

**STREAMKEEPERS NORTH SOCIETY
YUKON SCHOOLS FRY RELEASES AND HABITAT STUDIES
2007-2008**



**YUKON RIVER SALMON RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND
Project # CRE-67-07**

FINAL REPORT March 2008

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STREAMKEEPERS NORTH SOCIETY YUKON SCHOOLS FRY RELEASES AND HABITAT STUDIES 2007-2008

Abstract:

Yukon students from thirteen classes in six Yukon communities participated in fry releases and aquatic studies in spring 2007. Most schools released chinook fry back to their river system of origin. A few returned fry to the McIntyre incubation facility and did their habitat study activities at the McIntyre site. Others toured the McIntyre site en route to release their salmon. One school released chum fry back to the Kluane River. In October 2007, two schools participated in a chum broodstock collection and egg take field trip, hosted by the Kluane First Nation. Fry trapping field trips to Wolf Creek in October 2007 were part of the salmon studies of a Whitehorse high school. These field trips enabled an estimated 260 students and 45 teachers and volunteers to gain a better understanding and appreciation of Yukon River salmon and their habitat.

Introduction:

Conservation of Yukon River salmon runs depends on the maintenance and development of a stewardship ethic among those who live in the watershed. The Stream to Sea program helps students to achieve a better understanding of salmon and their habitat requirements, and thus helps to foster a stewardship ethic in students and their families. Field trip funding enabled students involved with classroom incubation of salmon to participate in fry releases and various aquatic habitat studies and activities. The memorable experience brought to life the scientific concepts students had been taught in the classroom. For students who had raised fry in their classroom, the sense of stewardship that the students developed for their fry was extended to include the natural salmon habitat and aquatic habitats in general.

Project Location:

Students participated in several field trips to many Yukon aquatic habitats, including McIntyre Creek, Flat Creek, Porter Creek, Wolf Creek, Morley River, Kluane River, and Tatchun Creek.

Project Summary:

The primary objective of this project was to enable students involved with the "Stream to Sea" program to participate in field trips with an aquatic habitat study focus, to enable them better understand the nature of salmon habitat. The R and E funding enabled fifteen Yukon classes to participate in field trips during which students conducted various aquatic habitat studies and activities. In most cases, the classes were accompanied by, and in some cases were chauffeured by, parent volunteers. The DFO education coordinator was available to facilitate the fry releases and various field trip activities. Activities varied with the age and time available. They included fry releases,

aquatic invertebrate studies, water quality studies, life cycle games, dissections, and fry trapping, and broodstock collection and egg takes.

Students who had raised salmon in their classroom as part of the Stream to Sea program were given the opportunity to release fry back into their natal streams, and thus make the connection between their classroom studies and the natural habitat of salmon. The field trip activities also helped to give students, teachers and parent volunteers an appreciation of the natural aquatic habitat of the salmon and to foster stewardship of the salmon and their habitat.

Fry releases: Fry releases occurred between May 11 and June 12, 2007. Eight schools released fry back to the Takhini River drainage, or to the McIntyre facility for subsequent release to the Takhini by the Northern Research Institute and DFO staff. Three schools released fish back to Tatchun Creek. One school released fry to Morley River and Kluane Lake school released their chum fry to Kluane River.

Students were bussed or chauffeured by volunteers out to various creeks to release salmon fry to their natal streams, or to pool them with McIntyre fish for tagging. Students, teachers and volunteers released fry into Flat Creek (Takhini river drainage), Tatchun Creek, and into the Kluane River. A number of classes incorporated a tour of the McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Project into their field trip. Field trip durations varied from a couple of hours to a full day. An estimated 225 students and 30 teachers and volunteers participated in these trips. The highlights from 2007 are:

- The Ross River School, Tantalus School in Carmacks, and Eliza van Bibber school in Pelly Crossing incubated Tatchun Creek Chinook eggs and released these on-site at Tatchun Creek
- Kluane lake School incubated Kluane River Chum eggs and released them into the Kluane River.
- Johnson Elementary School in Watson Lake incubated Chinook eggs from the Morley River and released them at the Morley River picnic area.
- Many of the Whitehorse area schools incubated Takhini River Chinook eggs released fry at McIntyre Creek and at Flat Creek

Chum salmon broodstock collection: An estimated 20 students and 15 volunteers participated in the chum salmon egg take field trip in October 2007.

- Kluane Lake school and a Porter Creek High school class helped to capture chum broodstock and take eggs at the Kluane River.

Wolf Creek fry trapping: About 15 Whitehorse students and their teacher participated in salmon studies and fry trapping in October 2007.

- Vanier High School students carried out a fry trapping study over two days at Wolf Creek.

Ongoing:

The Stream to Sea Program and incubators were again offered to Yukon teachers in the fall of 2007. Several classes decided to participate in the incubation portion of the project. Seventeen Yukon schools in eight Yukon communities are growing salmon in their classrooms in the 2007- 2008 season. Field trips are currently being scheduled for May and June 2008.

Partners:

Many organizations contributed to the success of this project. **Yukon Schools** teachers taught the Salmon in the Classroom program, and supervised classroom incubation and field trips. They were assisted on field trips by **parents and other volunteers**.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada conducted egg takes for the schools and provided technical support to the salmon in the classroom program and facilitation of the field trips. **Yukon College** students working at the **Northern Research Institute** McIntyre Creek incubation facility monitored and maintained the eggs prior to their delivery to the schools. They also assisted with class tours of the McIntyre salmon incubation facility. The **Kluane First Nation** hosted a feast for students from Kluane Lake School and Porter Creek school during the chum egg take.

Financial Summary:

Expenses Claimed from R & E Fund:		
Transportation Costs:		
	12 fry releases x \$100.00	\$2400.00
	2 broodstock collection field trips x \$ 240.00	\$480.00
	2 fry trapping field trips x \$100.00	\$200.00
Equipment for classes:		
	Thermometers	\$107.22
Total:		\$3187.22

OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING, ASSISTANCE, AND/OR INFORMATION:

Assistance Details

Amount of funding

Northern Research Institute and Yukon College students: Yukon College students they employ often assist in giving tours of the incubation site for school field trips	\$500 in kind
Yukon Parent and other community volunteers: assist on field trips	\$2,000 in kind
DFO support for field trips, including personnel and equipment	\$15,000 in kind
Streamkeepers North Society: equipment for field trips water quality and invertebrate sampling	\$2000 in kind
TOTAL IN KIND SUPPORT	\$20,500 in kind