





# Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee

# Strategic Plan

2020 - 2025



Mail Box 31094, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 5P7  
Office 2nd floor, 409 Black St., Whitehorse

 [www.yssc.ca](http://www.yssc.ca)  
 [ex.dir@yssc.ca](mailto:ex.dir@yssc.ca)  
 [@YukonSalmonSubCommittee](https://twitter.com/YukonSalmonSubCommittee)  
 [@yukonsalmon](https://facebook.com/yukonsalmon)

# Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee



The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) was established under Yukon First Nation Final Agreements (YFNFA) as the “main instrument of Salmon management in the Yukon”. These Agreements are modern-day treaties between individual Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon (the “Parties”) and are entrenched in the Constitution of Canada. Among other things, these Agreements protect the rights of Yukon First Nation people to harvest renewable resources and participate in the management of those resources. An important YFNFA objective is to ‘ensure the equal participation of Yukon Indian people with other Yukon residents in fish and wildlife management processes and decisions.’ The YSSC is a sub-committee of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB).

## Who We Are: YSSC members

- 2 members nominated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
- 2 members appointed by YFWMB

### Yukon River Drainage

- 2 members nominated by affected First Nations

### Porcupine River Drainage

- 2 members nominated by Vuntut Gwitchin Government

### Alsek River Drainage

- 2 members nominated by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

Note: With exception of YFWMB appointees, all the YSSC members are appointed by the Minister of DFO. The YSSC has a staff person, the Executive Director.

## What We Do: YSSC Responsibilities

The YSSC is a public advisory body, not a decision maker or manager. The YSSC makes recommendations directly to the governments of Canada, Yukon, and Yukon First Nations.

- The YSSC shall make recommendations to the Minister (DFO) on allocation of salmon to users.
- The YSSC may make recommendations to the Minister (DFO) on content and timing of salmon harvesting and management plans.
- Acting in the public interest, the YSSC may make recommendations to the Minister and Yukon First Nations on all matters related to salmon.
- The Minister shall consult the YSSC on legislation effecting Yukon salmon and their habitats.

The Minister must consider the recommendations of the YSSC and respond in writing within a specified period, which makes those recommendations influential.



# How is the YSSC Involved Internationally?



The YSSC plays a prominent role in the management of Alsek River and Yukon River salmon, which swim through the United States (U.S.) waters before entering Canada. The management regime for these salmon is determined by three documents:

1. The Pacific Salmon Treaty of 1985;
2. The Yukon First Nation Final Agreements of 1993 – 2006);
3. The Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001.

The Pacific Salmon Treaty commits to principles for sharing Canadian-origin salmon between Canada and the U.S., establishes a Transboundary Panel to manage the sharing of salmon that enter Canada through the Alaska panhandle (these include Alsek River salmon), and mandates the negotiation of a Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

The Yukon River Salmon Agreement established the Yukon River Panel to manage the sharing of Yukon River salmon, which include Porcupine River salmon. Pursuant to the YFNFA, the YSSC members make up the majority of the Canadian delegation of the Yukon River Panel. The YSSC also participates as an observer/advisor to the Transboundary Panel (specific to the Alsek River drainage). In these roles, the YSSC promotes and furthers Yukon interests on the international stage.

## YSSC Strategic Plan



In 2017, the YSSC began developing a strategic plan with a two day workshop involving the Parties of the YFNFA. Past YSSC members were interviewed to highlight successes and challenges. These meetings resulted in the creation of a long list of items that were concentrated into one strategic objective and seven strategic activities to guide the YSSC over the next five years (2020 to 2025). The strategic plan will be continually evaluated and updated.

### YSSC Strategic Objective:

To make sound recommendations on the management of salmon and salmon habitat that are informed by Traditional, local and scientific knowledge. Traditional Knowledge is very important to the YSSC. To the extent possible, we incorporate Traditional Knowledge into all of our activities, including long term planning, decisions and recommendations. The YSSC will continue to support and promote the proper collection, inclusion, and utilization of Traditional Knowledge in salmon planning and management.

A group of people, mostly men, are standing outdoors in what appears to be a rural or semi-rural setting. In the background, there is a large red barn with a grey roof and a multi-story apartment building with red and white siding. The people in the foreground are wearing outdoor gear, including jackets and hats. One man in the center is wearing a red jacket and a green cap, and is gesturing with his hands as if speaking. Another man to his left is wearing a green jacket and a yellow cap. A third man on the far left is wearing a blue jacket and a black cap. A fourth man on the far right is wearing a black jacket and a blue cap. The overall scene suggests a group meeting or a tour.


## **Strategic Activity 1: Communicate the YSSC's roles and responsibilities**

The YSSC will communicate what we do, and what we do not do. The YSSC is a public advisory body, not a decision maker or manager. The YSSC members make up the majority of the Canadian delegation of the Yukon River Panel, which means the YSSC can influence decisions at both the domestic and the international levels. To communicate our roles and responsibilities, the YSSC will create a publication on the YSSC and the YSSC's Strategic Plan. The YSSC will also create and update reference material for Members, the Public and stakeholders.



## **Strategic Activity 2: Develop a communication and engagement strategy**

The YSSC will increase knowledge and appreciation of Yukon salmon, their habitats, and management processes through a communication and engagement strategy. The development of this strategy will involve Yukon First Nations, Governments, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon public and our Alaskan neighbours. When developed, the strategy will inform our recommendation(s) to the Parties.



### **Strategic Activity 3: Increase engagement in the Alsek River drainage**



Alsek River salmon are a priority for the YSSC. Currently the YSSC attends the Transboundary Rivers Panel meetings, Alsek River salmon meetings and engages with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on Alsek salmon matters. The YSSC will create an Alsek Drainage Working Group to assist in the development of goals, including restoration, for these important salmon stocks.



## **Strategic Activity 4: Improve quality of escapement**



For salmon, the “quality” of escapement includes sex ratios, size, health of individual salmon and other factors which are important for conservation of salmon. The current spawning escapement goals set by the Yukon River and Transboundary Panels are based solely on the number of salmon that reach the spawning grounds, but do not consider the quality of those salmon. Yukon River Chinook salmon have been getting progressively smaller, with implications for the numbers of eggs they carry. There are many ways to increase the overall quality of escapement, such as using selective gear, releasing females, and targeting smaller males. The YSSC will continue to advocate for quality of escapement to increase the number and overall quality of returning salmon.



## **Strategic Activity 5:** **Achieving the upper end of spawning escapement goals and meeting harvest needs**

The YSSC will encourage salmon managers on both sides of the border to annually meet the upper end of spawning escapement goals in order to meet conservation and ecosystem requirements. In addition, the YSSC will encourage U.S. managers to meet their treaty commitments to get sufficient salmon to the border to provide for Canada's agreed-upon harvest share. Yukoners rely upon salmon for food, culture, and connections to the land. The use of salmon is very important to present and future generations of Yukoners. Salmon is fundamental to Yukon First Nation culture and sharing traditions.

When salmon abundance cannot meet both the spawning escapement goals and harvest needs, the YSSC will recommend the creation of a Rebuilding Plan which may reduce harvest while increasing the spawning escapement. As the run rebuilds, it is anticipated that more harvest opportunities will be provided.

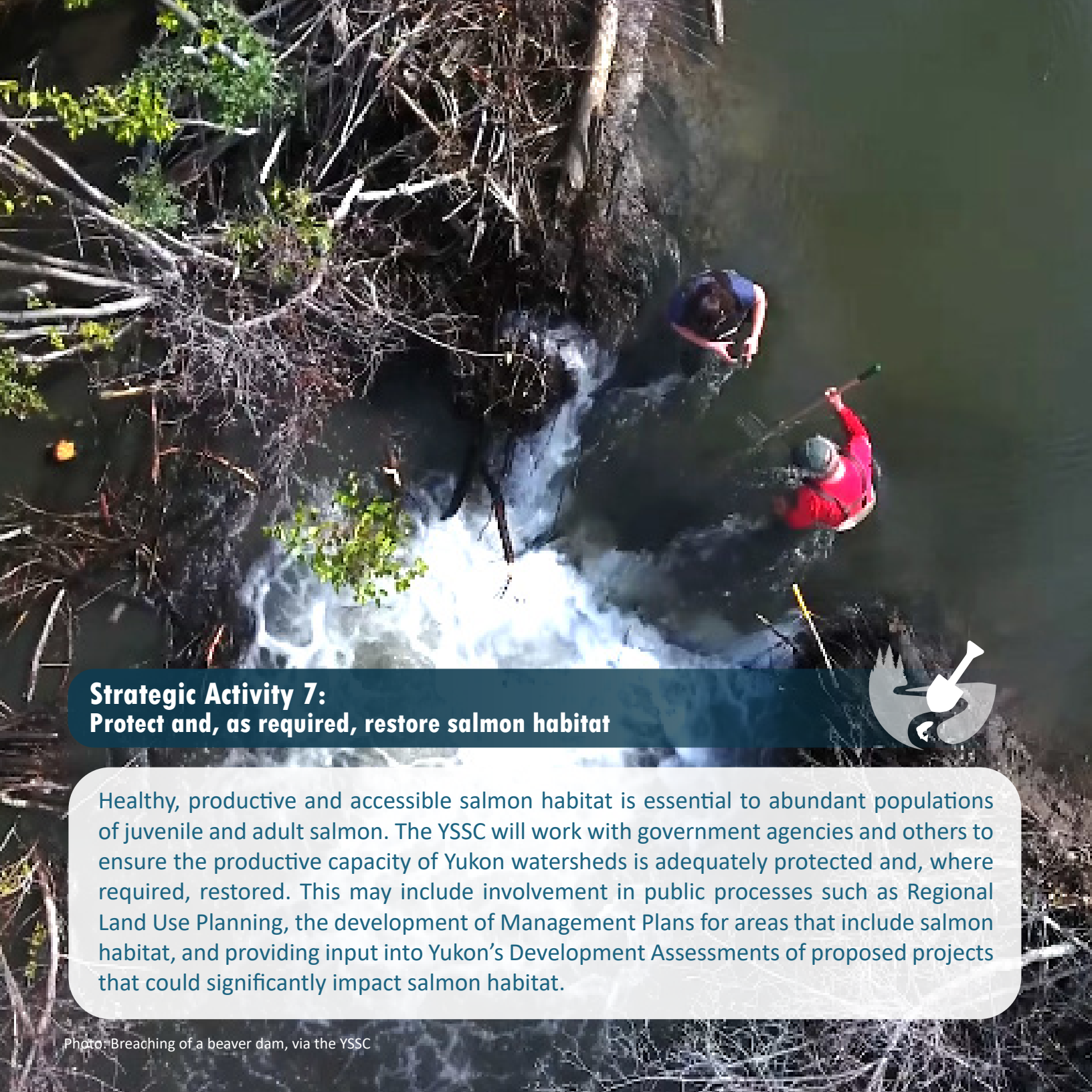




## **Strategic Activity 6:** **Engage in relevant legislative, policy, and/or regulatory reviews**



In order to influence the direction that Canada and/or Yukon takes regarding salmon and their habitat, the YSSC will continue to engage in the development of legislation, regulation, plans and policies related to salmon. The YSSC, when requested, will review and provide support in the development of community-based salmon harvest management plans.

An aerial photograph showing two individuals in a river. One person, wearing a red shirt and a grey hat, is in the water holding a long pole. The other person, in a blue shirt, is on the bank. They are working on a beaver dam made of sticks and branches. Water is splashing around the dam. The surrounding area is dense with trees and brush.

### **Strategic Activity 7:** **Protect and, as required, restore salmon habitat**



Healthy, productive and accessible salmon habitat is essential to abundant populations of juvenile and adult salmon. The YSSC will work with government agencies and others to ensure the productive capacity of Yukon watersheds is adequately protected and, where required, restored. This may include involvement in public processes such as Regional Land Use Planning, the development of Management Plans for areas that include salmon habitat, and providing input into Yukon's Development Assessments of proposed projects that could significantly impact salmon habitat.

# Thank You!

The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and effort to the development of this Strategic Plan. In particular, we would like to thank current and previous YSSC Members, Executive Secretaries, and Executive Directors who paved the way for this Strategic Plan. Many are gone now but the Plan lives on and supports Yukon salmon, their habitats and the people who depend on them.

We apologize for missing anyone who should be on this list. We relied upon our collective knowledge, which may have fallen short. Please reach out to us if you have any additional information.

## Members

Alan 'Al' von Finster	Glen Grady
Blanche Warrington	Hardy Ruff
Carl Sidney	Harvey Jessup
Chuck Hume	Harvey Kassi
Clyde Blackjack	James MacDonald
Craig McKinnon	Jason Jim
Dennis Zimmermann	John Burdek
Don Toews	Joni MacKinnon
Edward 'Ed' Long	Lewellyn 'Lew' Johson
Emmie Fairclough	Lorelei Smith
Francis Wellar	Michelle Dawson-Beattie
Frank Patterson	Paul Birckel
Frank Thomas	Pauline Frost
Gerald 'Gerry' Couture	Richard Sidney

Roger Alfred  
Ron Chambers  
Stanley Njootli Sr.  
Steve Taylor  
Tara Christie  
Timothy 'Tim' Gerberding  
Vicki Josie  
Wayne Jim  
William Josie  
Wolf Riedl

## Executive Secretaries/ Directors

Andrea Wilson  
Dennis Zimmermann  
Elizabeth MacDonald  
Gord Zealand  
James MacDonald  
Jesse Terice  
Louise Naylor  
Margaret Hansen  
Steve Smith



Mail Box 31094, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 5P7  
Office 2nd floor, 409 Black St., Whitehorse

 [www.yssc.ca](http://www.yssc.ca)  
 [ex.dir@yssc.ca](mailto:ex.dir@yssc.ca)  
 [@YukonSalmonSubCommittee](https://twitter.com/YukonSalmonSubCommittee)  
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