



Festival of Northern Fishing Traditions 2016:

Photo Essay from Zhigansk, Republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Russia, September 2016

Snowchange Discussion Paper #11

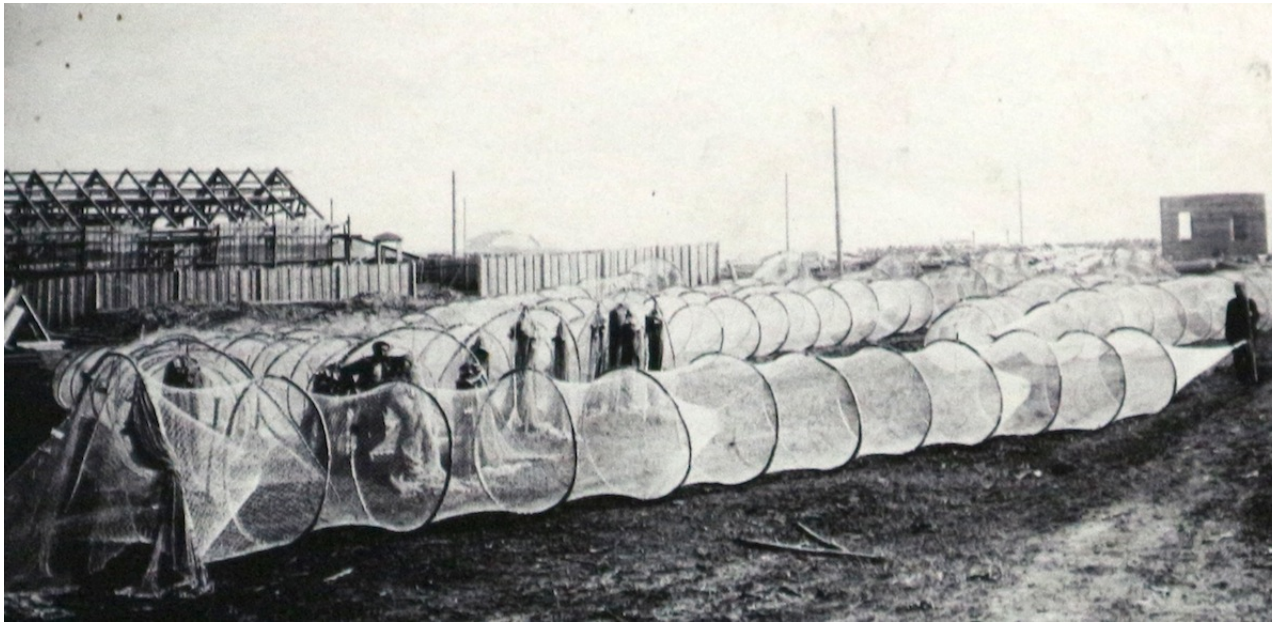
Tero Mustonen, Snowchange Co-op





Lena River, "Mother", as seen by Maria Ivanova, Student of the Zhigansk School. Used with Permission.

1. Festival of Northern Fishing Traditions 2016



The event included an overview of historical Northern fisheries, such as these fish traps from the Laptev Sea in Yakutia. Courtesy of the Sakha Museum of Culture, 2016.

Conceptualized in 2012 by the professional Finnish fisherman Olli Klemola, the Snowchange Festivals of Northern Fishing Traditions are mechanisms by the local and Indigenous communities of the North to highlight their age-old traditional, artisan and small-scale northern fisheries. All photos Snowchange, 2016 unless otherwise stated.



Catches of the Laptev Sea coastal fisheries in 1943. Courtesy of the Sakha Museum of Culture, 2016.

The first Festival was held in Finland in 2014. For the 2016 Festival, Snowchange discussed with various partners the event which was decided to be held on the Lena river at the community of Zhigansk, Republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Siberia, Russia from 1st to 5th September, 2016. This photo essay and Snowchange Discussion Paper explores the event using photos.



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sakha-Yakutia, Mr. Vladimir Vasiliev provided much support and coordination for the event

Zhigansk, located on the Lena river, is the national Evenk Indigenous territory, with around 4500 people. The commercial fishery in the region amounts to around 250 tonnes annually and subsistence catch is 150 tonnes. The community has been established in early 1600s and is historically well-known in Sakha-Yakutia. Ethnically Indigenous Evenk, as well as Sakha, Russian and other groups live in the community.



Participants had a possibility to admire the Sakha culture on a visit to the Ysyakh Festival Grounds in Yakutsk.



The main partners in the Festival included:

- Northern Forum
- Community and Region of Zhigansk
- Rospuutto Group, Finland
- ELOKA, National Snow and Ice Data Center, USA
- Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Local Sakha Chapter
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sakha-Yakutia, Russia

- Department of Biological Resources, Sakha-Yakutia, Russia
- Local companies, Indigenous communities, fishing families



Ysyakh Festival Grounds in Yakutsk.

We are thankful to all of these partners and co-organisers. The event was a great success. Over 60 delegates took part across Eastern Siberia, USA, the UK, Sámi, Finnish, and other fishing communities.



Cargo Ships on Lena.

The outcomes of the Festival included:

1. Second major Festival of Northern Fishing Festival, including roundtables and competitions in various traditional skills and fisheries.
2. Establishment of Snowchange Network of Northern Traditional Fisheries of Eurasia as the backbone of the future work in the region in this theme.

3. Framework Agreement between the Department of Biological Resources, Sakha-Yakutia, Russia and Snowchange Cooperative to develop new steps of management, monitoring and traditional knowledge in the Zhigansk region for water and fish health.
4. Decision to hold the third Festival of Northern Fishing Traditions in Khanty-Mansia, Siberia in 2018.



Church of Zhigansk

2. Festival Events



The Festival was opened with the flags of all teams flying high.



The first event was a seining competition on Lena, with all 14 teams, including 56 participants, crossing the river.



Boris, a professional fisherman from Zhigansk, commanded the Evenk-Finnish team.



Nets are being loaded to the river boats.



Seining on Lena.



Evenk-Chukchi-US team "Amerika" during the seining event.



Day 1 concluded with the drift net harvest, resulting in omul whitefish for the winners.



Views from Day 2 at the Festival Grounds



Traditional line fishing on Lena for sturgeon.



Arriving to Day 2 in a fleet of participants.



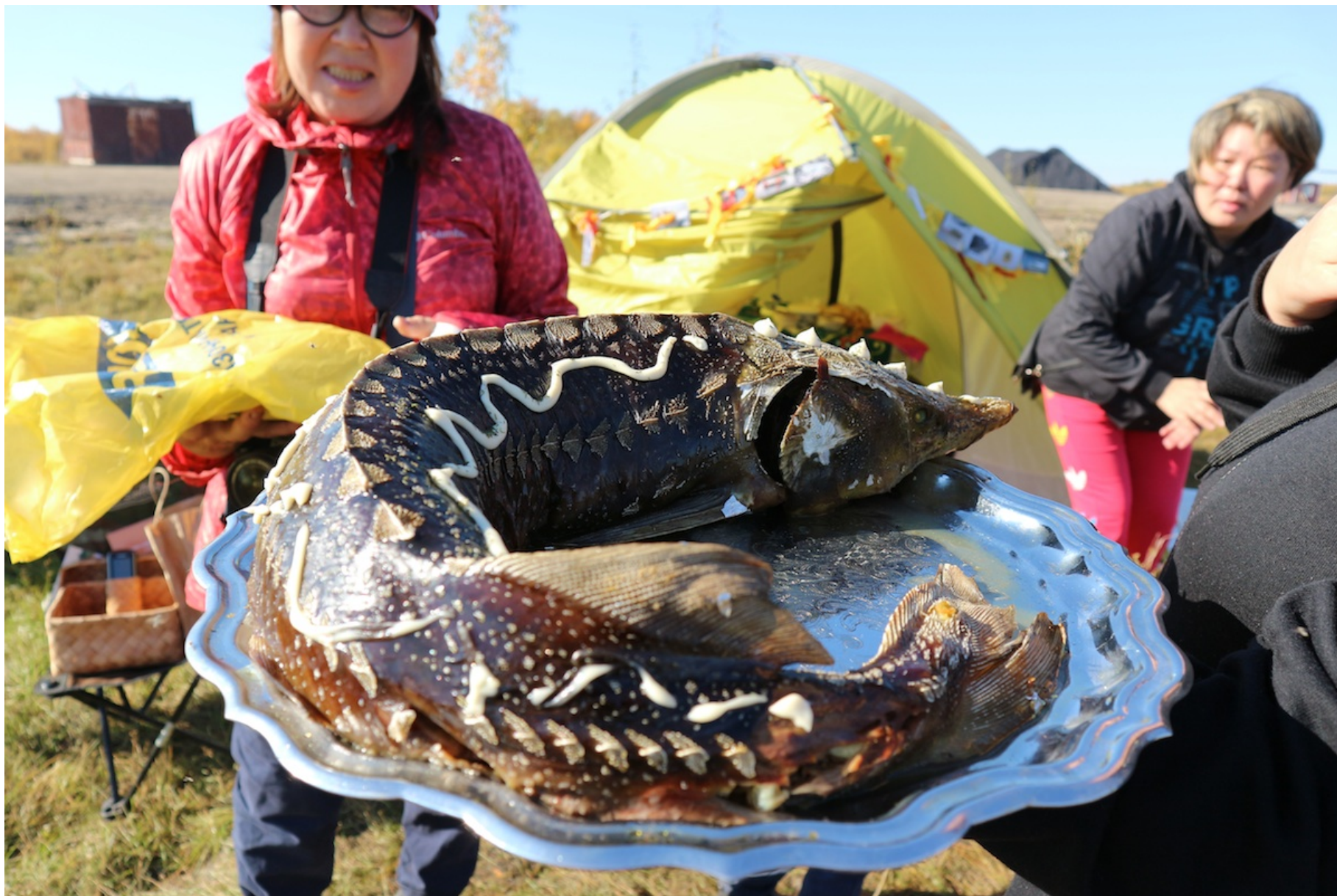
Opening of the Day 2.



Evenk Elder lighted the sacred fire for the Day 2.



Blue symbolized the Lena River during the performances.



Sturgeon is the local treat.



Sámi Indigenous delegate Aslak Holmberg yoiked the “Beautiful Woman”.



Fishing is the food security of Zhigansk, as these three professional fishers know.



Northern pike, dried.



Some of the vehicles suffered from the wet conditions of the Festival ground.



Views of the Lena River









Fisherman on a boat depicted in an ice sculpture in Yakutsk permafrost kingdom.



Lena River, the sacred provider of the Sakha-Yakutia.