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GOVERNMENT FUNDS RESEARCH INTO YUKON RIVER WATERSHED

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon’s on-going financial support of an international research project is already yielding scientific and socio-economic benefits, Environment Minister Elaine Taylor announced today.

“The Yukon government is pleased to support this important research into how climate change and water management decisions affect the Yukon River,” Taylor said. “This information is important to Yukon First Nations, resource managers, and anyone interested in our precious environment.”

Yukon government is providing \$353,250 over three years from the Northern Strategy Trust Fund to the Yukon River Inter-tribal Watershed Council, which is dedicated to the protection of the Yukon River watershed. There is also \$160,000 in-kind support being provided by the United States Geological Survey, Yukon and B.C. First Nations, the Water Resources Branch of Environment Yukon and the Yukon River Inter-tribal Watershed Council this fiscal year.

Eight technicians from the Teslin Tlingit Council, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and Trondëk Hwëch’in were trained in water quality testing and conducted their own sampling programs this past spring and summer. One of the main areas of interest is finding out what is happening to the carbon being released by melting permafrost. An intriguing finding from the organic carbon dating of the samples is that some meltwater now draining into Atlin Lake comes from ice sheets 18,000 years old.

Enhancing our awareness and understanding of climate change impacts is part of the Yukon government’s response to climate change.

“The value of the Yukon River as an indicator basin is of growing importance internationally as it is one of the few largely uncontrolled great rivers of North America,” Taylor said. “The information generated by this research will help not just Yukon, but other regions around the world, respond to climate change.”

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