

# Yukon Fisheries News

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

**Winter 2024/2025 Edition**

Nenana River on November 23, 2024

**Winter 2024**



## News from the Director

### Serena Fitka

YRDFA Executive Director

I was recently scrolling through TikTok one evening and came across a young man's post about the high cost of living in his community. As I looked through the comments, many asked, 'How can people afford to live out there [in rural Alaskan communities]?' Many of the replies only provided superficial answers, such as "We

learn to live with it" or "It is our only option." These responses typically don't delve into the specifics of the true cause. We live off the land that provides us with all the essentials of living a healthy, sustainable life. As indigenous people, we lived by the seasons. The seasons and weather guided what we harvested. We harvested what we needed to live off of, and nothing went to waste. As we moved more toward western ways of living, we have sustained our harvesting to offset the high cost of living. Regrettably, the abundance of our resources has diminished, leaving many in our communities reliant on the limited and often unhealthy offerings of the local grocery store.

After attending several meetings related to our Yukon River salmon fisheries, I have been reflecting on a few Alaska Native values. We learn this lesson from our Yup'ik classroom in grade school and from our elders/family members at home: take only what you need, and leave enough to replenish. Taking what you need deflects the sense of greed. When you possess more than you require, we instill the value of sharing. In contrast, taking only what you need and leaving enough to replenish align perfectly. This applies to all natural resources, from blueberries on the tundra to us humans. Thus, the web of life connects us all. The disruption of one affects another and creates a ripple effect among all living things.

[Continued on page 2]

## Inside this issue

**Recognizing YRDFA members appointed to the Regional Advisory Council Federal Subsistence Board** Page 3

**Yukon River Chinook, Chum & Coho 2024 Summer & Fall Summaries** Page 4

Preliminary run numbers are in from ADF&G & USFW

**Farewell to Gabe Canfield** Page 6

**A Brief Roadmap to Alaska's Fisheries Management Systems for addressing salmon bycatch, intercept and hatchery impacts** Page 7

**WEAP Update** Page 11

**Clearinghouse Project** Page 12

**Survey Program** Page 13

**Welcoming New Employees** Page 14

Meet our new YRDFA Employees  
Olivia Hanaayee Irwin & Alitha McCarty

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE  
FISHERIES ASSOCIATION





## Upcoming Meetings

### Alaska Marine Science Symposium

January 27-31, 2025

Anchorage, AK / Hotel Captain Cook

### Yukon River Science Symposium

February 12, 2025

Anchorage, AK / BP Energy Center

& Virtually, register at: <https://bit.ly/3OP5L2y>

### 2025 YRDLA Board Meeting

April 22 & 23, 2025

Fairbanks, AK / Pike's Waterfront Lodge

### 2025 YDLA Preseason Meeting

April 24 & 25, 2025

Fairbanks, AK / Pike's Waterfront Lodge

[Director's Report Continued]

Moving forward in a more constructive way is the only option to protect our salmon resources. The development of the Yukon River Salmon Rebuilding plan must incorporate a holistic approach, not just focusing on in-river issues. It equates to caring for your garden without any sunlight. Some species may thrive on no sunlight while others wither and die. Building on the 7-year agreement between Alaska and Canada, we should develop appropriate actions to achieve each component, with the ultimate goal of rebuilding the chinook salmon stocks on the Yukon River. If we don't develop a plan of action for this agreement, it will remain merely a piece of paper, showcasing the penmanship of two parties who are unwilling to take the necessary steps to achieve the ultimate goal.

I encourage leaders, community members and fishers along the Yukon River to continue to attend meetings, provide written comments, and testimonies at the various meetings that affect our salmon. Please sign up for our newsletter, check our website often and our social media accounts. I hope to see many of you during the upcoming meetings and please reach out if you have questions or need assistance on navigating the different meeting processes.



*Save the Date*

**YUKON RIVER**

*Science Symposium* *You can attend in person at:*

**FEBRUARY 12, 2025**

**9:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

**BP Energy Center  
Anchorage, Alaska**



*Or Virtually:*

**TO REGISTER, SCAN THE QR CODE  
OR GO TO THE LINK BELOW**

<https://bit.ly/3OP5L2y>



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# Recognizing YRDFA members appointed to the Regional Advisory Council Federal Subsistence Board



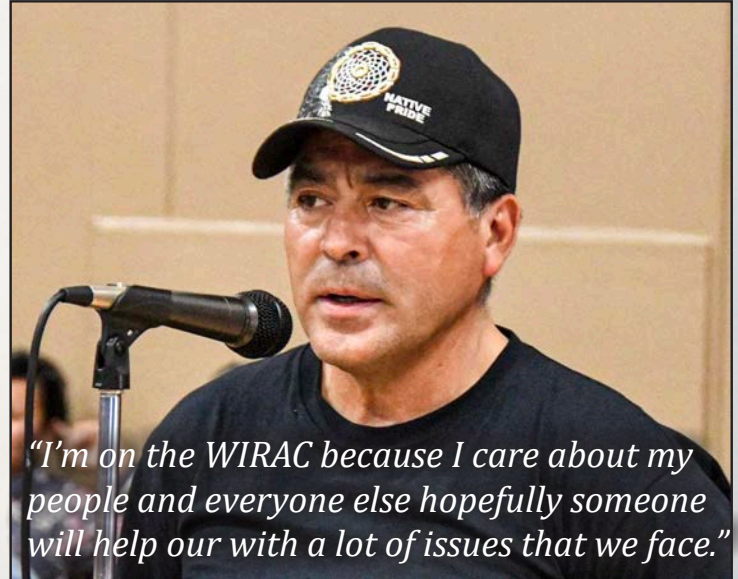
*"I decided to put my name in for the EIRAC, because the current management practices and strategies are not inline with our traditional ways of stewarding our lands, our waters, and our animal relatives. I pray that through this role I might be a voice for our people, our values, and our relatives who live on the land." - Olivia Henaayee Irwin, Nenana*

## Western Interior Alaska

Darrell M. Vent, Sr., Huslia  
Tommy Kriska, Nulato

## Eastern Interior Alaska

Dorothy J. Shockley, Fairbanks  
Olivia Henaayee Irwin, Nenana



*"I'm on the WIRAC because I care about my people and everyone else hopefully someone will help our with a lot of issues that we face."*

Tommy Kriska, Nulato

Read the full announcement here:

<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/secretary-interior-appoints-members-federal-subsistence-regional-advisory-councils>

# Contribute to YRDFA

For 35 years, YRDFA has worked to protect and advocate for all wild fisheries and traditional cultures that depend on these precious resources within the Yukon River Drainage. One of the last wild salmon runs on the planet.

You don't have to live on the Yukon River to make a difference! The work we do takes care of all of us!

**YOU CAN DONATE TODAY!**  
Scan QR Code or go to link below:

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

YUKON FISHERIES NEWS

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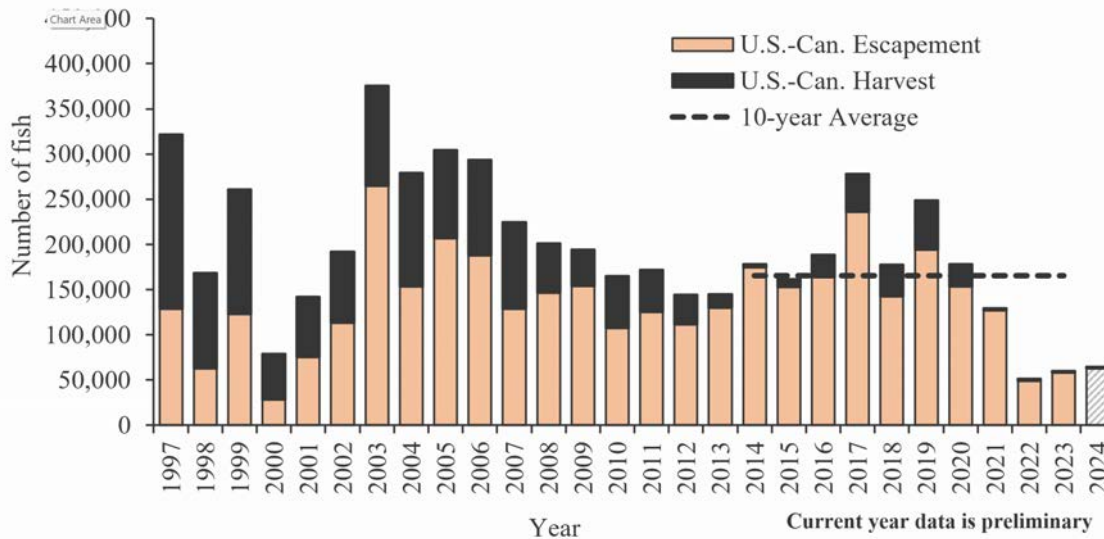
# Yukon River Chinook, Chum and Coho Salmon 2024 Summer & Fall Summaries

**Authors:** Deena Jallen, Fred West, Christy Gleason, Bonnie Borba, Holly Carroll, and Shane Ransbury

(**Author's note:** subsistence harvest estimates will be available later this winter and fall season assessment and management were ongoing at the time of this writing. The information provided in this summary is preliminary and subject to change.)

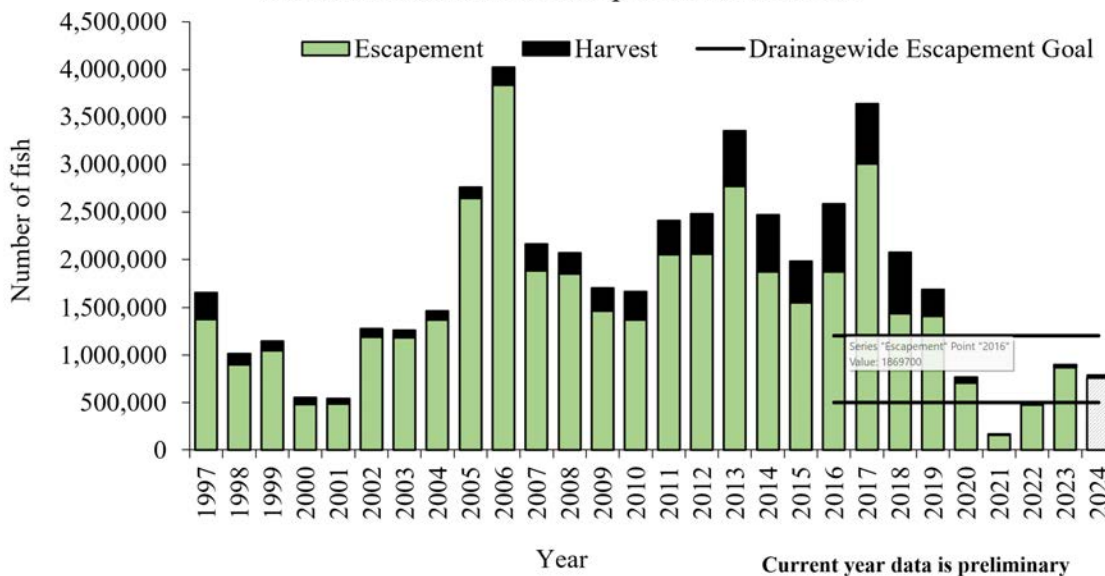
This was the fifth year of poor Chinook and fall chum salmon run abundance, which led to hardships for subsistence fishermen relying on these critical resources along the Yukon River. Over the past 5 years, summer chum and coho salmon run abundances have been variable but have been large enough to provide subsistence opportunity in most years. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff want to extend our gratitude for the commitment of fishermen to conserve salmon runs for future generations during low abundance years.

Chinook salmon escapement and harvest



The 2024 Chinook salmon run was larger than in 2022 and 2023, but still well below average. Approximately 64,200 Chinook salmon were estimated at Pilot Station sonar, and 24,200 Chinook salmon were counted at the Eagle sonar near the U.S. Canada border. Fishing for Chinook salmon remained closed all season. Escapement and other salmon monitoring project counts in Alaska and Canada were well below average. Escapement goals, including the new border passage objective of 71,000 fish heading into Canada, were not met.

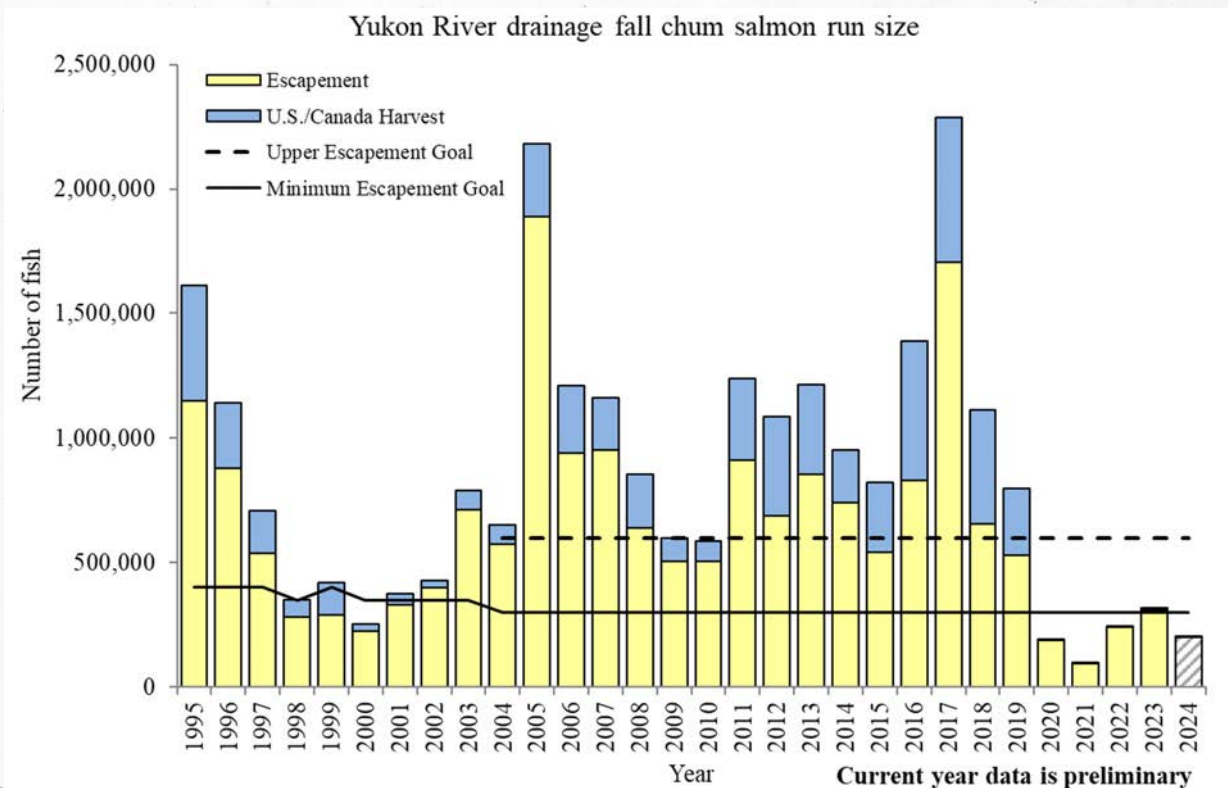
Summer chum salmon escapement and harvest





Summer chum salmon returned within the forecast, but with a smaller run than in 2023. An estimated 758,300 summer chum salmon were counted at the Pilot Station sonar prior to the switch to fall season. The run was within the drainagewide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million fish, but below the historical average of 1.6 million fish. Subsistence fishing opportunity for summer chum salmon was opened with selective gear types (dip nets, hook and line, and manned fish wheels) up through part of District 5. Pink and sockeye salmon could also be retained; however, all Chinook salmon were required to be released alive.

Fishing for nonsalmon remained open most of the season with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets restricted to 60 feet or less in length, which were required to be operated as a set net. To protect migrating Chinook salmon, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets were removed from the water for a two-week period in each district. The timing of the closure protected the bulk of the Chinook salmon run as the moved through each district.



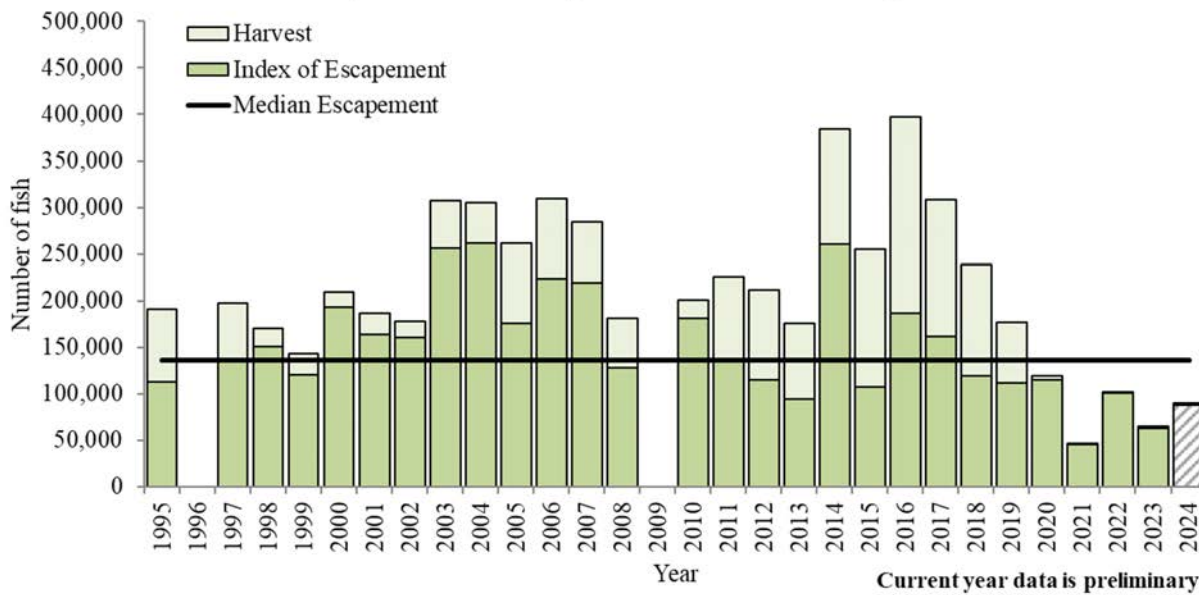
The 2024 fall chum salmon run is approximately 200,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 900,000 fish. The coho salmon index of run size is approximately 89,000 fish compared to a historical of 222,000 fish. Yukon River fall chum salmon run was the third lowest on record (1974–2023), while the coho salmon run was also the third lowest (1995–2023).

The preseason projection for fall chum salmon indicated the drainagewide escapement goal range of 300,000–600,000 fish could possibly be achieved. However, the Canadian fall chum salmon run has been extremely weak in recent years, therefore Canadian treaty objectives were not expected to be met. As summer chum salmon comprise the majority of the early portion of the fall season, subsistence fishing for chum salmon continued with selective gear types during the first ten days of the fall season in most districts before closing. As the fall chum salmon inseason run size projections fell below the drainagewide escapement goal, fall chum salmon fishing remained closed. The fall chum salmon drainagewide goal of 300,000–600,000, Teedriinjik goal of 85,000–234,000, and two Canadian treaty objectives were not achieved. In early October through the end of November, replicate surveys counting fall chum salmon are conducted in the Delta River in the Tanana River drainage. Similar to the first year of the salmon decline in 2020, the Delta River escapement goal of 7,000–20,000 fall chum salmon was the only one met this year.



### Coho salmon index of run size

(does not include escapement below lower river sonar)



At the start of the fall season, subsistence fishing for coho salmon was open with selective gears. As the coho salmon run progressed, it became apparent the run was late and very weak, prompting fishing to close for this species as well. Because of the low fall chum and coho salmon runs, 4-inch mesh gillnet fishing time was reduced to weekends to allow more salmon to migrate to the spawning grounds. Fishing restrictions were relaxed beginning October 1 starting in the Lower Yukon and progressing to upriver districts based on migration timing of fall chum salmon. However, to protect spawning salmon, important spawning tributaries for fall chum and coho salmon remained closed to subsistence salmon fishing gear through the end of December. These closures included the Koyukuk, Teedriinjik, Porcupine, Kantishna, and Nenana river drainages.

**For more information, contact the following staff.**

**Summer chum and Chinook salmon:** Deena Jallen (Manager), ADF&G, [deena.jallen@alaska.gov](mailto:deena.jallen@alaska.gov) 907-459-7309 or Fred West (Research Biologist), ADF&G, [fred.west@alaska.gov](mailto:fred.west@alaska.gov) 907-267-2237

**Fall chum and coho salmon:** Christy Gleason (Manager), ADF&G, [christine.gleason@alaska.gov](mailto:christine.gleason@alaska.gov) 907-459-7240 or Bonnie Borba (Research Biologist), ADF&G, [bonnie.borba@alaska.gov](mailto:bonnie.borba@alaska.gov) 907-459-7260

**Federal Subsistence Management:** Holly Carroll, USFWS, Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, [holly\\_carroll@fws.gov](mailto:holly_carroll@fws.gov) 907-351-3029

**Marine salmon research:** Sabrina Garcia, ADF&G, Marine Research Biologist, [sabrina.garcia@alaska.gov](mailto:sabrina.garcia@alaska.gov) 907-267-2180



## Farewell to Gabe Canfield

We would like to thank Gabe for her wonderful work with YR DFA and wish her the best of luck in her next adventure! Gabe started with YR DFA as an intern through the First Alaskans Institute. Her spirit and hard work moved her into a full-time position as a program coordinator who worked on several projects within YR DFA. Gabe eventually moved into the policy coordinator position and thrived. She found her niche and developed her passion for the Yukon River salmon and the people who relied on them. Gabe has been a valuable asset to our team. We are excited to see her move on and wish her well in her role.

# A BRIEF ROADMAP TO ALASKA'S FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR ADDRESSING SALMON BYCATCH, INTERCEPT AND HATCHERY IMPACTS

**Author:** Gale K. Vick

Salmon bycatch, intercept and hatchery impacts are on everyone's radar as we navigate through ways to mitigate the growing crisis in loss of salmon abundance and average sizes in both the Bering Sea / Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and in our multiple river systems. There are state and federal task forces and committees working on identifying possible answers but results are not happening fast enough. In the AYK the crisis for loss of Chinook, chum and coho are historically unprecedented and the evidence shows it is spreading. It is incumbent on all of us to keep pushing agencies and regulators for equitable solutions.

The pathway to solutions is fractured by jurisdiction limitations and of course, by regional disputes and needs and political pressures. Salmon are an anadromous species that must run a gauntlet through many different management systems. When looking at the multitude of jurisdictions that salmon must run through, it is easy to see why it is so difficult to manage salmon in a wholistic way and why it is so hard develop true comprehensive rebuilding plans.

This is a brief (and limited) roadmap on where each primary agency fits into the management of salmon. It illustrates the complication for salmon management even without including other state, federal and international agencies that also play a role in fisheries management and research. It also does not include the multitude of international commissions, Alaska local governments, advisory committees (state and federal), tribal organizations, academic institutions and numerous NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that also play immense roles in salmon research, policy and management. A real schematic for fisheries management input in the North Pacific is daunting and would take up pages. This is just a simplified overview of the major regulators and managers.

## ALASKA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC IN BRIEF

JURISDICTION	AUTHORITY	REGULATORY	MANAGEMENT	IMPORTANCE TO SALMON MANAGEMENT
FEDERAL EEZ EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE 3-200 MILES	U.S. CONGRESS MAGNUSON-STEVENS FISHERY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ACT (MSA)	NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (NPFMC)	NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)	BERING SEA AND GULF OF ALASKA BYCATCH JUVENILE ESTUARY HABITAT FEDERAL SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS (FMP) RESEARCH
ALASKA RIVERINE WATERS ADJACENT TO FEDERAL RESERVES	ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT (ANILCA) U.S. CONGRESS	FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD (FSB) U.S. DEPT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI)	U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS)	LIMITED CO-MANAGEMENT WITH ALASKA TRIBES FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS	GOVERNMENT OF CANADA U.S. GOVERNMENT THE PACIFIC SALMON TREATY YUKON RIVER SALMON AGREEMENT	PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION YUKON RIVER PANEL (YRP) (NORTHERN)	ALASKA DEPT OF FISH AND GAME (ADF&G) DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA (DFO) US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS)	YUKON RIVER MANAGEMENT / CANADIAN STOCKS ONLY SOUTHERN TRANSBOUNDARY MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
NORTH PACIFIC HALIBUT	PACIFIC HALIBUT TREATY	INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION (IPHC) (CANADA AND U.S.)	NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) ALASKA DEPT OF FISH AND GAME (ADF&G)	INCIDENTAL
STATE MARINE AND RIVERINE WATERS 0-3 MILES IN TIDEWATER	ALASKA CONSTITUTION ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE	ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE	ALASKA DEPT OF FISH AND GAME (ADF&G)	ALL SALMON MANAGEMENT IN STATE EXCEPT WHERE FEDERAL SPECIAL ACTION (SAR) IS IMPLEMENTED COMMERCIAL, SPORTS AND STATE SUBSISTENCE ALASKA PERSONAL USE FISHERIES ALL STATE WATERS SALMON HABITAT AND PASSAGE SETTING ESCAPEMENT GOALS, MONITORING HATCHERY MANAGEMENT AND PERMITTING STATE WATERS BYCATCH AND INTERCEPT NO TRIBAL CO-MANAGEMENT LIMITED CO-MANAGEMENT IN FEDERAL MARINE WATERS RESEARCH

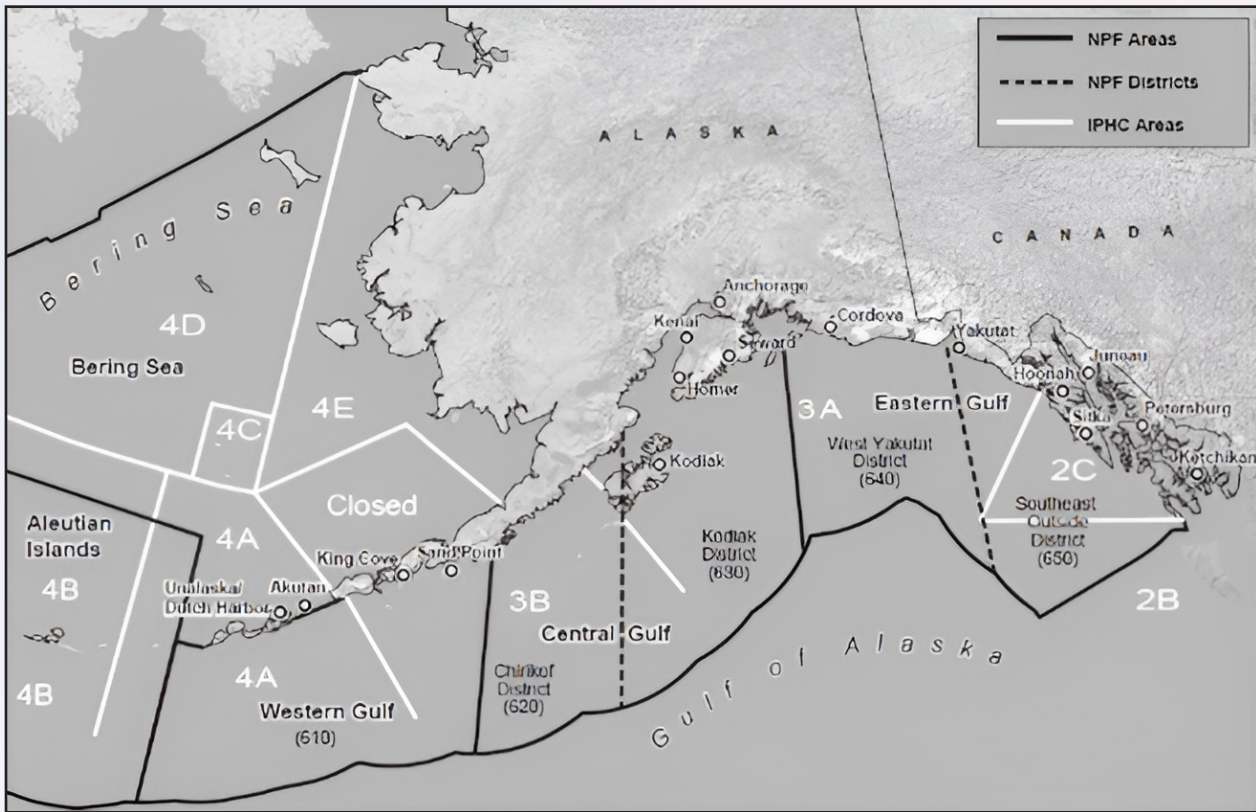
Interpretations listed here should be verified by each agency. The author does not make any claim to be a legal source.

Alaska Federal Marine Waters surround the North Pacific all along the Alaska coastline 3 miles from the shoreline to the 200 mile EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) limit. Outside the EEZ are international waters that the U.S. cannot control.

( 16 U.S.C. 773 et seq.; 1801 et seq.; 3631 et seq.; Pub. L. 108-447; Pub. L. 111-281. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-679>)



Defining the lines between federal and state waters is very complicated. Maps alone cannot tell the full story; waters of each jurisdiction are defined in federal and state regulations.



**MAP #1** General federally defined fishing areas (3 miles from tidewater) along with the IPHC (International Pacific Halibut Commission) areas.



**MAP #2** Alaska state commercial salmon areas - general



The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) is the federal marine regulatory body for the North Pacific EEZ. The NPFMC is the largest of eight councils around the coastal United States, which all get their authority from the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management Act (MSA). The NPFMC meets five times a year, comprised of the Council itself, a lay Advisory Panel (AP) and a Science and Statistical Committee (SSC.) Management of regulations and research is through NOAA Fisheries or NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service.)

The critical importance of the NPFMC and NOAA to salmon is under the bycatch regulations in the groundfish industry.

<https://www.npfmc.org>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska>

<https://www.npfmc.org/fisheries-issues/bycatch/>

### **International Treaties:**

There are two major international fisheries treaties between Canada and the United States:

(1) The International Halibut Commission (IPHC): Created by the Pacific Halibut Treaty between the U.S. and Canada, the IPHC regulates halibut in the North Pacific. NOAA, ADF&G and DFO (Canada) jointly manage. The IPHC relationship to salmon is strictly incidental catch which is very minimal. <https://www.iphc.int>

(2) The Pacific Salmon Treaty / Pacific Salmon Commission

The Pacific Salmon Treaty is a transboundary agreement between the United States and Canada to regulate and manage salmon that spawn in Canada but feed in U.S. waters along the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Salmon Commission is a sixteen-person body made up of four Commissioners and four alternates from each country, the United States and Canada, who represent the interests of commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, the conservation community, as well as federal, state, and tribal governments. There are also five regional Panels, four of which report to the Commission. The Commission and the Panels are aided by scientific advice provided by a number of bilateral Technical Committees. The Commission's work is administered through a Secretariat head office located in Vancouver, Canada. The five regional panels include the Yukon River Panel, Transboundary River Panel, Northern Panel, Fraser River Panel, Southern Panel.

The Yukon River Panel is the most critical to the Yukon River. In a departure from other Panel arrangements, the Agreement assigns many functions and responsibilities of the Pacific Salmon Commission directly to the Yukon River Panel itself. Further, in the event the Pacific Salmon Treaty is ever terminated, the Agreement can stand on its own under the name Yukon River Salmon Treaty with the functions of the Panel to be assumed by a new commission referred to as the Yukon River Salmon Commission. The 2024 Agreement for the Yukon River calls for a seven-year moratorium on Chinook salmon harvest as the Panel seeks to rebuild both Canadian-bound Chinook and fall chum stocks in both Alaska and the Yukon Territories.

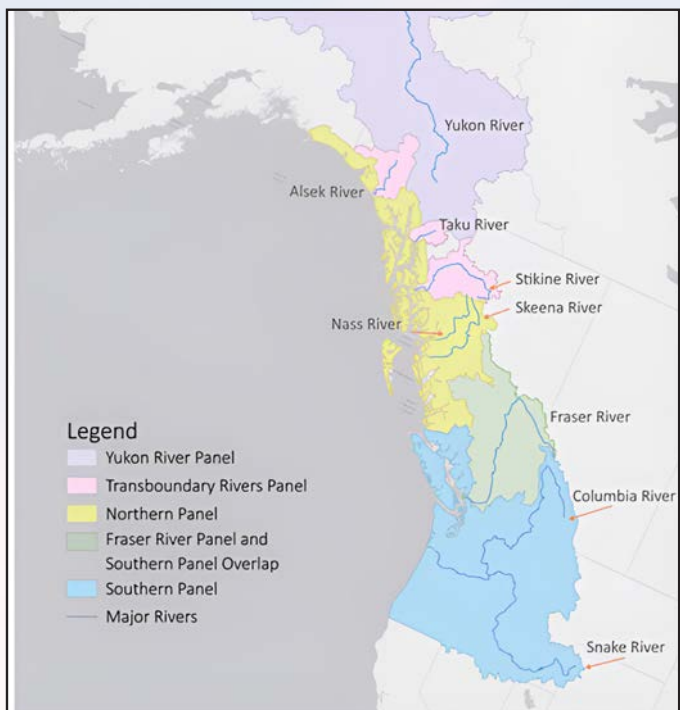
<https://www.psc.org/about-us/structure/panels/>

<https://www.psc.org/about-us/structure/panels/yukon-river/>

Alaska Federal Riverine Waters: 16 USC Ch. 51: Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) created the framework for Alaska federal subsistence fish and wildlife management within and adjacent to federal lands in Alaska, under Title VIII of the Act. Federal subsistence and federal resource management is regulated by the Federal Subsistence Board and managed through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the Department of the Interior.

The Act, passed by Congress and signed into law on December 2, 1980 provided varying degrees of protection to over 157 million acres of federal land in Alaska. Title VIII is specific to subsistence protections. Section 801. "The Congress finds and declares that: the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses by rural residents of Alaska, including both Natives and non-Natives, . . . is essential to . . . physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence . . . and the situation in Alaska is unique in that, in most cases, no practical alternative means





MAP #3 Pacific Salmon Commission

are available to replace the food supplies and other items gathered from fish and wildlife which supply rural residents dependent on subsistence uses” Section 802. “It is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress that (1) consistent with sound management principles, and the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, the utilization of the public lands in Alaska is to cause the least adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend upon subsistence; . . . The purpose of this title is to provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to do so; (2) non-wasteful subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and other renewable resources shall be the priority consumptive uses of all such resources on the public lands of Alaska when it is necessary to restrict taking in order to assure the continued viability of a fish or wildlife population or the continuation of subsistence uses of such population.”

Federally-managed fisheries allows for potential of co-management of fisheries resources and habitat by Alaska Native tribes. Public and tribal input is also considered

through the federal regional advisory committees (RACs)

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd530647.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd530647.pdf)

<https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/13-anilca-title-8-508.pdf>

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title16/chapter51&edition=prelim>

### Alaska State Waters:

Alaska state marine waters are generally shoreline to 3 miles but subject to regulation. Alaska state riverine waters jurisdiction is more complicated and currently under some litigation.

Almost all Alaska state marine and riverine waters are exclusively managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, unless where otherwise noted, such as species that are co-managed with federal agencies or federal management areas. This includes commercial, sports, state subsistence and personal use.

The Alaska State Legislature, under Article 8 of the Alaska Constitution, is primarily responsible for resource policy and regulation but delegates much of that regulatory authority to the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Board of Game.

The importance of ADF&G management of salmon is primary. The major issues that are inherently important to salmon management within State jurisdiction include:

- Adherence to sustainable management practices
- Escapement goal setting and monitoring
- Management of safe salmon passage in-river and protection of habitat
- Genetic testing and research
- Management of anadromous-release hatcheries and impacts on wild stocks
- Management and monitoring of Intercept fisheries in relationship to terminal salmon areas
- Supplying the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Legislature with management details for deciding allocations and other issues
- State subsistence management



Alaska does not have a tribal-state relationship, creating a barrier to tribal co-management of natural resources. However, through the AC (Advisory Committee) and Alaska Board of Fisheries processes, there is limited public input into management practices.

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=about.statutes>

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=about.mission>

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishing.main>

[https://law.alaska.gov/pdf/opinions/opinions\\_2017/17-004\\_JU20172010.pdf](https://law.alaska.gov/pdf/opinions/opinions_2017/17-004_JU20172010.pdf)

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/paad/nav/policy/>

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/water/data/map/>



YR DFA Board Meeting on October 21, 2024 in Anchorage, Alaska

## WEAP Update

**Author:** Rachael Kangas-Madros, YR DFA WEAP Program Manager

I hope all are staying warm, I wish you a happy holiday and a prosperous new year. The steering committee in-person meeting was a success in Anchorage, which took place on October 22, 2024. We had a few minor updates on the terms of reference, and the feedback was tremendously helpful. We look forward to meeting with the committee in February to review our 2025 Summer areas of culvert assessments. This will be a crucial meeting as it determines the areas along the Yukon that must be assessed for our projects. The Water Shed Ecosystem Action Plan program works closely with the clearinghouse team, who are instrumental in creating a story map and conducting TEK interviews. These interviews with the Elders and Fishermen along the Yukon are crucial as they provide us with invaluable insights into past and present salmon fishing trends, which are vital for our projects. If you have time for an interview and would like to share this knowledge, please contact Jadon Nashoanak at [jadon@yukonsalmon.org](mailto:jadon@yukonsalmon.org).

Working for YR DFA has been an amazing experience, and the teamwork is what makes this position positive. The knowledge gained in this position has been valuable and eye-opening. Our collective efforts have led to significant progress, and I am proud of what we have achieved. I look forward to our Summer assessments and the accomplishments we will achieve in 2025. Again, warmest of holiday wishes, and I look forward to meeting with our WEAP steering committee in February.





YRDFA Team - Jadon Nashoanak, Catherine Moncrieff, Olivia Irwin and Grace Kirkey at the EIRAC meeting in Fairbanks, AK. October 2024

The Clearinghouse Project aims to create a comprehensive, watershed-wide database that captures both social and ecological changes along the Alaska portion of the Yukon River. This project utilizes Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Western science. By weaving these two perspectives together, we're creating a tool that doesn't just assess the past but also paves the way for smarter resource monitoring, restoration priorities, and identifying critical data gaps.

The products generated from this project will benefit researchers, resource managers, Yukon River communities, and all who rely on its watershed.

This fall, we officially kicked off our TEK interviews! So far, we've interviewed 4 Elders and fishers along the Yukon River to gather invaluable insights. These conversations explore topics like: local history and personal stories, environmental changes over time, human impacts on the river, and interactions between species in the watershed.

In the coming months, the team will travel to more communities to conduct interviews.

One exciting component of the project is the creation of a historical timeline of events along the river. If there's an event in your area that you believe belongs on this timeline, please share it with Grace at [grace@yukonsalmon.org](mailto:grace@yukonsalmon.org). Your contribution can help us ensure the timeline is as complete and meaningful as possible.



Jadon Nashoanak, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Technician conducting a TEK interview with Yukon River Community Marshall Elder, Nick Andrew Sr. in September 2024.

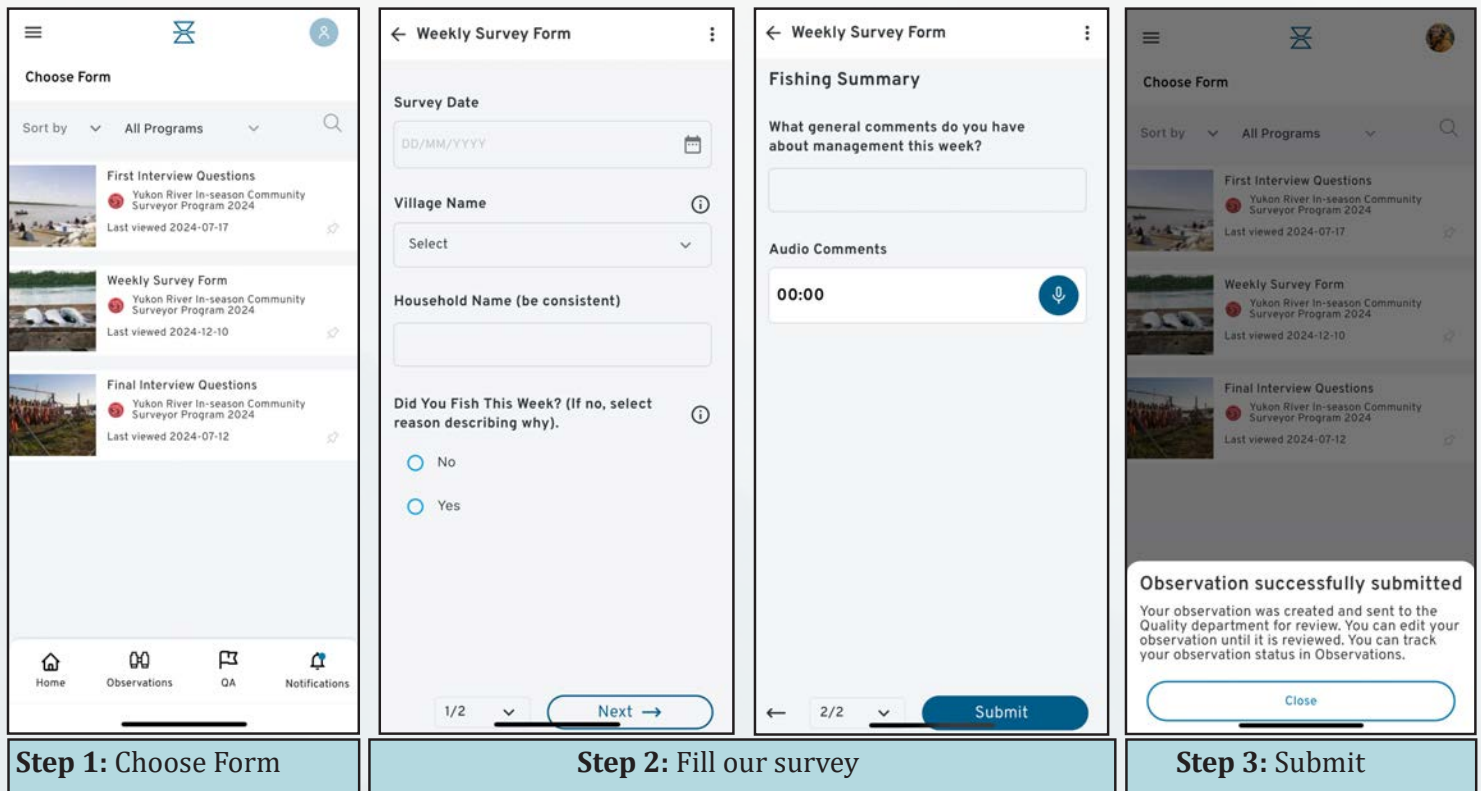


# Survey Program **Author:** Grace Kirkey, YR DFA Program Specialist

For over two decades, the YR DFA Inseason Subsistence Salmon Survey Program has served as a bridge between Yukon River fishers and fisheries in-season managers. This program allows fishers to share what they observe on the river; this program provides real-time insights while keeping survey participants' identities anonymous. It also fosters collaboration and shared understanding between communities and resource managers.

Each summer, it is our goal to hire local surveyors in 10 communities along the river to gather weekly reports from fishers. This season, we successfully engaged surveyors in 9 communities. The information they collect informs both fishers and managers, creating a more dynamic and responsive approach to managing the Yukon River's fishery.

This year, we introduced a digital version of the survey, giving surveyors the option to move from paper to an app-based system. While the traditional method remains available, the digital platform offers many advantages: reduces errors and ensures data is complete, improves connection between YR DFA staff and surveyors, and sets the stage for broader participation, allowing fishers to submit observations directly from their own devices in the future.



Surveyors who used the app appreciated its user-friendly design, and we're working to expand its use in the coming season.

We're constantly striving to improve the program. This spring, we'll hold a training session to ensure all surveyors feel confident using the digital platform. Our goal is for surveyors to not only excel in their own data collection but also act as mentors in their communities, inspiring others to participate.

We're grateful for the dedication of our returning surveyors, whose efforts make this program a success. A heartfelt thank you to Max Agayar from Alakanuk, Nita Stevens from Mountain Village, Basil Larsen from Russian Mission, Sherry Kruger from Anvik, Rachael Kangas from Ruby, Charlene Vent from Huslia, Stan Zuray from Tanana, Kara'Lisa Tremblay from Fort Yukon, Ruby Becker from Eagle, and to all of the fishers that participated. We cannot thank you enough for all of your hard work this past season.

We're currently seeking a surveyor for Marshall. If you're interested or know someone who might be, we'd love to hear from you! For more information please contact [catherine@yukonsalmon.org](mailto:catherine@yukonsalmon.org) or [grace@yukonsalmon.org](mailto:grace@yukonsalmon.org)

# Welcoming New YR DFA Employee



## **Olivia Henaayee Irwin**

Policy Coordinator

Olivia Henaayee Irwin (Iñupiaq/Koyukon Athabascan) is the daughter of the late James Timony Irwin of Nenana, Alaska and the late Gretchen Sumpter Irwin. Her grandparents are the late Jack Irwin and late Jennie Suckik of Allakaket and Nenana, Alaska and the late Daniel Sumpter and Rebecca Hoover. Olivia goes by her English name as well as her Denaakk'e name, Henaayee (pronounced hen-aa-he) which means "the story teller."

Olivia spent her early childhood in her home village of Nenana, Alaska before moving to her mother's home state of Missouri to complete grade school. After high school Olivia attended Pomona College in Claremont, California where she received her bachelors of art degree in Indigenous Studies in 2020. Following college, Olivia moved home to Nenana, Alaska and resumed practicing our ways of life, and began her activism career.

In 2020 she began working for Alaska Native non-profits supporting the advancement of traditional ways of knowing and providing regulatory and policy analysis. In 2024, Olivia founded H.I. Impact, LLC through which she consults Native non-profits on topics relating to natural resource policy and hunting & fishing regulations. Olivia serves as the Co-Chair of the Minto-Nenana Fish & Game Advisory Committee advancing local and statewide issues through the creation of regulations and by testifying at the Board of Game, Board of Fish, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, Federal Subsistence Board, and legislative hearings that relate to hunting and fishing. Outside of advocating, Olivia enjoys practicing our ways of life through processing fish, moose hunting, learning to tan moose hides, working at summer culture camps, beading, berry picking, and creating digital art.



## **Alitha McCarty**

Executive Assistant

Alitha McCarty is Koyukon Athabascan from Ruby and Hughes. She's lived in Ruby all her life with her family. Her life revolves around her son Sidney McCarty and furbaby Phoenix. Her parents are the late Esther McCarty (Hughes) and Patrick McCarty (Ruby). Her paternal grandparents were the late William and Marie McCarty. Her maternal grandparents were the late Arthur and Alice Ambrose.

Alitha went straight to work after high school. Working as a Teacher Aide at M.A.K. School in Ruby for about 5 years. She has been working at the Ruby Tribal Council for about 20 years. During this time she held the Education/Employment Director position, tribal enrollment, the Administrative Assistant position then the past few years she held the positions of Administrative & Bookkeeping Assistant. While working she had received her Associates in Tribal Management at UAF. Alitha had also completed and received certificates from the Doyon Leadership Training and from the TCC Leadership for Results Training. Throughout the years of working she took the opportunity to further

her education by attending various training and conferences ranging from education, human resources, bookkeeping and tribal enrollment.

Alitha and her family enjoy living a traditional, cultural and a subsistence lifestyle. Although Alitha isn't fluent in Denaakke language she can moderately read, write and speak it. She had written and sang her first Native song in honor of her late mother when her memorial potlatch was held. Her favorite times are spent hunting, beading, cooking and fishing along the Yukon river with her family.

Edeyedaaleelgots "hold on to your spirit, be calm within yourself"



**TEAM DIRECTORY**

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**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:** *Alitha McCarthy*  
Email: alitha@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. Marys
Y-2, Seat 2	Mike Peters	Marshall
Y-2, Seat 3	Stanislaus Sheppard	Mtn. 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**

DISTR./SEAT #	REPRESENTATIVE	COMMUNITY
Coastal, Alt. 1	Richard Tuluk	Chevak
Coastal, Alt. 2	VACANT	-
Y-1, Alt 1	Marvin Okitkun	Kotlik
Y-1, Alt. 2	Willie Andrews	Emmonak
Y-2, Alt. 1	Rex Nick	Pilot Station
Y-2, Alt. 2	William Riley Jr.	Pitka's Point
Y-3, Alt. 1	Basil Larson	Russian Mission
Y-4, Alt. 1	Tommy Kriska	Nulato
Y-4, Alt. 2	VACANT	-
Y5, Alt. 1	Janessa Newman	Rampart
Y-6, Alt. 1	Phillip Titus	Minto
Y-6, Alt. 2	Kathleen Demientieff	Nenana
Koyukuk Alt.1	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)

Cut & mail

*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
- Includes advertising on website, Facebook, and during public gatherings.

**Payment Method:**

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

- Check # \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed (payable to **YRDFA**)
- Card (Circle one):    VISA    Mastercard    Discover    AMEX

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization/Fishing District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail completed slip & donation to:**

**Phone:**

**YRDFA**  
**PO Box 13334**  
**Trapper Creek, AK 99683**

**1-877-999-8566**

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association  
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Protecting and  
promoting all healthy  
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