DEMONSTRATE SAMPLING AT FOX CREEK



THE SALMON MIGRATION GAME

