

Natural Resource Internship Program 2004 Annual Report for Study 04-309

The Kuskokwim Native Association and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have offered fisheries internships to about 15 high school students a year since 1999. The purpose of the program is to encourage community involvement in Kuskokwim River fisheries management through engaging youth (ages 14-19) in operational monitoring and research projects. The program is a one to two week summer internship that takes place at fisheries research camps. Interns gain fisheries field work experience by counting salmon passage through weirs, sampling salmon for age-sex-length analysis, collecting salmon fin tissue for genetic analysis, recording stream physical conditions, and living in remote camp environments. Interns also learn fisheries research, management, and ecological concepts through a curriculum of readings and activities that teach through a blend of traditional ecological knowledge and western science. Seven high school interns have been later hired by either the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or Kuskokwim Native Association as fisheries technicians. In 2004, we had 20 interns that were from seven villages. This has been an excellent opportunity for communities to participate in fisheries research and for students to explore career opportunities in the natural resources field.

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