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The management of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada is the joint responsibility of American and Canadian governments with active participation from stakeholders and is overseen by the Yukon River Panel (yukonriverpanel.com). The Yukon River Panel held its annual meeting in Whitehorse recently to review pre-season outlooks, management strategies and anticipated conservation measures for Canadian origin Yukon River salmon. The Panel agreed upon interim Canadian escapement goals for Chinook salmon, upper Yukon fall chum salmon, and for the Fishing Branch River fall chum salmon and discussed the expected low return of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon in 2013. Additionally, the Panel approved the final list of Restoration and Enhancement projects proposed for 2013 season.

The Yukon River Panel, established by the US/Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement, met in Whitehorse, YT from March 25 through 28 to discuss 2013 salmon run outlooks and review interim escapement goals for Canadian origin Chinook and fall chum salmon. The Panel agreed to a three year extension of the interim Canadian escapement goal range adopted in 2010 of 42,500 to 55,000 Chinook salmon as evaluated by Eagle sonar. The Panel also agreed to continue for three additional years an interim mainstem Yukon River Canadian escapement goal range of 70,000 to 104,000 upper Yukon fall chum salmon. For the Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, the Panel agreed to continue for three additional years an interim escapement goal range adopted in 2011 of 22,000-49,000 fall chum salmon. In addition to these escapement goals, there is a commitment to pass enough Chinook and fall chum salmon across the border to meet harvest share agreements.

Based on data compiled by the Panel's Joint Technical Committee, the 2013 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run is anticipated to be below average to poor. Recognizing this situation, the Panel determined that the implementation of conservative management measures is warranted to facilitate that the total number of Chinook salmon returning to Canada falls within the escapement goal range. In addition to existing U.S. and Canadian management strategies and regulations, the Panel discussed new regulations directed at Chinook salmon conservation that were recently adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. These changes include providing mandatory protection of the first pulse of Chinook salmon migrating up the Yukon River as well as an increased number of management tools available to better conserve incidental harvest of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon during chum fishing fisheries in Alaska.

Beyond discussing biological and management issues, the Panel approved over \$US 1 million of funding for 31 project proposals for salmon and habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund projects in both Alaska and the Yukon. The Panel has allocated over \$US 10 million since 2002 to community-based projects, including stewardship projects, directly supporting the management and recovery of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada. For 2013, these projects include population monitoring projects, stewardship and education projects, and subsistence harvest surveys. Projects that were approved for funding will occur along the Yukon River Mainstem and its tributaries, such as the Porcupine River. Communities include Mountain Village, Rampart Rapids, Dawson, Mayo, Old Crow, Teslin and Whitehorse during the 2013 season.

As the current administrator of the Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement fund, representatives from the Pacific Salmon Commission secretariat provided the Panel with an update on 2012 projects that were approved to receive funding by the Yukon River Panel. Additionally, the secretariat presented an overview of its current structure, responsibilities and activities carried out in support of both the Yukon River Panel as well as other Panels established pursuant to the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Since the Yukon River Salmon Agreement was signed in 2002, the Panel has set an example for cooperation in the sharing and management of international salmon stocks. The Panel, which operates under the umbrella of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, consists of 6 Alaskan and 6 Yukon representatives from throughout the Yukon River system, and is supported by regional advisors, scientists, and managers from both Canadian and United States agencies.

At its winter meeting (scheduled for December 2 to 6, 2013 in Whitehorse) the Panel will review the outcome of the 2013 salmon runs as well as the management actions employed in both Alaska and Yukon. The Panel will also consider Restoration and Enhancement Fund project submissions proposed for 2014.

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