

The Salmon's Journey: One River, One Life.

The Yukon River Panel, established by the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement, met in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory from December 10-13, 2017. At this meeting, the Panel recognized fifteen years of international cooperation since ratification of the Yukon River Salmon Agreement in December 2002.

To mark the occasion, a special presentation was made to the Panel by the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee members of the Panel's Canadian section. Canadian Panel member Harvey Jessup, in his current role as Chair of the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, supported by Canadian Panel member John Burdek and Canadian advisor to the Panel Jesse Trerice, presented the Panel with a specially commissioned art work designed, carved and painted by renowned Northern Tutchone and Tlingit artist Eugene Alfred of the Selkirk First Nation from Pelly Crossing, Yukon.

In his address to the Panel, Mr. Jessup conveyed the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee's and Canada's sentiments regarding the strength of cooperation between Alaska and Yukon to manage Yukon River salmon stocks. *"Canada and the U.S., especially Alaska and Yukon, have a long history of collaboration on many fronts, not the least of which is the long-term sustainability of salmon in the Yukon River. One river, one life. Salmon are the very essence of life along the Yukon River sustaining people, wildlife, plants and entire ecosystems as can be attested to by the people who live along its pristine shores from its headwaters in Yukon to its mouth in Alaska".*

Mr. Alfred's yellow cedar carved panel was commissioned to represent salmon, the river, and the inseparable bond between people and fish, and the finished piece embodies many aspects of this relationship. The two Chinook salmon, one male and one female bearing eggs, are depicted in red, the colour of life, and are immersed in a turquoise background, a colour that expresses the spirituality of the sky, the water and the plants; the black represents the balance. A raven is featured in the panel's top right corner and is believed to be the bringer of salmon to the people; while a human, just below, represents today. The hand at the bottom left of the panel symbolizes the cooperation between Alaska and Yukon, figuratively conveying the reality that we all have a hand in the commitment to sharing and bringing back the salmon for future generations.



Entrusted to the care of the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, the "The Salmon's Journey" sculpture will henceforth be displayed as a centerpiece at all Yukon River Panel meetings to serve as a reminder of the duty as members of the Yukon River Panel to ensure the long-term sustainability of Yukon River salmon and the important relationships between the salmon, the river and the people.



Yukon River Panel members, alternates and advisors with the “Salmon’s Journey” panel in December 2017 at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

Useful links:

Yukon River Panel: <http://www.yukonriverpanel.com/>

Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee: <http://yssc.ca/>

Artist Eugene Alfred: <https://eugenealfred.com/>