

YUKON FISHERIES NEWS

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YUKON RIVER
DRAINAGE
FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

A United Voice for
Downriver and Upriver
Fishermen.

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YRDFAs 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 YRDFAs.

NEW ENERGY SOURCES IN EAGLE

BY JAN KONIGSBERG

It may not be too long before the current of the Yukon River may be turning more than fish wheels and delivering more than salmon to folks along the river.

Alaska Power and Telephone (AP&T), the utility serving Eagle and Eagle Village, has plans for an underwater “windmill” in the Yukon River at Eagle to generate electricity. The underwater windmill is called a hydrokinetic turbine – hydro for “water” and kinetic for “movement.” This type of hydroelectric project does not require a dam or a penstock to divert water. The Denali Commission has provided partial funding for this project.

Before AP&T builds the project, it must apply for an operating license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC has jurisdiction over all hydroelectric projects located on navigable waters of the United States. In addition, AP&T must obtain the necessary permits from various government agencies before it can go ahead with construction.

AP&T will use a hydrokinetic generating unit developed by the company UEK, based in Annapolis, Maryland. The unit consists of two, 5-bladed fans or rotors, mounted side-by-side. Each rotor is 8 feet in diameter.

The machine will be submerged and then anchored to the river bottom in the right channel about half way between town and Belle Island. The river there is about 28 feet deep in the summer, and about 18 feet in the winter,

including 4 feet of ice. Electric cables that run through a hole bored beneath the river bottom will bring the electric current to a converter station located in town.

Depending upon water level, the speed of the current varies between 4 and 5 knots. At those speeds, the river current will spin the two rotors with enough force to generate up to 100 KW (kilowatts) of electric power. The town's electric load is highest in the winter, when the demand is about 150 KW.

If the first hydrokinetic unit works as intended, AP&T plans to install another unit, which should provide enough power that the diesel plant would operate solely as a backup power source.

There is no guarantee, however, that this project will work as planned. The turbines will have to handle everything the river throws at it, literally.

The biggest unknown is river ice, particularly during breakup. Ice chunks can float through the



entire water column, scouring the river edge and river bottom. The moving ice also pushes a lot of other debris into the river. Even in the ice-free season, debris, especially waterlogged wood, can interfere in the machine's operation.

These are concerns about how the environment may adversely impact the turbines.

In addition, there are concerns about how the hydrokinetic unit may impact the environment, especially fish. AP&T will monitor the turbine with underwater video cameras to determine if fish are swimming into the rotors. AP&T will

“NEW ENERGY...” CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

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*Welcome to our newest associate members!

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY JILL KLEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As mid-winter is upon us, we already begin to look forward to upcoming events. The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) will be holding our 18th annual meeting this year in Grayling, Alaska, from February 25-28, 2008. This is the one time of year that a river-wide delegation of fishermen meet in a Yukon River village to discuss important fishery issues, as well as spend time getting to meet new people and seeing familiar faces they haven't seen in a while. It is a time for exchanging information, meeting with fishery managers, and tackling the hard issues that YRDFA was created for.



Important issues that are discussed here in this newsletter are also slated for the agenda in Grayling. For instance, energy supply is an important issue facing rural Alaska with ever increasing prices. One might ask what the connection is between rural energy and YRDFA, but as one commercial fish processor told me, "The ultimate problem in determining the feasibility of fish processing is energy."

For the subsistence user, energy is also a factor in decision-making. High fuel costs make it expensive to run boats, and the price of anything that needs to be shipped into rural Alaska is determined in part by the cost of fuel. There are some interesting hydro energy sources being tested in the Yukon River that may help save costs, and YRDFA will monitor and discuss these as they may impact the people whose lifestyle we are trying to protect and the salmon they rely on.

Other topics that have been long standing issues for YRDFA and the Yukon River are salmon bycatch and co-management. Both issues have been addressed by YRDFA for more than ten years now and are resurfacing as new aspects of these issues arise.

With salmon bycatch, the issue is the increasing number of salmon being caught in

the pollock fishery and the need to find new measures for reducing this impact to in-river fishing families.

Co-management, long a tenet of YRDFA, is also back on the agenda as we look into management of the fisheries after many years of dealing with lower than anticipated and lower than desired salmon returns matched with an uncertain future of how the salmon stocks will truly be rebuilt and sustain the various fisheries along the Yukon River.

Last but not least, it is important to continue involvement by Yukon River residents in the salmon fisheries. This is a core reason that YRDFA was created. Ever more important today, when there are a multitude of distractions for young people, it is important to keep them connected to their culture. As the origi-

nal founders of YRDFA are still involved and believe in the preservation of their fisheries, they are looking to the next generations of young fishermen and young leaders that want to sustain their way of life.

In order to help meet this need, YRDFA will be looking into new ways to get people involved, to enter them into a "pipeline" that brings them into the organization through programs and then moves them along into members and board members.

All of these issues will be discussed in Grayling and we hope you will discuss them on your own, with your friends and family, and assist us in meeting our mission to promote healthy, wild salmon fisheries along the Yukon River. ☺

Join us in Grayling for the

YRDFA **18th** **Annual Meeting**

February 25-28, 2008

YRDFA board members and staff, fishers, agency representatives, and other friends will gather in Grayling, Alaska the week of February 25, 2008 to discuss important fisheries issues. This meeting is open to the public and all interested people are encouraged to contact our office. Some travel assistance may be available.

We hope to see you in Grayling!

Call us at **907.272.3141 ext. 101** or **877.999.8566** (toll free) for details.

CO-MANAGEMENT: YR DFA'S ROLE – PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

BY CATHERINE MONCRIEFF, ANTHROPOLOGIST & BECCA ROBBINS GISCLAIR, POLICY DIRECTOR

Faced with a fisheries disaster and increasing conflict between users, fishermen and women from throughout the Yukon River watershed gathered in Galena in 1990 to form the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. From its inception, YR DFA has worked with the dual goals of sustaining wild, healthy salmon runs and providing an institution where fishers throughout the basin could resolve their conflicts by sharing information and perspectives. Facilitating communication amongst fishers and between fishers and managers has always been a key part of YR DFA's work, and we've also worked to incorporate local knowledge into management decisions. Many times over the years, YR DFA members have expressed an interest in increasing the role local people play in managing the fishery, called "co-management." Some have suggested that YR DFA should play a role in making this happen. At this juncture, more than seventeen years into our organization's history, it's a good time to examine what co-management means, and where YR DFA seeks to go in our co-management role.

CO-MANAGEMENT DEFINED

Co-management, cooperative management, and community-based fishery management are all terms used to describe a model of fishery management in which communities play an active role in managing their fisher-

ies. These models vary widely, ranging from management entirely by the community to state/government management with community input, with many models in between. Researchers have devised continuums that show the different levels of co-management. One of these is described by Fikret Berkes in his Levels of Co-Management (shown below). While YR DFA's role has varied on different projects, our co-management role has ranged from a 2 to a 5 on this particular scale.

YR DFA & CO-MANAGEMENT:

PAST & PRESENT

YR DFA has had a rich history of co-management activities on the Yukon River. These have included:

1993

- YR DFA participated in the first consensus management plan after receiving directive from Alaska State Board of Fisheries (Toklat River Fall Chum Salmon Rebuilding Plan);

1994

- Collaborated with ADFG on Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan;
- Worked on Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan document;
- Promoted dialogue between fishers and managers through in-season salmon management teleconferences;

1995

- Participated in U.S./Canada Yukon River Interim Agreement;

1996 and 1997

- Contributed to Anvik River Chum Salmon Management Plan;

1998

- Contributed to Yukon River Drainage Coho Salmon Management Plan and on optimum-sustained-yield amendments to Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan;
- Completed and distributed Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan;

1999

- Reached YR DFA Board consensus on proposal to restrict the feeding of king salmon to dogs;

2000

- Reached YR DFA Board consensus on apportionment of subsistence harvest opportunity between districts - 2001 Board of Fish Subsistence windowed schedule;
- Began work on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) program.

Since 2001, YR DFA's funding has enabled the organization to mature and begin its own projects. In addition to continued work on management plans, fisheries proposals and in-season teleconferences, we have also worked on marine bycatch reduction, habitat restoration, juvenile and adult spawning projects, education, outreach, local and traditional knowledge (LTK), subsistence and commercial fisheries revitalization, customary trade, and fish size issues.

YR DFA & CO-MANAGEMENT: THE FUTURE

Reflecting on our historical role in the co-management arena, YR DFA has been actively involved in ensuring that fishermen and their opinions are included in management decisions. Our role to date has been relatively minimal; for instance, we have pushed to include local knowledge, but haven't pushed for more local control of our fisheries. In

LEVELS OF CO-MANAGEMENT

Source: (Berkes 1994)

7 <i>Partnership/Community Control</i>	Partnership of equals; joint decision-making institutionalized; power delegated to community where feasible.
6 <i>Management Boards</i>	Community is given opportunity to participate in developing and implementing management plans.
5 <i>Advisory Committees</i>	Partnership in decision-making starts; joint action on common objectives.
4 <i>Communication</i>	Start of two-way information exchange; local concerns begin to enter management plans.
3 <i>Co-Operation</i>	Community starts to have input into management, e.g. use of local knowledge, research assistants.
2 <i>Consultation</i>	Start of face-to-face contact; community input heard but not necessarily heeded.
1 <i>Informing</i>	Community is informed about decisions already made.

mapping our path forward, YRDFA members and Yukon River residents should consider the role they hope to play in management. Should YRDFA continue as is? Or should we be pushing for more local involvement? If people would like to move towards a greater co-management goal, is YRDFA the group to do it or would another organization be better suited for this work?

YRDFA will be exploring this issue at our Annual Meeting in Grayling, February 25-28 with a guest speaker, Jaime Pinkham from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) in Oregon. We invite you to explore this topic with us. If you're unable to attend the meeting but have input, please give us a call at the YRDFA office. ☎

RESOURCES CITED:

Berkes F. 1994 Co-Management: Bridging the Two Solitudes. *Northern Perspectives* 22(2-3):18.

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VOICES FROM THE RIVER

Yukon River Fishermen Speak Out

BY CASEY PEAVY, PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

What do you see as the most important and/or pressing issue facing Yukon River Fishers for the upcoming year?

In January 2008, YRDFA Program Associate Casey Peavy had a chance to ask this question of fishers from up and down the Yukon. Here are their heartfelt responses...

Grafton Biederman, Venetie: "For subsistence people, it is low incomes [versus] the high price of gas to go out and check nets."

Abraham Kelly, Pilot Station: "Over the past years our fish buyers buy them from 2 places, there is one in Marshall – we depend on Boreal. Kwikpak is the buyer for Y-1 fishermen. When they open commercial fishing, Y-1 has a lot of openings, but they miss the fish here and there because of the different channels. Y-2 is not that bad, because there is just one channel. There are higher prices for gas and freight, and fish prices are not going up."

Randy Mayo, Stevens Village: "Oh, you're going to need to grab a legal pad [to take notes for] this! The regulatory regime. Upriver versus downriver; subsistence versus commercial. All user groups, it needs to be worked on in that area. By the Yukon River bridge, there's subsistence fishermen getting a lot of competition from non-locals coming to our fishing site. If the Board of Fish and other regulatory agencies don't take a look at this, the conflicts are going to escalate. Regulatory changes need to be implemented in most cases (I know about funding constraints all the way around), but if the State claims responsibility and management over the resources, then there is absolutely no presence whatsoever. YRDFA should be a springboard – I see a place for YRDFA as a citizens' fisheries advocacy group that does different things. The Native leadership for YRDFA should also focus on some of the indigenous or Tribal government side of river management – how we're treated

because of ANILCA, etc., as minority users. As a Tribal government, we're nowhere near the radar screen to participate as co-managers of the Yukon. Laws are made by the people, and can be changed by the people. Not only YRDFA and the Native leadership, but AITC, AFN... this is where the discussions and focus need to start to taking place. Not to do away with organizations that can be helpful, but YRDFA can be the springboard to get Natives talking about these issues."

Richard Burnham, Kaltag: "There are a lot of smaller issues, don't know if I can set one to the top. Interceptions on the kings; that could be very, very tough for the Yukon because the king salmon is such a diverse, important fish for [the Yukon River] – an important food source and economic source. The kings have steadily been in place enough – despite a few disasters – to fill the voids when we've had problems. It seems to be under attack with the interceptions in the ocean and other issues, like global warming. Because of the importance of the kings, it is the one fish that has been the driving force to sustain the food and economics for the Yukon River."

Ted Hamilton, Emmonak: "My feeling is bycatch – the issue is really big. Because of that issue it is leading us to fight over something as simple as subsistence when we shouldn't be. It's how we're being sidetracked by interested parties, to keep us from looking at the real (bycatch) problem – if we could just get a limit on the bycatch then we wouldn't be fighting over the limited resource that we have. The second big thing that we have is the sale of subsistence caught goods. Now, it is illegal to do so, with the limit that we have; but we're starting to see it be over-utilized." ☎

YUKON RIVER PANEL UPDATE

BY JILL KLEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Yukon River Panel (Panel) met in Anchorage from December 3-6, 2007. The Panel meets twice each year, once in Alaska and once in Yukon Territory, Canada. It is comprised of both Alaskan and Canadian fishermen and women from the Yukon River in addition to both state and federal fishery managers.

The Panel's main responsibilities are to develop and implement agreed research and management programs, make annual recommendations to the respective management agencies concerning conservation and management in the U.S. and Canada, set and adjust annual salmon spawning escapement objectives, and oversee the use and administration of the Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Fund.

During this fall meeting, the Panel discussed a variety of important topics ranging from salmon stock returns and marine interception of salmon in the pollock fishery to determining R&E Fund conceptual proposals to forward to the detailed proposal stage.

2007 SEASON SUMMARIES

Chinook Salmon

The Chinook salmon preseason projection was for an average to below average run and anticipated to be similar to 2006, which would provide for escapement, subsistence, Canadian border passage, and a limited commercial fishery. The river was free of ice by May 18 and the first subsistence catch was recorded on June 2, with the first Lower Yukon test fishery catch recorded on June 3.

The subsistence harvests were reported as good in the lower river, but subsistence fishermen in the middle river reported difficulties in catching Chinook salmon. By emergency order, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) allowed subsistence fishing 7 days per week in District 4 on July 6 and allowed an additional seven days of drift gill-net fishing for Chinook salmon from July 16 through July 23 in Subdistrict 4-A, because of the reported difficulty in catching Chinook salmon.

Similar to the management strategy utilized in 2006, ADFG scheduled a short, early commercial period based on the preseason projection. The opening was intended to foster early commercial interest. The first commercial fishing period in the lower river occurred in District 2 on Friday, June 15 for 3-hours with unrestricted mesh size gillnets; this was the second shortest commercial opening targeting Chinook salmon on record. The commercial harvest was 2,081 Chinook and 142 chum salmon.

FISHERS AND MANAGERS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND WORK TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF THE FISHERIES.

Overall the commercial fishery in Alaska was conservative after June 25 in order to meet escapement and subsistence needs and Canadian Border passage obligation. Escapement goals were all met or exceeded on the U.S. side of the border, yet border passage with Canada was short.

Chinook salmon were counted for the third year in a row by the sonars near the village of Eagle. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) also estimated Chinook salmon abundance with its long-standing mark-recapture tagging program that utilized a test fishery to gather test recovery data. Supplemented with aboriginal fishery data, it was apparent that the run into Canada was below average.

Due to this, domestic fisheries and commercial fisheries in the Canadian portion of

the Yukon River did not take place. Retention limits on the recreational (sport) fishery were varied to zero; however, aboriginal fisheries were not restricted.

The Canadian Chinook salmon spawning escapement goal was set for 33,000-43,000 in the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement*. Though the border sonars near Eagle are in use, the escapement goal is being determined by the mark-recapture project as dictated by the Agreement. In comparison to the past three years, the sonar count was low in addition to the mark-recapture estimate being below average. The 2007 preliminary mark-recapture estimate is 24,600 and the border sonar passage estimate is 41,200.

Summer Chum

The summer chum run is unique to the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River, with migration and spawning taking place only in U.S. waters. This year the preseason outlook was for an average to above average run that would meet escapement, subsistence, and a surplus for commercial fisheries. The total commercial harvest was 198,201 for the Yukon River drainage. The summer chum salmon harvest was the tenth lowest since 1967, but 315 percent above the 1997-2006



Panel member Ragnar Alstrom shares his views.



Joseph Strongheart, Sr., a U.S. Advisor to the Panel from Nunam Iqua, presents on his experiences during the 2007 educational exchange program.

average harvest of 47,713 fish. Subsistence harvests are anticipated to be near average. Summer chum runs have increased since 2001 and the total run past the Pilot Station sonar was 1.7 million.

Fall Chum & Coho

The fall chum run was projected to be an average odd-numbered year run size. Normal subsistence fisheries took place along with conservative commercial harvests, and all U.S. drainage-wide escapements were met or exceeded. In-season the run seemed lower than expected, which led to conservative commercial fisheries, but due to later run strength the commercial fisheries were extended.

Coho salmon, also an Alaskan only fishery along the Yukon River, saw early timing with a near average return. Coho were caught incidentally with fall chum and the escapement appeared to be average to above average.

The Canadian fall chum run was late and was counted for the second year in a row by the border sonars near Eagle, in addition to being estimated by the tagging program. There is good agreement between these two projects showing similar counts. The border escapement estimate was still being finalized at the time of the Panel meeting, but with an

expansion for late timing, the number could be approximately 250,000. The 2007 preliminary mark-recapture estimate is 221,948 and the border sonar passage estimate is 226,362

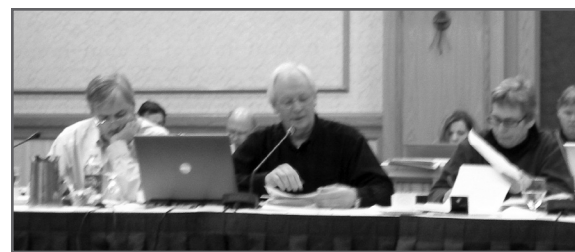
While the Canadian fall chum run was late, it was stronger than the pre-season outlook. Due to this, both commercial and domestic fisheries were opened for extended periods. Test fishery operations continued through the fall 2007 season and full aboriginal fisheries took place with no restrictions.

The Porcupine River fall chum salmon were determined weak from the Pilot Station in-season DNA information project. The mark-recapture project estimated 49,590 fall chum salmon while the Fishing Branch Weir counted 29,704 as of October 10 and was later expanded to 33,752. This met the 2007 Interim Escapement Target of 33,667 set by the Panel for rebuilding the stock, but was below the minimum escapement range of 50,000-120,000 outlined in the Agreement.

BYCATCH

Another important issue on the agenda for the Panel is the marine interception of Yukon River salmon in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands pollock fishery (see related article – “It’s Time for Some Limits: Chinook Salmon Bycatch” – on page 12). The Panel has written letters of concern on this topic to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and has sent Panel members to testify to the Council at three separate meetings, the most recent being in Seattle in early February 2008.

The *Yukon River Salmon Agreement* states that “*The parties shall maintain efforts to increase the in-river run of Yukon River origin salmon by reducing marine catches and by-catches of Yukon River salmon. They shall further identify, quantify and undertake efforts to reduce these catches and by-catches.*” The agreement also binds the United States to pass a set number of Chinook and fall chum salmon across the Canadian border to pro-



Hugh Monaghan (center), Executive Secretary to the Panel, leads a discussion while Canadian Co-Chair Frank Quinn and U.S. Co-Chair Elizabeth Andrews follow along.

vide for Canadian harvests and escapement needs. To enforce these requirements of the Agreement, the Panel will continue its involvement in the Council process to reduce salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery.

RESTORATION & ENHANCEMENT FUND

The Panel manages the R&E fund through a competitive proposal process. At the fall meeting, considering recommendations from the Joint Technical Committee, the Panel reviewed conceptual proposals that were submitted through a call for proposals. The Panel then determined which proposals to forward to the detailed project proposal stage, which will be reviewed in the spring for final consideration.

The funding sought this year was considerably higher than the R&E funding available, which leads to some of the proposals not being funded and others being reduced in their amount. The Panel has developed a budget priorities framework to ensure that the projects selected are furthering the goals of the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement*.

Please see the table following this article for a list of forwarded conceptual proposals. The Panel encourages public comment on these proposals. Copies will be available in mid-February at the ADFG offices in Fairbanks and Anchorage and from the Panel Secretariat (Hugh Monaghan, 867-393-1900) either by mail or electronically.

CONCLUSION

The Panel meeting is always a great opportunity for both Alaskans and Canadians to come together to discuss the Canadian origin Chinook salmon and fall chum stocks. Fishers and managers from both sides of the border exchange information and work together for the common good of the fisheries.

While important meetings took place by day, there was also time for socializing and tasting the salmon that everyone is working to sustain at the reception hosted by YR DFA. The event could not have been as successful as it was without the generous donation of Yukon River smoked salmon and caviar from Interior Alaska Fish Processors, Inc.

The spring Panel and associated meetings will be taking place in Whitehorse from March 31-April 4. For more information, visit www.yukonriverpanel.com. ☺



YUKON RIVER PANEL - 2008 RESTORATION & ENHANCEMENT CONCEPTUAL PROPOSALS TO ADVANCE TO DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSALS

PROJECT	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT PROPONENT	\$US/\$CDN REQ.
URE-04N-08	Ruby Data Collection	Ruby Tribal Council	19,000/
URE-05-08	Marshal Chinook Test Fishery	YRDFA	28,100/
URE-06-08	Kaltag Fall Chum/Coho Drift Gillnet Test Fishery	City of Kaltag	21,000/
URE-07-08	Gillnet Catch Comp (ASLWG) – Lwr Ykn Riv TF	YRDFA	14,000/
URE-08-08	Tech Assist, Dev & Support – Fish Wheel Video	USFWS	5,500/
URE-09-08	Rampart-Rapids Full Season Video Monitoring	Stan Zuray	46,100/
URE-13-08	Ichthyophonous Sampling at Emmonak & Eagle	ADF&G	45,900/
URE-16N-08	Eagle Sonar - Joint Project	ADF&G/DFO	193,000/
URE-17N-08	Pilot Station Echosounder Upgrade	ADF&G	43,100/
URE-18N-08	Juvenile Chinook Salmon Rearing in US Tributaries	USFWS	34,900/
URE-19N-08	In-season Chin Stock ID Pilot	ADF&G	45,000/
CRE-05N-08	Selective Fisheries - Implementation	Jake Duncan	/36,000
CRE-06-08	Yukon River North Mainstem Stewardship	DDRRC	/24,000
CRE-07-08	First Fish Youth Camp	Tr'ondek Hwech'in FN	/10,000
CRE-09-08	Tr'ondek Hwech'in Student Steward	Tr'ondek Hwech'in FN	/ 5,300
CRE-10-08	Size Selective Fishing using Live Catch Fishwheels	YRCF Assoc.	/29,700
CRE-11-08	In-Season Management Fund	YRCF Assoc & THFN	/50,000
CRE-16(b)-08	Klondike River Chinook Sonar	B. Mercer	/22,000
CRE-19-08	Mayo Riv Channel Reconst-Assess Juv Chin Hab-4	FN NND	/16,000
CRE-27-08	Porcupine River Chum Mark/Recapture Project	Vuntut Gwitchin Gov	/55,000
CRE-29-08	Chum Spawning Ground Recoveries – Minto Area	Selkirk RRC	/12,000
CRE-31-08	Pelly River Sub-basin Community Stewardship	Selkirk RRC	/25,000
CRE-37-08	Blind Creek Chinook Salmon Enumeration Weir	Jane Wilson & Assoc.	/46,000
CRE-41-08	Chinook Sonar Enumeration Big Salmon River	Jane Wilson & Assoc.	/79,500
CRE-46N-08	Upper Teslin River Chum Tracking Pilot	Teslin Tlingit Council	/5,000
CRE-51-08	KDFN Michie Cr Salmon & Habitat Monitoring	Kwanlin Dun FN	/30,000
CRE-52-08	Fox Creek Chinook Stock Restoration	Ta'an Kwach'an Cncl	/ 5,000
CRE-54-08	Ta'an Kwach'an Council Community Steward	Ta'an Kwach'an Cncl	/46,200
CRE-58-08	Community Salmon Stewardship – KFN Territory	Kluane First Nation	/17,000
CRE-63-08	Whitehorse Rapids Hatchery Coded Wire Tagging	YF&G Association	/35,000
CRE-64N-08	Incubation Temp/Sex Ratio Whs. Hatchery Study	Kwanlin Dun FN	/ 5,500
CRE-65-08	McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Project	NRI Yukon College	/47,000
CRE-66N-08	Salmon in the Classroom Incubator Chillers	Streamkeepers Nor Soc	/ 4,700
CRE-67-08	Yukon Schools Fry Releases & Habitat studies	Streamkeepers Nor Soc	/4,000
CRE-75-08	Value-Added Fish Processing Facility		
CRE-76N-08	THFN Viable Fisheries – Fishing Gear	Tr'ondek Hwech'in FN	
CRE-77N-08	THFN Viable Fisheries – Blast Freezer	Tr'ondek Hwech'in FN	/13,000
CRE-78-08	Collection of DNA Baseline Samples YR AK & YT	DFO/ADF&G	/60,000
CRE-79-08	Stock ID Microsatellite Variation – Chin & Chum	DFO	/30,000
	39 R&E CP to advance to DPs	Total \$1,499,700	\$495.6/1,004.1

N – Identifies a new YRP R&E project.
The amount expressed in \$US or \$CDN as per the request/application, rounded to the nearest \$100, and the respective values presently being essentially equivalent.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD FISHERIES PROPOSALS

The Federal Subsistence Board met at the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage December 11-13, 2007, to make decisions on fisheries proposals for the 2008/2009 regulatory year (April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009). Many Yukon River residents, particularly from the lower river, were in attendance. In fact, more than 35 people testified on proposals FP08-13 and FP08-14, described below.

Proposal FP08-13 which would have required all gillnets greater than 6" stretch mesh to not be more than 35 meshes deep failed by a vote of 0-6. The YRDFA Board had no consensus on this proposal. Proposed by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Proposal FP08-14 which would have restricted the maximum gillnet size for the Yukon River drainage to 7.5 inch stretch mesh for subsistence and commercial salmon fishing in Federal public waters failed by a vote of 3-3. The YRDFA Board had no consensus on this proposal. Proposed by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Proposal FP08-15 to allow drift gillnets no more than 150 feet long and no more than 35 meshes deep during entire regulatory opening(s) in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C passed by a vote of 6-0. The YRDFA Board had no consensus on this proposal. Proposed by the Loudon Tribal Council.

The Board took no action on **Proposal FP08-16** to eliminate the use of drift gillnets in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C, based on action on proposal 15 (above). The YRDFA Board opposed this proposal. Proposed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The Board voted 6-0 to defer **Proposal FP08-17** for one year. YRDFA submitted this proposal to exempt persons who are age 60 or older and are participating in the fishing activity themselves from the windows fishing schedule. One individual less than age 60 may assist one or more persons, age 60 or older, with their fishing activity. The YRDFA Board had no consensus on this proposal.

The full transcripts of the meeting can be viewed at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/fsb>. ☺

YUKON RIVER JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: A SCIENTIFIC VOICE

BY BOB DUBEY, PH.D., FISHERY BIOLOGIST

The Yukon River Joint Technical Committee (JTC) had its fall meeting November 5-8, 2007 in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Established in 1985 as a scientific advisory body to the negotiators of the United States and Canada Yukon River Treaty, the JTC now provides technical support and scientific review for the Yukon River Panel. The Committee membership includes fisheries managers, biologists, technicians, biometricians, research scientists, and other professional staff primarily from state and federal agencies. Technical staff from some local, tribal, and regional organizations in the U.S., including YRDFA, also participate in the Committee.

The JTC is responsible for getting the best science and management expertise possible to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate management plans, salmon stock assessments, escapement goals, and research projects for Yukon River salmon (particularly Canadian-origin Chinook and chum salmon). The Committee prepares an annual report, which includes: post season reviews of all the fisheries affecting Yukon salmon – subsistence, Aboriginal, commercial, sport, and marine fisheries; the status of spawning stocks; special projects undertaken each year including those funded from the Yukon; and run outlooks for the next year. The annual report also contains numerous tables and figures summarizing catches, escapements, run abundance estimates, and other data of interest to the Panel. Annually, the Committee provides technical reviews of proposals for the Yukon Restoration and

Enhancement (R&E) Fund¹ and any associated recommendations to the Panel.

In addition to having a member on the Committee, YRDFA is the project proponent for R&E funded projects involving local hire fisheries technicians. These projects have contributed fisheries technicians to assist with such projects as the lower river test fishery, *Ichthyoponus* sampling, Chinook salmon weight

There are now three years of comparable estimates for Chinook salmon and two for chum salmon. Although the sonar and mark-recapture estimates for chum salmon are similar, there are significant differences in the Chinook salmon estimates. The JTC reviewed and discussed the relationships between the mark/recapture and Eagle sonar estimates. The Committee also discussed what revisions

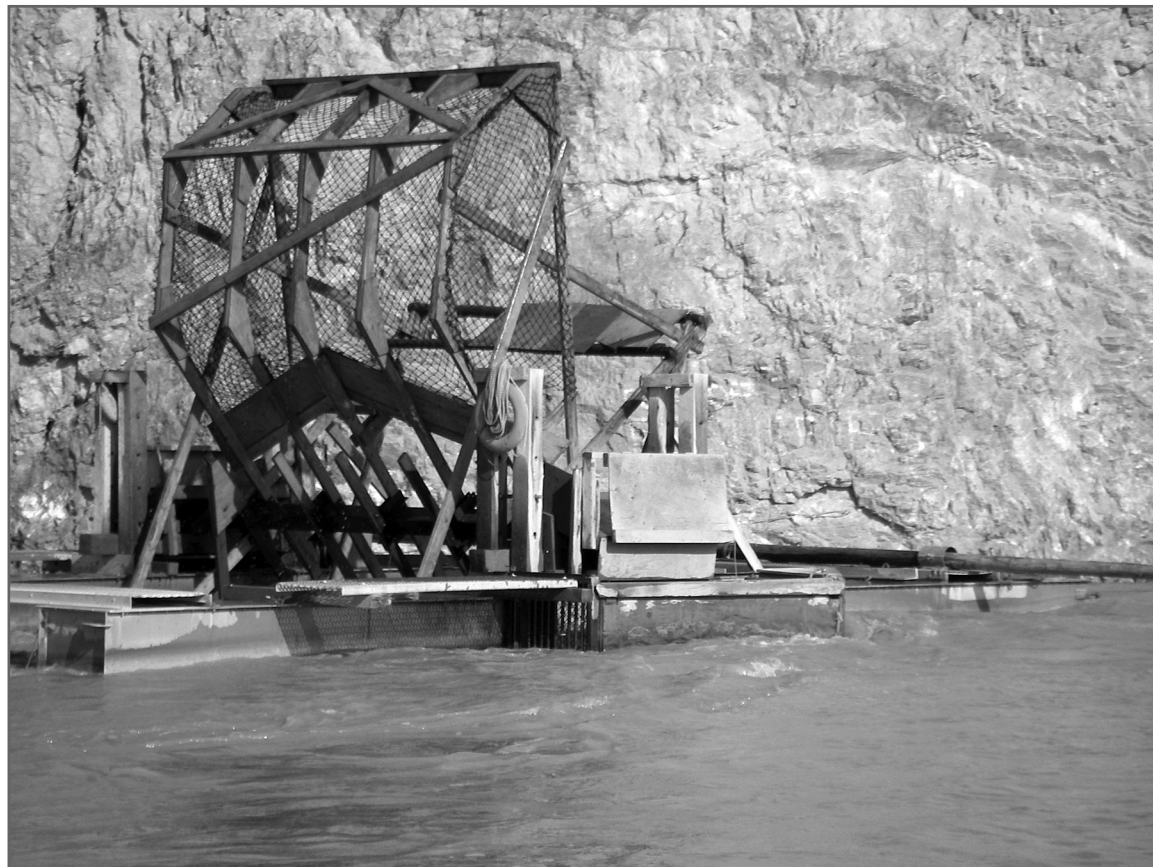
to spawning escapement goals might be required when the switch to Eagle sonar occurs. In the meantime, both projects will likely continue to run concurrently for an additional period of time, particularly for Chinook salmon, to ensure a rational transition can occur.

The JTC's next meeting is scheduled for March 3-6, 2008, in Fairbanks. Agenda items include a review of R&E Fund detailed proposals for 2008, preseason run outlooks for 2008 and progress reports on a number of assignments from the Panel. A summary of these meeting activities can be heard at the Yukon

Panel meeting and an annual JTC report is published in April each year.

YRDFA's work with the JTC is funded by grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund (PacSal). The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA, PacSal, or any related subagencies. ☪

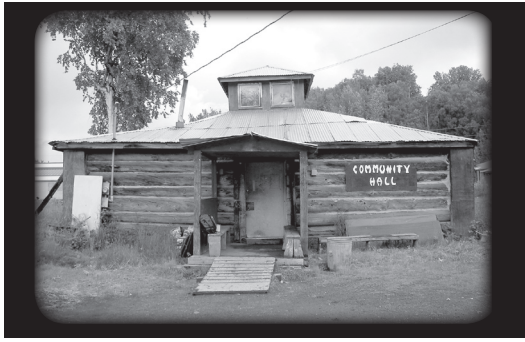
¹The R&E fund typically receives \$1.2 million annually for salmon management and research activities directed at restoration, conservation, and enhancement of Canadian origin salmon, as well as projects that involve stewardship and maintenance of viable fisheries in Canada.



One of the two mark/recapture fish wheels in operation between Eagle and Dawson on the Yukon River.

and girth sampling, and age-sex-length sampling of subsistence and commercially caught salmon.

One of the items of interest during the fall meeting was a review of border escapement estimates for Chinook and chum salmon. Passage estimates have historically been based on Canadian mark/recapture estimates. The upper Yukon escapement targets contained in the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement* were based on these estimates. However, a new and improved method involving sonar is being developed by the Parties at Eagle; 2007 was the third year of operation for this project.



SPOTLIGHT ON GRAYLING

BY CATHERINE MONCRIEFF, ANTHROPOLOGIST

Beginning with this issue, YRDFA will be highlighting a different village in each edition of Yukon Fisheries News. We hope these updates will give readers a glimpse into life and history in different areas of the Yukon River drainage.

The village of Grayling is located on the west bank of the Yukon River. It is situated east of the Nulato Hills and 21 miles north of Anvik (Commerce 2008, Wheeler 1998:83). Grayling has been occupied intermittently since at least 1869 and was a year-round settlement by 1900 (Wheeler 1998:83).

HISTORY

The people of Grayling are Holikachuk Athabascans, originally from the Upper Innoko River. In the 1830s and 1840s, they lived in five villages on the Innoko River and consolidated to Holikachuk, above Shageluk on the Innoko River, by 1944 (Vanstone 1981:558). In the 1960s, the 25 families remaining in this area moved to Grayling. Some of the reasons for the move include isolation at Holikachuk and lower freight rates at Grayling (Wheeler 1998:84).

The Holikachuk people have a long history of travel to the Yukon River and other places for trade and salmon (Goddard 1981:615). They came to the Yukon River seasonally to fish because the upper Innoko River had few salmon. There were Holikachuk fish camps near the Nowitna River in 1843 and near the Shageluk Slough in 1860 (Vanstone and Goddard 1981:558). Prior to their permanent move, the Grayling area had long been used as a summer fish camp by the Holikachuk people (Wheeler 1998:84).

FISHING

In Grayling, there is a year-round harvest of fish including salmon, whitefish, pike, sheefish, blackfish, lamprey, grayling and suckers. To catch these fish, Grayling residents use traps, gill nets, dip nets, set nets, fish wheels, and hook and line (Brown et. al 2005:30-39). In early winter, traps are set under the ice to catch whitefish. In late winter pike, whitefish and sheefish are harvested under the ice with a net. Dip nets are used after breakup for whitefish on their spring migration (Brown et. al 2005:35). Gill nets are used to harvest whitefish, pike and sheefish in open water after breakup. In March and April, blackfish are harvested.

During the summer, salmon fishing is very important and salmon are harvested with nets and fish wheels. Grayling residents annually harvest between 1,268 and 1,792 Chinook salmon (Brase and Hamner 2003). YRDFA conducted a gear and harvest survey in Grayling in 2004 and found that fishers surveyed used drift nets of 8 ½ to 8 ¼ mesh size for Chinook salmon and took two to three weeks in mid June to mid July to reach their harvest goals.

Whitefish, pike and sheefish are harvested using set nets at the mouths of tributaries before the salmon arrive (Brown et. al 2005:39). Hook and line are used for grayling and suckers in the summer. Dip nets are used to target pike and whitefish during freeze up (Brown et. al 2005:40).

Lamprey and burbot are fished for around Fox Point Island and Eagle Island. Pike, sheefish and whitefish are caught around Thompson Creek. The Upper Innoko lake

system is accessed for pike, sheefish, whitefish and blackfish (Brown et. al 2005:30).

DEMOGRAPHICS AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

According to the latest census, there are approximately 174 people living in Grayling. Subsistence fishing is an important activity, and most households in Grayling have at least one or two people active in fishing (Wheeler 1998:121). Nine residents hold commercial fishing permits.

Grayling is in the Yukon River fisheries management area sub-district Y-4A. There are no roads into the village and access is through air or river boat in the summer. The Iditarod sled dog race uses Grayling as a checkpoint every other year (Commerce 2008).

LOCAL YRDFA PROJECTS

YRDFA is holding its annual meeting in Grayling this year from February 25-28, 2008. Other recent projects in Grayling with YRDFA involvement include Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance and Timing, Subsistence Assistants, and the In-Season Subsistence Salmon Harvest Monitoring Pilot Project.

The Natural Indicator project seeks to understand more about salmon through local knowledge indicators of salmon. For instance, fishers in the middle Yukon River have long correlated the release of aspen seeds or “cotton” with the arrival of Chinook salmon. We thank our Grayling participants on this project: Joe and Rose Maillette, Edna and Tiny Deacon, Gabe Nicholi, Herman Deacon, Henry and Dolly Deacon, and Rose Golilie. We

also thank the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative for funding this project.

The Subsistence Assistants Program is an ongoing YRDFA initiative to recruit local residents to provide support to Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) subsistence salmon surveyors (post season). Subsistence Assistants help with logistics and conduct follow up surveys if necessary. Thanks to David Peter, Grayling Subsistence Assistant for 2007. We also thank ADFG for providing the funding for this project.

The In-Season Subsistence Salmon Harvest Monitoring project was a pilot project to increase community involvement in fisheries management and to document aspects of the subsistence salmon harvest. It took place in Grayling in 2004 when a locally hired technician conducted surveys with individual fishers. This salmon harvest information was provided to fishery managers in-season, enabling them to make better management decisions. It was also shared on the YRDFA teleconferences. YRDFA thanks Gabe Nicholi and Shirley Clark for working on the project and the Southeast Sustainable Salmon Fund for providing funding.

We look forward to spending time in Grayling at the YRDFA Annual Meeting and learning more about the community, the people and their fisheries goals. For more information on any of the above mentioned projects, please contact the YRDFA office. 🐟

PHOTOS:

LEFT: Grayling Community Hall. **CENTER:** Birchbark Smoke House upriver from Grayling. **RIGHT:** Dip netting under the ice with a fish fence in winter near Holikachuk. Photo by Tom Cleveland, courtesy of Henry Deacon

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YRDFA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

BY LAUREN SILL, PROGRAM ASSISTANT

2008 is shaping up to be a great year for YRDFA membership! We're in the middle of our winter membership drive to recruit new members and renew lapsed ones. If you are not currently a member, or your membership has expired, now is a great time to join! With your support, together we can create a future of sustainable and healthy salmon fisheries. Just fill out the membership form at the bottom of this page and send it, along with your donation, to our Anchorage office.

We'd like to welcome our newest YRDFA members: the Bowman family from Copper Center, Craig Edwards from Beaver, Eric Kameroff from Kotlik, Doug Karlberg from Bellingham, Nita Rearden from Bethel, Ann Wood from Manley Hot Springs, Allakaket Tribal Council, Asa' Carsarmiut Tribal Council, Beaver Village Council, Birch Creek Gwich'in Tribal Council, Evansville Tribal Council, and Koyukuk Tribal Council! And thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for another year. Our members are what keep us working towards the long-term sustainability of the river, its cultures and economies!

If you know anyone you think should be a member, please let us know. As always, we'd love to hear from you with any comments or questions. 🐟

Yes! I want to support healthy salmon runs for generations to come!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible annual gift of:

- \$5 Subsistence only user
- \$5 Student
- \$10 Commercial permit holder or crew member
- \$25 General public or agency
- \$100 Business
- \$100 Individual Sustainer
- Other: Amount _____

YRDFA works to:

- Solve problems in fisheries management
- Sustain wild salmon populations
- Keep people informed on current fisheries issues
- Restore salmon habitat and depressed runs

**payable by cash, or check or money order made out to "YRDFA"*

Please indicate the ONE fishing district you live and/or fish in:

- Coastal Y-1 Y-2 Y-3 Y-4 Y-5 Y-6 Koyukuk
- Flats/Y-5d

Member name: _____

Address: _____

Village/City: _____

State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail/fax: _____

Today's date: _____

NL-0208

IT'S TIME FOR SOME LIMITS: CHINOOK SALMON BYCATCH

BY BECCA ROBBINS GISCLAIR, POLICY DIRECTOR

We're sad to report that Chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery reached an unprecedented high in 2007. By the end of the year, the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) pollock fleet had caught over 122,000 Chinook salmon as bycatch. These salmon, don't forget, are either thrown back into the water—dead after hours in the nets—or saved for donation to food banks.

In a year like this in particular, where Chinook salmon runs on the Yukon were well below forecasts, commercial harvests were limited on the U.S. side and non-existent on the Canadian side and border passage goals were not met, this level of bycatch is particularly troublesome. While in-river users sacrifice their harvests, the pollock trawl fleet is allowed to keep catching the salmon whose return people patiently await on the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, in Bristol Bay, and in Norton Sound.

Fortunately, there is an opportunity for change. As we've mentioned before in Yukon Fisheries News, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (the Council) is currently considering new management options to reduce salmon bycatch.

The options the Council will be choosing from include area closures, which close just a set area to pollock fishing, and hard caps, which would shut the fishery down when the cap number is reached. The hard cap numbers being considered range from a low of 21,000 to a high of 114,000 for Chinook salmon.

As far as we're concerned, with bycatch numbers as high as they've been in the past few years, only a hard cap – which sets an absolute limit on salmon bycatch – is an acceptable solution to protect Yukon River salmon. YRDLFA has been sharing this view with the Council, and they've been hearing from other Western Alaska groups including Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the Yukon Delta and Bristol Bay CDQ groups, the Yukon River Panel, Eastern and Western Interior Regional Advisory Councils, and many concerned tribes and individuals.

The Council process moves slowly, with final action scheduled for December 2008, but it's never too early to comment. If you're able to send comments, please be sure to include the following points:

- The importance of salmon to you, your family, your community;
- Salmon bycatch at the levels of the past four years is unacceptable;
- The Council should adopt a hard cap immediately to limit salmon bycatch.

Written comments should be sent to: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

If you're interested in writing a letter and want some help, or if you would like further information, please contact Becca Robbins Gisclair at the YRDLFA office at 1.877.999.8566x106 or Becca@yukonsalmon.org.

YRDLFA's work on Bycatch is funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies. 🐟

“NEW ENERGY...” *continued from front page*

also monitor Chinook salmon spawning to determine whether turbines adversely affect salmon habitat.

AP&T plans to have its FERC license and other permits in hand in time to install the first unit later this year. If all goes well and two units are eventually in the river operating dependably and reliably throughout the year, then this project would save about 57,000 gallons of diesel that now fuel the community's generators.

YRDLFA is hopeful that in-river hydrokinetic projects will prove to be viable electric power supplies for Yukon River communities, so long as there are no significant impacts from these machines to fish, fisheries, and habitat. Because of its concerns, YRDLFA will be closely following the Eagle project.

YRDLFA also has recently filed motions to intervene in several other FERC proceedings in which a developer is investigating hydrokinetic sites along the Yukon River. A company named Hydro Green, based in Houston, Texas, is proposing to study the feasibility of installing their own brand of hydrokinetic units at various Yukon River sites in the drainage, including Eagle, Tanana, Galena, Ruby, Nulato, and Kaltag.

For more information call Becca Robbins Gisclair at YRDLFA.

Jan Konigsberg is a consultant who does work for YRDLFA. 🐟

WINTER/SPRING MEETING CALENDAR

February 11-15

ALASKA FORUM ON THE ENVIRONMENT
<http://www.akforum.com/>
Anchorage

February 25-28

YRDLFA ANNUAL MEETING
www.yukonsalmon.org
Grayling

February 28-29

WESTERN INTERIOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm>
Fairbanks

March 3-6

YUKON RIVER JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Fairbanks

March 17-18

EASTERN INTERIOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm>
Tok

March 20-21

YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm>
Lower Kalskag

March 31-April 4

YUKON RIVER PANEL MEETING
Whitehorse, Canada

March 31-April 8

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>
Anchorage