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Fairbanks, Alaska—Twenty-one teachers from rural Alaska will attend a salmon-themed in-service Oct. 3-6 in Fairbanks.

The in-service supports a classroom salmon incubation project coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Natural Resource and Youth Development Program. Teachers will learn how to participate in the project and an education program, which integrates scientific inquiry, fisheries and watershed studies, subsistence, ocean science and climate change.

Organizer Peter Stortz, a 4-H natural resource and youth development specialist, said, “We’re using Pacific salmon to teach math and science literacy in a cross-cultural setting.”

Scientists will talk about the salmon life cycle and other ecological concepts underlying the project and returning teachers will talk about their experiences with the program. Participants will learn about biological isotope markers, identifying how much seafood they eat through the examination of their fingernail clippings at a university lab. They will also monitor water quality and fish species in the Chena River.

The fisheries education program was developed in the early 1990s for youth in villages affected most by declining salmon runs. It has grown from the eight original communities to more than 80 communities around the state.

The teachers will represent mostly small rural communities, such as Fort Yukon, Venetie, Huslia, Kaltag, Galena, Russian Mission, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Kotlik, Scammon Bay, St. Mary’s, Stebbins, Twin Hills, Yakutat, Tetlin and Bethel. Participants are also coming from Sitka and Delta Junction.

Other in-service co-sponsors include Alaska Sea Grant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska COSEE, the Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence. This year’s training is supported by a grant from the Yukon River Panel Restoration and Enhancement Fund and the Pacific Salmon Commission. Most of the in-service will take place at the Alpine Lodge. For more information, contact Stortz at pjstortz@alaska.edu or 746-9459.
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 9:45 to 11:45 a.m. Oct. 6 along the Chena River. Contact Stortz for the location.

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