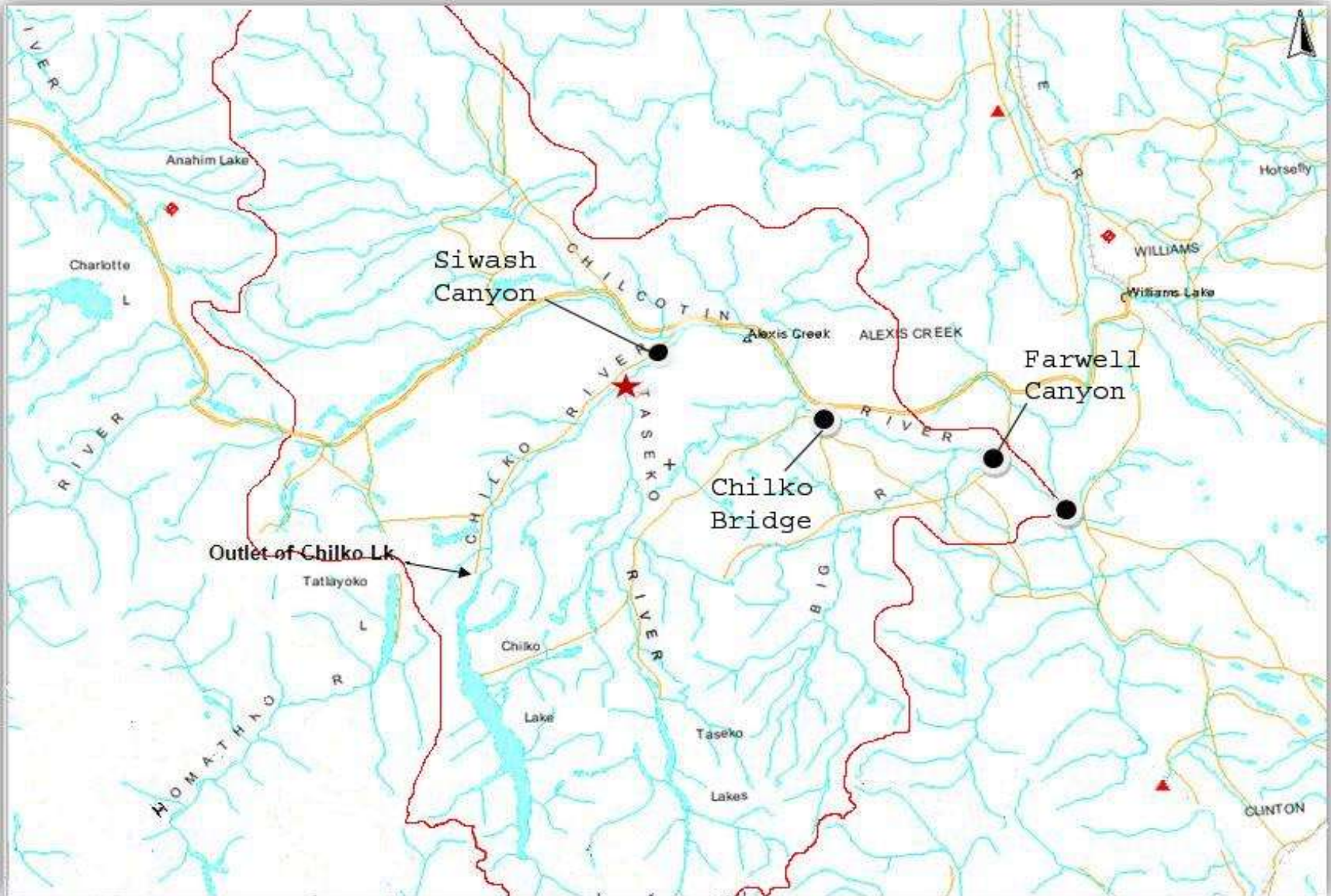


A photograph of a person fishing from a rocky cliffside into the ocean. The person is standing on a ledge, holding a long pole with a net at the end, and is in the process of casting or retrieving the net. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the rocks are dark and jagged. The background shows the ocean extending to the horizon.

TSILHQOT' IN National Government 2010 PICFI Program

- Setting and Challenges
- Pre-fishery Planning
- 2010 Fishery Activities
- What we Learned
 - *What worked well*
 - *Barriers / challenges encountered*
- Where We go from here?
 - *PICFI 1 (2011-12)*
 - *PICFI 2, 3, 4...*

Chilcotin River Watershed



Chilcotin River Watershed: Setting and Challenges

- Major Tributary system of the Fraser River
- Sockeye spawning concentrated primarily in the upper Chilko River drainage
 - *in Chilko Lk., and;*
 - *in Chilko River directly downstream of Chilko Lk.*
- Commercial (PICFI) fishing opportunities in the Chilcotin R. system are limited by three main factors:
 1. *fast flows and large substrates over much of the lower section*
 2. *current conservation objectives around Taseko sockeye stock, and*
 3. *poor road access, steep banks and rugged terrain,*

Rugged Terrain and Swift Water



Pre-fishery Preparations

- Early season scouting and discussions identified Chilko Lk. outlet as most suitable site for a seine fishery that could provide greater production than traditional dip netting practices;
- As fishery window approached, further discussions with Xeni Gwet'in Band and local interest groups revealed apprehension &/or opposition to fishing at that site.
- PLAN B - other seine sites, dip netting, other...
- Rented warehouse for housing totes, two ice machines, and other equipment, including forklift;
- Rented Flat-deck Truck and Gooseneck Trailer;

Outlet of Chilko Lake



Chilko Lk Outlet:

Traditional Fishing Site for Xeni Gwet'in & Provincial Park



Warehouses



Gooseneck Trailer (12 tote capacity)



2010 Fishery Activities

- Dip Netting at Four sites downstream of Taseko confluence (Farwell, Chilco Br. Siwash, Bull Canyon)
 - 326 fish (in very good condition) (1-3 dip nets on each of 6 days);
 - All fish killed, bled and placed in storage slurry immediately - ensuring highest quality product
 - One shipment of 167 fish sent to Siska plant, then flash frozen (fillets, smoked (hot and cold) and candied pieces produced at Oceanmaster Foods, Maple Ridge)
- Identified strong demand for fresh and frozen local sockeye sales.
- Remaining fish sold through Roadside Fresh Fish Sales or given to community members - sold out in three hours each time

2010 Fishery Activities

- Conducted overflight of Chilko and Chilcotin rivers from Taseko River to confluence with Fraser scouting for additional potential seine sites and access points - 3 identified
- Attempted jet-boat supported seining on Chilcotin R. at Chilco Bridge
 - Poor results (no fish captured) due to:
 - Large boulders,
 - Fast flows
 - Timing (late in the run)
 - Inexperience with gear and deployment techniques - more testing required

2010 Post-Fishery Activities

- Secured exclusive supplier status with the local Grower's Co-operative - product currently placed
- Sold 75 pounds of fillets for New Year's Eve gala.
- Hosted CFE workshop attended by ONA, Siska, UFFCA, and DFO
- Currently working with Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development to prepare Concept Paper and investigate funding opportunities for developing local processing and/or blast freezing capacity
- LESSONS

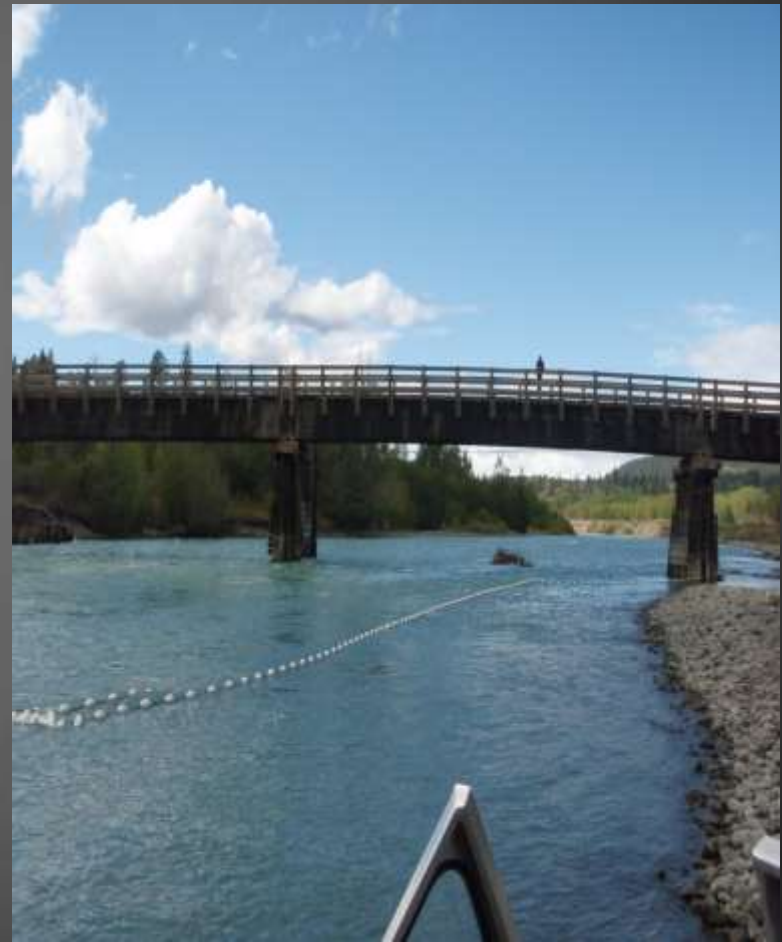
Condition of Sockeye in the Watershed



Farwell Canyon Dip Netting Site



Chilko Bridge Seining Day



Roadside Vending Station



What We Learned

WHAT WORKED WELL

KEY FOR THE TSILHQOT'IN: THE CONSISTENT, LARGE RUN SIZE, ON WHICH A SUSTAINABLE FISHERY CAN BE DEVELOPED

1. *This year operated a selective re: location and gear type ensuring that weak sockeye stocks are avoided and by-catch mortalities are prevented;*
2. *UFFCA involvement - a strong coordinating force helping each group to meet objectives of the fishery and to open markets and promote product sales through the internet*
3. *DFO role in the fishery has been concerted, focused and very supportive*
4. *Collaboration with other groups such as SISKA (fish plant manager) worked well to facilitate processing of our fish and marketing it*

What We Learned

WHAT WORKED WELL

- 5. Identified numerous opportunities for improvement for this coming year with respect to fishery gear and procedural efficiencies;*
- 6. Identified a local, year-round retail market (Grower's Coop) for fillets, smoked and candied salmon*
- 7. Secured exclusive supplier status with local retail Grower's Co-op outlet*
- 8. Continuing efforts to build business relationships with mid-Fraser and Okanagan First Nations groups to identify and open specialty markets outside of Williams Lake*

What We Learned

Challenges / Barriers

- 1. Hydrological Conditions of river system and access points to the river are very limited;*
- 2. Missed opportunities for operating fishery during peak run due to*
 - Chilcotin forest fires created unsafe and unhealthy conditions & restricted access,*
 - Fatality (non-PICFI related) at dip-net fishing site*
 - Lack of acceptance by some for planned seine fishery because of potential effects to traditional fishing sites, culture, the resources?);*
- 3. Ran out of time to test alternate beach seine sites on the lower Chilcotin*

What We Learned

Challenges / Barriers cont'd

- 4. Logistical inefficiencies (limited production) exist with dip netting at larger scale*
- 5. Lack of good physical access to river banks*
- 6. Not owning a jet boat presents logistical and economic restrictions for operating a seine fishery*
- 7. Limited Taseko stock data forces a conservative approach to timing the fishery anywhere downstream - missed opportunity*
- 8. Remoteness of watershed in relation to existing processing facilities in the province points to need for a local processing and/or blast freezing plants*

Where do we go from Here

Phase I (2011-12)

- Conduct one-day test seine at outlet of Chilko Lk. with participation of concerned community members to demonstrate logistics and impact levels
- Secure agreements with individual Tsilhqot'in Bands or private land owners for utilizing preferred fishing sites well ahead of next year's fishery;
- Investigate the opportunities that would allow for development of a locally-owned processing plant and/or blast freezing and storage plant;
- Conduct an economic analysis of commercial harvests at different levels to support business plan for developing a local processing plant

Where do we go from Here

- Given logistical inefficiencies with dip netting, develop alternative commercial models utilizing numerous small-scale fish-buying station licenses
- Pursue funding to study Taseko River stocks, in particular, the timing of the sockeye spawning migration
- Identify suitable sites for employing alternate gear types / techniques (e.g. weirs or fish wheels or...) for commercial-scale harvest;
- Work with Interior Health to allow for fresh fish sales at Farmer's Market (~3 markets / year)
- Prepare for fresh sales through advertising and pre-booking to improve fresh sales efficiencies.

Where do we go from Here

Phase II Program for PICFI...

1. Extension of the demonstration fishery program beyond 2012. TNG conducted its first demo fishery this year - further testing needed to iron out logistical wrinkles is.
2. Modify the scope of the program to include eligible costs such as:
 - Infrastructure development (e.g. construction and upgrade of river access roads and landing sites)
 - Purchase or lease of processing and freezing facilities
3. Continue with Business Planning initiative, including identifying markets outside BC., and investigation of opportunities for:
 - » other fisheries in the Chilcotin(trout),
 - » other revenue-generating uses for processing and/or freezer plants (wild meat or beef)
 - » marketing and selling roe and head and guts