

## Association of Village Council Presidents Press Release

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For Immediate Release

### **Yukon River Salmon Disaster: Neighbor helping Neighbor**

Vivian Korthius, CEO

#### **Status of Salmon**

The Yukon River, from the mouth of the river as it empties into the Bering Sea all the way to the headwaters in Canada, is experiencing an unprecedented situation with salmon this summer. Throughout the whole river, including within the AVCP region, there has been no opportunity for subsistence users to catch salmon to put away for the winter. In other parts of the State, such as the Bristol Bay Region, the salmon season has been successful. The Bristol Bay donation of salmon to the Yukon River villages is a story about “neighbor helping neighbor” during a disaster.

#### **Bristol Bay Salmon Headed to the Lower Yukon River**

Through an amazing number of organizations working together there are king and chum salmon caught in Naknek and King Salmon in the Bristol Bay Region being donated to the Yukon River villages. The organization responsible for this is Sea Share. Sea Share is working with both the TCC and AVCP regions to distribute 25,000 pounds of fish. Half the fish will go to the villages on the Lower Yukon River. Sea Share is a nonprofit whose mission is to engage the seafood industry in a collective effort to improve nutrition for the people served by food banks and feeding centers.

On the Lower Yukon River, the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association through their local processing plant, Kwik’pak Fisheries, will receive the donated salmon to deliver to the communities along the Yukon River from Russian Mission to Nunam Iqua.

Sea Share is partnering with Lynden, Northern Air Cargo, Everts and Alaska Air to fly the fish to Anchorage. From there Everts will fly half the total amount of fish to Emmonak to hand over to YDFDA for repacking to be delivered to families along the Lower Yukon River.

Kwik’pak Fisheries will re-box the frozen fish in Emmonak and prepare for distribution to the villages on the Lower Yukon River, to be delivered by tender boats. One tender boat will head up the Yukon to deliver from Russian Mission down to Pilot Station. Another tender boat will bring the fish to St. Mary’s to Mt. Village. A third tender boat will deliver from Kotlik to Nunam Iqua. This process will take about 3-4 days to deliver all the fish after it is delivered to Emmonak. As of today, July 22, the salmon has been flown into Anchorage. The

salmon is expected to land in Emmonak on July 23rd or 24th.

### **AVCP collaborating with YDFDA on salmon donation**

The six Bristol Bay fish processors: Alaska General Seafoods, Leader Creek Fisheries, North Pacific Seafoods, Ocean Beauty Icicle, Silver Bay Seafoods and Trident Seafoods have worked through Sea Share for Bristol Bay salmon to be donated to both the AVCP and TCC Regions along the Yukon River.

AVCP has been assisting Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association by coordinating with the Tribes in the communities from Russian Mission to Nunam Iqua on the Lower Yukon River to identify each communities' point of contact to receive the donated salmon.

On the Lower Yukon, there are 10 villages receiving the salmon including Russian Mission, Marshall, Pilot Station, St. Mary's, Pitka's Point, Mt. Village, Kotlik, Emmonak, Alakanuk and Nunam Iqua. Considering there is more than one tribe in four of the villages, the total amount of Tribes benefiting from the donated salmon on the Lower Yukon is 16 Tribes.

Each community will work through their Tribal Office to determine how the salmon will be distributed in each village. In the villages where there is more than one Tribe, the Tribes will work together on prioritizing who will receive the salmon. Since there has been no fish to share, as is our tradition, the Elders will receive the first donated fish in each community.

### **Helping our Villages**

The idea for helping the villages on the Yukon River came from the fish processors in a meeting they had in King Salmon on July 1st. Sea Share was asked by the processors to help coordinate the project and to see that the salmon get to the families that need it along the Yukon River. We know that the donated salmon will not be enough to fulfill all the needs for the winter. But, it is certainly greatly appreciated and we are thankful to our neighbors in the Bristol Bay region. On behalf of our villages-Quyana-thank you.

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*For additional information, please contact AVCP Communications Director, Gage Hoffman at 907-543-7308 or email at [ghoffman@avcp.org](mailto:ghoffman@avcp.org)*

*AVCP is a regional nonprofit tribal consortium comprised of the 56 federally recognized tribes of the YK Delta. The geographic boundaries of AVCP extend from the Yukon River Village of Russian Mission downstream to the Bering Sea coast, north up through Kotlik and south along the coastline to Platinum and then extending up the Kuskokwim River to Stony River, including Lime Village on the Stony River tributary. The area encompasses approximately 6.5 million acres, or 55,000 square miles, in Western Alaska.*