Rural teachers to attend salmon in-service

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 22, 2011
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Fairbanks, Alaska—Nineteen teachers from rural Alaska will attend an in-service training Sept. 28-Oct. 1 in Fairbanks with salmon as a theme.

The in-service supports a classroom incubation project coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Natural Resource and Youth Development Program. Other in-service co-sponsors include Alaska Sea Grant and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Organizer Peter Stortz, a 4-H natural resource and youth development specialist, said salmon was chosen as a vehicle for a math and science education program because of its economic and cultural value to the communities.

Teachers will learn how to participate in the project and how to use materials to create a yearlong program that integrates watershed monitoring, fisheries, biology, subsistence, management issues, ocean science and climate change. The teachers also will learn about how much seafood they eat, through the examination of isotopes in fingernail clippings and will monitor water quality and fish species along the Chena River.

Stortz said the incubation program grew out of a request in the early 1990s by Yukon River fishermen, who were concerned about declining salmon runs. 4-H developed the fisheries education program for youth in villages impacted most by the decline. The program has grown from the eight original communities to more than 70 communities around the state.

The teachers will represent mostly small Bush communities, such as Akiachak, Chignik Lagoon, Egegik, Elim, Fort Yukon, Igiugig, Kalskag, Koyuk, Kwethluk, Levlock, New Stuyahok, Newhalen, Sand Point, Stebbins, Togiak and Unalaska, as well as the highway communities of Northway, Tetlin and Haines.

This year’s training was supported by a grant from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. Most of the in-service will take place at Wedgewood Resort. For more information, contact Stortz at pjstortz@alaska.edu or 746-9459.

ON THE WEB: www.uaf.edu/ces
NOTE TO EDITORS: Stortz is available by cell phone at 907-354-7194. Most of the workshop is in a classroom setting, but more visual, hands-on activity will include a water quality monitoring session from 9-11:30 a.m. Oct. 1 along the Chena River. Contact Stortz for the location.

DC/10-22-10/0XX-10