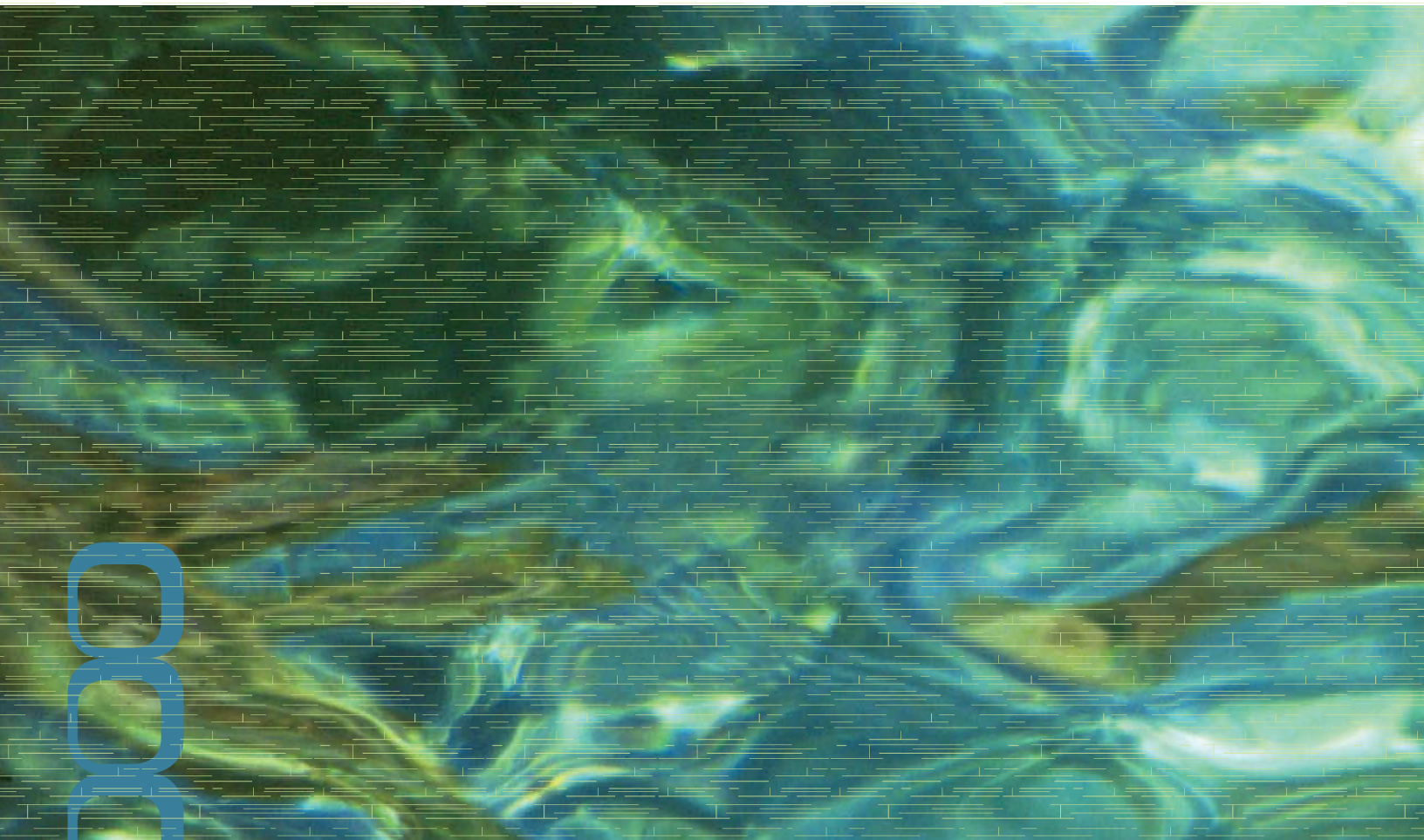


2012 YUKON RIVER SALMON SUMMIT SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

October 10-12, 2012
Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre
Teslin, Yukon



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Executive Summary

The 2012 Yukon River Salmon Summit brought participants together from throughout the Canadian Sub-basin to continue working on action plans to address poor Chinook salmon returns. This three day event, held in Teslin from October 10-12, 2012, continued the work of the initial summit, which took place in the spring of 2011.

Among the 50 participants were representatives of First Nations, the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC), the Yukon River Panel (YRP), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), and the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA). The Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) provided technical and administrative information. The participants discussed outcomes of the initial summit, causes of the salmon decline, YRP and border-related processes, current issues of concern, and recommendations for future actions.

Salmon Summit participants believe that there is not enough being done to address the current Yukon River Chinook salmon crisis, and that action needs to be taken. The effects of the salmon declines have been felt by the people at the headwaters for more than a decade, and in the past five years have spread drainage-wide. Yukon First Nations and other participants feel that to bring the salmon back to historic levels they need to collaborate with their Alaskan neighbors to pursue timely science, sensible policies, far-reaching outreach and communication, and sound processes regarding the status, health, and management of Yukon River Chinook salmon. Yukon First Nations recognize the importance of these mighty fish to the Tribes and fishers in Alaska. Chinook salmon are important for cultures and subsistence across the Yukon River drainage, and those who depend upon the salmon should work together to bring back sustainable, strong runs. ...



Goals of the Summit

- **Develop better understanding** amongst First Nations about steps and approaches each First Nation and the YSSC are taking to improve the health of the Yukon River Chinook salmon stock.
- **Learn more** about the causes of Yukon River Chinook salmon declines.
- **Review, revisit, and discuss** progress to date regarding strategic priorities identified during initial Salmon Summit.
- **Develop an implementation plan** for future actions to improve the health of the Yukon River Chinook salmon stock.



Summary of Outcomes

While participants discussed a range of issues and ideas, the main outcomes were:

1. **Hold an international meeting with fishers**

This outcome was a carry-over from the first Salmon Summit, and it was deemed more important than ever. In essence, this outcome aims to enhance cross-border knowledge and understanding amongst all organizations, management entities, and governments involved in Yukon River fisheries. CYFN is actively pursuing funding for the event, in partnership with YRDFA and others. Topics may include:

- The Yukon River Salmon Agreement.
- Conservation and restoration of Chinook salmon and other salmon stocks.
- Food security.
- Fisheries management structures on each side of the border.
- Traditional knowledge.
- Scientific research.
- Communications strategies.

2. **Direction for the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee**

Recognizing the role and influence of the YSSC and the involvement of its members in the summit, participants developed a number of recommendations for them to explore. These recommendations, which the YSSC agreed to strongly consider, included:

- Ensure sensible spawning escapement goals for Canadian-origin Yukon River Chinook salmon.
- Further a media campaign on the importance of Yukon River salmon to fishers across the drainage.
- Explore the listing of Yukon River king salmon as a species at risk (recognizing that this is a lengthy process, and a listing in Canada does not mean that a similar listing will take place in the U.S.).

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- Identify a specific number of returning Chinook salmon that would trigger a full closure of the fishery.
- Explore the impacts of jet boats on Canadian spawning grounds.

3. **Direction for First Nations**

Participants recommended that each First Nation consider taking up certain issues of concern, including:

- Participate in a Chinook salmon fishing moratorium for one full salmon lifecycle.
- Engage in scientific work for the fishery and relate it to traditional knowledge.
- Allow more female Chinook salmon to reach the spawning grounds.
- Ensure that beaver dams do not obstruct upstream migration of adult Chinook salmon in spawning streams.
- Explore the listing of Yukon River Chinook salmon as a species at risk.

4. **Recommendations for improvements to the Yukon River Panel process**

Yukon First Nations look to the YRP to set appropriate Canadian-origin salmon escapement objectives that will result in adequate numbers of salmon reaching the spawning grounds. Further, they look to the YRP to use its funds and influence to support worthwhile restoration and enhancement projects. They expect Yukon First Nation interests to be appropriately represented in the YRP process at the scientific, political, and community levels. In consideration of this, participants developed the following recommendations for the YRP:

- Eliminate closed-door meeting sessions or allow First Nation representatives into those sessions for greater transparency and increased trust.
- Provide a structure for First Nations to give meaningful input to the Panel, especially during YRP meetings.
- Include qualified First Nations representatives on the Joint Technical Committee (JTC), thus benefitting from their scientific expertise and their keen understanding of the importance of salmon to the people who depend upon them.

- Ensure First Nation representation on the YRP.
- Explore the inequity of the number of representatives–alternates and advisors–on the YRP from the U.S. and Canada.
- Continue to improve the management of the Restoration & Enhancement Fund (R&E) by addressing the following concerns:
 - The fund is currently administered outside of Yukon, resulting in a lack of understanding of proponents and projects by the administrator, as well as a lack of benefit to the region. Fund administration should take place within Yukon.
 - There seems to be a technical bias in the evaluation of proposals, with scientifically-based proposals gaining more support through the JTC (a scientific body). Further, there is concern that some proposals are rejected for not being technical enough at the conceptual phase, as opposed to providing proponents with the opportunity to provide additional detail later in the process. Review of non-technical proposals should be undertaken by individuals with the appropriate expertise, and those proposals should be considered on equal footing with the more technical projects.
 - First Nations representatives and members of the public are not allowed to listen to funding discussions, but agencies that have submitted proposals are included in the deliberations, creating a perceived bias and lack of equal treatment.
 - Al von Finster, formerly of DFO and the JTC, currently working as a fisheries consultant in Yukon, assisted in the facilitation and operation of the summit. Based on his years of experience, he provided additional recommendations, available at yukonsalmon.org/salmonsummit.htm. ...



Progress on Strategic Priorities from Initial Salmon Summit

Through a group process during the initial summit, held in the spring of 2011, participants identified five strategic priorities outlining actions to bring back Yukon River Chinook salmon. At the onset of the second summit, the intention was to further develop plans around these five priorities. However, after some discussion participants felt this was generally unnecessary, as three priorities were being adequately addressed, one was not a strategically sound option, and one was carried forward. As such, participants developed other recommendations, outlined in the Summary of Outcomes section of this report.

The following is a list of those original priorities, along with brief updates on the status of each:

1. **International Yukon/Alaska meeting of all salmon fishers along the Yukon River.**

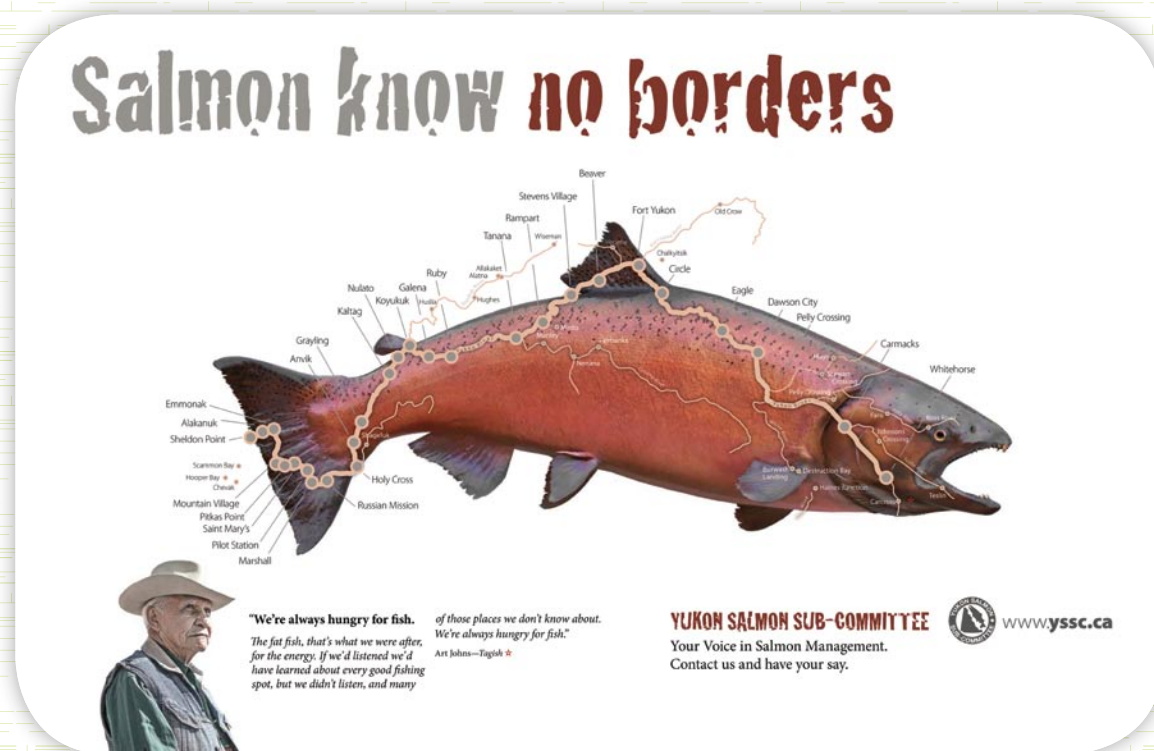
Background: An international salmon summit would bring together stakeholders from both sides of the border to raise awareness and discuss how to restore and enhance the Yukon River Chinook salmon run. Yukon First Nations, CYFN, YSSC, and YRDFA could support an application for funds through the Restoration & Enhancement (R&E) Fund, government funding, and other funding sources.

Status: In partnership with YRDFA, CYFN applied to the R&E Fund for fiscal support for this meeting. The project was not funded, but reviewers provided detailed suggestions for improvements to the proposal, and the proponents have drafted new language based on those recommendations. Further, earlier in 2012 two inter-tribal groups in Alaska, the Association of Village Council Presidents and Tanana Chiefs Conference, passed resolutions to begin an inter-tribal fish commission for the Yukon River, and they expressed a desire to include Yukon First Nations. Representatives from both inter-tribal groups indicated an interest in discussing the matter during an international summit. Participants in this year's summit once again identified this as their top priority.

2. Media Campaign

Background: Yukon First Nations and the YSSC recommended launching an awareness campaign around the lack of salmon and the importance of salmon to First Nations. The awareness campaign can raise the Canadian profile across the border for those Alaskans that don't understand that there is an issue for Yukoners. It could also get the message to southern audiences and possibly make it a political issue.

Status: The YSSC administered a survey to Yukoners regarding Yukon River salmon, and designed a media campaign based on the results. The campaign, Salmon Know No Borders, includes artwork, photography, and personal profiles around salmon. It has been broadcast through local newspaper advertisements, posters, and social media. Response to the campaign has been positive, and the posters are almost gone. There has been some discussion about broadening the campaign along the entire Yukon River drainage, including Alaska. As a next step the Executive Director of the YSSC suggests the development of a website that could serve as a hub for Yukon River salmon information distribution and messaging.



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3. Lobby Yukon and Alaskan Politicians

Background: There are three key messages that Yukon First Nations would like to deliver to governments on both sides of the border. They are:

1. Honour the treaty obligations.
2. Protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon every year in Alaska and Yukon.
3. Conserve the salmon all along the Yukon River and in the ocean.

Status: In short, communication on these issues is already happening. The Yukon Fish & Wildlife Management Board has briefed the Yukon Government Minister of the Environment, and First Nations have been active, as well. Additional work will be required to ensure that these messages are delivered upon. While many groups, including YRDFA, have fought for reductions in bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, additional efforts will be required to reduce bycatch further.

4. Open the Yukon River Salmon Agreement

Background: Two changes initially identified for additional consideration and discussion were: 1) the need for penalties/compensation for non-compliance with the treaty; and 2) increased funding from the Restoration & Enhancement Fund, which has not increased since it was established.

Status: Following an enlightening presentation provided by Steve Gotch, Area Director with the Department of Fisheries & Oceans and new co-chair of the Yukon River Panel, participants decided that renegotiation would be challenging and would likely not yield enough gain to make it worthwhile at present. However, participants did note that the Yukon River Salmon Agreement would be more functional if periodic reviews were built in, as they are in the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

5. Research Causes of Declining Salmon Population

Background: First Nations would like DFO to work with U.S. counterparts to look into causes of the declining Chinook salmon population. It was suggested that DFO be asked to produce a large, comprehensive "cumulative impact assessment report" outlining all current information to answer the question: "Why are Chinook salmon disappearing?"



Status: In the fall of 2012, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game launched an initiative to answer this question through an unprecedented level of research, including research in the marine environment and stock assessments. This initiative may address many of the potential reasons and form the basis of a cumulative assessment.

For a complete report on the initial Salmon Summit, please visit yukonsalmon.org/salmonsummit.htm. ...



Our creator put us here and gave us different foods to eat: salmon, caribou, everything. They are for us to use, but also to take care of. He put us over the animals, and we take care."

—Pearl Keenan, Teslin Tlingit Elder



Presentations

A number of presentations were delivered at the summit, either to provide background information or to answer key questions posed by participants during the planning of the event. These presentations, listed below, are available for viewing and downloading at yukonsalmon.org/salmonsummit.htm.

Department of Fisheries & Oceans' Long-Term Vision for Yukon River Chinook Salmon

Steve Gotch, Area Director, Yukon/Transboundary Rivers Area Office, DFO

This presentation explores what DFO's long-term vision—to advance sustainable aquatic ecosystems and support safe and secure Canadian waters while fostering economic prosperity across maritime sectors and fisheries—means for the Yukon River Chinook salmon and users of these stocks.

Yukon Chapter of the Pacific Salmon Treaty

Steve Gotch, Area Director, Yukon/Transboundary Rivers Area Office, DFO



One outcome from the initial salmon summit was to explore the utility of opening the Yukon River Salmon Agreement to address areas of concern for Yukon First Nations. This presentation provides history and details of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, with a focus on the Yukon Chapter. It also details the process for amending the Yukon Chapter of the Treaty, including considerations of benefit or need.



Revised Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund Process

Steve Smith, Area Manager, Fisheries Management, Yukon/Transboundary Rivers Area Office, DFO

Prior to the 2012 Salmon Summit, a number of participants expressed concerns over processes around the R&E Fund. This presentation covers various key aspects of the fund, including: background, recent administration and assessment changes, application life cycle and process, and future changes being considered.

Influences on the Production and Survival of Yukon River Chinook Salmon

Mary Ellen Jarvis Resource Manager, Yukon River, Yukon/Transboundary Rivers Area Office, DFO

To develop solutions for addressing poor Chinook salmon returns, participants first needed to discuss potential causes of recent declines. This presentation provides an overview of relevant influences in the marine and freshwater environments.

Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee Update

Dennis Zimmermann, Executive Director, YSSC

Learn about the YSSC: who they are and what they do. This presentation reviews meetings and events the YSSC has been a part of in recent months, lessons learned during an educational trip to Alaska, and status and details of international escapement goals on the Yukon River. ...



List of Participants & Presenters

1. Elaine Alfred, Pelly Crossing, Selkirk First Nation
2. Gail Barnaby, Whitehorse, Council of Yukon First Nations
3. Steve Becker, Cheeshina, AK, Cheeshina, TCC, Stevens Village
4. Brian Bell, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
5. Paul Birckel, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
6. Kathy Birckel, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
7. Tracy Boyes, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
8. Ron Chambers, Haines Junction, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
9. Tara Christie, Dawson, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
10. Richard Dewhurst, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
11. Tim Dewhurst, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
12. Emmie Fairclough, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
13. Jay Farr, Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
14. Pauline Frost, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
15. Duane Gastant'Aucoin, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
16. Dean Gill, Pelly Crossing, Selkirk First Nation
17. Steve Gotch, Whitehorse, Department of Fisheries & Oceans
18. Jason Hale, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
19. Don Henry, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
20. Betsy Jackson, Ta'an Kwäch'än, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
21. Madeline Jackson, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
22. Mary Ellen Jarvis, Whitehorse, Department of Fisheries & Oceans
23. Wayne Jim, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
24. Coralee Johns, Ta'an Kwäch'än, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
25. Roberta Joseph, Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
26. Jerry C. Kruse, McCabe Creek, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
27. James MacDonald, Whitehorse, Department of Fisheries & Oceans
28. Chris MacLoed, Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
29. Mary Maji, Ross River, Ross River Dena Council
30. Nathan Millar, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
31. Robert Moar, Carmacks, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
32. Julia Morberg, Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
33. Winnie Peterson, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
34. Kathryn Porter, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
35. Wolf Riedl, Haines Junction, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
36. Johnny Sam, Carmacks, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
37. Darryl Sheepway, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
38. Marian Sheldon, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
39. Carl Sidney, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
40. Roger Smarch, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
41. Jane Smarch, Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
42. Doug Smarch Sr., Teslin, Teslin Tlingit Council
43. Steve Smith, Whitehorse, Department of Fisheries & Oceans
44. Grady Sterriah, Ross River, Ross River Dena Council
45. William Sydney, Pelly Crossing, Selkirk First Nation
46. Frank Thomas, Teslin, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
47. Al von Finster, Whitehorse, AvF Research & Development
48. Frances Woolsey, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
49. Colin Wright, Burwash Landing, Kluane First Nation
50. Dennis Zimmermann, Whitehorse, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee

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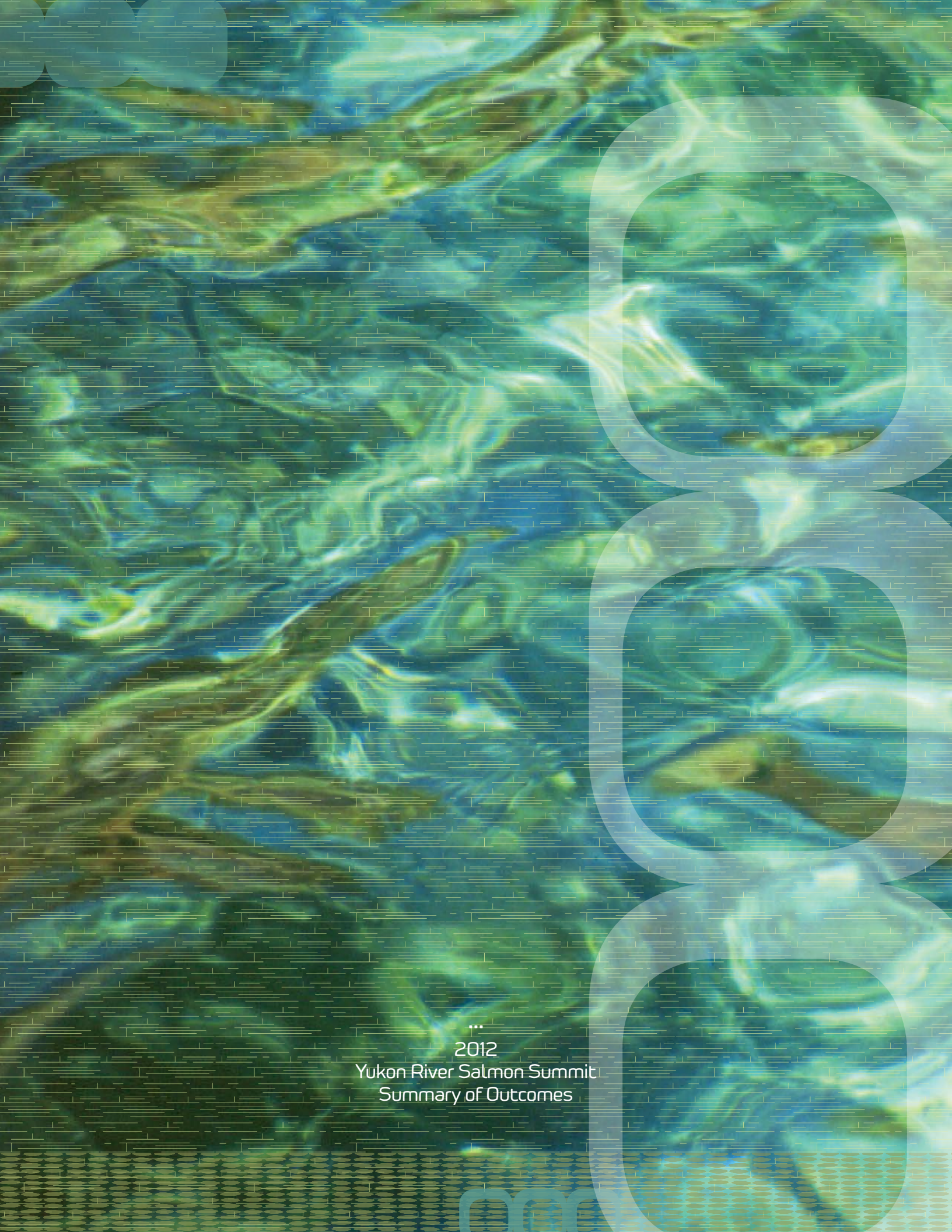
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