

Yukon Fisheries News

Protecting and promoting all healthy wild fisheries and cultures along the Yukon River drainage

Fall 2025

In this edition:

2025 Board and
Preseason Meeting
35th Anniversary
Celebration

Ruby Culture Camp
Eagle Bio-technician
Fisheries Biologist
Training

Upcoming Meetings

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim Finfish

November 18-22, 2025

Pike's Waterfront Lodge | Fairbanks, AK

Yukon River Panel

January 24-29, 2026

Alaska Marine Science Symposium

January 26-30, 2026

Captain Cook Hotel | Anchorage, AK

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Island/

Chignik Bay

February 18-24, 2026

Egan Convention Center | Anchorage, AK

MREP North Pacific Fisheries Science & Management Workshop

February 23-27, 2026

Juneau, AK

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Strengthen the mission of YRDFA to protect and advocate for all wild fisheries, one of the last wild salmon runs on the planet, and traditional cultures that depend on these precious resources within the Yukon River Drainage.

For 35 years YRDFA has been dedicated to these precious resources and your generosity is greatly appreciated.

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION



Yukon Fisheries News is published by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
721 Depot Dr. Suite 14 • Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 272-3141 • Fax: (907) 272-3142 • TOLL FREE 1-877-99-YUKON(98566)
www.yukonsalmon.org

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News from the Executive Director, Serena Alstrom

Greetings,

I hope everyone is staying safe and enjoyed the fall harvest of fish and game. First, I want to acknowledge the devastating loss of life and homes along Alaska's coast from Typhoon Halong. This powerful storm has left many Alaskans in disbelief, forcing us to confront the accelerating reality of climate change and its growing impacts across our state. Yet even in the face of these challenges, we must remain vigilant, resilient, and committed to finding solutions that help us both adapt to and mitigate this changing climate.

As I write this fall newsletter, I am often overcome with a deep sense of sadness, anger, frustration, and hopelessness. These emotions arise from our continued inability to harvest salmon—an essential part of life along the Yukon River. This loss has forced many of our communities to rely on handouts and government assistance, filling freezers with store-bought food instead of the fish we once caught with our own hands. The impacts go far beyond economics. The true cost is cultural—something that cannot be measured in dollars. Those who have not grown up in small, rural communities dependent on the land for sustenance may never fully understand what this means. To truly grasp it requires living a subsistence lifestyle, where survival and identity are intertwined.

Our true economy is not built on currency, but on the food in our freezers. How can we influence a system that prioritizes a Western economic “bottom line” when it disregards the wellbeing of people living traditional, subsistence ways of life? We have taken away individuals' ability to harvest their own food, only to let commercial interests harvest it and sell it back to the very people who should have had access in the first place.

I urge each of you to channel your frustration and heartbreak into a force for change. Do not let these feelings fester—use them to power your advocacy. Participate in decision-making meetings, offer testimony, and share your lived experiences. Let your words be informed, strategic, and united. Together, we can demand sustainable, equitable, and forward-thinking management of our natural resources.

I look forward to standing alongside you at the upcoming Board of Fisheries and North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings this winter.

Serena Alstrom

YRDFA Executive Director



WESTERN ALASKA DISASTER RELIEF

YRDFA's thoughts are with the communities
that were affected by Typhoon Halong.

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Involvement

YRDFA -

Brian McKenna taught electrofishing, drone technologies, fisheries gear types, and provided a fisheries overview.

Nicole Farnham taught CPR/First Aid, resume building, and water quality and gear use.

Rachael Kangas managed the workshop and supported participants throughout their stay in Eagle.

USFWS -

Holly Carroll provided an overview of fishery management and led a sonar training.

TCC -

Kim Nicholas brought an electrofisher to Eagle allowing participants to learn about and practice using the equipment.

AK DNR -

Annie Grenier and Iris Nawiesniak provided boat safety training and certification through AK DNR's Alaska Boating Safety Program.

ADF&G -

ADF&G provided an Aquatic Resources Permit allowing participants to get hands-on learning with various gear types.

Eagle Sonar Project -

The Eagle Sonar Project is jointly operated with staff from ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Sonar crew members explained the sonar operations to participants.

UAF -

Kristen Reece led a class on environmental DNA.

Andy Bassich -

He shared his experiences with the Yukon River Panel and Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and Provided hands-on training in boat operations and set net handling.

Village of Eagle -

They hosted participants to meet with Chief Karma Ulvi and Elders and discuss their experiences with salmon and the Yukon River fishery.



YRDFA - Eagle Bio-tech Fisheries Technician Workshop

Author: Alexis Isherwood

About the Workshop

In July 2025, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) hosted a Biological Fisheries Technician Training Camp to promote educational and employment opportunities for Yukon River residents. Seven participants from across Alaska traveled to Eagle, Alaska where they spent ten days immersed in the Yukon River basin and nearby creeks including Mission and American creeks.

The camp offered a well-rounded curriculum covering essential topics such as résumé building, CPR and first aid, boat safety, water quality monitoring, gear deployment and data collection, environmental DNA (eDNA), electrofishing, drone operation, and sonar technology. Through both classroom lessons, and hands-on fieldwork. Participants developed technical skills that are valuable for future roles in fisheries science, environmental monitoring, and local stewardship.

This unique training opportunity was made possible through the collaboration of many organizations including YRDFA, University of Alaska Fairbanks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

YRDFA has offered similar training in the past, but it has been several years since the last session. To revive the program, Executive Director Serena Alstrom wrote a grant and secured funding to relaunch the training starting in 2025. The opportunity was advertised throughout Yukon River communities, with many participants saying they heard about it through Facebook. Initially, YRDFA planned to hold two training camps—one in St. Mary's (lower river) and one in Eagle (upper river)—but the St. Mary's camp was postponed to June 2026.

Opportunities like this are vital for preserving the Yukon River's ecosystem and fish populations. By equipping local residents with scientific tools and real-world experience, the training helps empower community-driven stewardship. Participants leave not only with new certifications and skills, but also with the confidence to take active roles in protecting the river, supporting their communities, and advocating for the future of Alaska's fisheries. Brian McKenna, YRDFA's Fisheries Biologist and workshop instructor, puts it well "while we are there to provide training, it's also a great learning opportunity for us as well, and it's always great to have two-way learning opportunities."



Brian guides participants through the electrofishing process as they actively use the equipment in American Creek.



Maya assists with setting the beach seine net during trial runs.

Instruction Highlight: eDNA

Kristen Reece, an Alaska CASC Fellow, Caleb Scholars Intern, and workshop instructor, taught participants about the value of using environmental DNA (eDNA) to study salmon populations in the Yukon River. She demonstrated how to collect eDNA using a battery-powered vacuum pump to filter river water. In the field, participants practiced the technique—putting on gloves, wading into the river, turning on the pump, and carefully collecting water samples.

“Samples are being collected from the environment in numerous ways around Alaska,” Kristen said. “So having a baseline understanding of how, why, and when we take eDNA samples can be useful.” She also emphasized the importance of sterilizing equipment, collecting the correct volume of water, and avoiding contamination. “Learning how to be careful during sampling is a universal skill that applies to other forms of research.”

Afterward, Kristen explained the lab-based steps she would take to extract DNA from the samples. “Environment DNA can be a complimentary tool used to assist in validating other fisheries techniques,” she said. Though DNA extraction is complex, it’s useful for measuring salmon species’ relative abundance.

Currently, salmon are counted using sonar at a pilot station in Eagle, Alaska—a method with its own limitations, just like eDNA. Still, both tools are valuable, especially as Chinook and Chum salmon populations continue to decline. As commercial fisherwoman, the participants noticed a recent decline in Chum salmon and shared their firsthand observations contributing valuable insights rooted in local knowledge and citizen science.

Through these conversations, Kristen found herself not just teaching, but also learning: “I learned from participants’ observations and perspectives from the Lower Yukon River compared to those from the Upper Yukon. Listening to how they historically fished and how that has changed over the years was very interesting.”

Everyone works together to reload the beach seine net and continue practicing the netting technique.



Kristen Reece demonstrates how to collect eDNA.



Bernadette shows Kristen how to repair the seining net.



Instruction Highlight: CPR & First Aid

Nicole Farnham, a contracted instructor through YRDFA, led a class on CPR, first aid, and AED training. While she contributed to the overall planning of the course-helping to develop lesson plans and structure the curriculum-her hands-on CPR and first aid instruction stood out as a highlight for both her and the participants.

After laying a foundation of background knowledge, she transitioned into hands-on training. Participants practiced CPR on mannequins, learned how to apply bandages and slings using first aid kits, and received AED instruction with a training defibrillator.

Although several participants had previous CPR experience, Nicole's class was interactive and informative. Her energetic and engaging teaching style resonated with the group, making the session both enjoyable and educational. "Something that stood out to me was people's enthusiasm during the course," she shared. "I think when they see an enthusiastic instructor enthusiastic about what they are teaching, they feed off that energy and have fun with it."

This course was a vital component of the workshop-not just because of its relevance to fieldwork, but because CPR and first aid are essential life skills. Nicole emphasized the importance of being prepared: "You are the first line of response, and having the confidence and skills in your back pocket to handle emergencies is incredibly important."



Mary and Shirley preparing to use bandages to practice first aid techniques during the CPR and first aid training session.



Nicole teaching Mary how to set up a minnow trap before placing it in American Creek.

Importance of Fisheries Training

Nicole Farnham explained the broader impact of the workshop: "This is allowing people in communities to actually help work with their fish-whether it be salmon or whitefish-they can now be researchers. They can take the skills they've learned and work with their tribes to apply for small grants to do fish research. It also gives them the opportunity to apply for fisheries jobs and bring money and opportunities into their communities, especially because jobs are so limited in rural areas."

This training was especially meaningful for many of the incredible women who participated-some of whom had previously stepped away from fisheries work. With updated training, new gear, and hands-on experience, they are now better prepared to enter the field and support their communities through the work they love.



All content, including writing and photography, by Alexis Isherwood.

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Bio-tech Training Overview

Author: Rachael Kangas Madros, Training/Education Manager

Bio-Tech Training Crew in Eagle, Alaska July 2025

The Fisheries Technician Training Program was initiated by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) with the primary objective of training local individuals along the Yukon River to provide employment and stay involved while preserving their fishery. This training aimed to enhance the participants' skills and knowledge in salmon research, project implementation, and administrative functions. YRDFA partnered with local agencies and organizations to establish a 15-21-day field-based training curriculum. Following successful development in conjunction with YRDFA staff and the training coordinator, it was determined that the program would be condensed into a 10-day training format.



Andy Bassich from Eagle with a fish from his setnet.

The Bio-technician 10-Day training program, which took place in Eagle, Alaska, represented a significant milestone for this initiative. From July 18 to July 28, 2025, seven participants from the Yukon River took part in this fisheries technician training. The program was designed to provide them with the critical skills and knowledge necessary to contribute effectively to fisheries and environmental projects.

The training cohort consisted of seven committed members from the Yukon community, although one participant had to withdraw. The curriculum encompassed a comprehensive range of topics, including seining techniques, CPR and AED certification, electro-fishing, eDNA training, boat safety certification, fishing gear familiarity, minnow trapping, agency management, sonar class and field training,

drone classroom training, resume building, data collection, and water quality monitoring. All participants received certifications in CPR and AED, as well as boating safety, and completed field training, demonstrating their readiness for future responsibilities.

The Alaska wildfire season posed unforeseen challenges that significantly impacted participant availability for the training, as well as for the Lower Yukon training scheduled in St. Mary's, Alaska. Several applicants were engaged with the Bureau of Land Management to respond to wildfires, resulting in lower participation during the summer months. Despite these challenges, the project continued to move forward, reflecting our resilience and commitment to its objectives. Technician trainees represented various communities, including Alakunuk, Pilot Station, Eagle, and Fort Yukon, Alaska. The decision has been made to postpone the St. Mary's training until June of 2026, as the planned initial training dates coincided with the hunting season. YRDFA acknowledges the significance of this time, particularly given the inability of our fishermen to fish and stock their freezers. We intend to resume this project next summer and will ensure that registration information is available on our website in the spring. I would like to express my gratitude to all organizations, educators, and staff members who contributed to making this initiative possible, thereby facilitating essential educational training for individuals along the Yukon River.



Ruby Culture Camp

Author: Rachael Kangas Madros, Training/Education Manager



Hunting season is upon us. The seasons are changing, and we are hunting and gathering for our soul food to hold us over during our winter months. Story times are their best with our families and friends during the fall. With that being said, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association had an excellent opportunity to be contracted out to host the Native Village of Ruby's 2025 culture camp located on the Yukon River on Straight Island, a testament to our success and accomplishment.

This event, which took place July 8-12, 2025, was a resounding success and was made possible by the generous support of numerous entities and organizations. Their contributions, which ranged from financial support to the provision of resources and expertise, were instrumental in the event's success.

The youth and adults, including elders, had many moments in the evening to listen to stories around the campfire, sharing Traditional Knowledge and stories of how they had filled smokehouses and enjoyed the bounties of salmon all year long in the past. The stories had the youth ask questions, and many of the youth shared how they wished they had salmon strips to share around the campfire.

With much anticipation, I had announced to the Youth that we had been permitted to drift net for a few King salmon and chum by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. The kids were elated. This opportunity was through the Yukon Fishing Permit for Customary and Traditional Harvest of Salmon. YRDFA would like to thank ADF&G for allowing our Youth to fish and practice their skills and harvesting methods, and for providing the salmon for camp that week. 6 King salmon, along with one non-salmon species, were harvested. The youth went to local elders' smokehouses and were taught how to make half-dry salmon to share that Friday with the community members on their final camp day.

YRDFA staff and many presenters from Canada, Alaska, and the Lower 48 came together to host many salmon educational activities on conservation, life cycles, and issues our salmon are facing. With education being noted as necessary, we had also mainly focused on cultural and Traditional Knowledge





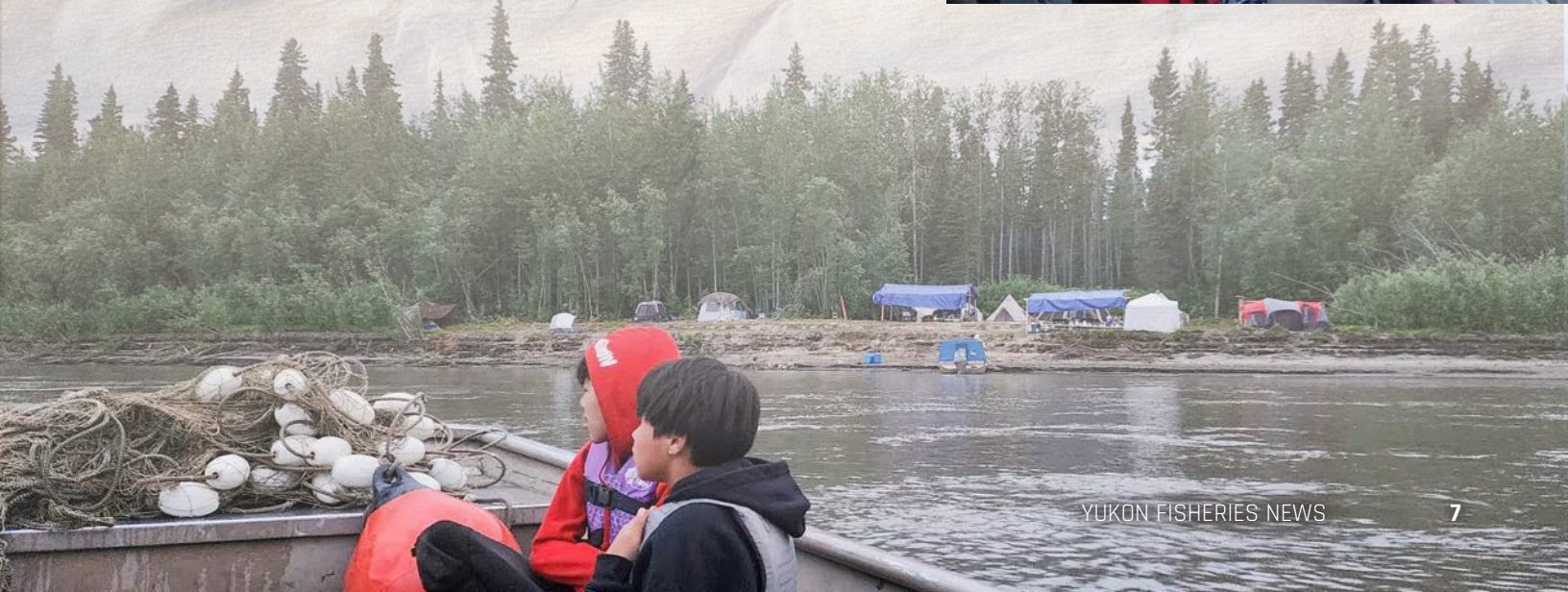
Lena McCarty, Ruby Elder, showing the youth how to cut fish.



and practice, including fish cutting, Indian ice cream making, akutaq making, and sharing Indigenous foods such as muktuk and sheefish at meal times, providing a wealth of knowledge and enlightenment to all participants.

One of the many activities that made a positive impact on our youth was making traditional fish ice cream one evening and then taking a boat ride to the neighboring village of Galena, Alaska. The youth and staff visited the Galena Elders Center, met with many of the elders, and shared a meal with the elder community. My vision with this crucial activity was that if we do not have many Elders in our community, why not bring the youth to the Elders and ensure the youth have a connection with such knowledge holders. This experience was phenomenal, and the stories told that evening around the campfire were enlightening and heartfelt.

YRDFA would like to personally thank the Native Village of Ruby, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Yukon Koyukuk School District, Dineega Corporation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and all local supporters and presenters for making this possible. In the future, YRDFA is hoping to make this opportunity possible for other communities along the Yukon. With closing, I wish for freezers to be filled with moose, caribou, and berries, and I look forward to making more memories for our people along the Yukon River.





2025 Board Meeting Author: Mike McIntyre

From left to right: Kathleen Demientieff (Nenana), Fred Huntington Sr. (Galena), Stanislaus Sheppard (Mountain Village), Victor Lord (Nenana), Charlie Wright (Rampart)

YRDLA's Annual Meeting was held at Pike's Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks, Alaska on April 22 & 23, 2025. ADF&G and US Fish and Wildlife gave presentations for this years Yukon River Preseason Forecast. YRDLA staff gave program reports from WEAP, Clearinghouse, ISN Survey, NPRB Reports, Engaging Fishers and Climate Drivers, AOOS, Training and Education, Outreach and Financial Report. Future meeting date for the next YRDLA Annual Meeting was decided to be in Anchorage, Alaska on April 21-22, 2026. YRDLA also held elections for Board and Alternate seats.



YRDLA Board meeting on April 21, 2026

Election Results:

Clifford Kaganak, Coastal Seat 1; John Strongheart, Y1 Seat 1; Brooke Woods, Y5 Seat 2; Jan Woodruff, Yukon Flats Seat 1 retained their Board seats.

Richard Tuluk, Coastal Alternate 1; Janessa Newman, Y5 Alternate 1; Rochelle Adams, Yukon Flats Alternate 1 retained their Alternate seats. Brandon Kameroff was elected for the Y1 Alternate 1 seat.

Election of Officers results. Stanislaus Sheppard was elected as Co-Chairman for Lower River. Charlie Wright was elected as Co-Chairman for Upper River. Jan Woodruff retained her seat as Secretary. Clifford Kaganak was elected as Treasurer.



Clifford Kaganak Sr. YRDLA Board Member from Scammon Bay during the board meeting.



Catherine Moncrieff, YRDLA Anthropologist, gives a program update during the board meeting.



Yukon Salmon Chowder

HEARTY COMFORT MEAL FOR THE YUKON SOUL

Author: Rachael Kangas-Madros



Family Size



1 hour

INGREDIENTS

6 - CUPS WATER
2 - BAY LEAVES
3-4 CELERY STALKS-DICED
5 - WHOLE GREEN ONIONS
3 - CHICKEN BOULLION CUBES
SALT & PEPPER TO TASTE
1.5 TSP OF THYME/DILL WEED
1/2 TSP LEMON PEPPER
1/2 TSP OF OLD BAY SEASONING
1/2 CUP DICED ONION
5 - DICED CARROTS
4 - DICED POTATOES
1 1/2 QUARTS HEAVY CREAM
1 - FILLET OF SALMON
1 TBSP DRY RANCH POWDER

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare stock in a large stock pot or dutch oven
2. Add and simmer vegetables in stock until fork tender omit the diced green onions. all other vegetables get added
3. Dice your salmon into bite size pieces set aside
4. Once vegetables are fork tender add in seasonings and heavy cream slowly simmer, taste and adjust salt and pepper to your preference.
5. Once seasoning is desired and stock is at a slow boil add in your diced salmon pieces and green onion pieces.
6. Make a basic cornstarch slurry and add in slurry slowly until the thickness desired.
7. Turn off your chowder cover and let sit for 10-15 minutes off heat to cook salmon through.
8. Enjoy with your favorite bread, crackers and are all favorite pilot bread.

A large group of people are gathered in a room with large windows, some dancing and others talking. A man in a yellow vest is dancing in the center. The room has wooden walls and large windows looking out onto a snowy landscape.

YRDFA's 35th Year Anniversary Celebration

YRDFA Celebrated it's 35th Anniversary on April 23, 2025 at Pike's Waterfront Lodge. We were joined by past Executive Directors, Wayne Jenkins and Jill Klein. Many people came to celebrate with us. The night concluded with an auction of donated items from artists and businesses, music and dancing as Fairbanks band Shot Time played.



Catherine Moncrieff, YRDFA Anthropologist gives a farewell. Catherine retired after 23 years with YRDFA.



Former Executive Director Wayne Jenkins speaks during the celebration



Serena Alstrom presents Catherine Moncrieff a farewell gift during the 35th Anniversary Celebration.



Former Executive Director Jill Klein speaks during the celebration.



Virgil Umphenour, part of the YRDFA Founding Members speaks during the Celebration.



Catherine Moncrieff, YRDFA Anthropologist and Jill Klein, Former YRDFA Executive Director during the 35th year anniversary of YRDFA.



Bill Alstrom, YRDFA Board member with Jadon Nashoanuk, YRDF TEK Technician and Rachael Kangas pose for a photo with Mike McIntyre's salmon mask donated to the Silent Auction.



YRDFA's 35th Anniversary concluded with a fun night of music and dancing!



Jerry Shewfelt Jr plays and sings with Shot Time during the 35th Anniversary Celebration.





Serena Alstrom, YRDFA Executive Director delivers the welcome address.



Stan Zuray, Former YRDFA Board and Board of Fish receives recognition.



Fred Huntington Sr., YRDFA Board Member during a comment period.



District 5 during break-out groups.

2025 Preseason Meeting

Author: Mike McIntyre

YRDFA's Preseason Meeting was held at Pike's Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks, Alaska on April 24 & 25, 2025.

On the first day, Serena Alstrom, YRDFA Executive Director welcomed everyone with a welcoming address and Francis Thompson, YRDFA Board Member from St. Mary's delivered the Keynote Address. The Yukon Status presentation was presented by Zach Liller, ADF&G Research Biologist; Deena Jallen, ADF&G Yukon River Summer Season Manager; Matthew Olson, ADF&G Yukon River Interim Fall Season Manager; and Shane Ransbury, USFW Yukon River Assistant Manager. The day was concluded with a Youth Presentation by Jazmyn Vent, Koyukon & Inupiaq from Huslia.

On the second day, Stanislaus Sheppard gave an opening prayer and Serena Alstrom gave an overview. There was Agency and Organization Reports on Yukon River Chinook Salmon Rebuilding Strategy by Elizabeth McDonald, Council of Yukon First Nations. Middle Yukon River Sonar Feasibility Project Update, Brian Lepping, Tanana Chiefs Conference. Eva Burke, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Avian Flu Update by January Frost, U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Overview of Yukon River Canadian-Origin Chinook Salmon Rebuilding Plan, Kirsten Lyle & Jayson Kurtz, Yukon River Panel / EcoFish Research.

After the program updates, Yukon River districts met in break-out groups to discuss issues with the Yukon River and it's fisheries. YRDFA Employees compiled all the input and came up with a plan for the future with this important important information.

YRDFA recognized former YRDFA Board and former Board of Fisheries member, Stan Zuray. Thank you Stan Zuray for your many years of service to the Yukon river communities, people and your continued work in Alaskan Fisheries.

The meeting concluded with Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner, Douglas Vincent Lang.



Farewell to Catherine Moncrieff

Author: Serena Alstrom, YRDFA Executive Director

It is with a profound sense of gratitude and a touch of melancholy that we announce the departure of Catherine Moncrieff, our esteemed staff anthropologist, after 23 dedicated and impactful years at the Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association (YRDFA). Catherine's contributions to the Yukon River and its communities are immeasurable, characterized by her exceptional ethnographic work, unwavering dedication, and an insatiable eagerness to learn and adapt. Her departure will undoubtedly leave a significant and deeply felt void within our organization and among the many individuals she touched.

My own connection with Catherine dates back to my high school days, a formative period when I first had the distinct pleasure of crossing paths with her. She was tirelessly conducting interviews in St. Mary's, immersing herself in the local culture and the rich tapestry of knowledge held by the community. It was during this time that I had the invaluable opportunity to assist her, helping to identify and connect with respected knowledge holders who possessed deep insights into our vital salmon runs. This early collaboration was a foundational experience, showcasing Catherine's respectful approach to engaging with communities and her commitment to understanding their perspectives.

Throughout the often challenging and dynamic history of YRDFA, Catherine has been a steadfast and reassuring presence. Her unwavering hard work, coupled with a genuine and infectious passion for the Yukon River communities, has been absolutely instrumental in ensuring our continued existence and ability to advocate for the health of the river and its people. She consistently demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate complex social and environmental issues, always with a focus on amplifying local voices and traditional ecological knowledge.

Beyond her remarkable professional achievements, Catherine's gentle and easygoing personality was a defining characteristic that allowed her to forge countless meaningful relationships. She possessed a rare gift for making people feel comfortable, valued, and genuinely heard, fostering an environment of trust and open communication. Her empathetic nature was a cornerstone of her success, enabling her to bridge cultural divides and build bridges between diverse perspectives.

As Catherine embarks on this new chapter of her life, we extend our sincerest best wishes for a retirement filled with joy, relaxation, and all the fulfillment she so richly deserves. Her legacy at YRDFA will endure through the countless reports, studies, and relationships she cultivated, all of which have laid a strong foundation for future work.

Quyana for all you have tirelessly done for the people of the Yukon River. Your impact will be felt for generations to come.



Community Meeting in Scammon Bay

Authors: Grace Kirkey & Olivia Henaayee Irwin

In September, YRDFA made our very first trip to Scammon Bay! Community Liaison Olivia Henaayee Irwin, Community-Based Monitoring Coordinator Grace Kirkey, and NOAA affiliate Kristen Green traveled together to host a series of conversations and workshops with local residents.

On the first day, we introduced YRDFA at a community meeting and shared an overview of our work. Grace presented our In-Season Subsistence Survey Program, which will expand to include Scammon Bay next year. This program has grown beyond tracking harvest numbers to also include questions about well-being and food security, helping us better capture the realities of life on the Yukon River. Olivia then led a discussion on fisheries management, creating space for community members to share how recent rules and regulations have affected them.



Kirsten Green during the Scammon Bay Community meeting.

The next day, Kristen, with support from YRDFA, hosted a seasonal subsistence calendar workshop. Around a large table, the community mapped out when different fish, plants, and animals are harvested throughout the year. Using

dotted lines, people showed how timing has shifted such as a food once gathered in October now being harvested in August. This hands-on process sparked conversation about food security and the seasonal changes people are seeing firsthand.

The poster created during the workshop will be analyzed and then transformed by a graphic designer into a clear, community-designed subsistence calendar. Once complete, it will be shared back with the people of Scammon Bay as both a resource and a record of their knowledge.



Olivia Henaayee Irwin & Grace Kirkey in enjoying time at Scammon Bay.

WEAP Beaver Project + Community Meeting **Author:** Olivia Henaayee Irwin

From July 14-16th members of our team flew to Beaver to conduct water sampling along the Yukon river near town and in Lower Mouth Birch Creek in order to gather baseline data in response to the Hilcorp/Doyon Yukon Flats Exploration project. In addition, members tested the Yukon river near Beaver for the presence of Cyanide. Our Cyanide tests thankfully showed very low levels present. At 0.006 milligrams per liter it was well below the drinking water threshold set by the EPA of 0.2 milligrams per liter. Therefore our staff currently does not see a cause for concern regarding Cyanide in that area.

The other water tests we conducted looked at temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, PH, and conductivity. Combined, these numbers can help us determine the quality of water for salmon habitat. The results of these tests in both the Yukon and in the Lower Mouth Birch Creek for dissolved oxygen, turbidity, PH and conductivity were all very good and within the recommended range for salmon productivity. The temperature, however, in both the main stem of the Yukon and Lower Mouth Birch Creek were high. Salmon need cooler water, between 5 and 16 degrees Celsius, depending on their life cycle stage. Temperatures above 16 degrees Celsius start to stress the fish.

In the Yukon, temperatures were taken across the river and at different depths and the temperature was consistent at 17.1° C or 62° F. In Lower Mouth Birch Creek the temperature was 18.28° C or 65° F throughout the water column. Staff deployed temperature water loggers in Birch Creek that will monitor water temperatures for the rest of the season.

While in Beaver, our team hosted a community meeting to hear experiences and observations from local fishermen, gather feedback for YRDFA projects, invite input on in-season management decisions, share management updates and fishery closure/opener announcements, and provide resources on upcoming meetings. Local fishermen reported success catching whitefish and pike during 4" mesh net openers with no incidental salmon catch. A significant number of large pike, sheefish, and whitefish were caught, providing some food for locals and dogs. Beaver residents expressed frustration with the ongoing closures and lack of fishing opportunities. However, the community of Beaver, together with other residents of the upper Yukon River—such as those in 5D and across the border—have faced complete closures on salmon fishing for six years, at this point, Beaver residents expect to not fish.

Here is your chance to own some YRDFA Gear!
\$27.99 + (shipping & handling)

Check out our t-shirts that come in many different colors!

All Proceeds go to supporting the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

Scan QR Code or Go to link below:
<https://www.bonfire.com/store/yukon-river-drainage-fisheries-association/>

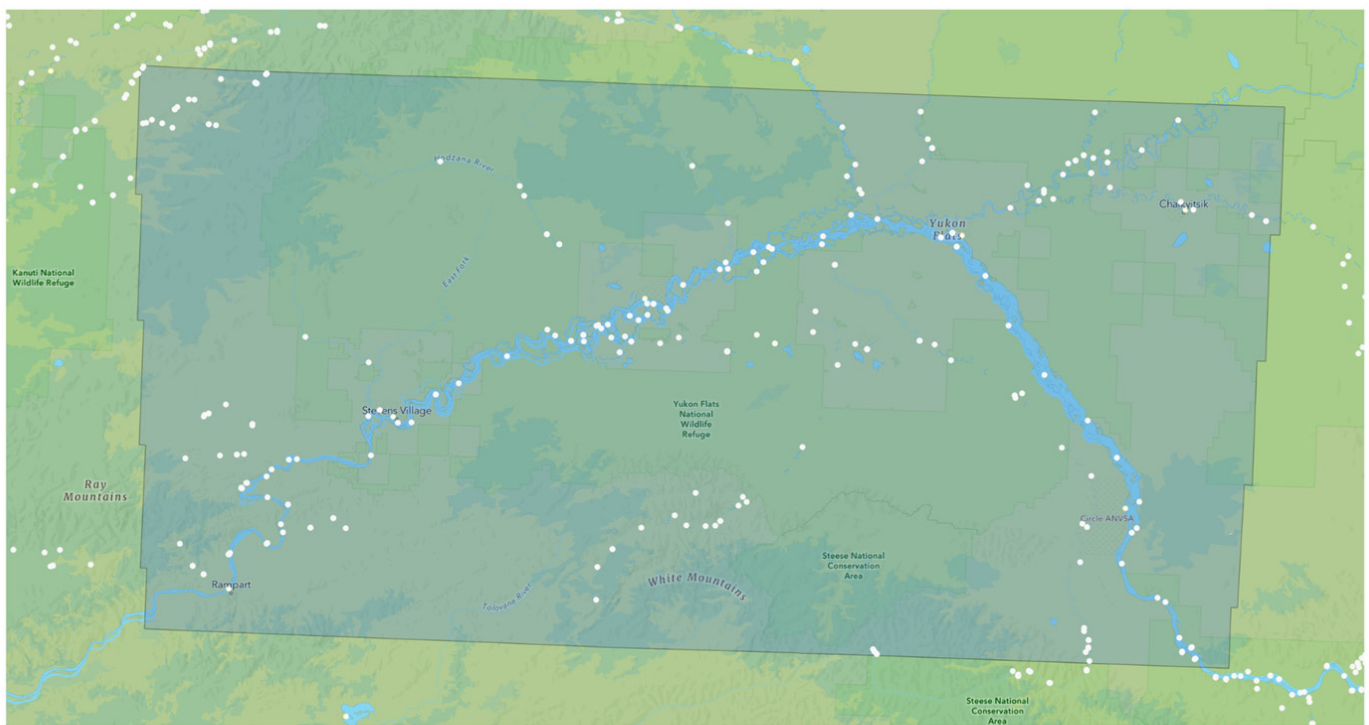
YRDFA 35th Anniversary

YUKON LIFE

Eat a Whitefish Instead!

YRDFA Salmon Heads or Tails

Mute or Unmute



Salmon Presence in the Proposed Yukon Flats Oil & Gas Exploration Area

○ Report of salmon presence

■ Yukon Flats Exploration Area Map



Data collected from ADF&G Anadromous Waters Catalogue (AWC)
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/SARR/AWC/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>



Yukon Flats Oil & Gas Exploration Author: Olivia Henaayee Irwin

Doyon and Hilcorp aren't the only ones interested in exploring the Yukon Flats for oil and gas. The Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil & Gas is considering opening state land in the Yukon Flats for oil and gas exploration. On August 30th the open comment period closed for comments, notice of intent, and proposals for the opening of the Yukon Flats Oil & Gas Exploration Solicitation Area. The public notice invited public comments on the solicitation area and proposed exploration, as well as proposals from companies and corporations to receive an oil and gas exploration license.

Tribes and organizations have expressed concern for years regarding the opening of the Yukon Flats for development. In 2019 Doyon, Limited and Hilcorp Alaska signed an agreement to conduct oil and gas exploration on 1.6 million acres of Native Corporation lands in the Yukon Flats. Disagreements surrounding stewardship and land management have arisen between Tribes and Doyon, with many Tribes expressing fear that the potential disruption on the environment will cause lasting effects leading to further declines in salmon and game populations, increased food security, and greater challenges in sustaining cultural and traditional practices. As the land owners, Doyon doesn't need permission from Tribes and has authority over the subsurface land rights as the Native Corporation.

There exists an environment rich with all necessary elements for productive salmon habitat. With concerns for salmon habitat recurring in conversations with fishermen and management, YRDLFA's team analyzed data from the Anadromous Waters Catalogue (AWC), a data collecting system that tracks almost 20,000 streams, rivers, and lakes throughout the state that have been specified and identified as important for the spawning, rearing, and migration of salmon. By overlaying the Yukon Flats proposed solicitation area with the AWC nominations, we found 523 unique points of salmon within the boundaries of the solicitation area.

These 523 points appear as dots on the AWC map and indicate reported observations of salmon presence, rearing, and spawning. There were 149 nominations for Chinook present, 47 for Chinook rearing, and 14 for Chinook spawning, providing evidence that the Yukon Flats is ripe habitat for Alaska's most vulnerable salmon species and it must be

Salmon Presence in within the Yukon Flats Exploration Area

Species	Life Stage	Nominations
Chinook	Present	149
	Rearing	47
	Spawning	14
Chum	Present	150
	Rearing*	N/A
	Spawning	24
Coho	Present	131
	Rearing	6
	Spawning	2

*Chum salmon do not rear in freshwater

protected. Recent runs of Chum and Coho have also been close to or below historically low levels, causing additional closures. This summer on the Yukon River retention of Chinook, Chum, and Coho was completely shut down. 150 nominations were made for Chum presence, 24 for Chum spawning, 131 nominations for Coho presence, 6 for rearing, and 2 for spawning. With runs at historic lows throughout the state and Yukon River, causing full closures up and down the river preventing communities from meeting their subsistence needs, conservation measures must be taken at all life stages to support the run returns.

The presence of salmon within the Yukon Flats is evident and the protection of those lands and waters that provide the pristine habitat for their survival is fundamental. Any exploration or development in the Yukon Flats has the potential to cause long-term environmental damage to habitat, water quality, wildlife, and the Yukon River watershed ecosystem as a whole. Disruptions to the delicate balance within this rich ecosystem are irreversible and would be devastating to the land and people who rely on it.

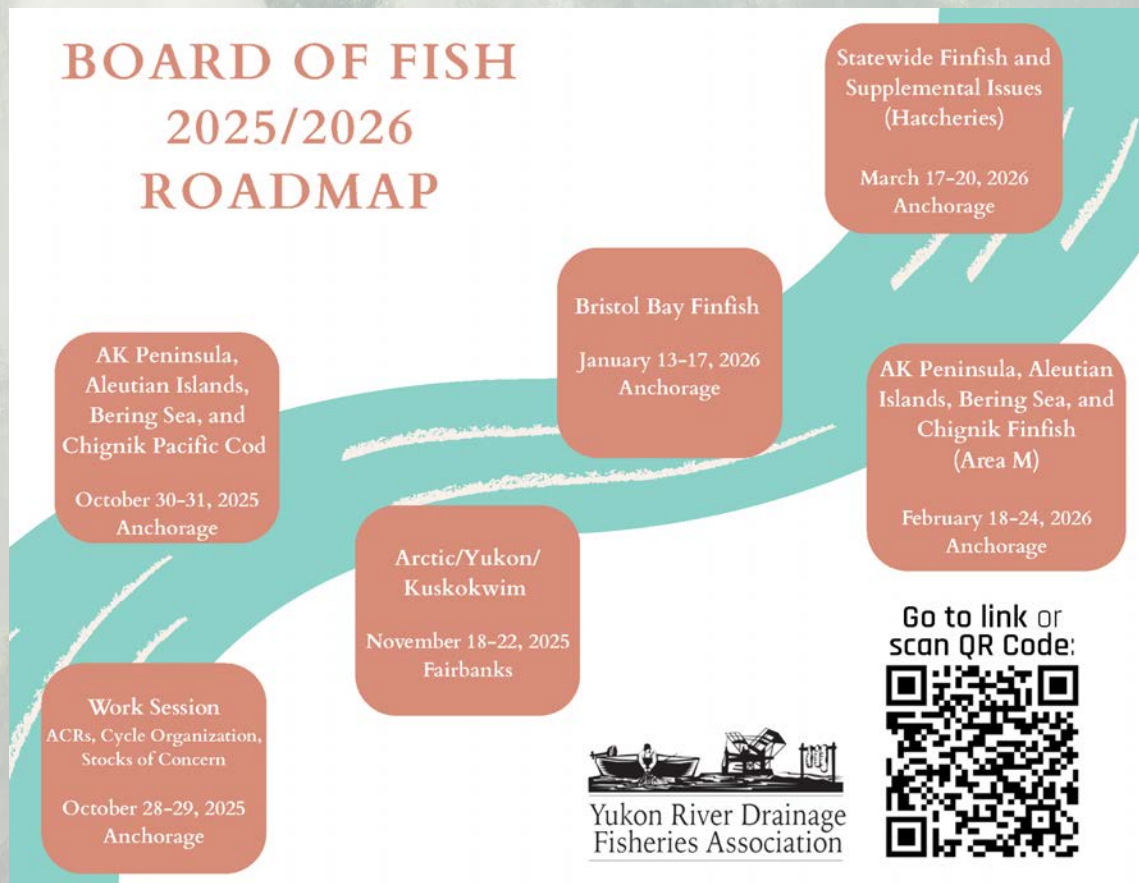
AWC Overview: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/SARR/AWC/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

AWC Mapper on ArcGIS: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1a4eb07b42ff4ebb8c71ba45adaedf0c/>

DNR Notice: <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/View.aspx?id=219954>

BOF Roadmap Calendar Author: Olivia Henaayee Irwin

As we begin to transition into fall, YRDFA is gearing up for the meeting season. Check out YRDFA's new 2025/2026 Board of Fish Road Map calendar to see all the important dates for the upcoming meeting cycle. This calendar includes comment deadlines, meeting dates and locations, as well as suggested times for advisory committees, Tribes, and organizations to meet to stay on track while juggling multiple meetings and proposals. Follow YRDFA for more information on how to get involved in fisheries management.



or Follow this link: <https://yukonsalmon.org/alaska-board-of-fish-2025-2026-roadmap/>

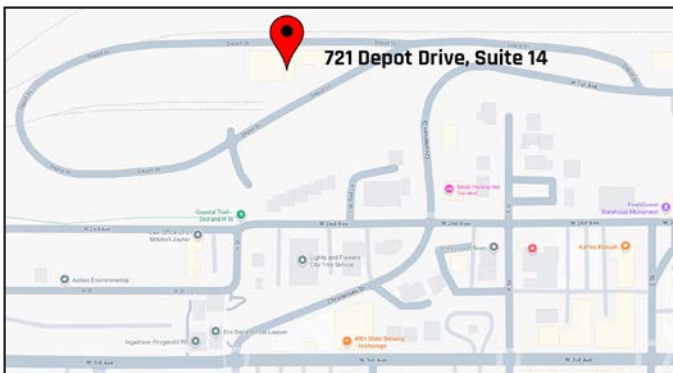


YRDFA Opens New Office in Downtown Anchorage

Anchorage, Alaska — The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) is pleased to announce the opening of our new office in downtown Anchorage, located at 721 Depot Drive, Suite 14. This location will also serve as our new mailing address moving forward.

With much of our team working remotely across Alaska and beyond, this new office provides a central and convenient workspace for staff while in Anchorage. The office will be used for meetings, administrative work, and as a hub for collaboration when team members are in town.

We're excited about the opportunities it brings to strengthen our operations and support our mission of ensuring sustainable fisheries and the well-being of communities along the Yukon River.



For all correspondence, please use our updated mailing address:

YRDFA

721 Depot Dr, Suite 14
Anchorage, AK 99501

Subscribe to the YRDFA Mailing List



Be the first to receive YRDFA news, newsletters, important upcoming fisheries events and meetings

Scan the QR Code or go to the link below to sign up for the YRDFA Mailing List!

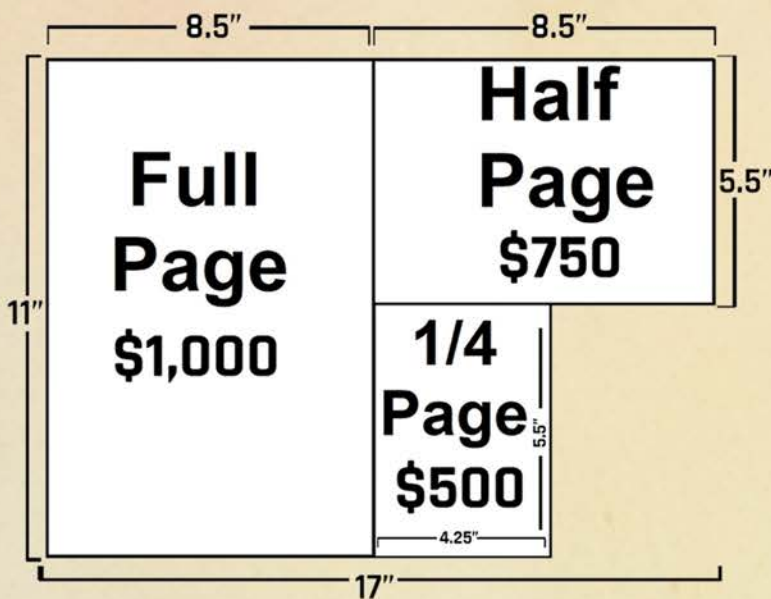
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Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

Welcoming new YRDFA employees



Erik West

Finance Manager

Erik West joined YRDFA in July 2025 as the Finance Manager. Erik has been a CPA since 2004 and is a licensed CPA in WI, MT, and AK. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) for the first time with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accountancy in 1999. Then Erik graduated from UW-L for the second time with an MBA Degree in 2007. He has over 24 years of accounting experience almost equally split between Public and Private accounting, including 9 years of experience in Nonprofit Finance Manager/Director/Controller related work, as well as being self-employed as an Interim Chief Financial Officer for a 3 months in 2017. Erik was born and raised in La Crosse WI, then moved to Missoula, MT in 2007, and finally made his way to Anchorage in April of 2022. Along with him, Erik brought his wife and 2 children to Alaska and they are all die-hard Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee Brewers fans. Erik was the Treasurer of the Missoula Lions Club from June 2019 to April 2022.

Erik is really excited to work at YRDFA mostly because of the really quality work YRDFA does for the benefit of the Yukon River and its salmon.



Nicole Farnham

Bio-Technician Trainer

Nicole Farnham is a former Fisheries Biologist, she brings years of experience working across Alaska with Tribal organizations, state and federal agencies, and academic partners. In her role, she develops and leads training programs that prepare community members to become fisheries technicians, supporting research, monitoring, and stewardship along the Yukon River.

Nicole earned her Bachelor's degree in Fisheries with a minor in Marine Biology and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in One Health Biomedical Science, which she expects to complete in spring 2026. Her background includes stock assessments, subsistence harvest monitoring, science outreach, and hands-on fieldwork throughout Alaska's rivers and coasts, including cold-water diving to support research efforts.

Outside of work, Nicole enjoys life on the move with her husband and toddler, her favorite adventure buddies. As a family, they love exploring new places, camping, hiking, and finding fun in the outdoors wherever they go. Whether it's a big trip or a small day adventure, Nicole treasures time spent making memories together.

TEAM DIRECTORY

Executive Director: Serena Alstrom
Cell: (907)799-4336 | Email: serena@yukonsalmon.org

Finance Manager: Erik West
Phone: (907)272-3141 ext.1003 | Email: erik@yukonsalmon.org

Project Manager: Rachael Kangas-Madros
Phone: (907)272-3141 ext.1006 | Email: rachael@yukonsalmon.org

Communication Manager: Mike McIntyre
Phone: (907)272-3141 ext.1001 | Email: mike@yukonsalmon.org

WEAP Coordinator: James Van Lanen
Email: james@yukonsalmon.org

Program Specialist: Grace Kirkey
Phone: (907)272-3141 ext.1005 | Email: grace@yukonsalmon.org

Field Technician: Matthew Lohrstorfer
Email: matthew@yukonsalmon.org

Policy Coordinator: Olivia Henaayee Irwin
Phone: (907)272-3141 ext.1008 | Email: olivia@yukonsalmon.org

Fisheries Biologist: Brian McKenna
Email: brian@yukonsalmon.org

Administrative Assistant: Loren Peterson
Email: loren@yukonsalmon.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District	Name	Community
Coastal, Seat 1	Clifford Kaganak Sr.	Scammon Bay
Y-1, Seat 1	Stanley Pete	Nunam Iqua
Y-1, Seat 2	John Strongheart	Alakanuk
Y-1, Seat 3	Paul Andrews	Emmonak
Y-2, Seat 1	Bill Alstrom	St. Mary's
Y-2, Seat 2	Mike Peters	Marshall
Y-2, Seat 3	Stanislaus Sheppard	Mountain Village
Y-3, Seat 1	Alfred Demientieff Jr.	Holy Cross
Y-4, Seat 1	Fred Huntington Sr.	Galena
Y-4, Seat 2	Robert Walker	Anvik
Y-5, Seat 1	Charlie Wright	Tanana
Y-5, Seat 2	Brooke Woods	Rampart
Y-6, Seat 1	Dorothy Shockley	Manley Hot Springs
Y-6, Seat 2	Victor Lord	Nenana
Koyukuk River	Darrell Vent	Huslia
Flats, Seat 1	Jan Woodruff	Eagle
Canadian, Seat 1	VACANT	-

ALTERNATES

District	Name	Community
Coastal, Alt. 1	Richard Tuluk	Chevak
Coastal, Alt. 2	VACANT	-
Y-1, Alt. 1	Marvin Olátkun	Kotlik
Y-1, Alt. 2	Brandon Kameroff	Emmonak
Y-2, Alt. 1	Rex Nick	Pilot Station
Y-2, Alt. 2	VACANT	-
Y-3, Alt. 1	Basil Larson	Russian Mission
Y-4, Alt. 1	Tommy Kriska	Nulato
Y-4, Alt. 2	VACANT	-
Y-5, Alt. 1	Janessa Newman	Rampart
Y-5, Alt. 1	Phillip Titus	Minto
Y-6, Alt. 1	Kathleen Demientieff	Nenana
Koyukuk River	VACANT	-
Flats, Alt. 1	Rochelle Adams	Fort Yukon/Beaver
Canadian, Alt. 1	VACANT	-

YOUNG FISHERS REPS

District	Name	Community
Lower River	Kerri Kelly	Pilot Station
Upper River	Katlyn Zuray	Fairbanks (Tanana)

Yes!

I want to be a part of the United Voice on the Yukon River and support YRDFA!

Individual Membership:

- ☐ \$50 Newsletter subscription
☐ \$75 Newsletter subscription with beanie
☐ \$100 Newsletter subscription with hoodie
☐ Other amount \$_____

Agency/Business Donor:

- ☐ \$5000 Chinook ☐ \$1000 Chum ☐ \$500 Coho ☐ \$200 Pink

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Payment Method:

(online donations can be submitted at <https://yukonsalmon.org/support>)

- ☐ Check # _____ enclosed (payable to YRDFA)
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Exp. Date _____ CVV: _____

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YRDFA
721 Depot Dr Suite 14
Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone:

**1-907-272-3141 or
1-877-999-8566**

or Scan this QR code or go to this link to sign up electronically:



<https://www.yukonsalmon.org/support>

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) is a 501(c)3 organization.

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