



Sorting invertebrates from a single sample.

Using a standard method to collect invertebrates from stones in the riffle, the community researchers then place samples in trays for sorting. This is a time-consuming step, as each individual insect is picked up with forceps and sorted into ice cube trays.

In time, Unalakleet researchers will document invertebrate distribution and abundance along large stretches of the Unalakleet River. The information will be key to understanding the river's capacity to support productive salmon populations.



Salmon drying on racks in Unalakleet.

For further information about the Unalakleet Project, contact:

Henry Oyoumick
Box 270
Unalakleet, AK 88684
nvu.watershed@starband.net

For information about Coastal Communities for Science, contact:

Bering Sea Field Office
World Wildlife Fund,
406 G Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 279-5504

Michael Smolen: michael.smolen@wwfus.org



WWF *for a living planet*[®]



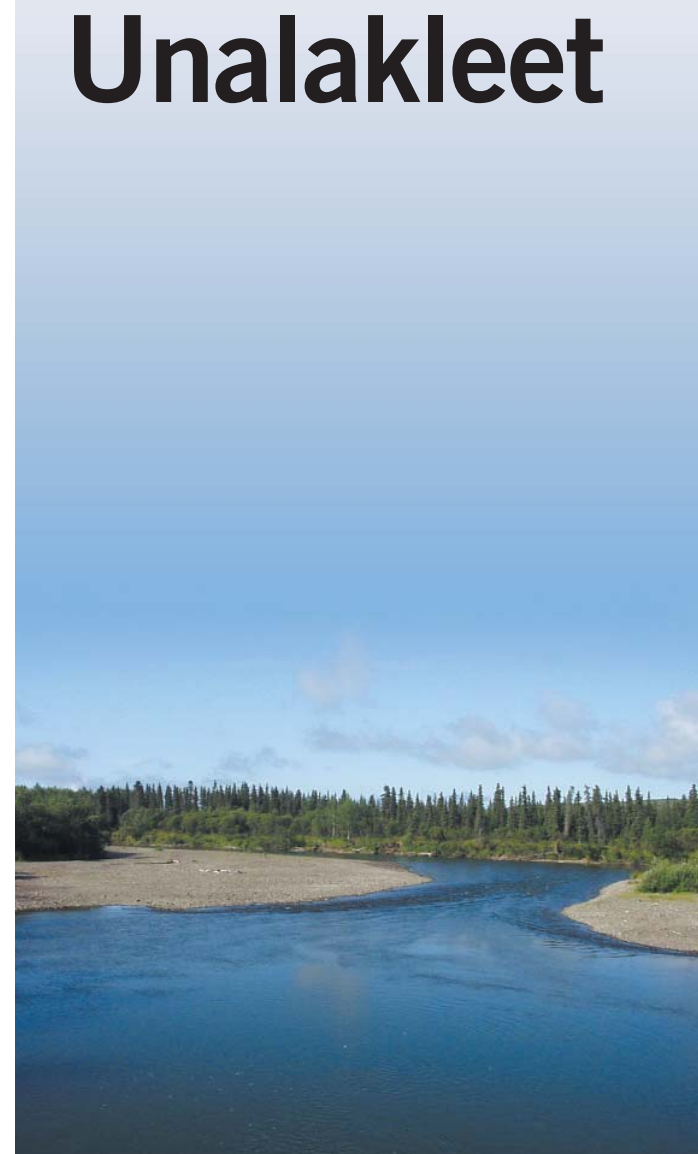
Coastal Communities for Science is supported by a grant from The National Science Foundation (ESI0337236)

Coastal Communities
For Science



Supporting Community-based
Science and Stewardship
In the Bering Sea

Unalakleet



Coastal Communities for Science Unalakleet



Henry Oyoumick, Community Coordinator, sorting invertebrates to determine the amount of potential food for young salmon.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) recognizes the Bering Sea as a globally significant ecoregion for protecting the world's biodiversity. Together with many partners, WWF is working to conserve the long-term viability and health of Bering Sea ecosystems. Coastal communities on both coasts of the Sea play critical roles in observing, managing, and conserving marine resources.

Through WWF's "Coastal Communities for Science" program, communities are partnering with scientists to develop research programs. Communities identify questions of interest to them, and are integrally involved in planning and implementing the research.

To date, four communities in the Bering Sea are key players in "Coastal Communities for Science": Unalakleet, St. George, St. Paul, and Hooper Bay.



Youth determine the amount of oxygen in the water.

The goals of the program are to increase youth participation and community-wide involvement in science. To accomplish the goals, WWF connects a large network of scientists with communities and provides training and equipment to support ongoing community-based science.

Through "Coastal Communities for Science" Unalakleet will assess and monitor the quality of the Unalakleet River – a key habitat for 4 species of salmon – and other creeks that flow into Norton Sound.

Together with researchers, Unalakleet residents will learn techniques in testing water chemistry, gathering data on temperature and flow rates, and assess the diversity and abundance of aquatic invertebrates.

Henry and his team are collecting macro-invertebrates, which are a critical component of the food web upon that young salmon need to feed for survival.

Henry and students collecting invertebrates.



When the sorting is completed, each kind of invertebrate is counted.

A census of stoneflies, caddisflies, and mayflies in the riffle habitats provides important indices of the quality of that portion of the river for fish propagation. Some of the invertebrates are very sensitive to perturbations from natural and human-caused sources.



This is one of many mayfly species found in the Unalakleet River