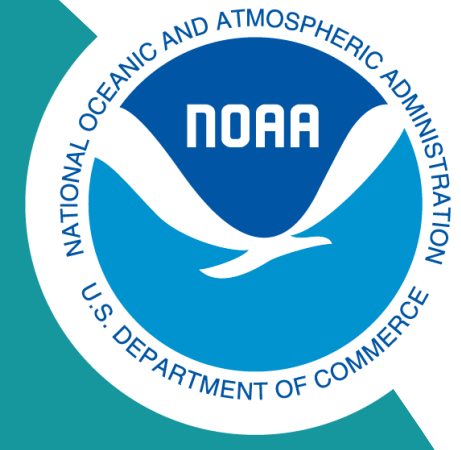




Oral History of Chum Salmon : The Tails of The Legendary/Kuskokwim Salmon



NOAA FISHERIES

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

Sea Grant Alaska

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Introduction

- Growing up in Bethel throughout my life has shown me the importance of our elders knowledge
- this project is very different from what I have done in the past because its working with oral history and doesn't give quantitative results
- I was able to create my own project and it was based on what I wanted to do
- choose who I wanted to interview
- created questions that I felt were important to ask
- "A recording containing information about the past obtained from the in-depth interviews concerning personal experiences, recollections and reflections. (Merriam-Webster)"

Methods

The first couple weeks of this project it was sitting down with my mentors and thinking about what I wanted to get out of this project and for me the most important part was listening to my elders.

The way that I picked my two narrators is creating a list of people I have grown up with and how much they have inspired me to continue my journey working with Salmon.

Example questions

- Tell me about what it was like growing up where you did?
- Can you tell me more about your history with fishing?
- When you think of Salmon what is your best memory with them?
- What are some ideas you might have to help preserve Chum Salmon?
- Can you tell me some activities that you do in town?
- What are some of your main concerns about the future Chum Salmon populations?
- Do you have any ideas on how to get more youth involved with salmon and conservation?

I was able to create questions focused on the narrators themselves and create a connection between us before diving into the harder subjects

Practice interviews

- practiced with other interns
- was able to get feedback from my mentors before doing the interviews

Recording Equipment

- Olympus :VN 801 PC

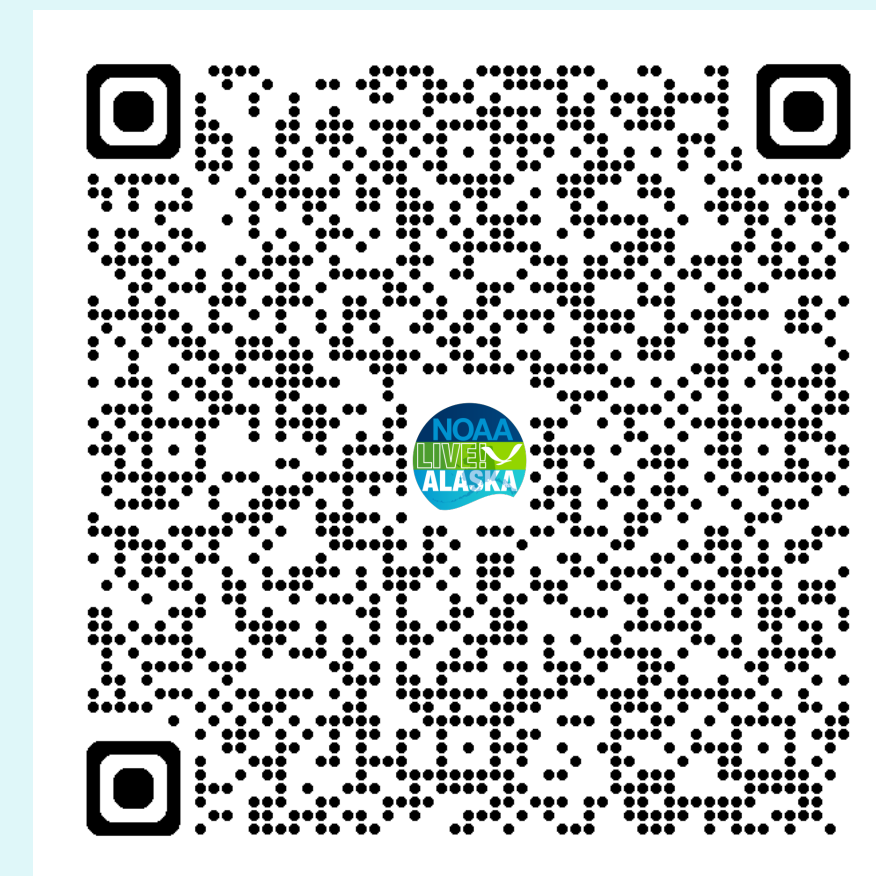
Transcripts software

- Otter.ai
- ExpressScribe

Follow up with narrators



Locations of Bethel and Aniak



Results

"What we have is our desire to protect a way of life, **protect the food and protect the river**, you know, **and that we have our voices, that's what we have.**"

"You know, it's the cost of living is really tough on people, **so it's important that we have our moose, our berries, our greens, our birds and our fish**, you know that that's why we're here, **that's why we're able to live here.**"

"**You see already villages upriver are dying.** They're still there again. Smaller and smaller. If you're close to Bethel, those villages are growing because Bethel will always be a hub"

- **Bev Hoffman**



Bev Hoffman
Community Elder
Bethel, AK



photo credit : Bev Hoffman



photo credit : Bev Hoffman

wildlife **History** keeping our tributaries safe
 Providing nutrients **Disconnection with the natural world**
Cost of Commercial fishing
 living **Chum Salmon Fishing**
Reconnect **Protect the river** **Fish Camp**
 Mushing dogs **Habitat** **Feeding the River**
Subsistence way of life **Culture** **Management**
Healthy People **"All the fish camps are abandoned"** **Climate change**

The main themes that came out of the interviews.

Dan Gillikin
Native Village of
Napimute
Aniak, AK



"**All the fish camps are abandoned.** They're collapsing. And I think it just adds to the whole social, you know, issues that are occurring in the villages. And so I think it's a huge factor, right? Again, that disconnection with the natural world is so fundamental"

"You got to pull the plug. **You got to pull the plug and get them out into nature** and let them [youth], let them explore, let them or teach them, teach them some stuff, but let them figure out their stuff out on their own"

"**Reconnect, and they want to do it. They just don't know it.** All they know now is games. I should say not all of them are that way, but a lot of them, they're just so plugged into the whole devices."

- **Dan Gillikin**

Conclusions

Conversations like this are extremely important in this rapidly changing environment and it is essential to listen to the voices in our own communities. The biggest takeaway from this project for me is that having normal conversations about the historical And present state of salmon is important. Talking about the issues will help bring attention to the future health of our salmon populations along the Kuskokwim River, encouraging youth to be more engaged with their environment.



photo credit : David Simeon



NPRB Project 2130 "Western Alaska Chum Salmon Marine Ecology Internship: Community Engagement through Culturally Responsive Education." Associated Core Proposal: 2210 "Yukon River and Norton Sound Chum salmon Marine Ecology."

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