

## TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW MIDDLE YUKON RIVER AREA SONAR PROJECT TO SUPPORT IMPROVED CHINOOK SALMON MANAGEMENT

- WHEREAS,** Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is an Alaska Native tribal health and social services consortium established by the Interior Alaska tribes and tribal communities, to provide a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development and culture of the Interior Alaska Native; and
- WHEREAS,** Yukon River Chinook and Chum salmon populations have suffered catastrophic declines in abundances in recent years; and
- WHEREAS,** Chinook and Chum salmon are critical to the socioeconomics, cultures, and traditions of Tribes and peoples of the Yukon River drainage; and
- WHEREAS,** Declines in Yukon River Chinook and Chum salmon populations have resulted in severe restrictions to subsistence harvests, resulting in food security concerns among Yukon River Tribes and residents; and
- WHEREAS,** The Pilot Station sonar project has very high uncertainty in estimating the Chinook run, resulting in large underestimates in some years (2009, 2015), and - of greatest concern- very large overestimates in a number of other years (2013, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021), which pose serious risks to the sustainable management of Chinook salmon; and
- WHEREAS,** These large differences between Yukon River Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station and Eagle, after accounting for harvests and escapements, greatly increase the management uncertainty when providing for subsistence harvests and sustainable escapements; and
- WHEREAS,** It is not possible to assess the in-season status of Chinook run at tributary weirs because these weirs provide data too late in the season; and
- WHEREAS,** The Pilot Station sonar project operated by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game is currently the main source of information to guide sustainable in-season salmon management, and it is very important that both managers and our member Tribes have high confidence in the Pilot station passage estimates for all salmon species; and
- WHEREAS,** For a number of years, various organizations and Tribes have discussed the need to develop a new middle river sonar project to improve information for in-season management of Chinook and other

salmon species and help validate Pilot Station passage data; and

**WHEREAS,** Compared to Pilot Station, the middle portion of the Yukon River is a narrower and more suitable sonar site for a new enumeration project for improved conservation and in-season management to ensure US-Canada border salmon passage goals are achieved; and

**WHEREAS,** TCC is committed to rebuilding and conserving the catastrophically declined Chinook and Chum salmon runs in order to provide for traditional uses of Yukon River salmon and protect the way of life and well-being of the Tribes and people that depend on healthy salmon fisheries; and

**WHEREAS,** TCC and its member Tribes have a strong interest in building our fisheries research and monitoring capacity, contracting with necessary external technical expertise; and engaging in tribal co-management of research, assessment, and monitoring.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors supports the initial feasibility work and cooperative development of a new middle river by TCC and adjacent member Tribes in collaboration with state and federal agencies, subject to the availability of funding.

### **CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors on March 16, 2022 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly established.



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**Charlie Wright**  
**Secretary/Treasurer**