

Georgetown Tribal Council

E-Newsletter



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August 2013; Issue I



Kate on the Kenai River with her pal Duncan

GEORGETOWN

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add to the distribution list, just have them send me an e-mail.

A bit about me: I am the IGAP Coordinator for the Native Village of Georgetown. I am responsible for keeping our tribal members informed and educated on these issues, and that will be my main priority with this publication, although it is my hope is to reach a wider audience in the region as well.

I hope you're all having a great summer, and I look forward to getting your feedback about our new publication!

Welcome to our first Issue of Georgetown's E-newsletter: A note from the Editor

The Georgetown E-newsletter is focused on environmental news affecting the middle Kuskokwim region. It will be distributed on a bi-monthly basis. It is our hope to keep everyone connected and informed of news and events that concern our environment.

At Georgetown, we believe that *we are all responsible for our environment and we are entrusted with its preservation so that our children and grandchildren can benefit in the same way we have.*

Part of that responsibility involves staying informed and connected with the current issues. The overall goal of the newsletter will be to address five main areas of environmental topics/issues:

Water Quality,
Climate Change,
Fisheries & subsistence,
Mining &
Regional environmental info.

If you ever have information to share regarding these topics, please let me know using the contact information following this note.

As with any newsletter, we will try to include some fun facts and stories so keep your eye out for those as well. If you know of someone who does not have access to the internet, but would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, please let me know and I will distribute it via regular mail as needed. By the same token, if you have someone you would like to

Visiting Georgetown

Collecting Baseline Water Quality Data



This June, Will and Kate with GTC traveled to Georgetown to collect the first of two annual trips worth of baseline water quality data. This is a brief summary of what they found.

So first of all, what is GTC testing for? GTC has been collecting water quality data since 2008 in order to establish baseline data for the Kuskokwim and George Rivers. With impending development in the area, it is important to know what the quality of the water is and has been, so that if anything should change, this data can help document that. The goal would then be to identify the cause of such changes.

How is data collected?

Using a YSI 556 meter, they collect water quality data for parameters including pH, DO, conductivity, temperature, and ORP for each of the monitoring wells. For further description on these parameters and what they can mean for a water source, please visit GTC's website (www.georgetowntc.com)

Water samples are also collected to send in to a laboratory in Anchorage for further testing, including total metals, total coliform, and other organic pollutants.

Testing and sampling are done at both monitoring wells in Georgetown and in the George River and Kuskokwim River.

Both of these rivers are vital habitat for both resident and anadromous fish, including but not limited to pike, sheefish, and salmon.

Please see Table 1 below for the results from GTC field testing in June 2013. All of the results were within optimal range, and nothing was seen that varied with significance from previous years.

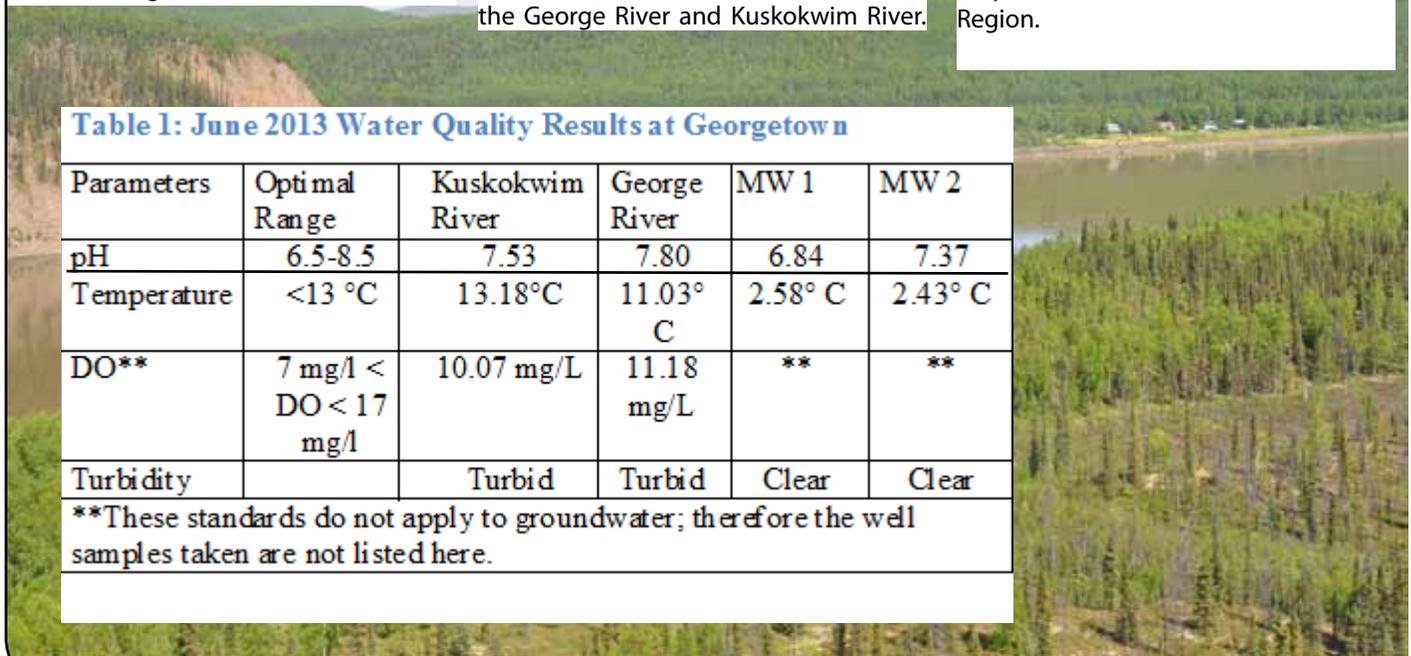
Stay tuned in the next issue for results from GTC's August field visit.

We will also continue to look into what the results have been over time since data collection began in 2008, and what they mean for the middle Kuskokwim Region.

Table 1: June 2013 Water Quality Results at Georgetown

Parameters	Optimal Range	Kuskokwim River	George River	MW 1	MW 2
pH	6.5-8.5	7.53	7.80	6.84	7.37
Temperature	<13 °C	13.18°C	11.03° C	2.58° C	2.43° C
DO**	7 mg/l < DO < 17 mg/l	10.07 mg/L	11.18 mg/L	**	**
Turbidity		Turbid	Turbid	Clear	Clear

**These standards do not apply to groundwater; therefore the well samples taken are not listed here.



Food For Thought: Fireweed

Although blueberries are not quite in season, salmon berries are...and let's not forget our flowerly friend Fireweed. It's everywhere in Alaska, and not just for looks!

Fireweed Jelly Recipe

8 cups fireweed blossoms (no stems)

1/4 cup lemon juice

4 1/2 cups water

2 pkgs Sure-Jell

5 cups sugar

Pick wash and measure fireweed blossoms. Add lemon juice and water. Boil 10 minutes and strain. Take the strained juice and heat to lukewarm. Add Sure-Jell and bring to boil. Add sugar and bring to full boil. Boil hard for 1 minute. Pour into hot clean jars and seal. Process in boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

alaskaoutdoorjournal.com



Photo credit: Will Hartman



Looking Forward to Our Next Issue: Berries!

Where did you pick berries this year?

What did you do with your harvest?

Any favorite recipes?

Did anything exciting happen on your adventure?

Contact Kate at kate.schaberg@georgetowntc.com to share your ideas, stories and pictures to include in the next issue of GTC's E-newsletter!

Close Encounters With Brown Bears: Grizzly or Not?

By: Kate Schaberg



Since moving to Alaska a few years ago, I have had several “encounters” with bears. There was the huffing outside of our tent on the Aniak, leading me to shine my headlamp straight into a pair of eyes looking back at me: ultimately ending in a sleepless night. There have been the random spottings of paw prints bigger than my head. And then this year, getting a bit more “up close and personal” with a black bear on my doorstep.

I must say that my feelings about bears has changed multiple times now from fear to misunderstanding to respect and then maybe a bit back to fear again.

Last year, I headed to the Kisaralik for a float trip and was warned by many to look out for brown bears...at that time, my feeling toward the creature was definitely one of fear. Several bear spottings there left me with quite a sampling of photographs and maybe a new perspec-

tive on bears. Why? Because I didn't get attacked! It wasn't even close....they were more scared of me than I was of them.

It was nice to just simply watch them from a safe distance and observe them in their natural habitat. I gained a certain amount of quiet respect for this potentially misunderstood species.

Fast forward to two weekends ago on the Kenai River. Ten minutes of a bear huffing at my husband outside of our tent, followed by roaring bears within 100 feet of us, while fighting over fish (think National Geographic video clip of bears fighting) and I think maybe some of that fear has been returned.

Again, I was not eaten...but I think it's safe to say that my feeling about bears can best be described as a respectful fear. I respect their space, I respect their lives, I would love to watch them from



afar..but I must admit, they scare me a little bit. Just because...well I guess we all fear the unknown a little bit, and I'll be the first to admit I know very little about this species... and come on., you have to admit: they have giant claws.

So I guess now is as good of a time as any to start my education...Grizzly or Not? If we're talking about the personality - I'd say it depends on the kind of experience you've had with them. Personally, I think not.

If we're talking science - turns out the way to tell is by where they are located and what the bear eats. Brown bears are located in coastal areas and have a much larger amount of animal protein in their diet from fish. Grizzly bears are located inland and rely more on berries and insects, supplementing with fish. In comparison, the grizzly is considerably smaller than the coastal brown bear.

Bear Safety: ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.main>

Bears are curious, intelligent & potentially dangerous animals, but undue fear of bears can endanger both bears and people. Most bears tend to avoid people. Keep in Mind:

Bears don't like Surprises! Make your presence known.

Don't crowd bears! Give them their personal space.

Bears are hungry! Cook away from your tent. Store your food away from the campsite. Keep a clean camp. Don't feed bears.

Close encounters: identify yourself- talk to the bear and wave your arms. Hold your ground, and don't run. If it makes contact - play dead or fight back.



What is Climate Change? How is it Impacting AK?

This summer has been pretty warm by Alaska standards. The word around town is that we broke the record of most number of consecutive days above 70 degrees in Anchorage. Should we blame (or thank, depending on your perspective) climate change?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), our earth is warming. They say that Earth's average temperature has risen by 1.4°F over the past century and is projected to continue rising. Climate change is the term that recognizes this shift.

This seems like then that the answer to our question would be simple: yes, we can blame climate change. But there is another key factor to consider when answering this question: is it a long term shift?

Climate change, as defined by EPA, is any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an **extended period of time**. In other words, climate change includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among others, that occur over several decades or longer.

(www.epa.gov/climatechange.glossary.html)

So I guess if we are just looking at this one summer's



temperatures...then we can't really be sure. But let's look at something a bit more telling: According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Arctic sea ice extent in 2012 was the lowest since satellite records began in 1979, decreasing by more than half.

When there is less ice, there is more open water, right? And when there is more open water, the ocean can absorb solar energy at higher amounts, which leads to an increased warming of the ocean (taking us back to where we started: less ice).

This vicious cycle has led to a wide range of impacts in Alaska, including:

- melting glaciers, rising sea levels and flooding coast communities.
- thawing permafrost, in-

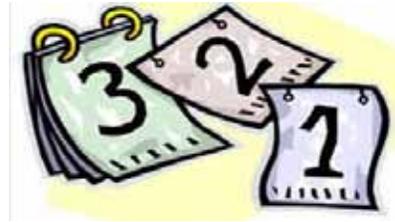
creased storm severity and related infrastructure damage.

- loss of the subsistence way of life as animal habitat and migration patterns shift and hunting and fishing conditions become more dangerous.
- forest fires and insect infestations increasing in frequency and intensity.

(www.climatechange.alaska.gov/cc-ak.htm)

What changes have you noticed where you live? How has it impacted your day to day activities? Share your responses for our next issue, and consider joining LEO (Local Environmental Observer) to document your observations along with other organizations in Alaska.

<http://www.anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/leo/>



Calendar of Events

August 10: Anchorage

9TH Annual Alaska Renewable Energy Fair will be held from 11am to 9pm on the downtown Parkstrip. www.REalaska.org or call (907) 929-7770.

August 20: Online

ACCAP Climate Webinar Aug 20, 2013 at 10 aM

Pollinator Attraction: How Do Non-Native Plants Change Pollination of Berry Plants Across Alaska? Christa Mulder & Katie Spellman

August 20-22: Anchorage

7 Generations Training, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Anchorage, AK. Contact Oxenia O'Domin, 907-729-3492, orodomin@anthc.org

August 24: Chugiak

Georgetown Tribal Council Annual Meeting in Chugiak, AK. Contact Will at 907-274-2195 for more information, we look forward to seeing you there!

August 27 @ 1 PM: Bethel

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group post season strategy meeting in Bethel, available via teleconference at 1-800-315-6338, password 58756#. Share your ideas!

Sep 10, 2013 at 10 AM: Online

ACCAP Climate Webinar

Community-Based Surveys Inform Climate Change Adaptation in Rural and Frontier Communities in Alaska David Driscoll

September 11-13: Anchorage

Sustainable Solid Waste Management (SSWM) Training. Contact www.zendergroup.org/sw.html or call 907-277-2111.

September 16-18: Anchorage

NPETE Grants Management Training, Contact Sara Grosse 907-771-9020 ext. 304 Email sgrosse@maine.rr.com

Oct. 2-3: Bethel

Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council to Meet

www.georgetowntc.com/Environmental.html

<http://gtcenvironmental.blogspot.com>



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