

A scenic landscape of a river valley. In the foreground, there are green trees and a gravel path. A river flows through the middle ground, with a bridge crossing it. The background features large, forested mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

**BRINGING  
THE SALMON  
HOME**

**THE COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON REINTRODUCTION INITIATIVE**  
*of the*  
**Syilx Nation, Ktunaxa Nation, Secwepemc Nation,  
Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia**

# FIVE GOVERNMENTS ONE VISIONARY AGREEMENT



“This formal working relationship will be based on mutual respect and recognition, and will be guided by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the reconciliation principles committed to by both the Government of Canada and Government of British Columbia.”

*~Letter of Agreement (July 29, 2019)*



# SETTING OUR COURSE

On July 29, 2019 in Castlegar, British Columbia, the Syilx Okanagan, Ktunaxa and Secwepemc Indigenous Nations, Canada and British Columbia signed a landmark agreement to explore salmon reintroduction into the Columbia River Basin.

The Letter of Agreement is a renewable commitment by the five governments to collaborate on exploring reintroduction of Pacific anadromous salmon into the Canadian portion of the upper Columbia River. Salmon have been blocked from returning to this region for over 80 years since the construction of Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State. This and other hydroelectric developments in Canada have impacted fish habitat and the Aboriginal Rights and Title and interests of Indigenous Nations. This joint effort complements the current negotiation process to modernize the Columbia River Treaty.

The reintroduction of salmon into these areas aims to return fish stocks for Indigenous food, social and ceremonial needs, and to benefit the region's residents and ecosystems as a whole.

**This report provides a summary of the first year of activities of this inaugural three year project, including establishing the Indigenous-led governance structure and processes, and drafting the Strategic Direction Framework.**

Letter of Agreement signing ceremony with representatives of the five governments, July 29, 2019, Castlegar, BC



# SALMON FOR OUR FUTURE



Syilx Nation salmon fry release ^ Sockeye v



Secwepemc Nation members of the Shuswap Indian Band prepare salmon for a feast v



“The restoration of salmon to all parts of the territory, including that of the Upper Columbia, is part of our inherent rights and responsibilities as Syilx Okanagan People. *ntityix* (Chief Salmon) is one of our Four Food Chiefs, and a central part of securing Syilx food sovereignty. Moving forward we are dedicated that these efforts not just use the best, cutting edge science, but also align with Syilx Okanagan traditional knowledge, cultural beliefs and practices for successful return of salmon, protection of our waters and the health of the planet.”

– *nk'tx'cən* Chief Chad Eneas, Penticton Indian Band, Syilx Nation

“The loss of salmon from *?amakis* Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa Nation territory) has had profound and long-term impacts on our Nation: socially, economically, culturally, spiritually and ecologically. The impacts to us have been comparable to the impacts of residential schools and forcing us on to reserves. We have been working to restore the salmon since at least the 1950's, and today I am thrilled that the five governments that need to work together are doing just that: committing to work collaboratively to see what we need to do together to bring the salmon back. This is one small step on the long road to reconciliation.”

– Kathryn Teneese, Chair, Ktunaxa Nation Council, Ktunaxa Nation

“I believe that my grandchildren and future generations will be able to fish the salmon once again in the Columbia River. This was the essence of our culture and life that kept us healthy not only physically but was the bond of our communities. Today we have a duty to make sure the waters are healthy so when the salmon return they will be able to reproduce and give us the sustenance that is crucial to our future generations.”

– Chief Barb Cote, Shuswap Indian Band, Secwepemc Nation

“The Government of Canada is committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. By combining science and research with Indigenous knowledge and advice, we stand a much better chance of successfully reintroducing salmon to this portion of the river and, ultimately, increasing Indigenous communities' access to more fish for food, social, and ceremonial purposes.”

– The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

“Salmon are integral to Indigenous communities and to the economic, environmental and social fabric of British Columbia. This signing demonstrates our government's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

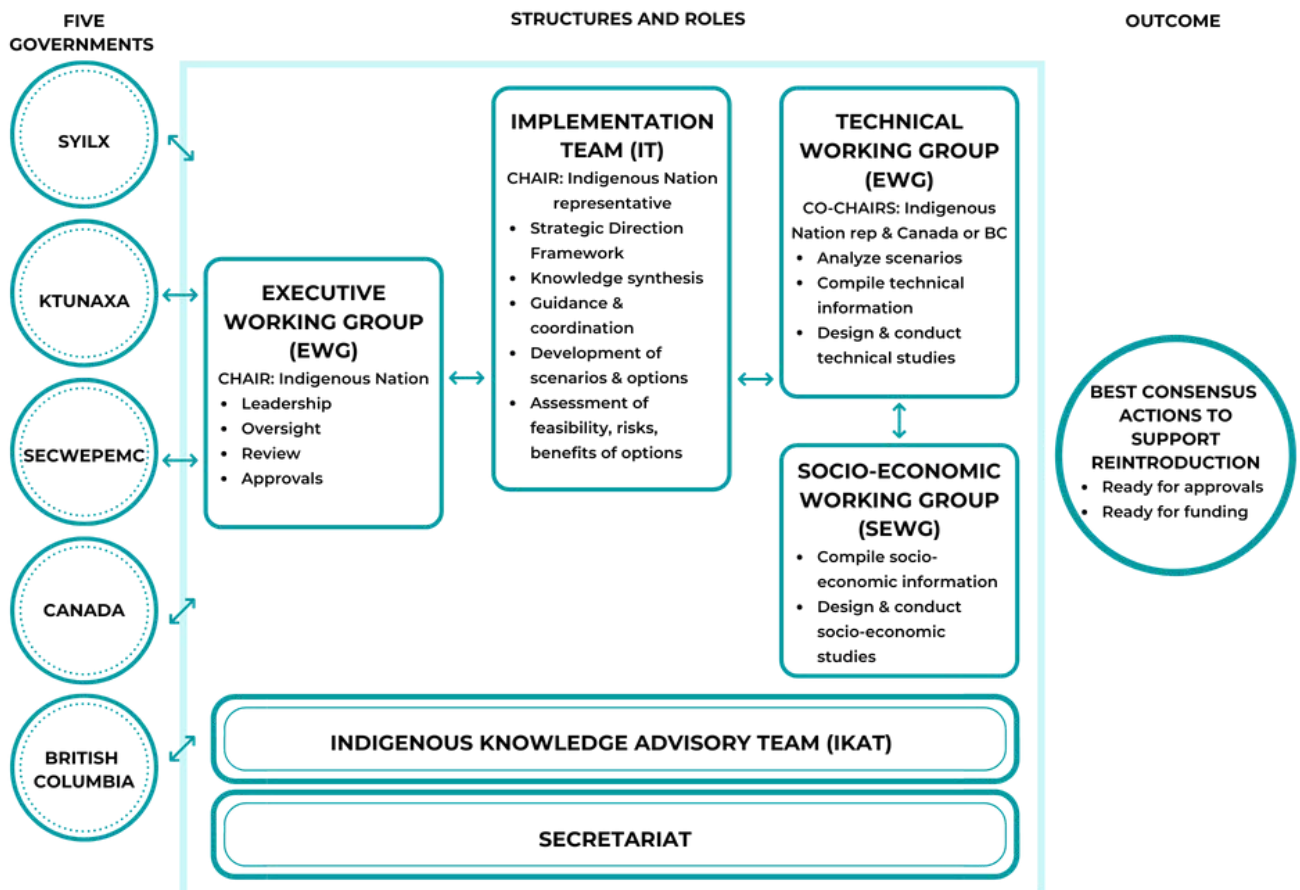
– The Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development



Calling the salmon home: Syilx Nation members including elder Hazel Squakin, seated on left, and elder *calyx* Richard Armstrong, foreground with drum, participate in annual salmon ceremonies at Kettle Falls, WA (photo) and Castlegar, BC

# INDIGENOUS-LED GOVERNANCE

This Initiative is being designed to be governed through an innovative organizational structure that is Indigenous-led, includes an Indigenous coordination mechanism, guiding principles for collaboration and decision-making, and is supported by an impartial Secretariat. The priority focus of the Initiative's first year has been to develop the foundational governance structure and processes and Strategic Direction Framework to best support the work going forward.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTION FRAMEWORK

## The Fish

1A Develop a strategic direction framework which includes broad guidance for more detailed annual work plans that will prioritize and guide activities funded through the Initiative;

1B Synthesize the current state of knowledge and information gaps into a knowledge synthesis report;

1C Develop an online repository and protocol for data sharing and reporting on salmon reintroduction to facilitate access and sharing of information;

1D Jointly develop a methodology and process to assess feasibility, risks, and benefits of salmon reintroduction that involves early engagement of the Parties and defines clear conditions of success for the Initiative. This approach will be used to conduct a desktop assessment that synthesizes the pertinent biological, ecological, social, cultural, operational, and economic considerations from Canada and the U.S. to inform future strategic directions and actions;

1E Pending a joint assessment and review of the findings from task 1D by the five governments, conduct necessary field-based activities, including experimental reintroductions, to maximize learning about the response of salmon, and assess the effectiveness of actions, to support salmon reintroduction; and

1F Prepare a long-term plan to guide future research and reintroduction actions, including options for long-term, stable funding in alignment with the priorities.

## The People

2A Develop an organizational structure that clarifies the involvement, terms of references, and operational procedures for collaboration and decision making among the Parties;

2B Collaborate with key stakeholders, including dam owners and operators with respect to salmon passage;

2C Prepare a communications and engagement strategy to support a broader salmon dialogue with others;

2D Support collaboration / coordination between Canada and the US to address transboundary needs and issues related to salmon reintroduction and learn from recent / ongoing reintroductions;

2E Build the capacity of Indigenous Nations to support their leadership and involvement in the salmon reintroduction Initiative;

2F Celebrate salmon among Indigenous Nations, including through ceremonial releases, to support their cultural, spiritual, and livelihood connections to salmon; and

2G Engage non-Indigenous communities to strengthen and broaden their connections to salmon in the upper Columbia.

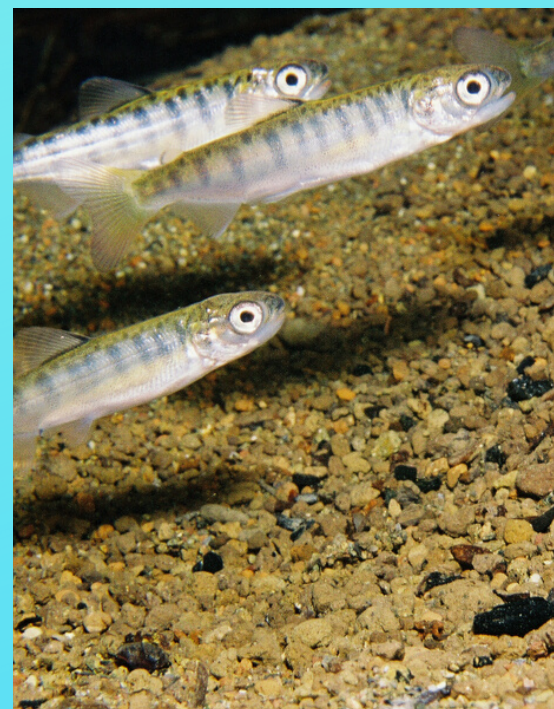
## The Funding

3A Follow through on existing financial commitments to the Initiative from the Parties;

3B Prepare annual budgets, operating plans, and financial / progress reporting to maintain financial transparency and accountability of the Initiative; and

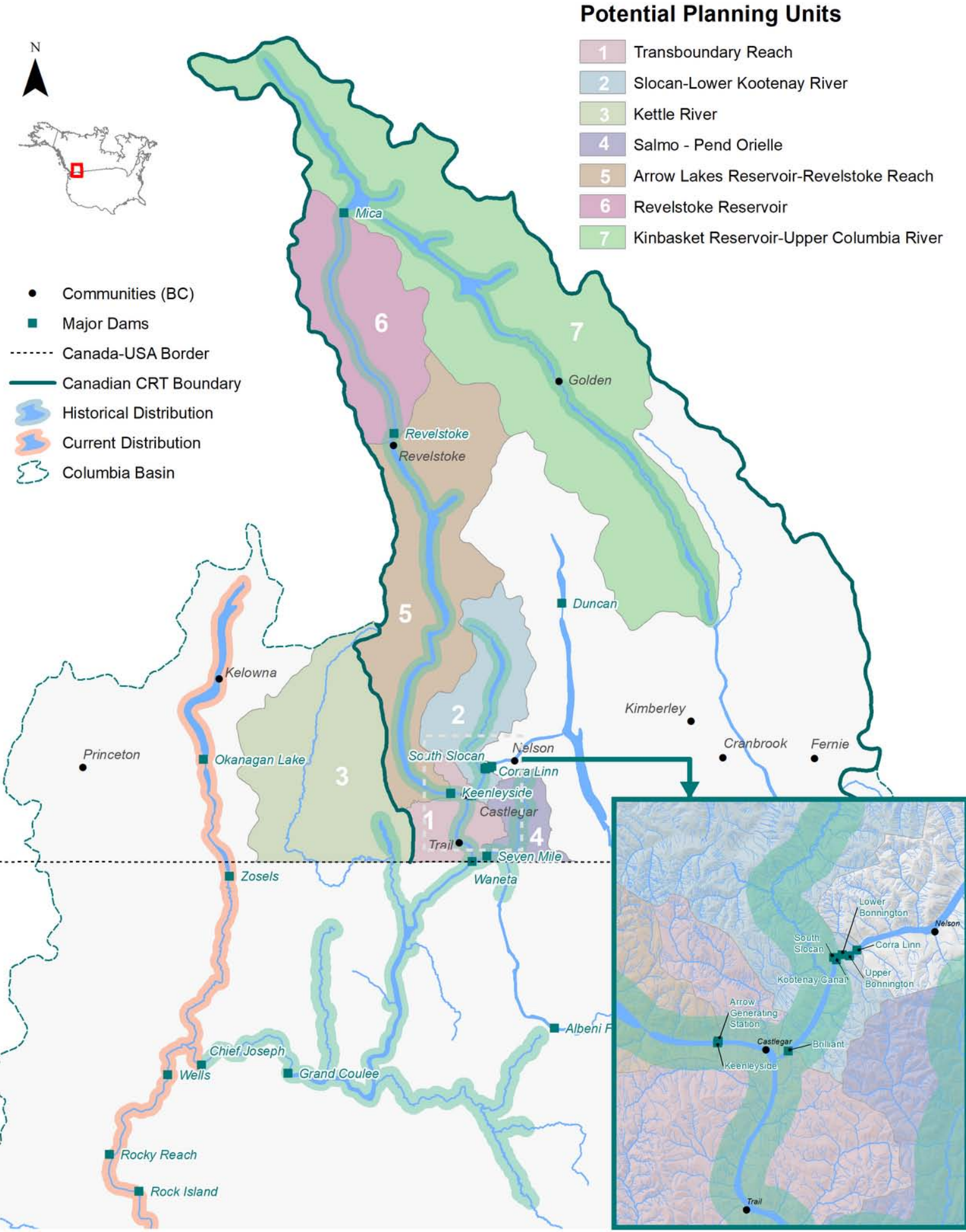
3C Develop a funding strategy and secure additional financial commitments from others to support activities during the initial period and during reintroduction efforts in the longer-term.

*The Strategic Direction Framework will be regularly reviewed and be responsive and adaptive to new information and circumstances.*



Juvenile chinook salmon

# COLUMBIA RIVER FOCUS AREA



# MODEL COLLABORATION

**EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP (EWG) \*Primary**

CHAIR Mark Thomas, Shuswap Indian Band, Secwepemc Nation  
 Chief Chad Eneas, Penticton Indian Band, Syilx Nation  
 Ray Warden, Ktunaxa Nation  
 Jennifer Davis, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
 Rebecca Reid, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

**EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP \*Alternate**

Chief Barb Cote, Shuswap Indian Band, Secwepemc Nation  
 Chief Keith Crow, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Syilx Nation  
 Jason Andrew, Ktunaxa Nation  
 Trevor Rhodes, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
 Carmel Lowe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

**IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (IT) \*Primary**

CHAIR Bill Green, Ktunaxa Nation  
 Jay Johnson, Syilx Nation  
 Murray Ross, Secwepemc Nation  
 John Krebs, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
 Eddy Kennedy, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

**IMPLEMENTATION TEAM \*Alternate**

Misun Kang, Ktunaxa Nation  
 Rosalie Yazzie, Syilx Nation  
 Adam Neil, Secwepemc Nation  
 Eva Schindler, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
 Dean Allan, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ADVISORY TEAM (IKAT)**

**TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG)**

**SECRETARIAT**

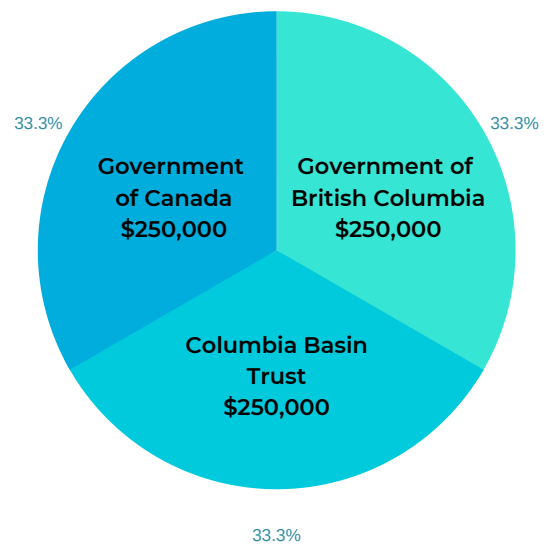
Hosted by Syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance

**FINANCIAL**

This three year initiative is supported by a total \$2.25 million budget for 2019-2022 contributed by Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia and Columbia Basin Trust.

The financial audit of the Year One \$750,000 budget will be available through Fraser Basin Council in September 2020.

**YEAR ONE FUNDING 2019-20**



**LOOKING AHEAD TO YEAR TWO ACTIVITIES IN 2020-21**

- Indigenous Knowledge Advisory Team appointments and ongoing input to CRSRI work.
- Technical Working Group appointments, technical studies and activities launched.
- Communications and community engagement strategies and plans approved and implemented.
- Transboundary information exchange, collaboration.

Executive Working Group, Implementation Team and Secretariat members (January 29, 2020)







Time for blessing and reflection: Ktunaxa Nation and community members with yakumsit (sturgeon nose canoe) maker Wayne Louie (holding staff), Columbia Salmon Festival, Windermere Lake, BC

## LEGACY STORY

This is legacy work. It's important to share some of the history leading to this precedent-setting *Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative*. This is a story of great loss—and real cause for hope. Of not giving up in the face of daunting challenges and holding strong to a shared vision of working together to bring the salmon home.

Though it's been over 80 years since salmon were able to return to the upper reaches of the Columbia, the spirit of the salmon endures all the way to the river's beginning place. As do the Salmon People, the Syilx, Ktunaxa and Secwepemc Nations who've lived here since time immemorial, and who've never given up their quest to bring the salmon back home to every part of the Columbia River and its watersheds. Who gather every year on the banks of this great river to pray, to sing, and to call the salmon home across all manner of borders and barriers. Who continue to lead the hard work to rebuild relationships, restore habitat, raise and release healthy salmon fry, and share the benefits.

Reintroducing salmon concerns Indigenous rights and responsibility. This Initiative is located in unceded Indigenous territories. Life-altering losses caused by the dams that block salmon passage have been felt foremost by the Indigenous Nations, who were excluded from Columbia River Treaty decision-making at the outset. The three Indigenous Nations uphold their sacred responsibility to reintroduce the salmon, including continuing to work with their US Tribal relations and other stakeholders, allies, and ENGOs along the river.

*Bringing the Salmon Home: The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative* offers new beginnings while acknowledging the past. It prompts necessary reflection and action to support self-determination and decolonization. It proposes early steps towards understanding what reconciliation requires. Of working collaboratively through an Indigenous-centred process. Of finding solutions to complex challenges through traditional Indigenous knowledge and western science, cultural renewal and technological ingenuity.

*Limlám̓t / Hu sukítqknataʔni / Kukstemc / Thank you*



# BRINGING THE SALMON HOME THROUGH SHARED STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

PHOTO CREDITS Front Cover: Columbia River, Revelstoke-Urbanworkbench, Flickr, Creative Commons  
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All other photos contributed by the Syilx, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc Nations, Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia

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