

# Conservation Education for Today and Tomorrow

## *Community Outreach*

The Conservation Genetics Laboratory (CGL) plays a vital role in educating our community about the conservation of our nation's fishery resources. Our commitment to outreach helps the Alaska Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) meet educational objectives and fulfill national goals in 'Communicating and Educating for Conservation'.

Through our outreach efforts we have attempted to foster an appreciation for fisheries and the sound scientific principles used to understand and manage them. Outreach efforts have included: spending a day with young children and parents on a lake or stream, providing genetic laboratory training for senior high school and college students, and actively participating in developing future employees through educational programs such as the Cooperative Research Units and the Student



*Kid's Fishing Day 2002, Portage Valley.*

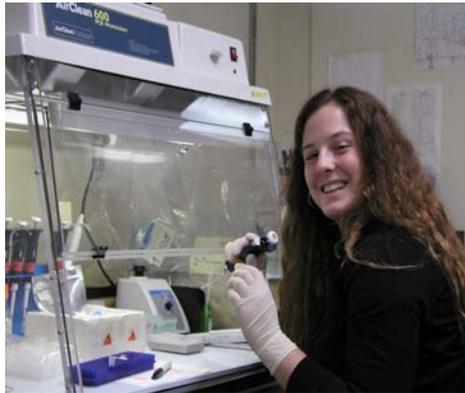


*Smokey Bear, Woodsey Owl and Sammy Salmon at Kid's Fishing Day 2002.*

Career Experience Program (SCEP). Members of the CGL have been major participants in Kid's Fishing Day for over 10 years. This annual public event is a cooperative effort of the U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Service directed at broadening youths' understanding and appreciation for fishery resources. Activities for the day at Willow Pond include puppet shows, bait casting stations, fish printing on T-shirts, hot dog roasts, knot tying, visits from Woodsey Owl, Smokey Bear and Sammy Salmon, and, of course, fishing. What better way to communicate the value of fisheries conservation, and educate children and their parents, than by baiting a hook and fishing in a lake surrounded by the snow capped



*Learning how to fish in Willow Pond at Kid's Fishing Day 2002.*



*Providing opportunities for academic and career advancement: Lynsey Luiten, Kelley Bradley, and Victoria Sheffrey; STEP students working for CGL.*

peaks of Portage Valley?

The CGL has had the privilege of being involved with students from various organizations both inside and outside the Service, including local schools and tribal organizations. Members of the CGL have been actively involved in educating students about conservation genetics in schools in villages around Alaska, including teaching of Advanced Placement Biology courses at local high schools. Over the years, other outreach partners have included: Anchorage



*Ora Schlei with Smokey; SCEP student working for CGL.*

School District Mentorship Program, Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Alaska Anchorage/Fairbanks, Anchorage Pacific University, 4H Extension Unit - Fairbanks, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kluane First Nations-Yukon Territory, Student Conservation Association/DOI Internship Program, Career Awareness Program, and Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Students have always been, and continue to be, an important part of the CGL.

The opportunities provided by the CGL have been valuable educational stepping-stones that have contributed to the career development of a number of students. Three SCEP students have been converted to full-time positions within the Service along with one from the U.S. Geological Survey Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The CGL often employs students from native communities who contribute their local knowledge and experience to our

understanding of Alaskan fisheries. Over the years, students from various villages such as Chalkyitsik, Kaltag and Tanana have made important contributions to many of our genetic projects.

Creating enthusiasm for natural resource management is as beneficial to the community, the Service and Alaskan fisheries as it is to the students involved. The future stewards of our natural resources are created through educating and communicating with the youth of today.



*Lynsey Luiten at DNA analysis station.*

The Alaska Region Conservation Genetics Laboratory was established in 1987 as the first conservation genetics facility in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The large modern facility maintains a staff of around 10 geneticists, biologists, and technicians dedicated to applying conservation genetics to further the mission of the Service.

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