

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Re: Juvenile Chinook salmon release into Fox Creek

Whitehorse, Yukon — The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council in partnership with the Northern Research Institute, Environmental Dynamics Inc. and Fisheries and Oceans Canada will release juvenile Chinook salmon into Fox Creek this week as part of a multi-year Chinook Stock Restoration Plan.

Fox Creek is a tributary to Lake Laberge, approximately 50 km north of Whitehorse. Past surveys indicate that the creek once supported a spawning population of Chinook salmon. Reasons for the disappearance of adult salmon in Fox Creek are unknown.

Salmon has long been a mainstay of the Ta'an Kwäch'än people and Fox Creek lies in the heart of Ta'an Kwäch'än traditional territory. Poor returns of Chinook salmon in recent years emphasize the need for stock restoration projects such as this.

In 1997, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council began researching the feasibility of re-introducing Chinook salmon fry into Fox Creek. Field work was undertaken by Ta'an Kwäch'än Council community stewards over the past two summers in preparation for stock restoration. In September 2008, eggs were collected and fertilized from adult Chinook salmon taken from the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Ladder. The fry was reared over the winter at the McIntyre Creek Incubation Facility.

The release of juvenile Chinook salmon into Fox Creek this summer marks the beginning of a 12 year stock restoration plan (two complete salmon cycles). The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council community stewards will monitor juvenile growth, overwintering success, and will count adult returns to Fox Creek.

The Fox Creek restoration project is a main focus of the community stewardship program. Since 2007, the project has employed two stewards on a seasonal basis. The community stewards monitor and assess salmon activity in several tributaries along the Yukon River within the Ta'an Kwäch'än traditional territory.

"I have worked as a community steward since June 2007. My vision is to protect and preserve the future of Chinook in the Yukon River Watershed. As a Ta'an Kwäch'än citizen, I am working for my First Nation and I am building knowledge for my elders and leaders. I am passionate about protecting our land and the Yukon River Watershed," says Coralee Johns, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council lead community steward.

Funding for this project was provided through the Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund. Project partners are Environmental Dynamics Inc, the Northern Research Institute and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Yukon Government's Y2C2 program assisted with trail cutting.

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