

YUKON FISHERIES NEWS

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SUMMER 2006



**YUKON RIVER
DRAINAGE
FISHERIES ASSOCIATION**

*A United Voice for
Downriver and Upriver
Fishermen.*



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YRDFA reserves the right to include or omit any submissions to the Yukon Fisheries News. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of YRDFA.

RECORD HIGH NUMBERS OF CHINOOK SALMON BYCATCH IN THE POLLOCK FISHERY

BY BECCA ROBBINS, YRDFA POLICY COORDINATOR

Chinook salmon are caught as bycatch in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands pollock fishery. Until recently, bycatch was regulated solely through the use of Salmon Savings Areas, specific areas which close when a set number of salmon have been caught. For the past few years the pollock fishery has been using a new program called the “Voluntary Rolling Hot Spot” or VRHS system and starting in August of this year, the VRHS system will replace the fixed closure area system. YRDFA supported development of the VRHS system with the hopes that it would reduce bycatch numbers. Several problems in the way the system is designed, along with this year’s elevated numbers indicate that the system may need improvements or additional regulations.

Despite recent efforts on behalf of the pollock fishery to reduce salmon bycatch (see YRDFA Fisheries Update, Dec. 2005), salmon bycatch numbers are already at record high levels this year. As of March 18, during the pollock “A” season 59,512 Chinook salmon had been caught as bycatch. To put this in perspective, last year at about the same time only 25,400 Chinook salmon had been caught. In 2005 a total of 76,269 Chinook salmon were caught as bycatch. Since the highest numbers of Chinook salmon bycatch usually occur during the pollock “B” season which

starts in June, these numbers indicate that over 100,000 Chinook salmon could be caught as bycatch this year. Since our data indicate that about 22% of Chinook salmon bycatch is of Yukon River origin that means that over 22,000 Yukon River Chinook salmon could be caught as bycatch this year and either discarded or given to food banks by the pollock fishery.

The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (the Council) manages the pollock fishery and is responsible for bycatch reduction measures. While the Council has already approved the VRHS system, they are currently undergoing a second set of analysis to set up ways to measure how effective the VRHS system is and to develop alternative measures to the VRHS system should it not reduce salmon bycatch to acceptable levels. YRDFA is participating in this process to ensure that adequate protections are in place to greatly reduce the bycatch of Chinook salmon which might otherwise have returned to the Yukon River. We’ll be sending out updates when there are opportunities to comment to the Council on this important issue and hope you’ll be able to do so.

For more information on this issue, or to receive updates by e-mail contact Becca at the YRDFA office, x106 or e-mail Becca@yukonsalmon.org. 🐟

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CORRECTION

In addition to the other individuals and organizations that were listed in the last issue of *Yukon Fisheries News*, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association would like to gratefully acknowledge Larry Lujan and Andrew Kelly Sr. for their generous donations to the 2006 YRDFA annual meeting raffle.

CHINOOK SALMON SAMPLING AT THE RAPIDS STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER

Fishermen and women in the Yukon River drainage have expressed concern about the quality of Chinook salmon harvests and escapement (i.e. sex and size) at several Regional Advisory Council meetings, at the last five annual YRDFA board meetings, and at many other fisheries gatherings in recent years. In response to expressed data needs, Chinook salmon length, weight, and sex data were collected during the entire run in 2005 near Rapids, which is on the main stem Yukon River approximately 40 miles upriver from the mouth of the Tanana River. These data were collected by several teams of students from the Rapids area and adult supervisors, including a science teacher from Huslia selected by the USFWS, the project manager of the Rapids video monitoring project, and the head of the Tanana Tribal Council Environmental Office.

Samples were taken from various fish wheel salmon catches. Net-caught fish were not used because of the inability of nets to catch different sizes of Chinook salmon at rates proportional to the Chinook salmon population in the river. Sampling occurred in well-known Chinook salmon fish wheel sites only. Chum salmon fish wheel sites were avoided because these typically catch a high percentage of small Chinook.

Chinook salmon were measured and weighed, and the sex of each was determined either by full dissection or by a slit made in the belly to feel for eggs or sperm sac. No samples were taken from a given catch if any fish had already been given away or processed. Weight data from this project include almost all Chinook salmon from the 2005 commercial fish wheel catch at Rapids (Table 1).

Of the approximately 1,000 Chinook salmon sampled in 2005, the largest one was 35 pounds and only 6 were over 30 pounds. Before approximately 1990, it was not at all uncommon for individual fishermen and women to catch 50-pound Chinook salmon each year, and a 30-35 pound fish was not considered large. It is important to note that all of the salmon sampled in 2005 were harvested with the same size gear that fishermen in this area have been using for years; thus there has been no change in harvest methods.

In addition, the sample size of approximately 1,000 Chinook salmon is equal to the total catch of several fishermen and women over the whole season.

The data illustrate the alarming reduction in size of Chinook salmon of this area that fishermen and women as well as buyers and processors have been noticing for many years now. Collection of weight data started in 2005; however our 2004 length and sex data indicate that weights would have been even lower in 2004 had they been taken. Presently the reasons for, solutions to, and even existence of a size decline are the subject of much

debate on the Yukon River.

USFWS Office of Subsistence Management funding of this project ended in 2005. YRDFA has approved a smaller collection project so monitoring can continue in 2006.

Above information taken from:

Peters Zuray, K. 2006. *Tanana Conservation Outreach, 2004-2005, Federal Subsistence Fishery Monitoring Program Final Project (Report in full at: www.RapidsResearch.com on the Student Data Project Page).* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of YRDFA. ☞

Table of all Chinook Weights Taken in 2005. Chinook Fish Wheel Sites Only Includes Interior AK Processors Commercial Catch at Rapids																			
WEIGHTS ONLY FOR:																			
Large Males										Females					"Jacks"				
5	9.5	10.5	11	12	12.8	13.8	14.5	16	19	10	14	16	18.5	21.7	1.9	4.5	5.7	6.2	7.4
6.1	9.5	10.5	11.2	12	12.8	13.8	14.5	16	19	10	14	16	18.5	21.8	2	4.5	5.8	6.3	7.5
6.5	9.5	10.5	11.3	12	12.8	13.9	14.5	16	19.2	10.4	14	16.1	18.5	21.8	2	4.5	5.8	6.3	7.5
7.3	9.5	10.5	11.3	12	12.8	13.9	14.6	16	19.2	10.8	14	16.1	18.5	22	2	5	5.8	6.3	7.5
7.7	9.5	10.5	11.3	12	12.9	14	14.6	16.1	19.5	10.8	14	16.1	18.5	22	2	5	5.8	6.4	7.5
7.8	9.5	10.5	11.3	12	12.9	14	14.6	16.1	19.5	10.8	14.1	16.2	18.5	22.2	2	5	5.8	6.5	7.5
8	9.6	10.5	11.3	12	12.9	14	14.7	16.2	19.6	10.9	14.1	16.2	18.5	22.5	2	5	5.9	6.5	7.5
8	9.6	10.5	11.4	12	13	14	14.7	16.5	19.6	11	14.3	16.3	18.5	22.5	2	5	6	6.5	7.5
8	9.6	10.5	11.4	12	13	14	14.8	16.5	19.9	11	14.3	16.3	18.6	22.7	2	5	6	6.5	7.5
8	9.6	10.5	11.4	12.1	13	14	14.9	16.5	20	11.3	14.3	16.3	18.6	22.8	2	5	6	6.5	7.5
8	9.6	10.5	11.4	12.1	13	14	15	16.5	20	11.3	14.4	16.5	19	22.9	2	5	6	6.5	7.5
8.3	9.7	10.5	11.4	12.2	13	14	15	16.5	20.1	11.3	14.5	16.5	19	23.1	2	5	6	6.5	7.6
8.4	9.8	10.5	11.4	12.2	13	14	15	16.5	20.7	11.5	14.5	16.5	19	23.5	2	5	6	6.5	7.6
8.5	9.8	10.5	11.5	12.2	13	14	15	16.8	21	11.5	14.5	16.5	19	24.3	2	5	6	6.5	7.6
8.5	9.9	10.5	11.5	12.2	13	14	15	16.9	21.5	11.8	14.5	16.5	19.2	24.5	2.5	5	6	6.5	7.9
8.5	10	10.6	11.5	12.3	13	14	15	16.9	21.5	11.8	14.5	16.6	19.2	24.5	3	5	6	6.5	7.9
8.6	10	10.6	11.5	12.3	13	14	15	17	22	12	14.5	16.7	19.4	25.2	3	5	6	6.5	8
8.6	10	10.6	11.5	12.3	13	14	15	17	22	12	14.5	16.9	19.4	25.4	3	5	6	6.5	8
8.8	10	10.6	11.5	12.3	13	14	15	17	22.3	12.2	14.6	17	19.5	25.5	3	5	6	6.5	8
8.8	10	10.6	11.5	12.4	13	14	15	17	23	12.2	14.6	17	19.5	27.5	3	5	6	6.5	8
8.9	10	10.7	11.5	12.4	13.1	14	15	17	23	12.2	14.7	17	19.6	28.4	3	5	6	6.5	8
9	10	10.8	11.5	12.4	13.1	14	15	17	23	12.5	14.7	17	19.7	29.5	3.5	5	6	6.6	8
9	10	10.8	11.5	12.4	13.2	14	15	17	23	12.5	14.8	17	19.7	29.8	3.5	5	6	6.7	8
9	10	10.9	11.5	12.5	13.2	14	15	17	23	12.5	14.8	17	19.8	34	3.8	5	6	6.7	8
9	10	10.9	11.5	12.5	13.2	14	15	17.2	23.5	12.5	14.9	17	20		4	5	6	6.7	8
9	10	11	11.6	12.5	13.2	14	15.1	17.2	24	12.5	14.9	17	20		4	5	6	6.9	8
9	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.3	14	15.2	17.2	24	12.5	15	17	20		4	5.3	6	7	8
9	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.3	14.1	15.3	17.2	24	12.7	15	17.1	20		4	5.4	6	7	8
9	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.3	14.1	15.3	17.4	24.5	12.7	15	17.1	20		4	5.5	6	7	8
9	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.4	14.2	15.3	17.5	24.5	13	15	17.2	20		4	5.5	6	7	8
9.1	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.5	14.2	15.5	17.5	25	13	15.3	17.2	20		4	5.5	6	7	8
9.1	10	11	11.7	12.5	13.5	14.3	15.5	17.5	25	13	15.4	17.3	20.5		4	5.5	6	7	8.1
9.1	10	11	11.8	12.5	13.5	14.4	15.5	17.5	26.1	13	15.5	17.3	20.5		4	5.5	6	7	8.3
9.1	10	11	11.8	12.5	13.5	14.4	15.5	17.5	26.2	13.1	15.5	17.4	20.5		4	5.5	6	7	8.4
9.2	10.1	11	11.8	12.5	13.5	14.4	15.5	17.5	26.5	13.3	15.5	17.5	20.5		4	5.5	6	7	8.5
9.2	10.1	11	11.8	12.5	13.5	14.4	15.5	17.5	26.5	13.4	15.5	17.5	20.8		4	5.5	6	7	8.5
9.2	10.1	11	11.8	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.6	17.5	28.4	13.5	15.5	17.6	20.8		4.4	5.5	6	7	8.5
9.2	10.1	11	11.9	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.7	17.9	30	13.5	15.5	17.6	20.9		4.4	5.5	6	7	8.6
9.3	10.3	11	11.9	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.7	18	30.5	13.6	15.5	17.7	21		4.5	5.5	6	7	8.8
9.3	10.3	11	11.9	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.8	18	33	13.6	15.6	17.8	21		4.5	5.5	6	7.1	8.8
9.3	10.4	11	11.9	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.9	18	34	13.7	15.8	17.9	21		4.5	5.5	6	7.1	9
9.3	10.4	11	12	12.6	13.5	14.5	15.9	18	34.2	13.7	15.8	18	21		4.5	5.5	6	7.2	9
9.3	10.4	11	12	12.6	13.5	14.5	15.9	18.3	35	13.8	16	18	21		4.5	5.5	6	7.2	9
9.4	10.4	11	12	12.6	13.5	14.5	16	18.4		13.9	16	18	21		4.5	5.5	6	7.2	11
9.5	10.4	11	12	12.7	13.6	14.5	16	18.5		13.9	16	18	21.3		4.5	5.6	6	7.3	
9.5	10.4	11	12	12.7	13.6	14.5	16	18.5		14	16	18	21.5		4.5	5.7	6.1	7.3	
9.5	10.4	11	12	12.7	13.7	14.5	16	18.8		14	16	18.3	21.5		4.5	5.7	6.1	7.4	
9.5	10.5	11	12	12.7	13.7	14.5	16	18.8		14	16	18.3	21.5		4.5	5.7	6.2	7.4	

TABLE 1. Chinook salmon weights sampled in 2005 at Chinook salmon fish wheel sites near Rapids. "Jacks" refer to small Chinook salmon that are less than 65.5 cm in length from eye to tail.

ROE PROCESSING FACILITIES FOR MIDDLE RIVER FISHERS

BY BECCA ROBBINS, POLICY COORDINATOR, YRDFA

As reported in the last YRDFA newsletter ("DEC's new roe processing regulations," Spring 2006), the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recently issued new rules which affect how salmon roe must be processed. Roe fishers on the middle and upper Yukon River have removed roe from chum salmon on simple tables outside at fish camps for years. Now, with the new regulations, fishers are required to have a covered building to remove roe in which meets the DEC standards. A covered building like this can be expensive to build, especially when sup-

plies have to be barged in. The roe fishery does not bring in very much money most years, so without help the cost of a building, as well as the permits required by the state, would be much greater than the income received from operating in the roe fishery. For this reason, YRDFA has been working with roe fishers in the Tanana and Kaltag areas to provide these buildings and to help with the complicated permit applications that must also be completed. In May, materials to build five roe buildings went out on the barge to Tanana. In early June materials

for another six buildings will be going to Kaltag. YRDFA is holding teleconferences to help fishers fill out permit applications. Hopefully all of these efforts will allow fishers to remove roe and sell it to processors who market wild Alaska salmon roe. The money they earn will help offset the costs of subsistence fishing – gas, boats, fish wheels, etc. and provide a source of income.

If you have questions about YRDFA's efforts, or would like more information about participating in the roe fishery, please call the YRDFA office. ☺

FISHERIES TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), is sponsoring a three-week program to provide education and training to become a Fisheries Technician. The goal of this program is to provide training for qualified individuals to obtain basic skills about operation of fisheries research projects, fish biology, and safety for work as entry-level fisheries technicians in fisheries field camps for federal, state, tribal, non-profit and private employers.

This training program will include both classroom and field (hands-on) experiences to provide a broad-based background for entry-level fisheries technician jobs. It will begin July 25th, 2006 near the village of St. Mary's and last approximately three weeks. There will be space for 10 students; must be 18 years or older to participate. There will be no cost to the student - lodging, food and travel will be provided by YRDFA.



Students completing the program receive:

- Final personnel evaluation that will function as a "Letter of Recommendation"
- Enhanced skills needed by fisheries technicians and desired by employers
- Stipend



Classes and job skills will include:

- Basic fish biology & life history
- Collecting fish for research & management
- Obtaining & recording data from fish
- Finding and applying for jobs
- Creating a personal resume
- Fisheries management & research on the Yukon River
- Safety training for first-aid, firearms, boating, & working in bear country

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NEW YRDFA STAFF



ANNE VANDERHOEVEN
Assistant Director of the Fisheries Technician Training Program

Anne Vanderhoeven joins the 2006 Fisheries Technician Training Program (FTTP) as the Assistant Director. She will work with Mike McDougall to ensure that this year's program is even more successful than last year. Anne is a logistics and coordinating expert with almost nine years of commercial fisheries experience in Alaska. She has been a groundfish and crab observer in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea working on commercial fishing vessels to collect fisheries catch data, and she has worked on-shore managing logistics and compliance for as many as four different government programs, all at the same time. This experience will be applied to the FTTP where she will help with pre-camp preparations and ensure everything goes smoothly during and after camp. She will make sure every detail is taken care of and have back up plans in place for when things change, as they inevitably do. Anne is looking forward to an exciting summer with YRDFA and her first trip to the River for camp near St. Mary's.

When not working, Anne enjoys traveling (she's been to all 50 states and 5 of 7 continents), most recently returning from safari in Africa this spring. Other hobbies include baking and gourmet ethnic cooking, racing stock cars, shopping for shoes and going to Las Vegas. She's the proud owner of Scout ("the wonder beagle"), a couple of cats, and a goldfish. She has degrees in Ornamental Horticulture, but forgets to water her own plants, and Biology/Evolution and Systematics. ☺

YUKON RIVER SALMON FISHERY TELECONFERENCES, 2006

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) sponsors in-season management teleconferences. Calls are open to the public and start May 30, 2006. The mission of the teleconference is to exchange information and facilitate dialogue between fishermen and managers and between different communities along the Yukon River, including tributaries and Yukon Territory, Canada.

All of the teleconferences are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. (AK time) on Tuesdays throughout the summer and fall fishing seasons. The teleconferences are approximately one hour in duration.

YRDFA board members, Federal Regional Advisory Council Coordinating Fishery Committee members, Yukon River Panel members, State Advisory Committees, Tribal Councils, City offices and NGO's such as AVCP, TCC and CATG will be able to participate throughout the summer season and can provide comments.

Please utilize designated locations such as Tribal Council or City offices as a central meeting location. Designate a speaker for consistent reporting and efficient use of time.

TELECONFERENCE AGENDA:

Village Identification and subsistence reports (see below for report guidelines),
Management update by Alaska Department of Fish and Game;
follow-up by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Management Strategy,
Local input by YRDFA Board members, Coordinating
Fisheries Committee, Inter-Tribal consortiums, Yukon River
Panel members,
Public comments.

SUBSISTENCE REPORT GUIDELINES:

Level of fishing activity and participation in the fishery,
Subsistence harvest levels,
Quality of the salmon,
Water levels and debris loads.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

A river-wide perspective (think about others),
Future salmon runs (meeting escapement goals and US/Canada
border passage),
Provide for people's needs (subsistence fish is food to live on),
Provide for economic opportunity (commercial is access to
much needed money).

YRDFA would like to thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel for their generous support of the in-season management teleconferences. ☺

DVD Now Available



Travel with the salmon migrating from Emmonak, Alaska near the mouth of the Yukon River to Teslin, Yukon Territory near the headwaters. Learn about the Yukon River Salmon

Agreement, Yukon River

Panel, Joint Technical Committee and meet many fishers along the river.

**For your copy
contact YRDFA
Outreach Coordinator,
Mike Illenberg at
(907) 272-3141 ext. 105
Toll Free: 1-877-999-8566
mike@yukonsalmon.org**

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN! IN-SEASON MANAGEMENT TELECONFERENCES SUMMER 2006

*Track the salmon runs and
keep yourself informed & updated
on in-season management issues.*

**END OF MAY – SEPTEMBER
EVERY TUESDAY
AT 1:00PM (ALASKA TIME)**



**1-800-315-6338
CODE 9966815#**

Fish Camp Fun

YRDFA Goes to Washington D.C.

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) receives funds to do important work for salmon along the Yukon River. We are able to receive our funds with the support of the State of Alaska Congressional leadership which includes Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Lisa Murkowski and Congressman Don Young. In order to keep our funds and in order to say thank you to our Senators and Congressman, we visit Washington D.C. every spring.

This year, Jill Klein, YRDFA's Executive Director traveled with YRDFA Co-Chairs, William Alstrom from Saint Mary's and Richard Burnham from Kaltag. It is important for the people from the Yukon River to meet directly with the Senators and Congressman as they are the people that our funds are for. YRDFA received funds to work on salmon health and with the people who rely upon the salmon to feed their families and fish for commercial purposes in order to make a limited income. Both William and Richard know first hand about life on the Yukon River, and they shared their stories with our State representatives in order to keep them updated on what is happening on the Yukon River.

While in Washington D.C. it was also important to visit the State of Alaska Governor's Office. Every state in the country has an office in the nation's capital. We met with a long-term employee of the State of Alaska, John Katz in order to keep him updated on Yukon River salmon issues and our need for funding to carry out the important work that we do for people along the Yukon River.

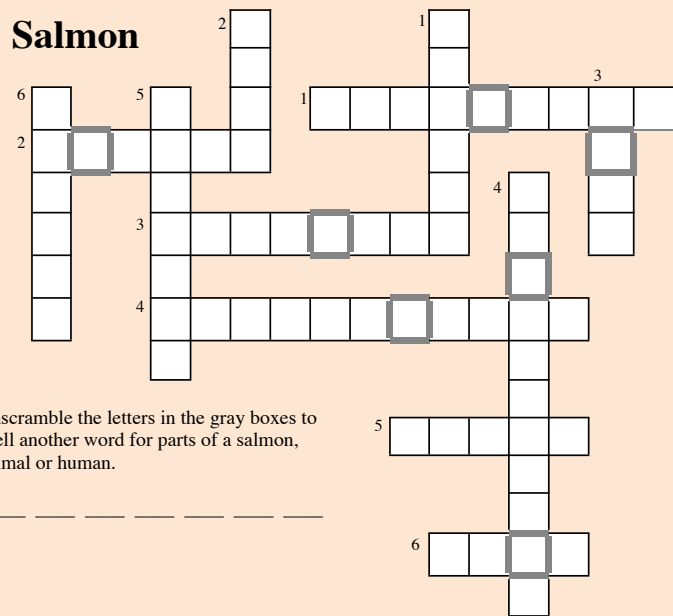
During the Springtime in D.C., it is Cherry Blossom season. There are trees there that were planted in 1912 and donated from the Chinese government. These pink blossoms are seen all over the city. As well as the natural beauty of Washington D.C., we were able to visit museums. The highlight of our trip was to have dinner at Restaurant Nora where we met with potential customers that want to sell Yukon River salmon. We spent most of the evening talking about Yukon River salmon, where they are caught, how they are caught and which fish are people's favorite.

Hopefully our trip will be well worth the effort. It is hard for our staff and board members to travel so far from home, but we know it is important work that will help the future of the Yukon River salmon and the people that depend upon them for their food and livelihood.



A.

Salmon



Unscramble the letters in the gray boxes to spell another word for parts of a salmon, animal or human.

Clues

Across

1. Stripes that help young salmon blend in with the gravel.
2. This fin is used to propel the fish in a quick forward motion.
3. This fin helps the fish to steer.
4. A sack that fills with air allowing the salmon to float up and down in the water column.
5. Help the fish to breath by taking oxygen out of the water.
6. Opening through which females lay their eggs.

Down

1. A fin on the top of the salmon that helps it to stay upright in the water.
2. This fin works like a rudder.
3. The hooked jaw of a spawning salmon.
4. A line of special scales that act like telephone receivers catching sounds and sending them to the brain.
5. The smallest fin, today scientists clip it to mark certain stocks of salmon.
6. Lots of these make up the skin of a salmon.

pectoral anal adipose caudal dorsal swimbladder
scales gills kype lateral line parr marks vent

Puzzles provided by the Fairbank's Fish and Wildlife Field Office

Answers:

ACROSS: 1. parr marks; 2. caudal; 3. pectoral; 4. swimbladder; 5. gills; 6. vent	A.
DOWN: 1. dorsal; 2. anal; 3. kype; 4. lateral line; 5. adipose; 6. scales	B.
1. eyed egg; 2. alevin; 3. fry; 4. smolt; 5. adult	C.
1. nets; 2. bears; 3. humans; 4. fishwheels; 5. dams	

Answers:

Fish Camp Fun

What are the five stages of the Pacific salmon lifecycle?

Solve the word puzzles below to find the answers.

B.

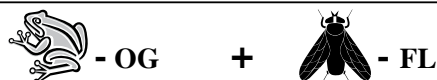
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Phase 1 _____

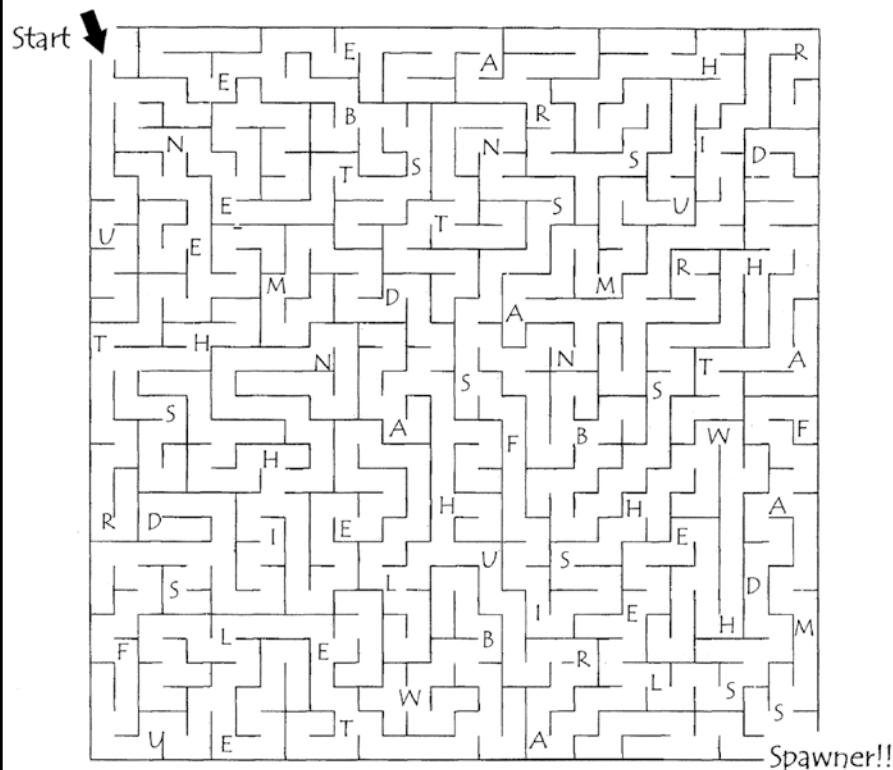


Phase 2 _____

C.

Salmon Face many threats as they return to their home stream to spawn. Solve the maze to discover what some of these dangers might be.

If you are traveling the right direction through the maze, the letters you pass will spell out words that are threats to salmon. There are five words hidden in the maze.

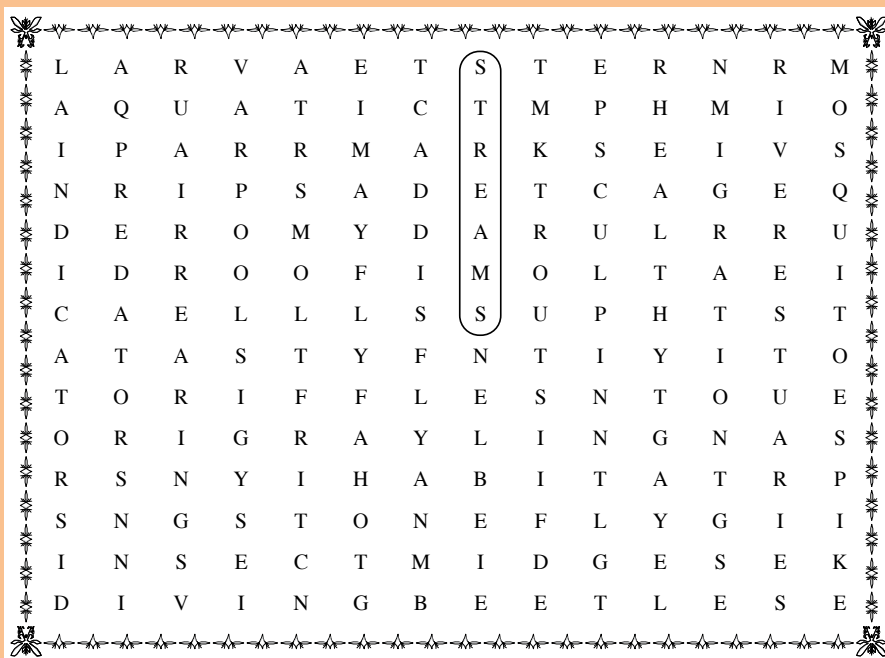


What are five threats?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Can you think of more?

D.



STREAM LIFE AND BEYOND... AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS & SALMON

Circle the words in **bold** in the word find at left.

Streams with many **pools** and **riffles** serve as good **habitat** for rearing fry and **smolt**.

Fry have **parrmarks** which help them to blend in with the gravel and avoid **predators** like **sculpin**, **grayling**, **pike**, **trout**, **tern** and predacious **diving beetles**.

Fingerlings eat **aquatic insect larvae**, such as **midges** or **mosquitoes**.

Aquatic insects such as **mayfly**, **caddisfly** and **stonefly** are good **indicators** of determining if a stream is **healthy**.

River estuaries provide smolt with good habitat during their **migration** to the ocean.

YRDFA FISCAL YEAR 2007 PROJECTS

July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007

Project Title		Funding Source	Project Description
1	Assist Andreafsky Science Camp	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)	YRDFA dedicates staff (Mike McDougall, Fishery Biologist) time to assist with teaching and facilitating the Andreafsky Science Camp conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for two weeks during the summer of 2006. The main goal of this project is to foster a sense of knowledge and stewardship in local youth towards Yukon River fisheries.
2	Chatanika River Stock Monitoring	NOAA	The purpose of this project is to continue monitoring the effects of the FE dam removal project on the Chatanika River. Positive identification of juvenile and adult salmon would allow for this waterway to be further protected with its listing in the Anadromous Waters Catalog. Fishery Biologist, Chris Stark will be conducting this project.
3	Classroom Activity Guide: Yukon River Salmon Agreement	Yukon River Panel	YRDFA will create an activity guide to supplement the Yukon River Salmon Agreement Handbook with the intention of making the Handbook more useful to Yukon River community schools to encourage its use in the classroom.
4	Customary Trade	Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)	This project developed case studies in Yukon River communities, describing patterns of customary trade of fish, with the intention that improved understanding of customary trade can be applied to subsistence management issues. While the bulk of this project already occurred, the contract has been extended until March 2007 to complete report writing and compile final reports.
5	Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) - Approved Fish Camp Processing Facilities	Southeast Sustainable Salmon Recovery Fund (SSSF)	In January 2006, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed new Seafood Processing regulations that require fishers who remove roe at their fish camps to operate in DEC-approved, permitted facilities. This project will provide materials and plans to build DEC-compliant facilities to roe fishers near the communities of Tanana and Kaltag (on the Yukon River), which will allow fishers to continue to sell roe legally and maintain a vital source of income.
6	Fisheries in the Classroom	SSSF	Partnering with University of Alaska – Cooperative Extension Service (UAF-CES), YRDFA will coordinate with 3 local YR schools to institute the 4-H Natural Resource & Youth Development Program (referred to as ‘Fisheries in the Classroom’), which allows for the set-up of small-scale re-circulating salmon egg incubation systems in the classroom. The goal of this project is to increase stewardship of the local salmon resources to ensure the long term health of local stocks. It is the hope that fostering youth involvement now will lead to responsible participation in local fisheries as adults. Another aspect of this project involves identifying local broodstocks for incubating (in future years) so that juveniles raised may be released. As a continuation project, part of this project will involve following up with and monitoring the progress of the project with the three schools chosen in FY 06, so there will be a total of six schools participating in FY 07.
7	Fisheries Technician Training Program	NOAA	For the fourth year, YRDFA will facilitate a three-week training camp at a remote location near St. Mary’s, Alaska to train 10-12 students seeking employment as a fishery technician and wishing to further develop their knowledge of Yukon River fisheries. Both fisheries and safety-oriented topics will be covered during hands-on and classroom instruction sessions. Guest instructors are invited from various organizations including U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, UAF-CES, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources.
8	Fishermen Quality Training	SSSF	This project utilizes training workshops to provide Yukon River commercial fishers with the proper bleeding, icing and other handling techniques in order to deliver prime quality salmon to processors. YRDFA is partnering with the Marine Advisory Program (MAP) and independent contractor, Norman Cohen to complete this project. Approximately 50 totes for holding ice may be purchased and given to those commercial fishermen participating in the trainings. Training videos will also be mailed out to individual fishers in lower Yukon River communities.
9	Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - based assessment of habitat	NOAA	This project will use a Geographic Information System (GIS) approach to survey streams for the documentation of salmon habitat in the Fish Distribution Database (FDD). Some of the specific objectives of this project are to document the presence of anadromous fish (both juveniles and adults) in streams that are not currently in the FDD in order to catalogue them, build the capacity of YRDFA to use GIS tools, and develop a protocol that can be used in other Yukon River tributaries to document the presence or absence of juvenile Pacific salmon. While this project will take place in the Salcha and Goodpaster Rivers, it would have application to other tributaries in the Yukon River Drainage.
10	Hire Local Technicians	SSSF	YRDFA-hired fishery technicians assist Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management on in-season assessment and monitoring projects. Technicians will be placed at the Eagle sonar, Pilot Station sonar, Sheenjek sonar, Tanana-Kantishna Mark-Recapture, Emmonak test fisheries, Tozitna Weir and Andreafsky Weir.
11	Ichthyophonous Education Booklet	Yukon River Panel: R&E Fund	In partnership with Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO), YRDFA will help fishers better understand the human health risks, or lack thereof, from parasites they may or may not find in Yukon River fish. Through local presentations / workshops and the creation of a fish parasite booklet, fishers will be able to make better decisions on whether to retain or discard subsistence-caught fish based on whether or not parasites (and what types of parasites) might be present in the fish. Fishers will also learn which parasites pose no threat to humans and/or how to safely prepare fish for consumption. It is anticipated that the booklet will be ready for distribution on September 1, 2006.
12	In-Season Harvest Interviews	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)	With funds provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), YRDFA assists with the hiring of interviewers in local Yukon River communities to assist USFWS in in-season salmon interviews. Interviewers receive preseason training, on-site mentoring and postseason reviews. This year we will be working with the communities of Emmonak, Kaltag, Huslia, Galena and Eagle.

13	Kaltag Fishery Development Project	SSSF	YRDFA has supported the Kaltag Fishermen's Association as they work on their fisheries revitalization plan for the middle Yukon River. Last year, YRDFA assisted with capital improvements to the building in order to assist the Kaltag Fishermen's Association in their commercial fisheries efforts. While YRDFA helped to jumpstart the process of revitalization, additional efforts are needed. YRDFA will offer technical assistance to the Kaltag Fishermen's Association to complete the capital improvements necessary for the fish plant to operate. As well, technical assistance will be offered on how to manage the building and any lease agreements and issues that arise from managing a fish plant in rural Alaska.
14	Koyukuk River Fish Investigations, Part II	NOAA	The main goal of this project is to identify the lifecycle locations of salmon and other subsistence fish species through interviews and site reconnaissance in the Koyukuk River drainage. Part I of this project (carried out in FY 2006) conducted interviews in Allakaket, Alatna and Hughes and mapping. During Part II (FY 07) preliminary results from Part I will be shared, additional interviews conducted (as necessary) and site reconnaissance will occur.
15	Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing	Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (AYK-SSI)	This project seeks to understand the historical abundance, distribution, and health of salmon populations in subsistence fishing communities in the lower Yukon River drainage through the documentation and incorporation of local and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Data gained from key respondent interviews will be analyzed to understand the correlations between TEK natural indicators and salmon population dynamics. This project will span across four fiscal years (FY 06-09) in the five communities of Hooper Bay, Emmonak, St. Mary's, Grayling, and Kaltag. This research will primarily address the question of how TEK can inform our understanding of the changes in the abundance, distribution, and health of salmon populations – essentially linking TEK with conventional approaches to fisheries research.
16	Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing: Supplement	NOAA	This project provides additional funding and support to the 'Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing' project, allowing YRDFA Fishery Biologist, Kristin Mull time to compile historical ecological data, salmon abundance data, and TEK data, analyze data, develop the conceptual model, and report writing.
17	Nenana River Coho Spawning Survey	NOAA	This project's goal is to gain a better accounting of Nenana River coho and fall chum salmon escapement so that a biological escapement goal (BEG) can be established for coho salmon. Fishery Biologist, Chris Stark – who has been in charge of this project since 1999, will conduct the data collection and estimations. Results will be added to the limited escapement assessment information that already exists. This will be the third year that YRDFA has funded this project.
18	Outreach and Information Gathering: TEK	NOAA	This project will allow YRDFA's Anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff, to communicate with fishers to better represent them and to hear their concerns specifically related to traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Tangible outcomes will include communication and participation in meetings and conferences, publications, reports and new project proposals. It's also important that YRDFA maintain the ability to respond to opportunities presented by the fishers or others to become involved in timely projects and/ or recording of TEK when elders or knowledgeable fishers are available.
19	Policy Advocacy & Monitoring	NOAA	The main goal of this project is to represent Yukon River fishers at the numerous state, federal, and international boards, councils and agencies which make decisions impacting the Yukon River, its salmon and communities, as well as at conferences and in alliances concerning salmon. The secondary goal is to build capacity within Yukon River communities to make their own voices heard in these forums. Forums include but are not limited to: the Alaska Board of Fish, the Federal Subsistence Board, the Federal Regional Advisory Councils, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the Yukon River Panel, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Land Management, the Federal Minerals Management Service, and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.
20	Regional Marketing Program	SSSF	This project is a continuation of the regional marketing efforts started last year by YRDFA. The funds will enable a second year of marketing to take place, with efforts on generation of photos, point of sale materials, sample purchasing and distribution, nutrition information, trade show attendance and follow-up and quality control assistance. An annual meeting of processors is also sponsored using these funds.
21	Salmon in the Marine Ecosystem	NOAA	The primary goal of this project is to reduce salmon by-catch in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands (BSAI) pollock fishery. The secondary goals are to build YRDFA's capacity for implementing changes in the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and to strengthen alliances with other salmon, tribal and marine conservation groups in Alaska and internationally to strengthen our ability to conserve Yukon River salmon in the marine environment.
22	Sheenjek River Genetic Stock Identification (GSI) Study	SSSF	YRDFA has a contract with the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments (CATG) in Ft. Yukon to conduct the parameters of this study, which are to collect tissue samples for DNA-based stock identification work. Samples will be taken from salmon of the Sheenjek River and results added to the current genetic stock information baseline. CATG can also seek assistant/advice from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Genetics Conservation Lab in Anchorage, if/when needed. This study received a project extension as weather conditions/wild fires prevented this project from being carried out in FY 06.
23	Salmon Stock Monitoring	NOAA	Monitoring the status and health of Yukon River salmon by YRDFA's Fishery Biologist, will allow YRDFA to work better to promote healthy, wild salmon fisheries. This project will also enable YRDFA to participate with a stronger scientific voice during regulatory and management meetings, such as at the Board of Fisheries and Federal Subsistence Board level, as well as in facilitating its own meeting to discuss the changing fish size issue.
24	Sub-Regional Marketing Program	SSSF	As with the Lower Yukon River Marketing project from FY 06, this project seeks to assist well-established processors with support to enhance their marketing efforts. Interior Alaska Fish Processors (IAFP) proposes a marketing program comprising of magazine advertisements, Internet and website promotions, and mail-order catalogs targeted at different demographic groups and will provide product samples to be used for promotional purposes.

"YRDFA FY 07 PROJECTS..." CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

“YRDFA FY 07 PROJECTS...” *continued from page 9*

25	Subsistence Age-Sex-Length (ASL), Weight & Girth Data Collection & Ichthyophonus Sampling	NOAA	Trust and understanding of fisheries data collected by subsistence users is very uncommon and generally not trusted by management agencies to be valid, and vice versa. This project may help to bridge that distrust. Near Tanana/Rapids and Eagle, Alaska two entities have requested support to collect age-sex-length data from subsistence-caught Chinook salmon. Funds would support the hiring of local technicians to collect the needed information and data, as well as samples for Ichthyophonus processing. Those samples will then be sent to a laboratory for testing and confirmation of Ichthyophonus infection.
26	Subsistence Assistance	SSSF	YRDFA-hired project assistants facilitate Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game (ADFG) post-season harvest subsistence surveys. Local assistants provide logistical and administrative support to the ADFG surveyor when in their community. This will be the third year that YRDFA has supported this project.
27	U.S.-Canada Information & Outreach	USFWS	By way of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, YRDFA receives treaty implementation funds which support the efforts of the international Yukon River Salmon Agreement. With these funds, YRDFA assists the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game to disseminate information about the Agreement and its implementation, activities of the Yukon River Panel, and management of the Yukon River salmon. Includes publishing the YRDFA newsletters and sponsoring YRDFA's annual meeting, among other information and outreach projects.
28	Y-2 Fishery Development	SSSF	This project will allow for the purchase of equipment for a fall chum salmon processing line. YRDFA would provide funding only if local communities also matched and assisted Boreal Fisheries, Inc. in their efforts, which has already secured \$58,000 from the State of Alaska.
29	YRDFA Program Development, Management & Oversight	NOAA & SSSF	This project not only allows YRDFA to oversee its projects, but it also allows it to develop new ones and supports YRDFA as they interact with management agencies, regulatory boards, and others on fisheries issues. This work is carried out by YRDFA management and administrative staff. YRDFA's Fishery Biologist and Policy Coordinator also contribute to this project when scientific and policy-related information is appropriate to the administration and management of the Association.
30	Yukon River Educational Exchange	Yukon River Panel	For the fourth time, YRDFA will organize and facilitate this program which is funded by the Yukon River Panel. Two, 8-10 day trips will occur in July and August bringing 5-7 Yukoners to Yukon River communities in Alaska and vice versa to have the opportunity to interact with local fishers, witness test fisheries, observe commercial fishing openings, spend time at fish camps, talk to agency personnel, meet with Tribal Council/ First Nation representatives & Elders. The program takes advantage of participants' local guides' and host community members', differences in age, motivation, cultural background, and past fisheries experience to share knowledge regarding different types of fisheries, the Yukon River Salmon Agreement and YR Panel, management issues, salmon biology, and status & health of salmon stocks. Participants will be challenged to learn by pursuing issues of interest and concern, to research through observation and personal experience and to document their experience for further sharing of knowledge with their home communities.
31	Yukon River Salmon Fishery Teleconferences	Yukon River Panel & OSM	Weekly teleconferences facilitated by YRDFA (every Tuesday at 1:00pm from May 30 to mid-September) bring together state and federal managers, tribal and first nation representatives, subsistence and commercial fishers to discuss progression of the salmon returns and fisheries and management options.



YRDFA IN THE FIELD

EMMONAK: June 13-15, Executive Director, Jill Klein, Policy Coordinator, Becca Robbins, and Program Assistant, Casey Peavy will be conducting a site visit and participating in the In-Season Teleconferences.

EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE: June 18-26, Executive Director, Jill Klein, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Mike Illenberg will be coordinating the Yukon River Panel Educational Exchange in St. Mary's, Pilot Station, and Kaltag.

KALTAG: June 18-22, Fishery Biologist, Kristen Mull will be investigating Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance and Timing.

ST. MARY'S: June 24-28, Fisheries Biologist, Mike McDougall will be preparing for our Summer Fisheries Technicians Program.

ANDREAFSKY RIVER: July 1-14, Fisheries Biologist, Mike McDougall will teach at the Andreafsky Science Camp.

ST. MARY'S: July 24-August 11, Fisheries Biologist, Mike McDougall will be administering the Summer Fisheries Technician Program.

ALLAKAKET: August 15-24, Anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff and Fisheries Biologist, Mike McDougall will be investigating spawning grounds along the Koyukuk River.

EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE: August 12-19, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Mike Illenberg will be coordinating the Yukon River Panel Educational Exchange in Yukon Territory Communities.

SALCHA RIVER: August 14-20, Fisheries Biologist, Kristin Mull will be conducting a GIS Based assessment of Habitat.

GOODPASTER RIVER: August 21-27, Fisheries Biologist, Kristin Mull will be conducting a GIS Based assessment of Habitat. 🐟

IN YOUR OWN WORDS...

STAN ZURAY

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Tel: (907) 366-7114 • Fax: (907) 366-7195
stanzuray@netscape.net • www.RapidsResearch.com

April 27, 2006

Subsistence means different things to different people and it's hard to say anything about it that doesn't somewhat conflict with another user's definition. What it is however should be defined by people who live off the resource not by distant people, using their ethics and ideas of what is or what should be legal as guidelines, and majority rule as their gavel. It seems continually depressing to witness the lack of support and apathy towards an honorable, hard working lifestyle often by the very persons charged with its protection.

The more traditional examples of subsistence that exist today seem to be part of a yearly cycle that includes activities taken up in each of the seasons. Setting up fish camp in the spring, fishing for family, dogs and customary trade all summer, hunting and running trap lines during winter – are all activities that are interrelated and made more efficient by the other parts of the cycle. All the activities contribute to each other. While the times they are a changing, healthy examples of this lifestyle in whole or part still exist in the interior and other parts of Alaska today.

The ability to practice and pass on traditional subsistence activities to the next generation is in big trouble. Almost every aspect of this seasonal lifestyle has a regulation or requirement somewhere that makes it virtually impossible for the average subsistence user to legally carry out that activity. Often one finds themselves in open violation of an enforced law and sometimes it is a violation of a law that “sits on the books” and is not enforced because of political considerations. What I see is enough apathy over changing this situation, from our Federal and state governments to our regional organizations and all the way down to the people who use the resources that the decline we now see in subsistence rights and subsistence use will continue. We are passing on to our children the distinct possibility that they will not be able to do what we did. At the very least they will not only have to deal with the issues that come up in their lives but they will have to fight the fights that we didn't want to.

Some fishermen and even some sympathetic legislators have suggested that to bring these issues to light only cause's premature enforcement. Some of our past and present issues such as the federal trapping regulation mess and the DEC commercial roe fishing shut down do not bear that out (see: http://www.rapidsresearch.com/html/subsistence_activities.html). Both of these were activities that accumulated a series of unreasonable requirements and regulations that sat on the books for years only to surface years later as most of our heads were stuck in the tundra.

Coming Soon to a Theater Near You:

It's illegal to put up any traditional smokehouse fish products if they are intended to be part of customary trade as practiced all up and down the Yukon. Even the transportation of the “adulterated products” as labeled by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is clearly illegal. That means that elders who have been doing this all these years are lawbreakers and people who give them rides to town with their fish are also. Anyone who thinks that the future enforcement of this is not on the agenda of numbers of federal and state personnel need their head examined. The fear of a political outcry from the native and rural community is the only thing keeping enforcement from the doors of Yukon River fish camp smokehouses. DEC has admitted this is a line they are not interested in crossing at present.

As the pressures of regulations, permits, fish camp land use and lack of support from the very agencies often trusted with protecting this subsistence priority increase and the numbers of subsistence users continue to decrease it is only a matter of time before enforcement efforts will start (at least 2 instances in the lower river already have happened). Customary trade has always been a major part of subsistence in this area and at present is the only thing allowing many individuals to go to their camps each summer. Without it the majority of camps in this area would most certainly close - a situation I'm afraid would be looked on as positive by some.

Subsistence users, organizations formed to help them and the native people of this state, need to fight to insure the stability of subsistence activities much more proactively if the next generation is to have anything of value left.

Stan Zuray, Tanana

YUKON RIVER EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE SUMMER 2006

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) will be coordinating the Yukon River Educational Exchange Program, Summer 2006 for the fourth year! The Educational Exchange Program provides an opportunity for diverse groups of people, involved in salmon fisheries along the Yukon River, to come together. Yukoners visit Alaska and Alaskans visit the Yukon Territory to explore, experience and understand regional and cultural differences regarding fisheries issues.

Alaskans will visit up-river communities in the Yukon Territory from August 12th - August 19th, 2006

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Find out how the Yukon River Salmon Agreement affects and impacts their lives,
- Become informed and updated regarding salmon management issues,
- Witness test fisheries and spend time at local fish camps,
- Interact with local fishermen, management entities, commercial fishermen & processors,
- Meet with Canadian First Nations & Elders,
- Learn about salmon biology, status of stocks and different types of fisheries, and
- Obtain skills and resources necessary to share this knowledge with home communities.

SEARCHING FOR PARTICIPANTS

We are searching for 5 Alaskans to participate in this year's exchange. Each participant needs to be able to travel by boat, plane or foot on a rigorous 8 day trip, and willing to stay in simple accommodations. YRDFA will provide for food, lodging and all travel expenses. Participants should be strong community leaders involved in salmon fisheries. Applications are available at www.yukonsalmon.org. These dates are tentatively scheduled and may change depending on the host community schedules.

Mail, fax, or email applications to:

Mike Illenberg, YRDFA, 725 Christensen Dr., Ste 3-B, Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 272-3141, Toll Free: 1-877-999-8566, Fax: (907) 272-3142,
Email: mike@yukonsalmon.org

YRP Community Webpage Contest

The Yukon River Panel is looking for residents along the Yukon River in Alaska and Yukon Territory, to create their community webpage. Every community and fish camp has a place on our map of the Yukon River drainage. Selected entries will be published on the Yukon River Panel's Website.

PRIZES:

The top three from Alaska and the top three from the Yukon Territory will receive;



For more information visit our website
www.yukonriverpanel.com/contest.htm

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 9, 2007

ELECTION TIME!

Elections for the YRDFA Board of Directors and Alternates are underway. Nominations were accepted until May 5, and ballots have been sent out to all YRDFA members. Only votes from current members will be counted; if you are not already a YRDFA member, it's not too late to join today and make your vote count! ☘

ACTION ALERT LIST

Want to stay up to date on issues affecting Yukon River salmon and communities? Send an e-mail to Becca@yukonsalmon.org to join our e-mail list or call the YRDFA office to make sure your address or fax is on our list to receive Action alerts and updates on important issues! ☘

HELP US, SO WE CAN SUPPORT YOU! BECOME A MEMBER NOW!

Your membership helps support our core purpose, which is to provide a collective voice for the people of the Yukon River to ensure the long-term sustainability of the river and its cultural and economic benefits.

IN 2005 ALONE, YRDFA:

- Conducted 7 research projects dealing with stock monitoring, habitat investigations, local & traditional knowledge and marine by-catch
- Trained 9 fisheries technicians
- Employed 10 local residents as seasonal technicians
- Held 14 in-season teleconference calls to connect local fishermen with management
- Hired over 40 local residents as project assistants
- Brought together 60-80 people river-wide for a fisheries forum to discuss current fisheries issues

ANNUAL DUES:

- ☐ Subsistence Only User (1 year)\$ 5
- ☐ Subsistence Only User (2 year)\$ 10
(You receive a YRDFA baseball cap)
- ☐ Commercial Permit Holder or Crew Member (1 year)\$10
(You receive a stainless steel travel mug)
- ☐ Sport User/General Public\$10
- ☐ Commercial Permit Holder or Crew Member (2 year)\$20
(You receive a Barlow pocketknife)
- ☐ Associate/Business/Corporation.....\$100
(You receive recognition & thanks in the YRDFA newsletter)
- ☐ Lifetime Member\$100
(You receive a mug, a knife, and recognition & thanks in the YRDFA newsletter)

Payable by cash, check or money order to:
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

NAME _____

AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ FISHING DISTRICT _____