

# Final Report

## **Camp Akaitcho Ecole William MacDonald School Fall/Winter Fish Monitoring Camp September 24-28 and March 12-16, 2007**

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### **Introduction:**

William McDonald Middle School has a history of educational excellence in Yellowknife since 1947. Current school population consists of 279 students from grades 6 through 8 with an Aboriginal population of 25%. There is a staff of 20 teaching professionals.

The goals of the program were:

- To integrate Aboriginal Culture and Language components (Traditional Knowledge) and Scientific Inquiry (Western Knowledge) into the Environmental Outdoor Education Program (EOEP).
- To have our leadership team deliver a program of aboriginal skills to other students in the district.
- To increase the sustainability of the EOEP as an integral component of the school's curriculum.
- To develop a fish monitoring program that is sustainable

The objectives of the program were:

- To develop sustainable infrastructure for Camp Akaitcho so as to maintain a fall and winter program
- To develop an ongoing ( 2 season) fish monitoring station on Quyta Lake located 50 km outside of Yellowknife
- To build capacity for integrating Aboriginal Language and Cultural as well as environmental components into current educational programs.
- To increase the understanding of environmental stewardship and sustainability to all students.

Deliverable items from this project included:

- Summary of fish monitoring data and results by March 31, 2007.
- Copy of slide-show presentation to be presented to entire school at year-end assembly.
- Invitation to celebration of fall harvest

Eighteen Grade 8 students planned, set up and spent 5 nights, 6 days winter camping and conducting fish monitoring. In addition to these duties, students were responsible for leading a group of grade 4 students through various activities throughout a three day period (Tues-Thurs). Approximately 142 grade 4 students attended the camp over 3 days. Students prepared fish for consumption. The following students completed this activity as leaders in our camp:

Fall Camp-Hannah Clark, Jeanne Yurris, Colby Wallis, Dayna Polakoff, Kylar Villebrun, Meagan Stevens, Quentin Sputek, Brayden Cogdale

Winter Camp- Taryn Williams, Kaitlyn Menard, Makenzie Zouboules, Lisa Ngo, Dayna Polakoff, Jeanne Yurris, Hannah Clark, Tunchai Redvers, Lexie Letzing, Emily Smith, Candace Elatiak, Oliver Hodgins, Dennis Foster, Quentin Sputek, Brayden Cogdale, Colten Arychuk, T.C Ibey,

**Methods:**

- Students set-up and monitored a fish net under the ice recording specific data according to fish species (ie. sex, weight, length)
- Students completed extensive training courses on Snowmobile Safety, First Aid, and Survival Training
- A 50 meter long by 6 ft wide net was placed adjacent to the camp site. The net was placed such that it was approximately 4 ft from the bottom of the lake. Upon further investigation with a depth sounder it was determined that the underwater topography showed a slope that went from 20 ft (from shore) to 68ft (far end of net)
- In accordance with proper ice netting, the net was lowered to 10ft from the bottom on the first day and then 3ft from the bottom on the subsequent 2 days in an attempt to gather more species of fish.

**Results:**

***“Monitoring and Research”***

***Fall Camp Data***

- A total of 28 fish were caught over a 3 day period.

- Total of 17 White Fish ranging from 2.8 lbs to 4.1 lbs. There were 10 male and 7 female
- Total of 7 Trout ranging 3.4lbs to 5.3 lbs. There were 5 male and 2 female
- Total of 3 Sucker fish ranging from 4lbs-6.1 lbs. There were 2 female and 1 male
- Total of 1 Northern Pike weighing 8.5 lbs (a 1lb trout was found inside this fish). This was a male Northern Pike

### ***Winter Camp Data***

A total of 7 fish were caught over a 3 day period

- Total of 4 White Fish and 3 Trout were netted over three days of netting.
- White fish ranged from 3 lbs to 4.2 lbs with 3 males and 1 females
- Trout ranged from 3lbs to 3.8 lbs and there were 2 males and 1 female.

### ***Traditional knowledge***

- Students completed training in traditional shelter building with an expert igloo builder from Pond Inlet (Titus Aooloo-Narwhal Adventures)
- Students had the opportunity to live in their own shelters for 5 days during this winter season
- Dry Meat preparation,
- Fish preparation,
- Shelter building,
- Netting of fish, and
- Snaring of rabbits were sessions that student leaders with the help of an Aboriginal expert helped to deliver to all of the younger students.

### **Discussion:**

As this was the second year of the fish monitoring camp, all participants were very pleased with how well the monitoring went. Setting the net was the most difficult and time consuming task in the entire process. Students did very well to understand how the net was placed into the water and how the net was pulled to harvest the fish. After the initial first harvest, a decision was made to lower the net from 10ft off bottom to 3 ft off bottom. The result was not favourable as the catch did not improve. The fall harvest of fish was clearly much more productive in terms of number of fish and fish species.

It was anticipated that a better understanding of fish migration patterns through the seasons would occur. With the data that was collected, any correlation to fish species, depth and location during the different seasons was not possible to determine. There may also have been other factors that can be looked at in greater detail (ie. wind, water temperature, outside temperature, water levels, lake structure, location, depth of net, etc.)