



Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

117 Industrial Road • Whitehorse, Yukon • Y1A 2T8

Telephone: 867.668.3613 • Facsimile: 867.667.4295 • E-mail: info@taan.ca

June 18, 2018

Media Release, for immediate release

At 2.p.m., on Sunday, June 17, 2018, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council was pleased to release Chinook salmon fry at Fox Creek, a tributary of Lake Laberge, on our Traditional Territory. The afternoon began with a prayer by Elder Frances Woolsey, whose granddaughter, Jesse Kates, released the first bucket of the total of 6,500 fry. Excitement was high, as children and other attendees took buckets containing fry to Fox Creek and let them go into their new home.

Although Fox Creek had been extirpated of Chinook salmon by the 1950s, traditional knowledge indicated that the fish had once lived in its waters. Ta'an Kwäch'än Council began planning to change the depleted situation as early as 2007. The Fox Creek Salmon Restoration Project, an example of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council's commitment to preservation and enhancement of resources in our Traditional Territory, is now a healthy 10-year-plus project that demonstrates success. In addition to returning an important food source to the Ta'an people, the project provides training for our youth and opportunity for partnerships.

Happily, several weeks before the release, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council staff observed newly hatched wild fry in the creek's back eddies. That meant, tiny fry released between 2012 and 2014 had returned as adults to successfully spawn. More newly hatched wild fry have been observed every year since 2016.

For this year's fry release, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council was especially grateful to Yukon Energy and the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Hatchery who provided a large number of the Chinook salmon fry, and to schools who participated in the Stream to Sea program and raised some of the fry. Ta'an Kwäch'än Council lost 32,000 fry in a fire at the Yukon College's McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Facility in March 2018. While this loss will affect the numbers of wild spawned fish four to six years from now, the full effect may be difficult to determine as the exact number of wild salmon spawning in the creek is unspecified. However, it is a certainty that the record number of newly hatched wild fry moves the Fox Creek Chinook Salmon Restoration Project towards its goal of re-establishing a self-sustaining population of Chinook with sufficient spawners to have a high probability of long-term persistence. Ta'an Kwäch'än Council aims to ensure that a viable natural stock is abundant enough to contribute to a sustainable harvest for current and future generations as part of their natural culture and heritage.

For the 2018 fry release, Chief Kristina Kane stated: "We would like to acknowledge the generous fish fry donation by Yukon Energy Corporation to Ta'an Kwäch'än Council this year, as well as the Yukon school children who helped with the Stream to Sea program. We also continue to be appreciative of the Whitehorse Fish Hatchery for brood stock collection, fertilization and egg rearing to the eyed stage; to Yukon College for their technical advice and management of the McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Facility; the McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Facility for receiving and rearing eyed eggs annually;

Fisheries and Oceans Canada for technical support; and Yukon Salmon Sub-committee for technical and administrative support; and the Pacific Salmon Commission for program funding. We would also like to acknowledge the guidance of our Elders, for the prayer today and for the knowledge that has helped formulate this program as one that returns salmon to an area where traditional knowledge tells us they once were. Thank to our staff and Citizens for their continued interest and strong support.” The Chief also noted that “the number of partners represents the complexity of this conservation effort. We look forward to working together with our existing and new supporters to augment our conservation efforts for Chinook salmon and our other projects.”

--30--

Contact:
Communications Officer
communicationsoffice@taan.ca
668.3613 ex. 204

Attached photo:
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Citizen, Alexander LeBarge, releases Chinook salmon Fry into Fox Creek.