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PRESS RELEASE: December 18, 2014

The management of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada is the joint responsibility of United States (U.S.) and Canadian governments and is overseen by the Yukon River Panel (yukonriverpanel.com). The Yukon River Panel held its 2014 fall meeting in Anchorage, Alaska to review post-season information on run abundance, management actions implemented, and preliminary harvest of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon stocks. In addition, the Panel evaluated Project Concept proposals submitted for consideration to the Restoration and Enhancement Fund, discussed ongoing financial and administrative matters and responsibilities, and provided the opportunity for public testimony. The Panel extends their thanks and appreciation for the cooperation and sacrifices made by Yukon River fishery participants in both Alaska and Yukon to implement conservation measures that enabled over 64,000 adult Chinook salmon to reach their spawning grounds in Canada.

The Yukon River Panel (Panel) is established under the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement pursuant to the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and consists of 12 Alaskan and Yukon Territory residents from throughout the Yukon River system. The Panel is supported by regional advisors, scientists and managers from a variety of Canadian and U.S. organizations. The Panel met in Anchorage, Alaska from December 7 to 11, 2014 to review status of the 2014 Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon runs, management actions implemented, harvest estimates available and to report on administrative and financial activities in 2013/14. The Panel also reviewed and selected Restoration and Enhancement Project Concept proposals that will be invited to submit Detailed Proposals for the 2015 funding cycle.

The 2014 preseason outlook for Canadian-origin Yukon River Chinook salmon was for a poor to significantly below average run. Following a series of poor runs resulting in not achieving the lower-end of the bilateral interim management escapement goal, there was concern for effects on future productivity and long-term health of this stock. In response, the most stringent management and conservation measures implemented on the Yukon River to date were undertaken to ensure that as many migrating adult Chinook as possible were able to reach their spawning grounds in Canada.

Conservation measures implemented in Alaska included continued closure of all directed commercial and subsistence fisheries for Chinook salmon from the near-shore marine waters to the international border. Chinook salmon captured during chum salmon directed commercial and subsistence fisheries

using dip net, beach seine, and fish wheels were required to be released alive. The few captured incidentally in chum salmon directed gill net fisheries at the end of the Chinook salmon run were not allowed to be sold commercially and were retained by fishermen for personal or subsistence use.

The low abundance of Chinook salmon runs over the last 7-years has resulted in a considerable reduction, and in many cases foregoing of harvest, by Yukon First Nation people to enable as many adult fish as possible to reach spawning areas in the upper Yukon River watershed in Canada. Many Yukon First Nation Governments enacted resolutions to forego Chinook salmon subsistence harvest activities, while the allocation of Chinook salmon to Yukon First Nation subsistence fisheries was removed for conservation purposes for the majority of the 2014 season. All commercial and domestic fisheries for Chinook salmon remained closed for the duration of the 2014 season while angling for, or retaining Chinook salmon was prohibited in the Canadian portion of the Yukon River during the adult migration and spawning period.

Through the implementation of conservation measures in Alaska and Canada, over 64,000 adult Chinook salmon returned to their spawning grounds in Canada exceeding the interim management escapement goal range at the international border of 42,500 to 55,000.

The 2014 mainstem Canadian-origin chum salmon run forecast was 200,000 to 260,000 fish. Analysis of the total 2014 mainstem Canadian-origin chum salmon run is ongoing and is expected to be published in the 2015 Joint Technical Committee report. Approximately 173,000 Canadian-origin Yukon River mainstem (fall) chum salmon were enumerated at the Eagle Sonar project near the international border. With an estimated spawning escapement of over 160,000 chum salmon, the interim management escapement goal at the international border of 70,000 to 104,000 was exceeded.

The escapement of Canadian-origin (fall) chum salmon into the Fishing Branch River of the Porcupine River sub-watershed was forecast to be below average with 40,000 to 52,000 adult fish anticipated to return to the Porcupine River. Despite the strong mainstem Yukon River fall chum salmon run, enumeration of chum salmon at the Porcupine River sonar project in 2014 was below 18,000 fish. Although analysis of chum salmon escapement to the Fishing Branch River is ongoing, the goal of 22,000 to 49,000 was not likely achieved. In response to the series of poor Canadian-origin chum salmon returns to the Fishing Branch River since 2008, the Panel has requested the U.S. / Canada Joint Technical Committee to develop a stock rebuilding plan, which is to include a range of rebuilding options, for presentation to the Panel at its annual 2015 Pre-Season meeting.

Following the consideration of the results of the Joint Technical Committee review, public comments received, and assessment against the Panel's renewed near-term priorities for the Restoration and Enhancement Fund, the Panel has selected 30 Project Concept proposals that are invited to submit Detailed Proposals for consideration at the Panel's annual 2015 meeting.

The Panel has allocated more than \$US 12 million since 2002 to restoration, enhancement, stewardship and communications projects, directly supporting the management and recovery of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada.

Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund Project Concepts Invited to Submit Detailed Proposals (2015)

1. Big Salmon River Juvenile Chinook Out-migrant Assessment Study 2015
2. Blind Creek Chinook Salmon Enumeration Weir
3. Collection and Analysis of Yukon River DNA Baseline Samples in Alaska and Canada
4. Draanjik Salmon Weir, Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska (Phase 1: feasibility and conceptual design)
5. Fishing Branch River Chum Salmon Habitat Assessment – Year 2
6. Genetic stock identification of fall chum salmon in commercial harvests, Yukon River, 2015
7. Genetic stock identification of fall chum salmon in subsistence harvest from the Tanana Area, Yukon River, 2015
8. Mainstem Teslin River Chinook Sonar Project - 2015
9. 2015 Michie Creek Salmon and Habitat Monitoring Project
10. Porcupine River Sonar Program – Chinook Salmon
11. Radio tracking of Chinook salmon and genetic sampling in the Porcupine River, Canada
12. Radio tracking of chum salmon in the Porcupine River, Canada
13. Rapids All Season Video Monitoring, 2015
14. Salmon Stewardship Coordinators for Yukon Schools
15. Sonar Enumeration of Chinook Salmon on the Big Salmon River
16. Southern Lakes Chinook Salmon Restoration and Enhancement
17. Stewart River Sonar Pilot Program
18. Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Fox Creek Salmon Restoration Project
19. Temperature monitoring of Yukon River Chinook Salmon spawning and migration habitats in Canada
20. Teslin River Chinook Stock Restoration Investigation
21. Yukon River Chinook Salmon Hatchery Augmentation Feasibility Assessment and Development
22. Yukon River Chinook Salmon Mainstem Outplant Program spawning evaluation
23. Yukon River Chinook Salmon Stock Restoration Community Technical Advisor
24. Yukon River Chinook Salmon Stock Restoration Education Initiative
25. Yukon River Chinook Salmon Subsistence Sampling: (Anvik, Galena, Ruby, Fort Yukon)
26. Yukon River Education Exchange Program
27. Yukon River In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences
28. Yukon River North Mainstem Stewardship
29. Yukon River Pre-Season Planning Meeting
30. Yukon River Salmon Stock Identification

Proponents of projects selected by the Yukon River Panel will be individually notified by the Yukon River Salmon Restoration and Enhancement Fund administrator (Pacific Salmon Commission). The deadline for submission of Detailed Proposals for the Panel's consideration will be midnight on Sunday, January 25, 2015.

At its annual Pre-Season meeting (scheduled for April 12 - 16, 2015 in Whitehorse, Yukon) the Panel will review 2015 Canadian-origin Chinook and chum salmon forecasts, proposed management strategies in the U.S. and Canada, and consider Detailed Proposals submitted to the Restoration and Enhancement Fund to be selected for funding in 2015. Further information regarding this meeting, including venue and a detailed agenda, will be posted to the Yukon River Panel's website by March 2015.