

**Plenary Four: Yukon Fishing – It's not just about fish!**

**Moderator: Nathan Millar, Environment Yukon**

**Introduction**

**Nathan Millar, Environment Yukon**

- There has been a steady increase in anglers, although in the last ten years there has been a decline in licenses (decline due to less non-Yukon licenses)
- Rate of participation is second only to Newfoundland and Labrador (average is 13 days of fishing)
- Strongest reason why we fish has been determined to be the connection to family, community and the environment
- Anglers are stewards of aquatic resources, they are the eyes and ears out on the land, can report changes
- Values include economic, recreational, commercial and aquaculture
- Most fishing pressures in the Southern Lakes and Kluane Area

**Water Monitoring in FN Communities**

**Albert Genier, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC)**

- The 70<sup>th</sup> tribe (out of 80) will sign the treaty in Whitehorse this summer at the Summit
- Mission: to drink within fifty years from the Yukon River
- The Yukon River (largest untamed river in North America)
- There is a great deal of support for the YRITWC
- Program in 9<sup>th</sup> year (water quality)
- Water Quality program on the Yukon side began in 2006 – working on how to include communities in scientific monitoring; has been based on existing infrastructure and available monitors
- Sampling looks for point source contamination and pollution
- Local Monitors, monitor every two weeks between May and September
- In the 2006 season, 90 samples were collected
- Hoping to initiate under ice sampling in the future and expand program

**Stream to Sea Education Program**

**Trix Tanner, Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

**Learning Resources**

- Resource people – teachers: kids get exposed, rely on teachers to do analyses, put in context, etc...
- Learning is highly experiential – hands on teaching, and learning by doing which builds stewardship
- Partners – key is the Yukon River Panel, which provides funding

**Kluane Lake School**

- Running the salmon incubation/release program for twenty years
- Community celebration when the fry are released, the whole community participates

## **Community Stewardship of Aquatic Environments**

### **Al von Finster, Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

The community needs to have long term support for long term projects

Yukon Examples:

- Tatchun Creek
- Watershed Stewardship Groups
- McIntyre Creek – tremendous amount of activity within the watershed. There are many different interests that have a sense of ownership; long history of conflict.

Opportunities:

- Made a pitch for Bruce Bennet to consider the establishment of wildlife viewing on the Canyon at McIntyre Creek for birds
- Copper Belt – it is famous throughout the world, and perhaps more could be done to communicate and celebrate this
- Rainbow Trout – is important because it is a great fish for kids to fish for

Al noted the eroding clay bank and the that the cliff face is going into the creek; highway cut in process of failing

- Chinook salmon spawning area at mouth of creek
- Good candidate for fish restoration

### **Family Fishing in Yukon**

#### **Dennis Zimmerman, Fish On Yukon**

- Urban upbringing – moved north; personal story of engagement
- Personally started clean up of Pump House Pond area and inviting friends – instigator was the news article about a bird caught in fishing line
- Connecting with kids – teaches about life and death; everyone has their role
- There is a pent up demand; people want to know where to start, some opportunities are: Family Fishing Day & Yukon Outdoor Women – Yukon Fish and Game Association, Colouring Contest – Yukon Salmon Committee
- Dennis's website: <http://fishonyukon.com/>
- Need to develop a brand - his brand is not “big fish”
- Top 5 places to fish with kids: #1-Pumphouse Pond, #2-Hidden Lakes, #3-Snafu Lake, #4-Fish Lake, #5-Haines/Valdez Alaska

### **Questions:**

- (1) Sara Nielsen asked if “adopt a stream” was still a City of Whitehorse program – Trix responded that she believed it was still on the website.
- (2) Mary Whitley asked what Dennis really thought about all the line being left behind at Pumphouse Pond – Dennis noted that he can only help to set an example, and that there will continue to be those that are less responsible, encourage education to foster stewardship
- (3) Has the class seen returns of salmon over the years – Trix responded that the school program is enhancement for education of kids, not necessarily for enhancement of fish.
- (4) Shifting baseline – has it changed management? Al indicated that there has been a decline in size, which has led scientists to look into it. The fish cycle and fishing cycles mean inconsistencies in terms of observations.