

Trout River Ecology Camp 2005

Participants



Students



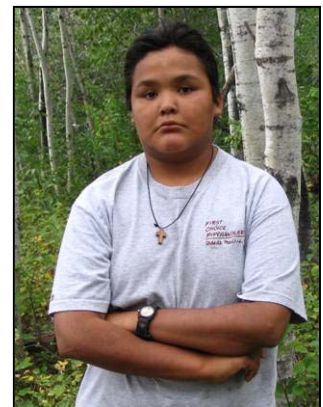
Jordon Nahanni
Age: 13
Fort Simpson



Shawn Bonnetrouge
Age: 16
Fort Providence



Dylan Cazon
Age: 12
Fort Simpson



Mike Kraus
Age: 13
Fort Simpson



Ernie Edda
Age: 15
Fort Simpson

Students



Amanda Duntra
Age: 16
Fort Liard



Rachel Duntra
Age: 15
Fort Liard



Ariel Duntra
Age: 14
Fort Liard



Gracyn Tanche
Age: 16
Fort Simpson



Trish Isaiah
Age: 12
Fort Simpson

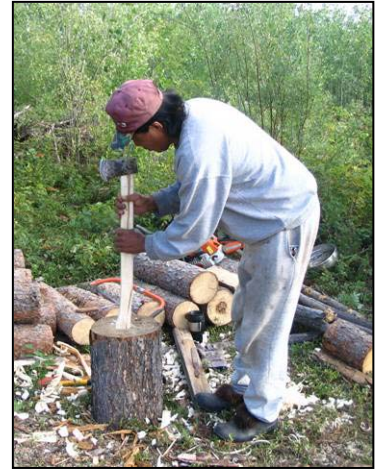
Staff



Elder Ernest Hardisty



Michael Cazon



Angus Sanguez



David Cook



Elder Sandra Edda



Tanya Cazon



Gerald Antoine



Cindy Edda, Judy Tsetso, Lois Lafferty, Ginette Martineau



Danny Allaire

Trout River Area and the Camp





During the last regional wildlife workshop held in October 2004 there was consensus that the youth ecology camp should be held at different locations throughout the Dehcho Region. This would allow communities the chance to host and conduct the ecology camp as well as providing the opportunity for participants to experience different areas of the Dehcho. This year's ecology camp was awarded by a DFN/ENR committee to the Land is Life business owned and operated by Michael and Tanya Cazon from Fort Simpson.

In previous camps a variety of both traditional and scientific teachings were taught. This year's camp focused on more of the traditional aspects of the land. The students learned a lot of new tools that will enable them to become future leaders in their own respective communities. Once again we appreciate all the work the instructors and elders did this year to ensure a most memorable experience by all those who attended.

Traditional Food Preparation

A young bull moose was shot by a harvester the day before camp started. When the students got to the camp they put their personal gear away, then helped prepare the moose meat. The boys set up a drying rack under the guidance of Elder Ernest Hardisty and Gerald Antoine, a fire was maintained under the drying rack for the duration of the camp to ensure the dry meat was smoked properly. The boys also learned how to properly butcher moose meat, skin a beaver, fix ducks and skin a moose head for cooking on an open fire. The girls learned how to make dry meat, dry fish and how to prepare a moose hide.

Boys making a meat drying rack.



Boys learning how to skin and stretch a beaver.

Boys looking on as Ernest demonstrates how to prepare a moose head for cooking.



Traditional Food Preparation

Girls learn how to make dry meat under the guidance of elder Sandra Edda.



Girls learn how to use traditional methods of preparing and stretching a moose hide, all of them eagerly participated.



Girls learn how to prepare fish for cooking and how to make dry fish.

Forestry

The students learned about forest inventory methods and the use of specialized equipment. They measured diameter breast heights (DBH), estimated tree heights with a clinometer, and took tree cores to estimate the age of the trees. Tree age is calculated by counting the annuli of the tree core. Afterwards we discussed the succession of the forest based upon the forest stand characteristics that we measured. On the last of the camp the students brainstormed ideas on how to prevent the loss of biodiversity; some of their ideas were to use solar energy, eat traditional foods and burn wood to heat homes.

Traditional forest ecology aspects were also taught. Students learned which trees were good for firewood, what type of trees were utilized for certain types of tools and how our ancestors utilized the forest for their benefit. The students found it quite interesting and eagerly participated in all of the practical exercises.



Aging trees using a borer.



Forestry



Instructing students on traditional forest practices.

Students using a clinometer for estimating tree height and measuring diameter breast height (DBH) of designated trees.



Navigation & Orienteering

Students learned how to read maps by determining and using coordinates of latitude and longitude on a map. Each student had to find a location on a map using coordinates and define a location with coordinates. Due to time limitations we were unable to offer compass training during the camp.

Students learned how to use a global positioning system (GPS) to navigate around camp using waypoints that they entered themselves. The intention of the course was to show how useful a GPS can be on the land. Unfortunately, inclement weather prevented the opportunity for students to create track logs during boat trips so we were unable to demonstrate some of the more practical applications of the GPS at this years camp.

Students learn how to read coordinates from a map and find locations on the map.



Navigation & Orienteering

Students learned how to use a Global Positioning System (GPS).



Students going for a hike on a trail near camp.

Students learning how to find their direction by how a tree grows in the forest.



Radio Telemetry

Danny taught the students how very high frequency (VHF) and satellite radio collars worked. There were discussions on how and why wildlife researchers use the different types of collars, and on the different methods of live capturing wildlife in order to deploy radio collars on animals. As a practical exercise students used a receiver, and hand-held antennas to locate hidden VHF collars around camp.

21 caribou have been captured within the Dehcho during over the past 2 years, they were collared with satellite/VHF collars. Maps of their daily and seasonal movements were shown to the students who found it quite interesting and each of them participated in the practical exercise.



A student searching with her eyes closed for a VHF collar with the receiver and hand-held antenna.

Two VHF breakaway collars for bison calves, a hand-held "H" antenna and a teardrop design satellite collar for caribou.



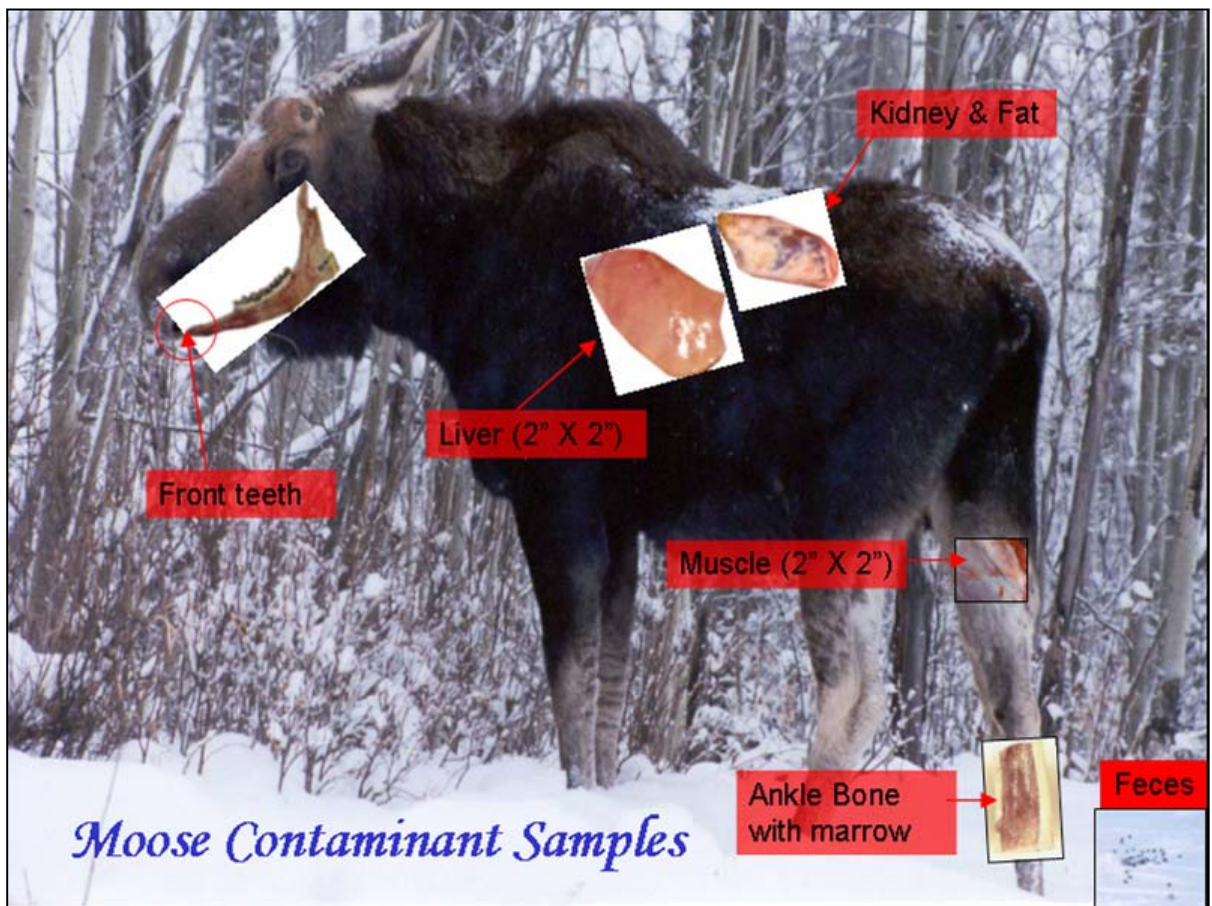
Plant Collecting & Identification

The students were provided with an ENR booklet “Wild and wacky plants of the NWT” which helped with plant identification in addition to the traditional and scientific knowledge passed on by the instructors. Students learned about plants that could be used for certain types of traditional medicines, for example rat root and labrador tea both could be used for colds. Students learned how to identify plants on the land and learned more about the plants they were familiar with already.



Biological Sampling

We discussed the reasons for collecting a variety of biological samples from animals, like what we can learn from a tooth or a kidney. The samples that are collected from an animal depend upon the questions that we want answered. The biological samples that were collected from the moose provided by Angus to ENR were for studying heavy metal contaminants in country foods, specifically moose. Any Dehcho harvesters who are interested in participating in the program need to hand in a complete sample kit for reimbursement from ENR.



Traditional Knowledge

The students were exposed to a variety of traditional activities during the camp. On the first and last days of the camp there were fire feeding ceremonies. The students learned how to traditionally set up a camp and how to erect a teepee out on the land. Michael and Gerald taught the boys how to drum and sing a few songs. The girls learned how to make birch bark baskets under the guidance of elder Sandra Edda. David Cook taught all of the students how to properly navigate a canoe out on the river, they also learned survival techniques like building a proper fire and how to set rabbit snares. The students soon realized the cultural significance of their newly acquired knowledge and were eagerly awaiting the next lesson.

To keep group dynamics flowing the instructors had the students do team building games in the evenings. At the end of every day the elders and instructors would tell stories about the history of the land and how it used to be; the students and camp attendants were each given a turn to share what they learned within the sharing circle.



Traditional Knowledge



Hunting trip up river

The boys went on a hunting trip with Angus, Gerald and Ernest overnight. They managed to shoot a beaver, some ducks and caught a few fish in a net. Unfortunately they didn't bring along a camera to document their experience. The hunting party camped at Redknife river; which was an important historical gathering place for the Dene people. Only the bare necessities were taken. The students learned how to camp under the stars. The guides stopped at cultural sites, raptor nests and fish bearing rivers, along the way feathers were found. Everyone enjoyed the trip.



Trout River Drum Dance

The camp ended in celebration, traditional hand games and a drum dance was held to celebrate a memorable experience by all who attended. The boys learned a few drumming songs during the camp and the girls encouraged them by dancing.



JMR Community Feast

On the last day of the camp a feast was held in the community of Jean Marie River to celebrate the conclusion of another successful ecology camp. The function was well attended by local residents and camp participants. The weather, although quite cool and cloudy, did not dampen their spirits. The elders, supervisors and local residents played an integral role in the ecology camp's success as did the good group of students from throughout the Dehcho region. All students wholeheartedly participated in and became involved with all of the different experiences provided to them during the camp. The 2005 ecology camp was definitely a memorable experience.

This year awards (thermos) were given out to students that showed leadership among their peers - Shaun Bonnetrouge and Gracyn Tanche. Additionally, Dehcho First Nations provided each student with a Dene drummers CD, each elder with a thermos and each instructor with a coffee mug.



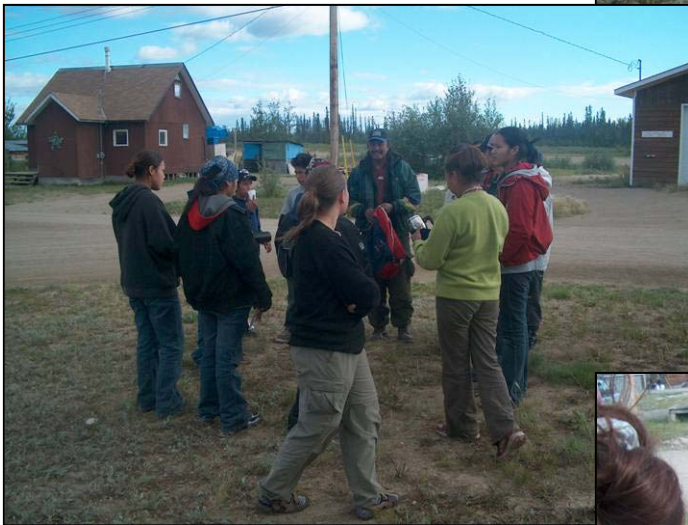
Jean Marie River residents volunteered to help prepare the feast.

The community feast was a lot of fun and a lot of people came out to celebrate the closing of a successful 2005 ecology camp.



JMR Community Feast

Students returning from Trout River Ecology Camp.



Students gathering after the feast to receive their gifts.

Gerald handed out the feathers the boys found on their hunt.



We thank the local residents of Jean Marie River and the following agencies who provided funding because without them the camp would not have been achieved: the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program Government of Canada (CIMP), Dehcho First Nations (DFN), and Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Forest Management, Fire Operations and Wildlife Government of Northwest Territories. We hope this continues to be an annual event in the Dehcho Region, Mahsi Cho.