

# INDIGENIZING SALMON SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT: LEARNING FROM YUP'IK AND ATHABASCAN PERSPECTIVES & EXPERIENCES

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Wisdom from...Stanley Hoffman Sr., Robert Lekander, Ana Hoffman, Stanley Hoffman Jr., Avery Hoffman, Mary Peltola, Matthew Kapsner, Darrell Garrison, Ruth Garrison, Connie Sankwich, Elizabeth Hoffman, Elias Venes, Henry Kohl, Evon Waska, Aaron Moses, Elizabeth Lindley , Tad Lindley, Elijah Lindley, Nancy Simeon-Morgan, Betty Simeon, Megan Leary, Okalena Morgan, David David, Nicholas David, Agnes David, Pauline Egrass, Jonathan Egrass, Naomi Norback, Helen Evan, Nicholas Snow, Arnold Andrews, Dara Whitworth, Kevin Whitworth and others who respectfully declined to be acknowledged by name.

# ISM TEAM

**Team:** **Jessica Black** (Gwich'in) PI, UAF; **Courtney Carothers**, UAF; **Rachel Donkersloot**, Coastal Cultures Research; **Danielle Ringer**, UAF; **Janessa Esquible** (Ojibwe), UAF; **Brooke Woods** (Koyukon Athabascan), UAF, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; **Jonathan Samuelson** (Yup'ik, Dena'), Native Village of Georgetown, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; **AlexAnna Salmon** (Yup'ik), Iguigig Village Council; **Dehrich Schmidt-Chya** (Sugpiaq), Alutiiq Museum; **Carrie Stevens**, UAF

**Advisors & Partners:** **Liz La quen náay Medicine-Crow** (Haida, Tlingit; First Alaskans Institute), **Barbara 'Wáahlaal Gidáak Blake** (Haida, Tlingit, Ahtna; First Alaskans Institute); **Wilson Justin** (Ahtna; Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium); **Adrienne Christensen** (Aleut; Port Heiden), **Freddie Christiansen** (Sugpiaq; Old Harbor Native Corporation), **Danielle Lowrey** (Yup'ik; Orutsarmiut Traditional Native Council), Karen Linnell (Naltsiine/Was'ineidi; Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission), **Liza Mack** (Unangax̂ Aleut International Association)

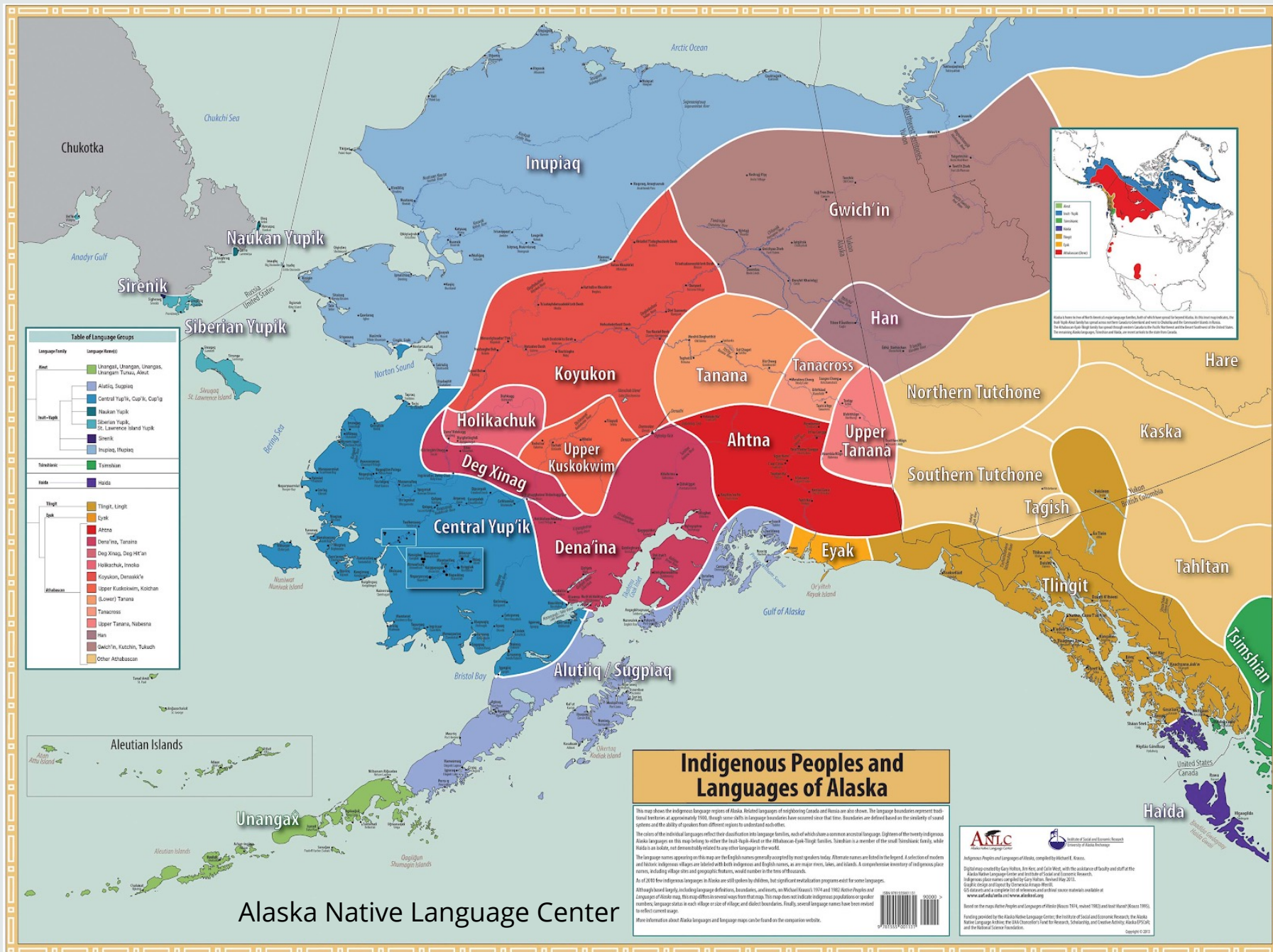


# Project Goal

- Document the breadth and depth of Indigenous values, knowledge, and governance systems connected to salmon across Alaska, and to use this wisdom to improve current salmon science & management processes for all.



Taken by Janessa as part of ONC Fisheries Program



Alaska Native Language Center

# Kuskokwim Region



Taken by Danielle Lowrey



Taken by Janessa Esquible

# Methodology

- Indigenous-led
- Indigenous approaches
- Circle dialogues
- Multigenerational interviews
- Semi-directed interviews



ISM Circle Dialogue in Bethel, Alaska in 2018

# Analysis

- Qualitative data analysis
  - Transcribe
  - Code- grounded theory
- Reflection, conversation and deep listening



JE: I see okay. Next question is if you feel like your val- Yup'ik values, knowledge, wisdom that you learned growing up. Is that reflected in Fisheries today?

AM: No its definitely not. It feels like more of a commercial fishery now and not an experience cause fishing is more, people aren't really mad that they aren't catching fish they are, a lot of it is doing to the experience of fishing. It's not they can get fish at any time but telling people you cant fish really hurts knowing that you can't do something that you've always done and so and Yup'ik people as a whole are trying to constantly be busy so. Not for weeks on end not doing anything really, really, messes up. Messes up a lot of people.

16:18 Next question is if you feel like y...

- power
- Subsistence Ways of Life
- Values
- well-being
- Western Management Practices

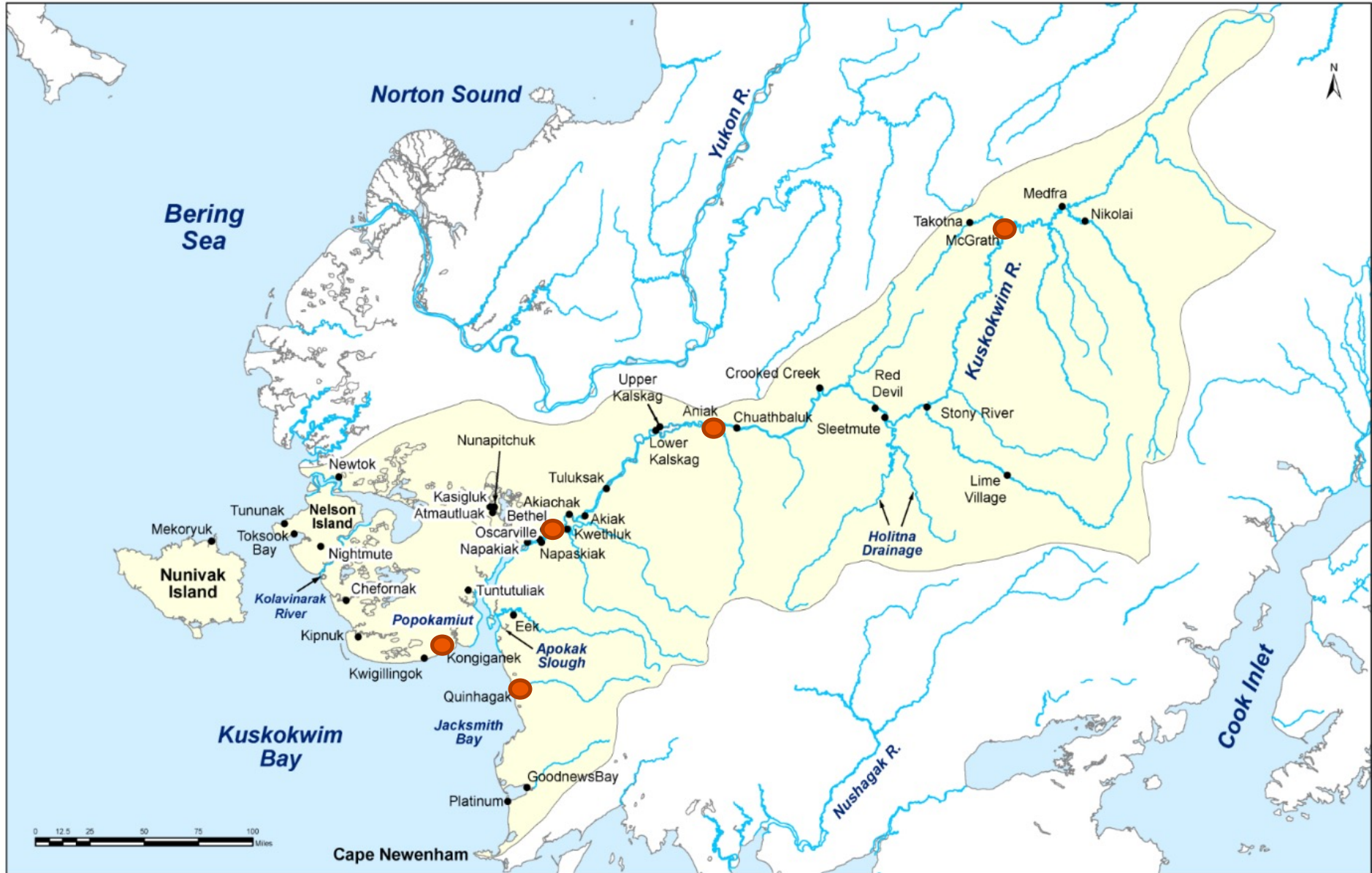


# Project Progress

- 28 Interviews with 46 Indigenous fishers
  - 2019-2022



Multigenerational Fishing Family Interview with Venes Family



Alaska Department of Fish & Game Map

# Key Themes

- Indigenous stewardship practices & values
- Concerns for salmon and communities
- Salmon management
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses

# Indigenous Stewardship Practices & Values

"Our ancestors were always being respectful of the fish they caught and they did not overtake...we're sharing peoples...there's a lot of stories about sharing, especially with those who are less fortunate."  
-Okalena Morgan



"My mom taught me really young how to take care of food on hand right away...seals, furs, salmon, anything...She taught me a lot...now I teach my grandkids even when they're young..."  
- Project Participant



"Without our subsistence way of life, I don't know where we'd be..."  
- Project Participant

# Indigenous Stewardship & Care

- Fishing "terminal areas"
- Release large female salmon
- Salmon processing timing
- Following guidance of Elders or Chiefs



# Concerns for Salmon and Communities

"I didn't get any silvers because these places where I was fishing before are...dying...the water is not clear like it used to be...it's dead waters...the fish I got out of there were sad and weak."

– Project Participant

"I think the world we are living in right now is so busy and so modern and technology, we are forgetting these things, even though these unwritten rules and traditions, they are still very important to our identity..." - Megan Leary

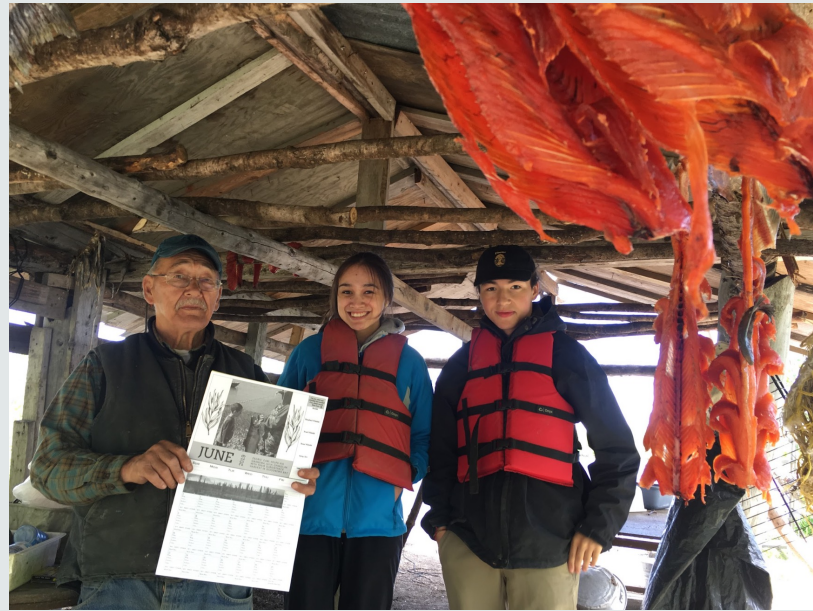
"That's the biggest worry I have...is we aren't teaching anybody nothing, we are not teaching Yup'ik values, we are teaching that we have to fight for fish to be able to fish."

-Aaron Moses

# Salmon Management: What is working?



<https://www.ktoo.org/2017/06/01/fishermen-pulling-empty-nets-kuskokwims-low-water/>



# Salmon Management: What is not working?



Photo Credit: Nancy-Simeon Morgan

“Why are they harassing us? Why are we fighting for subsistence like I heard one of my people saying that, ““Why are we fighting for subsistence?”” That's our right to do that, to get food like for millennia from generation to generation that's our cultural and self identity. I believe we should be given the freedom to be doing what we have always been doing.” – Evon Waska



# Salmon Management: What is not working?

- Unsustainable fisheries management practices
- Poor communication
- Poor relations
- Combat fishing
- Poorly timed restrictions



# Salmon Management: What is not working?



Multigenerational Whitworth & Andrews Family  
Interview

"A lot of fisheries management today is looking at a single species...you need to look at...the weather...climate change...you're looking at the environment and you're looking at the ecosystem. Everything that affects the fish, the people...has to be involved and in place and part of the management."

– Kevin Whitworth

# Salmon, People & the Future



“Oh my. I would love for them to be sitting on the bank in their fish camp with you know getting enough fish for their needs for that year without wasting or overdoing. You know there's, I would love for them to have that, to having their babies running on the beach and fishing on the rest of the week, you know. “I got a whitefish gram”” and they would run it up the bank and show me and then I would have to go down the bank and scale it and cut it up and hang it in the smokehouse. I would love for them to get that experience and the closeness of being together, gathering their food for the winter as a family.” – Betty Simeon

# Next steps

- Sharing this work with fisheries managers and researchers
- Conducting interviews with fisheries managers
- Identifying strategies and solutions for improvement

# Miigwech/Quyana/Tsen'ahn/Thank you!

- Interview participants
- Community partners
- Indigenizing Salmon  
Science & Management  
project team
- Funders