



Yukon Salmon Resiliency **C**ONFERENCE

Whitehorse, Yukon

Nov. 20-22, 2018

Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre

Hosted by:



Conference Message

“There is urgency around the current state of Yukon salmon. There are many pressures facing the salmon that have sustained people, cultures, animals and habitats for centuries. Yukon’s salmon and the people that depend upon them are resilient. It is time to harness this resiliency, work together with collective strength, and act to rebuild Yukon’s salmon populations and the cultural connection to salmon. Be a part of the next chapter in Yukon’s salmon story.”



The Pacific Salmon Foundation introduction:

“Thank you for attending the Yukon Salmon Resiliency Conference and contributing to the future of one of the world’s greatest natural resources. The Pacific Salmon Foundation has worked to restore and enhance wild Pacific salmon for more than 30 years and until recently has primarily focused on coastal stocks and communities in British Columbia. The plight of Yukon River Chinook is of special interest due to its importance as an economic and cultural touchstone as well as its unique natural history. Our hope is to help support a long-term recovery strategy with the expertise and participation of the local salmon stewardship community.

We welcome you to this extraordinary event: a forum of ideas, to share our stories and successes and work together to find a way forward for Yukon salmon.”

– Brian Riddell, President and CEO, Pacific Salmon Foundation



Conference Goal

To get together, share information, and collaborate in order to support the rebuilding of Yukon’s Chinook Salmon in a period of low productivity.

Conference Objectives:

- To share relevant and strategic BC/Alaska/Yukon salmon research, information and perspectives with a wide variety of Yukon salmon stakeholders;
- Provide an opportunity for Yukon salmon stakeholders to work together on a forward-looking Chinook-rebuilding strategy;
- To harness the collective expertise, interest, passion around Yukon Salmon in an effort to increase the profile and awareness of Yukon salmon locally, nationally and internationally.

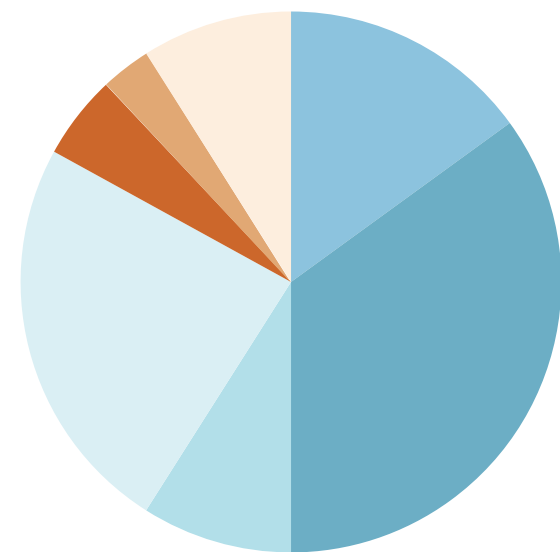
Conference Values

- The conference will balance western science with traditional knowledge.
- The conference will facilitate and utilize external (outside of Yukon) expertise balanced with the innovations within Yukon.
- The conference will attempt to balance reporting on initiatives with providing space for participant input.
- The conference will attempt to look forward and wherever possible develop new Yukon-wide strategies, partnerships and approaches.
- The conference will celebrate salmon and attempt to provide HOPE moving forward.

Conference Statistics

100
PARTICIPANTS
FROM
THROUGHOUT
THE YUKON

Yukon communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Marsh Lake, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Tagish, Teslin and Whitehorse



- First Nation Governments
- Private Sector/Consultants
- Fisheries Agencies
- Land Claim Organizations
- General Public
- Students
- NGOs



25 individuals from throughout Yukon and British Columbia made presentations on the following themes:

- **New Salmon Research:** What new research and science will provide insight into Yukon's salmon challenges and opportunities?
- **Next Steps in Restoration:** How can we learn from our local successes and external initiatives to support Yukon salmon rebuilding efforts?
- **Perspectives on Plans and Planning:** Why is community-based salmon planning essential for the Yukon's salmon recovery?
- **Culture, Ceremony, Celebration through Storytelling:** Why is it important to honour the past in order to move forward into the future?
- **Strategies to Move Forward:** What strategies and action plans can we commit to locally, regionally, and globally to support Yukon salmon conservation and restoration?

To view and download conference presentations visit yukonsalmonresiliency.com

Participants were asked what they were most impressed by and one thing they were the most curious about. The following ranked the highest:

New Salmon Research

Most impressed by...

- the International Year of the Salmon and the efforts being made internationally to conserve and better understand the impacts to salmon;
- the Pacific Salmon Explorer as a data visualization tool and would hope that it can be brought to the Yukon;
- eDNA and its application for salmon in the Yukon.

Most curious about...

- eDNA technology, reliability, cost-effectiveness and sampling ease;
- the impacts to Yukon salmon in the ocean and the freshwater;
- where to focus our conservation efforts.

Next Steps in Restoration

Most impressed by...

- the dedication and efforts by Tina Donald and the Simpcw First Nation in BC with their Dunn Creek Hatchery;
- the Yukon First Nations and their efforts at in-stream incubation;
- the common concerns around hatchery fish and the new understandings that may alleviate some concerns.

Most curious about...

- the unintended impacts of enhancement programs and hatcheries on wild stocks;
- restoration efforts and the corresponding relationship to conservation and harvest management in Alaska and Yukon;
- whether there is appetite to have small-scale, community-based hatcheries in Yukon.

Perspectives on Plans and Planning

Most impressed by...

- the community-based salmon plans for Selkirk First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council;
- the regional partnerships in BC with First Nations along the Skeena watershed;
- the traditional values (i.e. Doòli and Ha Kus Teyea) present in the community-based salmon plans.

Most curious about...

- the Pacific Salmon Treaty and future negotiations with Alaska;
- how to plan in the face of climate change, water temperature, increased predation and more;
- how the Wild Salmon Policy protects components of a mixed stock fishery.

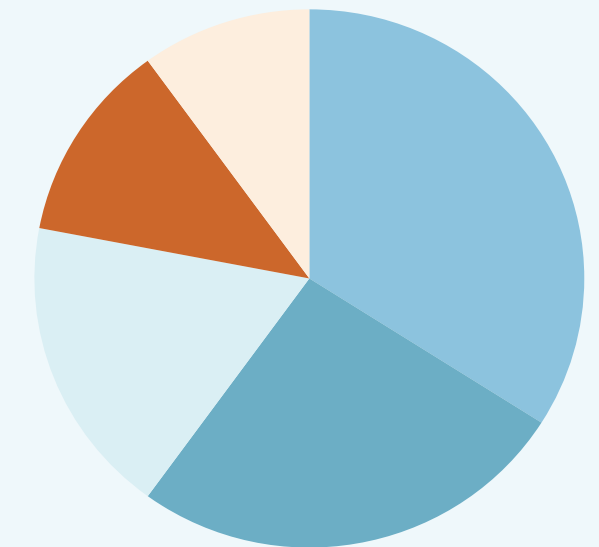
What kinds of stock restoration activities would participants support?

Options included*:

- **Habitat Restoration**
“restore habitat before other more intensive actions”
- **Beaver Dam Management**
“provide access to juveniles and adults at a low cost and community driven”
- **In-Stream Incubation**
“support projects that don’t impact the genetics of wild salmon”
- **Hatchery Programs**
“small-scale temporary conservation hatchery to prevent depressions of stocks”
- **Removal of Natural Barriers**
- **Removal of Anthropogenic Barriers** (i.e. dams)

* from the 2014 YSSC Stock Restoration Technical Team Report

Participants voted and support the following:



- Habitat Restoration
- Beaver Dam Management
- In-stream Incubation
- In-stream Hatchery
- Other



Participants organized themselves into the following groups to identify priority actions and recommendations:

1. Salmon Enhancement
2. Raising the Profile of Yukon Salmon
3. Working Together for Yukon Salmon – within Yukon
4. Working Together for Yukon Salmon – with Alaska and the World
5. Youth and Yukon Salmon

Key Observations from the Strategy Sessions

Salmon Enhancement

- Small-scale enhancement will not restore stocks entirely but has value for social and education purposes; can prevent extirpation locally; must consider genetic risks;
- Mobile hatchery facility with limited use in each system;
- No appetite for large-scale hatcheries anywhere due to risks to wild stocks.

Raising the Profile of Yukon Salmon

- Need to make sure we are getting the information back to the people, those that fish, not the leadership role, this is our role as conference participants;
- First Nations need to talk as one people;
- Politicians and media must influence and in order to see movement, there needs to be a campaign with a compelling story.

Working Together for Yukon Salmon – within Yukon

- Meeting between Yukon First Nations on how we can work together for salmon;
 - to bring us together - strength in our collective wisdom;
 - enough talking - time to do something;
- Assert our rights as the voice for salmon - using our traditional laws and language;
- Bringing in all Yukon people - campaign;
 - clarifying the message and the responsibilities;
- this crisis is everyone's issue;
- spirit and intent of the UFA - science and traditional knowledge.

Working Together for Yukon Salmon – with Alaska and the World

- Salmon bring people together as one people;
- Campaign: identifying roles and responsibilities - clearing up the confusion; who is responsible for what to mobilize and use resources effectively - using the language that will motivate action;
- International - tell the world OUR salmon story, Salmon Summit, International Year of the Salmon, Ocean Research - acidification, pollution, overfishing, campaign for salmon.

Youth and Yukon Salmon

- Getting youth engaged and bringing the passion back to the community;
- Youth conference, including elders, in Alaska and Yukon;
- Array of hands on experiences - getting outside and on the land, learning beyond the classroom.

Strategic Recommendations

- Feasibility study around a network of small-scale stewardship hatcheries (or mobile hatchery concept);
- Potential for an independent small-scale stewardship hatchery in a particular community (i.e. McIntyre Hatchery) that is supported Yukon-wide;
- Funding a Yukon-wide program around stream-side incubation as a keystone project to support Yukon First Nations restoration efforts;
- Support for an awareness campaign around Yukon Chinook salmon focused on Alaska. Potential audiences - Alaskan fishers, politicians (i.e. Washington, D.C. like the Vuntut Gwitchin approach for Porcupine Caribou);
- Support for the Establishment of a Yukon-wide Stewardship Society or Fish Commission to speak with a unified voice in Yukon. Purpose to educate, communicate and influence further conservation efforts in Alaska and support the concept of “one river one people”. Potential political salmon agreements between First Nations. May include social media and digital storytelling;
- Leveraging the Yukon River Chinook conservation message through the International Year of the Salmon and the Yukon River Panel efforts;
- Support for a follow-up Salmon Summit with Yukon and Alaskan Fishers;
- Revisiting the Yukon River Salmon Agreement and Pacific Salmon Treaty as it relates to provisions within Yukon;
- Youth Outreach Strategy with potential for an exchange or conference with Alaska;
- Establishment of the Pacific Salmon Explorer in Yukon as a keystone project.

This conference was delivered in partnership with the International Year of the Salmon.



Acknowledgements

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Thanks to the following for their opening remarks:

Elder William Carlick, Chief Kristina Kane, Grand Chief Peter Johnston, and the Honourable Pauline Frost.

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Photo Credits: Stephen Anderson-Lindsay

Reference

Zimmermann, D., Big Fish Little Fish Consultants (2019). Yukon Salmon Resiliency. Hosted by the Pacific Salmon Foundation.



