



**Issue:**

Collection and export of Yukon salmon genetic materials for use in salmon net cage farming.

**Background:**

Creative Salmon has been engaged in this practice since 1990. DFO issues a permit authorizing this practice each year, and the YSC is consulted as part of the permitting process. The YSC had formerly endorsed the practice (recommended to the Minister that Creative Salmon's permit be approved), but for the past two years the YSC has deferred making any recommendation to the Minister on the permit, as public consultations needed to be conducted on this issue.

**Action to Date:**

August 1996	The Yukon Salmon Committee first discussed the issue of the transfer of salmon genetic material for use in salmon open net cage farming.
June 1997	The YSC advised DFO that, due to diverse opinions within the Committee, they could not come to a decision regarding Creative Salmon's permit but would work towards developing a policy.
March 1998	YSC recommended that Creative Salmon's permit to collect and import Yukon River Chinook salmon milt be approved.
May 1999	YSC recommended that Creative Salmon's permit to collect and import Yukon River Chinook salmon milt be approved.
November 1999	YSC member attended a World Fisheries Trust meeting to learn more about aquaculture and genetics.
June 2000	YSC recommended that Creative Salmon's permit to collect and import Yukon River Chinook salmon milt be approved.
June 2000	YSC hosted a workshop on biodiversity and salmon gene banking.
May 2001	YSC advised Creative Salmon that they were unable to come to consensus within the Committee regarding Creative Salmon's permit and requested funding assistance to hold a public workshop on the issue.
May 2002	Creative Salmon workshop hosted in Whitehorse to advise public of the issue.
2002	YSC was not consulted on the issuance of Creative Salmon's permit to import salmon milt
November 2002	YSC made a resolution to gather additional information on salmon open net cage farming, in order to come to a final decision on whether or not to support the practice of allowing Yukon River Chinook genetic materials to be exported for use in this industry.
June 2003	YSC advised DFO that they could not reach consensus on the support of Creative Salmon's permit and were deferring their recommendation until they could finalize a position on this issue.

October 2003	YSC put the issue of transferring Yukon Chinook salmon genetic materials for use in salmon open net cage farming on the agendas of all drainage basin working groups.
October 2003	YSC identified resolution of this issue in their 3-year Strategic Plan.
November 2003	YSC reached consensus within the Committee that they did not support the practice of allowing Yukon Chinook gametes to be collected for use in the salmon open net cage farming industry. YSC determined that the next step should be to consult the Yukon public prior to making a recommendation.
November 2003 - present	Discussed issue at various meeting venues: Yukon, Alsek and Porcupine River Working Groups; FN Renewable Resources Managers Meeting; Dawson, Whitehorse and Alsek Public Meetings; Mayo, Alsek, Teslin and Laberge RRC meetings. Etc.
February 2004	YSC hired a private contractor to conduct a literature review of the benefits and impacts of salmon open net cage farming.
May 2004	YSC advised DFO that they were in the process of conducting public consultations on the issue, and were deferring their recommendation re: Creative Salmon's permit until they had completed their consultations.
May 2004	YSC distributed literature review of the benefits and impacts of salmon open net cage farming to RRCs, First Nations, NGOs, governments etc. and requested public comments.
Summer 2004	YSC made a series of public service announcements on the radio advising of their consultations and how the public could submit comments or get additional information.
November 2004	Based on public input, the YSC decided to host a workshop on the transfer of Yukon salmon genetic material for use in salmon open net cage farming.
March 16-17, 2005	YSC held a public workshop with speakers representing, First Nations, DFO, Creative Salmon, Suzuki Foundation, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
April 2005	YSC has received over 50 written responses from the public regarding this issue.

**Information Distributed via:**

- YSC meeting minutes;
- YSC website
- Public Service Announcements;
- YSC newsletter;
- Public meetings;
- Direct mail out of literature review to YSC distribution list (First Nations, Governments, NGOs, UFA Boards and Committees etc.)

**Outcome of Workshop:**

A broad range of comments were heard at the YSC's workshop. Some participants supported the practice, other supported it with certain conditions and many rejected the

practice under any circumstances. Some of the comments for and against the practice were:

In favor of collection and transfer of genetic material

- Materials are banked, so that the Yukon would have a source of Yukon chinook genes if the stock were ever to crash;
- YSC would have more input and control, if they continued to be involved in the process;
- Practice doesn't harm fish and no real impacts to environment
- Creative Salmon runs a good operation and is environmentally friendly
- It is too late to control the situation as Creative Salmon already has the genetic materials

Opposed to collection and transfer of genetic material

- Environmental impacts to net cage farming industry (disease, escapes, destruction of habitat)
- Shouldn't 'play with fish'
- Yukon salmon is unique and we shouldn't allow them to be created anywhere other than in the Yukon
- Even though Creative Salmon is a good operation, allowing them to conduct this practice opens the door to other companies, which might be less environmentally friendly
- If Yukon chinook are successfully cultured, will compete with wild product and affect the market price
- Can't control what might happen with Creative Salmon in the future i.e. they might be sold to another aquaculture company, which operates differently

Next Steps:

The YSC will be discussing the outcome of the workshop and deciding on a course of action. A record of the proceedings of the workshop is being assembled and will be available to the public.