

Georgetown Tribal Council

E-Newsletter



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PLUS!

NEWS

FROM THE

KUSKOKWIM:

An overview of the George River - Ecological Perspective Internship, Plus find out what the Kuskokwim River Watershed Council has been up to!



An Update from the Environmental Committee..

After a busy summer, the GTC Environmental Committee was happy to get a chance to meet this fall. On September 10, they met at the GTC office to discuss and plan for some exciting projects the Environmental department will be working on over the next year. Seasoned members Debby Hartman & Renee Fredericks welcomed former Environmental Coordinator and GTC member Jonathan Samuelson (pictured above) to the team. Jonathan brings with him a wealth of knowledge that can be put to good use on some of our projects like the collection of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).

A large portion of the meeting was spent designing a project which aims to document TEK for the Native Village of Georgetown.

The purpose of the project?

Jonathan sums it up nicely here:

"Sense of place is a critical component to the cultural survival of people of a community. In cases where communities are no longer inhabited a documented history and lifestyle play a vital role in providing knowledge necessary to strengthen one's sense of place."

GEORGETOWN

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A letter will be sent out this fall to all of those the committee thinks may be interested in contributing information for this project. If you do not receive a letter, but have some stories or pictures that document life in Georgetown related to hunting grounds, harvesting areas, seasonal moves, language, medicinal uses of items found in nature, rituals, diets or any other topics you can think of, please reach out to any of the Committee members or the Environmental Coordinator at GTC.

Remembering your time on the Kuskokwim...

We are searching for stories/pictures! The theme this month:

"WE GOT STUCK"

Send us your stories and photos via e-mail and with your permission, we'll post them to facebook. The person with the most likes will be entered into a drawing for a prize at the end of the year!

Food For Thought: Pick Your Berries

Also known as NOME DELIGHT,

A recipe shared by Debby Hartman from her kitchen, and taste tested by MANY!

Recipe by Cynthia Erickson in Tanana, AK



BLUEBERRY DELIGHT

Cynthia Erickson
Tanana, AK

1 c. flour	3 Tbsp. cornstarch
1 c. butter or margarine	1 c. water
1 c. chopped walnuts	3 Tbsp. raspberry gelatin dessert mix
8 oz. cream cheese	1 qt. blueberries
1 c. powdered sugar	Additional non-dairy whipped topping for garnish
2 c. non-dairy whipped topping	
1 c. sugar	

First layer: Cut together the flour, butter, and walnuts until crumbly. Pat into a 9x13 inch baking pan and bake at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes. Cool.

Second layer: Whip the cream cheese with the powdered sugar and fold in the non-dairy whipped topping. Spread evenly on top the cooled first layer. Chill well.

Third layer: Boil the sugar, cornstarch, and water over medium heat until the mixture is thick and clear. Add the raspberry gelatin and stir until dissolved. Add the blueberries. If necessary, cool the berry mixture to prevent it from melting the cheese layer. Spread the berry layer over the cream cheese and chill well.

Fourth layer: Garnish with another layer of non-dairy whipped topping. Before serving, chill thoroughly. It can be allowed to sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serves 10.

Pictured above:
Debby's version
of Nome Delight
(recipe on left) & the
Schaberg kids making
Nome Delight

Pictured on bottom
from left to right,
Becka Wilmarth's
daughter Corynn
enjoying her mom's
blackberries; Kattie
Wilmarth's monster
blueberry find in
Georgetown this fall;
More of Becka's berry
harvest, this time
cranberries!



NEWS FROM AROUND THE KUSKOKWIM

George River - Ecological Perspective Internship

Summary taken from Excerpts written by Dave Cannon, and personal conversation with Dan Gillikin

Eleven students from the Middle Kuskokwim Region spent nearly two weeks participating in a paid internship program on the George River this summer. The Interns established six monitoring sites in various stream channel habitats that will be monitored over time. Dan Gillikin with the Native Village of Napaimute and Dave Cannon with the Kuskokwim River Watershed Council, both fish biologists, instructed the students on quantifying differing habitat types (e.g., beaver dam complexes, parafluvial spring brooks, mainstem channel).

The group (pictured below) also conducted depletion trapping to document juvenile salmon abundance and collected chemical parameters such as pH, conductivity, temperature, and specific conductance. The internship was a collaborative effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commercial Fisheries Division, the Kuskokwim Watershed Council, and the Native Village of Napaimute.

The student interns were with the EXCEL Alaska program which provides local students with transitional skills and career opportunities necessary to navigate in an ever-changing world. This trip was intended to foster an interest in natural resource management fields, and in Gillikin's words: "It was a great success". According to Dave Cannon, "There's no doubt in my mind that every one of the interns and instructors will never look at a river system in the same way ever again - whether they're moose hunting, berry picking, fishing...or whatever!" They are looking forward to another successful internship program next summer!

Check out a video documenting some of their fun at: <https://youtu.be/OtfA79ZiMYM>



Photos by Dave Cannon; for more information and photos, visit the [Native Village of Napaimute's facebook page](#) or the [KRWC facebook page](#).

NEWS FROM AROUND THE KUSKOKWIM

A LOOK AT CO-MANAGEMENT ON THE KUSKOKWIM RIVER: THE KUSKOKWIM RIVER INTER TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

BY: LAMONT ALBERTSON

Over the decades there has been much conversation about creating a citizen organization which had meaningful influence on fisheries management of the Kuskokwim River. To that end, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG) was created in the late 1980's by the State of Alaska, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, but over the years, in practice, proved to be largely ineffective in providing fair and equitable subsistence fishing opportunity river long...

In what was to be a long term evolutionary process, the Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) was set up in the spring of 2015. The organization went on to sign a binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in May of 2016, and hired an interim Director, LaMont Albertson, the first of June 2016.

Commissioners from thirty three villages, representing seven districts, were appointed and from them three in season managers were selected to work closely with the USFWS. The in season managers along with refuge staff and representatives from ADF&G, met weekly throughout the 2016 season. KRITFC Commissioners played a key role in those consultations in determining openings and closures for the summer's subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon.

The KRITFC will be meeting during the upcoming winter to evaluate and improve upon this initial co management scheme. What the KRITFC would like to see is full participatory governance in determining the harvest of the Kuskokwim's salmon resources. The KRITFC looks forward to the time when the State of Alaska becomes more involved in the co management process. Distributive and shared decision making are hallmarks of co management and should lead to conservative, precautionary management of the river's valuable subsistence resources.

Commissioner Jonathan Samuelson is an important part of the co management process and we look forward to his continued participation in the KRITFC. For Georgetown members, if there are any issues or concerns which need to be addressed, contact him and he will in turn contact KRITFC staff. Please feel free to call LaMont, at 907-545-7388

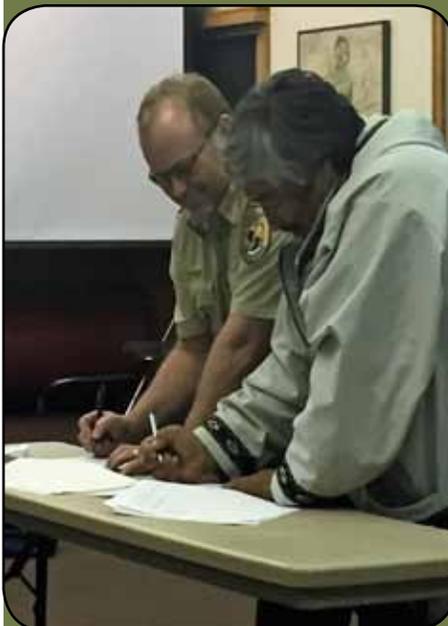
[Find KRITFC On Facebook](#)

Commissioner Jonathan Samuelson shares his photos from the second convening of the Commission, May 2016 in Bethel:

KRITFC Chair Mike Williams Sr. signs the MOU with USFWS Yukon Delta Refuge Manager Ray Borne.

Elders James Charles (Tunutuliak) and Nick Petruska (Nikolai); the lower river and headwaters sitting at the same table.

Samuelson signing as a witness, the MOU between KRITFC & USFWS.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE KUSKOKWIM

The Kuskokwim River Watershed Council's Up River Outreach Trip: The Journey

By: Adrian Boelens, KRWC Executive Director



As we geared up and rechecked our supplies for travel a sense of excitement brewed. The 282 mile boat ride to McGrath from Aniak would be a long one! But needed, for all of KRWC employees. A sense of establishing not only work ethic between each other, but a future of friendships between us all were in the making. We excitedly packed the two boats needed for the trip and departed Aniak in the early afternoon of June 4th, 2016.

Our first village stop was Crooked Creek, to refill gas tanks, and do a little leg stretching. Greetings from the Thomas's Trading Post was exchanged with happy 'hellos' and curiosity of our group. We waved goodbye and continued on to Sleetmute for our last gas pit stop, before heading to Stony River, for overnight camping. Being welcomed into Judy 'Jeannie' Evan's yard in Stony River was a delight. We could hear festivities taking place in the distance, somewhere in the village. A renewing of vows had taken place earlier that day, for a well known local family. A live band imported from Anchorage played old time 'rock and roll'.

As we traveled toward McGrath the winds and clouds rolled in, and we became doused with a moderate rain shower. Arriving around 6pm in McGrath, we were welcomed and went our separate ways to find comfortable sleeping quarters. Robert "Mansey" Magnuson welcomed my son and I with a hearty grilled steak and fresh cut vegetables. The sleeping arrangements were heavenly, after such a long boat ride up the Kuskokwim. As morning arrived, I was rested and ready to present my ACEC Presentation and Power Point to MTNT, Ltd. and McGrath Native Village Council. MTNT stands for McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai, and Telida. MTNT, Ltd. is a Village Corporation and exists for the benefit of its shareholders, the people of the Upper Kuskokwim Basin of Alaska, who are primarily descendants of the Athabaskan people. It was a pleasure to introduce myself, and establish connections with the people of McGrath. During my presentation, I had several questions and concerns. I was overwhelmed with questions, Answering to the best of my ability, I was thankful Suzanne showed up in the nick of time to assist me with a few difficult questions that were asked.

We had a great outcome in McGrath and great interest generated. Many community members stayed after the meeting to look at our 50 mile map of McGrath and the BLM land that surrounds the community. We were able to get a resolution for the Native Village of McGrath for area's they would like to nominate as an ACEC. They are nominating 5 different areas for; Sheefish spawning grounds, traditional use areas and salmon spawning grounds.

Our next stop was Stony River Alaska. We had a great turn out in their new community hall. Our presentation lasted roughly 30 minutes. After our presentation we met with local community members who were concerned for some BLM area's that surround their community. There are 2 major watershed locations near Stony River that a local community member would like to have nominated for whitefish spawning, and salmon spawning grounds. We are currently working to create a resolution for the community member to present to their tribe for an ACEC nomination. As we headed down river towards home, our last stop was Sleetmute Alaska. We did not have that great of turn out of Adult community members in Sleetmute, but the youth flocked in. They were attentive and eager to learn. A few youth had questions on BLM lands, questioning if some area' their families subsist on are on BLM lands. We took a close look at the map to help answer their questions. Our hope is they took this information home to their parents and relayed the concerns they had.

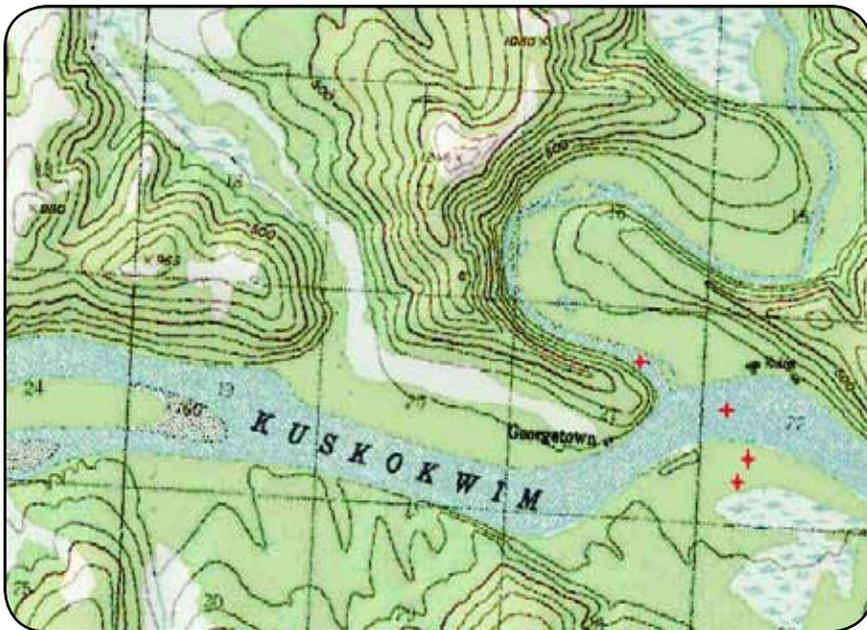
Our trip was a great success! We were able to educate roughly 70 community members from the up river villages. We were able to secure nomination, and drafted resolutions. We were asked to return to some villages to spread awareness to the rest of their community members.

The Purpose of Baseline Water Quality Data in Georgetown...Are temperatures on the rise?

The GTC Environmental department, with funds from the EPA Indian General Assistance Program, collects water quality information for the establishment of baseline data on the Kuskokwim and George Rivers at Georgetown, AK, as well as for the two monitoring wells on site. We currently have data for the two wells from 2008-2016, and for the rivers from 2012-2016. Parameters measured on site include pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, specific conductivity, salinity & total dissolved solids. Samples are also sent to the lab for information on SVOC, VOC, and total metals. This article shares how baseline data can be used, and some of the trends in data we are starting to see..

Collecting Data: Who, What, Where, Whenand why??

Each year in early July and early September, the GTC Environmental Coordinator & Tribal Administrator sample at four monitoring sites (pictured below): MW-1 & MW-2 are the monitoring wells, KR-1 is the Kuskokwim River at Georgetown, and GR-1 is just up from the mouth of the George River.



The parameters we are measuring are listed above. One of our most common comments/questions is: "There's nothing wrong with that water, we've been drinking it forever. Why do you test so much?"



Photos clockwise from top left: Map of testing sites, George River, Kate Schaberg at MW-1, YSI meter in action



We test the water each year not only to ensure high quality water, but to establish baseline data- that is, what the water's "normal" conditions are. By having this baseline information, we are able to confidently identify if there are any changes in the quality of the water. These changes could point out any areas that need further investigation and study. Ultimately, the goal would be to identify and conduct further research on the changes taking place, and to do so in time to prevent any major problems.

With mining for natural resources occurring in the region which holds the risk of introducing water contaminants, and climate change being a high priority in the state of Alaska and all over the country - having and documenting this baseline data is a strong tool for the Native Village of Georgetown.

For the most part, the data we have collected has remained fairly stable over the years, but there is some indication that temperatures may be beginning to rise.

GT Temperatures, continued.

Freshwater pH; Georgetown 2012-2016

When the numbers stay the same

To see how baseline data can work, take a look at the figure on the right. The minimum and maximum pH range established by state water quality standards is 6.5-8.5. At KR-1 & GR-1, there was only one time the pH was found to be outside of this range, and it was just barely below 6.5. If, one year, all of a sudden the pH was found to be very low, it would indicate that there could be something that caused the pH to become lower, or more acidic. In this scenario, an investigation of the area could identify that there was some sort of spill, and clean-up could be arranged to prevent further damage.

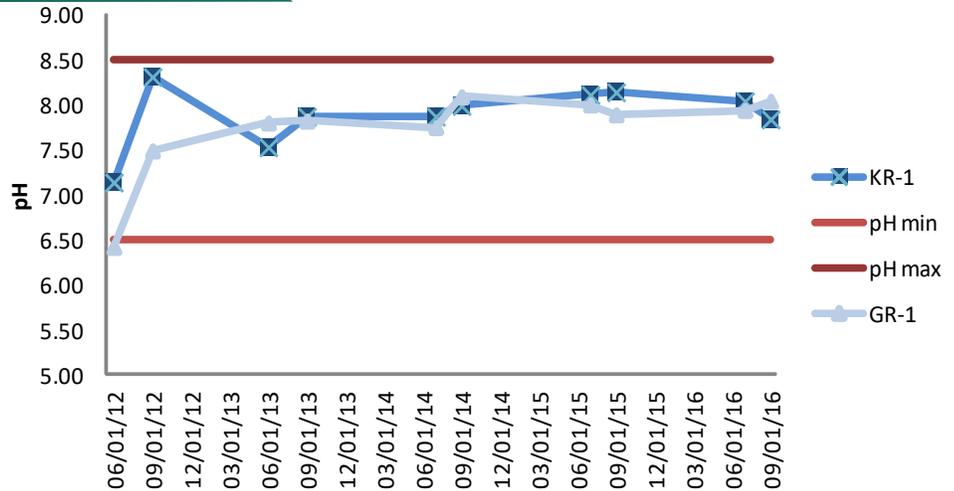
So when the parameter being measured is in a good range, and it remains the same - that is a good thing!

When the numbers start to change

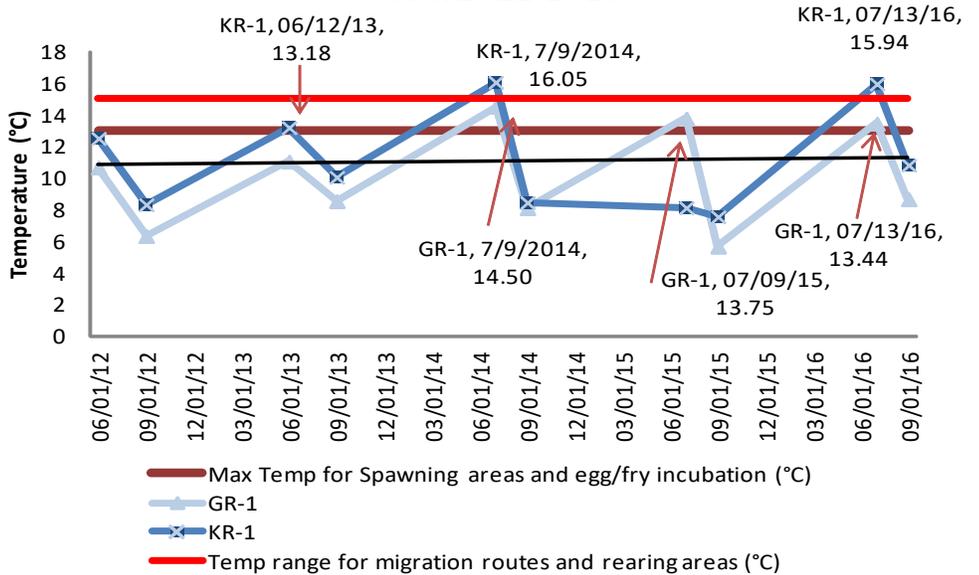
On the graph to the right, you will see two red lines - the bright red line shows the maximum temperature for migrating salmon, the dark red line shows the maximum temperature for spawning and egg/fry incubation. In 2012 and 2013, the temperatures at both KR-1 & GR-1 were below or just at these maximums. However, since 2014 there have been several occasions where the temperatures have been above those points. Since we have only 4 years of data in the freshwater systems, it is hard to tell if this is a trend yet - but we will definitely be keeping an eye on it.

After some initial research, we found that The Scenarios Network for Alaska & Arctic Planning website offers a "community chart tool". These charts show predictions for temperature and precipitation for communities around Alaska. According to their chart shown here, the average temperature in the summer months will increase between 1-3 degrees fahrenheit over the next 30 years in Georgetown.

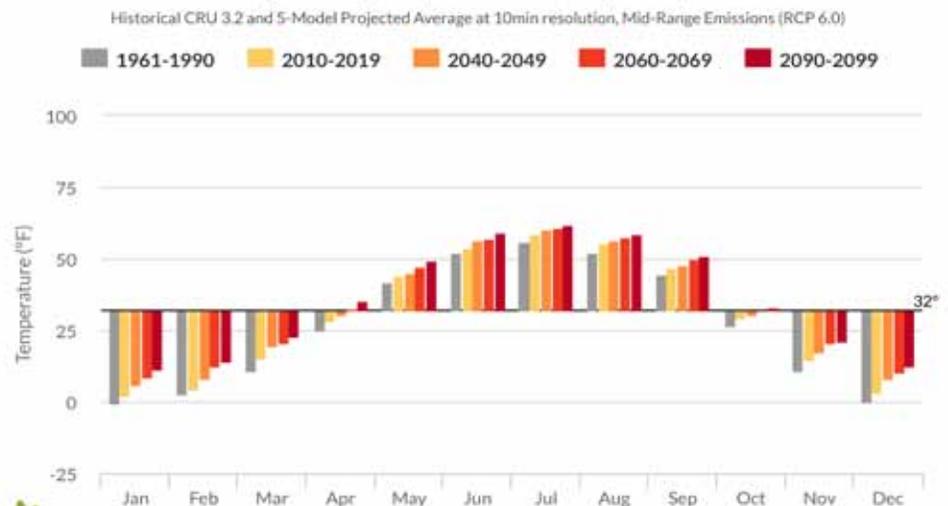
The numbers say warmer air and water temperatures are on their way. The GTC will be conducting a vulnerability study this year that we hope will identify climate change related risks like this and describe ways to adapt on a community level.



Freshwater Temperature GTC: 2012-2016



Average Monthly Temperature for Georgetown, Alaska



Due to variability among climate models and among years in a natural climate system, these graphs are useful for examining trends over time, rather than for precisely predicting monthly or yearly values.

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

1

A new fiscal year begins for IGAP work! To all of you hard working IGAP staff out there - have a great year!

5-6

2016 Children's Environmental Health Summit; Anchorage

18-20

Future of our Salmon Conference
Portland, OR

19

Calling all Storytellers! FIND YOUR PARK; SHARE YOUR STORY. Storytelling event hosted by Alaska Geographic in Anchorage in the style of Arctic Entries. Theme will be celebrating Alaska's public lands in honor of this year's National Park Service Centennial. Stories of all genres are welcomed. If you are interested in telling your story in seven minutes on stage, please email a short story synopsis to eoliver@alaskageographic.org for consideration.

24-28

ATCEM

The 2016 Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management, organized by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, is an annual gathering that brings together Tribes, Non-profits, and State and Federal organizations, for a week of environmental conversations. The discussions focus on finding and implementing solutions to address the unique environmental concerns facing Alaskan communities.

This year's topics include: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Environmental Values, Air Quality and Healthy Homes, Water Quality and Sanitation, Changing Climate, Solid Waste Management & Brownfields

•Our Changing Climate

NOVEMBER

If you know of any upcoming events for our next E-newsletter issue, contact the GTC at kate.schaberg@georgetowntc.com, and we will be happy to include them on our calendar!

29-Dec 2

BIA's 26th Annual Tribal Provider Conference: CANCELLED

For any questions, contact Gary Hanson with the BIA-Alaska Region at 907-271-1537 or gary.hanson@bia.gov

DECEMBER



www.georgetowntc.com/Environmental.html
<https://georgetowntc.wordpress.com/>



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HAPPY FALL!

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