

Nisutlin River Campsite and Maintenance Program

Final Report



Teslin Tlingit Council

March 2019



Introduction

The Nisutlin River Campsite Development and Maintenance program was created to provide adequate campsite locations along the Nisutlin River for a variety of river users. These designated sites will minimize the impacts of tourism and recreation on wildlife, concentrate use to high water camps which are less vulnerable to erosion and protect the rights of Teslin Tlingit people and their family camps along the river. Although the program could not be finished during the summer 2018, TTC ensures that every project component will be in place at the beginning of summer 2019. This report explains what was accomplished last year, what could have been done differently and what the finished program will look like.

Project Activities

- Completed and collected in April 2018 'public feedback forms' to understand what people in the community thought about the project and what they would like to see happen in the program
- Trip up the Nisutlin River on June 13th to identify campsite locations, site assessment and marking locations for campsite infrastructure
- Hiring of Local contractor to build outhouses
- Purchasing of outhouse materials
- Designing and printing of campsite identification signs, program information signs and visitor feedback cards
- Acquiring drop boxes used for a previous project in Teslin
- Purchasing fuel for jet boat

Meeting program objectives

The early recon trip allowed TTC staff to identify three sites along the river already experiencing a high level of use by river travelers. These sites were chosen based on elevation from high water mark, boat accessibility, site visibility and signs of previous use. Staff also took notes of issues that were highlighted in the public feedback forms like garbage along the banks of the river, burnt tent poles and jet boat traffic.

Hiring a local contractor to build the outhouses allowed TTC to keep money in the community and provide an employment opportunity for someone who needed work. The contractor used recycled timber for the outhouses, lessening the cost construction and also reducing waste. Tent poles were made from previously downed trees and fire rings will be made from old car rims.

By partnering with Yukon Government's Department of Environment, TTC was able to design informational signage that provides river users locations of designated sites, safe camping tips and a background on Teslin Tlingit Council Family camps and how to respect them. YG erected one of the informational signs at portage during the summer of 2018, while the sign going up at

portage will be put up in the early summer of 2019. Campsite identification signs were also finished in 2018 by YG.

A voluntary feedback program was established to gather information about the types and volume of river travelers from year to year, inform future management and assess program success. River travelers are asked to take a visitor feedback card on their trip, which can be acquired from portage site or the TTC Lands and Resources office, and deposited in a drop box at the Teslin Marina.

Variances to Project Goals/Workplan

The Nisutlin River Campsite Development and Maintenance program was intended to be completed in the summer of 2018. There were a number of factors that did not allow this to happen.

1. Contractor issues. Hiring a local contractor took longer than expected and the one who was hired took their time to get started. Only 2/3 outhouses were completed in time to be brought up the river and installed.
2. Jet Boat engine failures. After partially installing the first two outhouses, TTC Game Guardians and the local contractor had to be retrieved from the farthest up river site due to a jet boat engine failure.
3. Low water levels. Once the boat engine was fixed, the river levels had dropped too low and site construction could not go forward.

If TTC were to do this project again:

- Seek out a different local contractor that would start on time and be more reliable
- Hire other labourers from the community to help with construction and installation
- Ensure that work on the campsites starts as early in the summer as possible
- Approach recreational and outdoor business before the summer to try and create program partnerships

Communications

Once the project is underway, TTC will collaborate with organizations in the outdoor recreation sector to advertise the project so that river users know it exists. A pamphlet including a map of the river, photos of the campsites and info about reasoning behind the project will get people interested in the program. It will allow travelers to better plan their trip on the Nisutlin and make their stay along the river more enjoyable. The Enhancement Trust is well recognized as important part in making this program a possibility, and YFWET logo is displayed on the visitor information signs and feedback cards.

Acknowledgments

TTC would like to thank its Game Guardians, Joe Dewhurst, Yukon Government, the Teslin Renewable Resources Council, the Teslin Tlingit Renewable Resources council and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust for its support for making this program a reality.