

# **YUKON RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

## **Preamble**

We, the Tribes/First Nations of the Yukon River and its tributaries, proclaim that our fisheries are essential to our cultural, nutritional, economic and spiritual well-being and way of life. We recognize our responsibility and authority to exercise our tribal rights as stewards to our traditional territories and resources. Since time immemorial, we have properly cared for the fisheries of the Yukon River and its tributaries, but for the past 100 years US, Canadian, and State of Alaska have usurped management with no deference to tribal governments. We commit, to conserve, restore and provide for tribal use of fisheries based on indigenous knowledge systems, and scientific principles. Founded on tribal unity, we form the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission for the health and wellbeing of our tribal members, our future generations, and all Alaskans and Canadians who rely upon the health of the fisheries.

## **I. Article 1: Name, Membership, Commissioners**

### **Section 1. Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (Commission).

### **Section 2. Commission Membership**

Membership in the Commission shall be open to any Tribe/First Nations who:

1. Is a Federally Recognized Tribe (Tribe)/First Nations located along the Yukon River and its tributaries; and
2. Ratifies this constitution and joins the Commission by a duly adopted resolution. A Tribe/First Nation may withdraw from the Commission at any time by resolution.
3. Non-voting members (e.g. YRDFA, YDFDA, other) may be invited at any time by resolution.

### **Section 3. Commissioners**

1. Each member shall appoint one person to serve as that member's Commissioner to the Commission.
2. Each member will provide a resolution authorizing the Commissioner's authority to vote on behalf of the member.
3. The form of appointment or election of the Commissioner and the term of service shall be at the discretion of the member. The member shall also determine the process for removal of Commissioner and filling any vacancies.

## **II. Article 2: Purpose, Powers and Limitations of the Commission**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Commission is for the Tribes/First Nations of the Yukon River and its tributaries to:

1. Act with a unified voice for the conservation and restoration of Yukon River fisheries to protect our traditional way of life and well-being.
2. Establish a comprehensive management plan and program, which includes allocation, based upon indigenous knowledge systems and scientific principles.
3. Establish co-management plan(s) to ensure meaningful and substantive Tribal/First Nation participation in all aspects of fisheries management.

### **Section 2. Powers**

To accomplish the purpose, the Commission will have the power to:

1. Actively advocate and coordinate Commission positions.
2. Adopt plans, policies, procedures and resolutions by consensus.
3. Seek and accept funding from state and federal agencies, and public and private persons and organizations, and expend such funds.

### **Section 3. Limitation of Commission Authority**

Any and all sovereign rights and powers vested in the members shall not be abridged by this Constitution or powers authorized to the Commission. The Commission's authority is limited to the powers specifically delegated through this constitution and any other authority that may be delegated through the resolution of members.

## **III. Article 3. Meetings and Voting**

1. The Commission shall hold at least one meeting a year, by or at the direction of the Chairman. Members shall receive notice not less than thirty (30 days) before the date of such meeting.
2. A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum, so long as at least one member is present from each region.
3. All action must be authorized by motion and approval by a consensus of those members in attendance.
4. Each Commissioner shall be entitled to one vote.
5. Each Commissioner shall sign a pledge of conduct prior to the start of each meeting.
6. The conduct and procedure of the meetings may be further defined by appropriate resolution of the Commission.

#### **IV. Article 4: Chairman and Executive Council**

##### **Section 1. Election and Term of Office**

1. The Commission shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair. Officers must be Commissioners and receive a majority vote from the Commission. Officers shall serve a term of two years. There will be no term limits.
2. The Commission may designate regions for the establishment of an Executive Council. Once designated, each region shall elect a representative to represent them on an Executive Council. Executive council members must receive a majority vote from their respective region. Executive council members shall serve 2 year terms. There will be no term limits.

##### **Section 2. Duties of Officers**

1. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Commission, shall perform all duties of a Chairperson and shall exercise any authority delegated to him/her by the Commission. The Chairperson shall be the official policy representative of the Commission.
2. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson by performing those duties and functions delegated by the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the vice-chair shall preside and have all rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson.

##### **Section 3. Executive Council Meetings and Voting**

1. The Executive Council shall convene meetings, as necessary and as directed by either the Chair or Director. Members shall receive notice not less than thirty (30) days before the date of such meeting.
2. A majority of membership shall constitute a quorum.
3. All action must be authorized by motion and approval by a consensus of those Executive Council members in attendance.
4. Each Executive Council member shall be entitled to one vote.
5. Each Executive Council member shall sign a pledge of conduct prior to the start of each meeting.
6. The conduct and procedure of the meetings may be further defined by appropriate resolution of the Executive Council.

#### **V. Article 5. Vacancies and Removal of Officers**

1. If an Officer dies, resigns, is removed, or otherwise permanently leaves the Commission, the Commission shall declare the position vacant and elect replacement for the balance of the unexpired term.

2. The Commission may remove an Officer for any cause or reason deemed necessary by the Commission. Removal shall be through a majority vote of the Commissioners.

## **VI. Article 6: Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended by consensus of the members by member resolution. Tribes/First Nations must receive at least 90 days of notice prior to any vote on a Constitutional amendment.

## **VII. Article 7: Ratification**

This Constitution becomes effective upon the receipt of resolutions adopting the Constitution and joining the Commission from a majority of the members of the Yukon River and its tributaries. The Constitution is not ratified until a majority of the members of the Yukon River and its tributaries pass resolutions adopting the Constitution and joining the Commission.