



DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE
ALASKA DEPT. OF FISH AND GAME

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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PROJECT TIMEFRAME

2014 - 2016



ADF&G complies with OEO requirements as posted at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=home.oeastatement>

Northway Comprehensive Harvest Assessment

This project updates subsistence harvest assessments for the community of Northway. The study will document subsistence harvest and use of all kinds of resources, map contemporary hunting and fishing areas, and describe sharing of wild foods.

Project Background

The National Park Service has been updating harvest assessments for communities near the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Several communities in the Copper Basin have been surveyed, including Chistochina, Copper Center, Slana, Mentasta Lake, and Mentasta Pass. With approval from the Northway Village Council, the same study is being conducted in Northway. The surveys document Northway's 2014 subsistence harvest and sharing of wild foods and other resources. The report will also include residents' assessments of changes over time and documentation of the challenges that subsistence users face. The National Park Service is providing funding to ADF&G Division of Subsistence for this cooperative project.

The Division of Subsistence is a research arm of ADF&G that studies and documents subsistence harvest and use in Alaska. Participation in our surveys is always voluntary, and the personal and household information we collect is strictly confidential. State and federal managers, including the Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game and the Federal Subsistence Board, need accurate information to meet their responsibilities for fish and wildlife management. The reports that result from this research are also helpful for local governments in project planning and proposal development.

Northway Projects Overview

There are 2 subsistence-related projects in Northway:

1. This ADF&G harvest assessment that will invite all households to participate in comprehensive harvest surveys. The study will also include in-depth interviews with selected key respondents about their subsistence experiences; and
2. An "Environmental Survey," also approved by the Northway Village Council, to test for contamination in traditional foods. This project is being funded by the U.S. Army Garrison Ft. Wainwright, and it will be conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this summer.

These are two different projects and the Northway Village Council is closely involved with both. At the end of each ADF&G harvest survey, a handout about the environmental survey will be provided. The handout will also be left with households that decline the survey and with households where we were unable to talk to a head of household. ADF&G will document all kinds of concerns and observations during the harvest surveys and interviews. Comments about types and locations of environmental contamination will help U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service environmental contaminants biologist Angela Matz develop a sampling plan for testing fish and other foods.



Moose skin drying

Description of Work

Division of Subsistence staff will work with locally-hired research assistants to conduct comprehensive harvest surveys in Northway from February 3–9, 2015. All households will be invited to participate in surveys that document the harvest and use of all kinds of resources, from berries to whitefish. Names are never associated with the information on the survey. To thank respondents, we will draw the names of 4 participating households to win credit at Naabia Niign.

We will also conduct interviews with people who have been hunting and fishing for a long time. That information, also anonymous, will help us do a better job of describing subsistence in Northway—how wild resources and harvest patterns have changed over time, traditional and modern hunting and fishing methods, and the values associated with wild foods.

Final results will be summarized in a report provided to the community and will also be included in the online Community Subsistence Information System (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sb/CSIS>). The publicly-available report and data will not disclose any personal or household information.

Research about Northway not yet published

In the early to mid-2000s, the Division of Subsistence participated in an important project led by Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge Liaison Connie Friend. The project focused on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of nonsalmon fish in several upper Tanana communities. Elders requested documentation of nonsalmon TEK because of their concerns that knowledge was being lost. The Division added another component to that project: a harvest survey of land mammals and fish, including mapping the areas used by upper Tanana residents for hunting and fishing. Unfortunately, the report was never published, due to employee turnover and funding restrictions. We know the importance of the information and regret the delay in finishing the project. We expect to use much of the traditional knowledge about nonsalmon fishes (especially humpback whitefish) in the final report for this project.

Project Timeline

October 2014 - Northway Village Council project approval

February 2015 - Conduct household surveys

Fall 2015 - Community review of study findings

Summer 2016 - Community review of draft report

Winter 2016 - Final report published and sent to Northway Village Council

Winter 2016 - Final summary sent to all Northway Residents



Fish and fish eggs drying