



Pacific Salmon Treaty Renegotiations Update - Fraser & Approach Salmon Fisheries Forum - April 1, 2026

What is the Pacific Salmon Treaty?

The Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) was signed between Canada and the U.S. in 1985.

- Provides a framework for management of Pacific salmon within the Treaty geographic area, including joint conservation and harvest sharing arrangements.

Guiding principles/objectives:

- Prevent overfishing and provide for optimum production; and
- Ensure each party receive benefits equal to the production of salmon originating in its waters.

While implementing its fisheries under the treaty, each country considers:

- Desirability in most cases to avoid undue disruption of existing fisheries; and,
- Annual variations in stock abundance.

Each country manages its own fisheries but does so in a manner that is consistent with the PST.

Canada's PST Commitments

- Ensure obligations are implemented consistent with Treaty language, spirit and intent of PST.
- Ensure all Canadian fisheries are managed in accordance with Treaty obligations.
- Ensure information on Canadian fisheries / fishery harvest relevant to PST is provided consistent with PST expectations and timelines.
- Ensuring the continued operation of Pacific Salmon Commission Secretariat and associated funding.

PST Structure

The treaty is composed of (*the structure*):

Articles

Overarching principles / establish context



Annexes

Specific components of the treaty (including Chapters). I.e. Annex IV Fishing Chapters.



Chapters

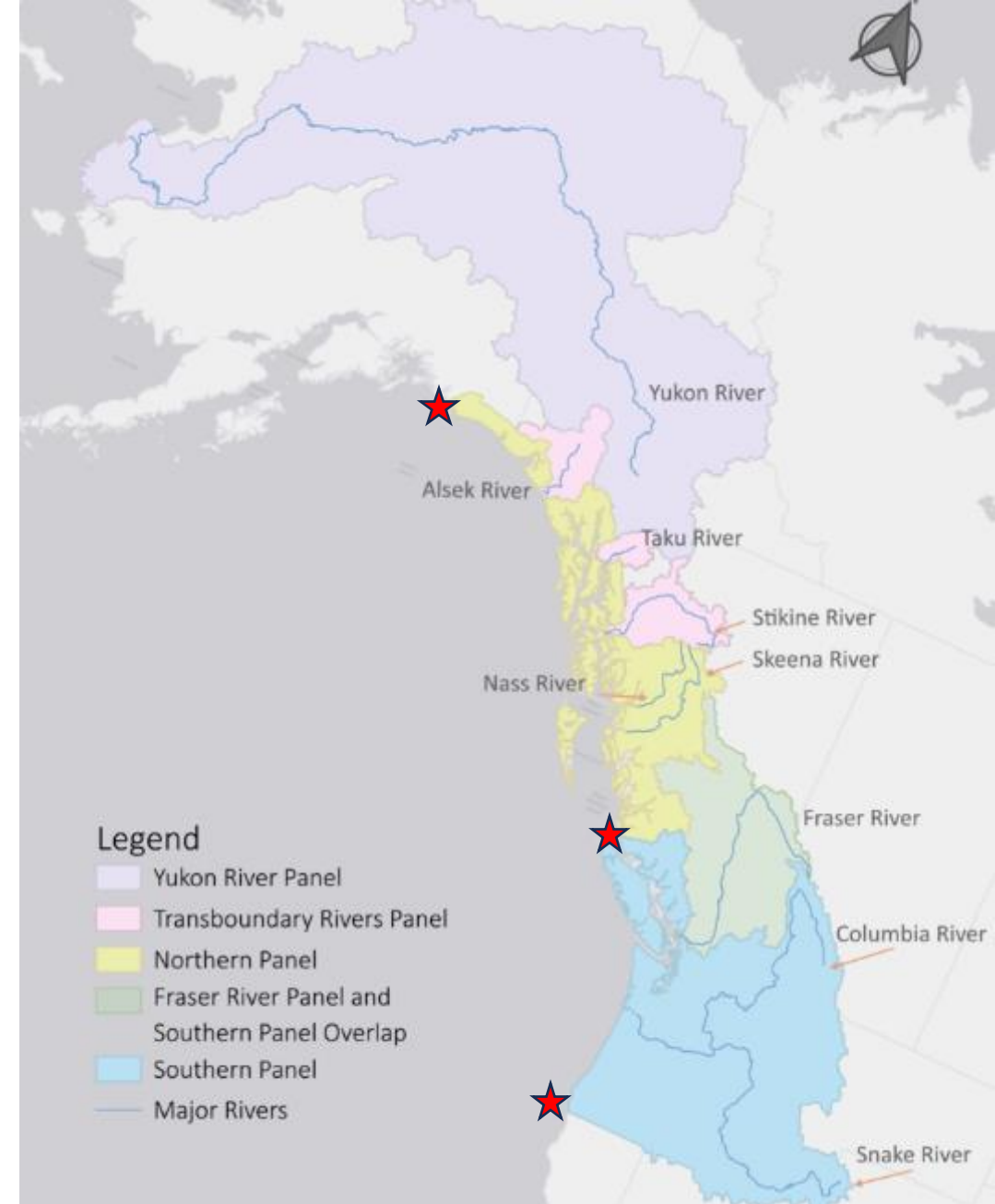
Provides details of individual “Agreements”, based on species, geographic location or subjects.

Diplomatic Notes

Outlines binding amendments, updates or additions to Chapters or Articles

The **Pacific Salmon Commissioners** oversee implementation of the Treaty and most Chapters (Agreements).

The **Pacific Salmon Commission Secretariat** provides administrative assistance and enables Commission, Panel and Technical processes to proceed.



PST Chapters

Chapter 1: Transboundary Rivers

Chapter 2: Northern BC & Southeastern Alaska

Chapter 3: Chinook Salmon

Chapter 4: Fraser River Sockeye & Pink Salmon

Chapter 5: Coho Salmon

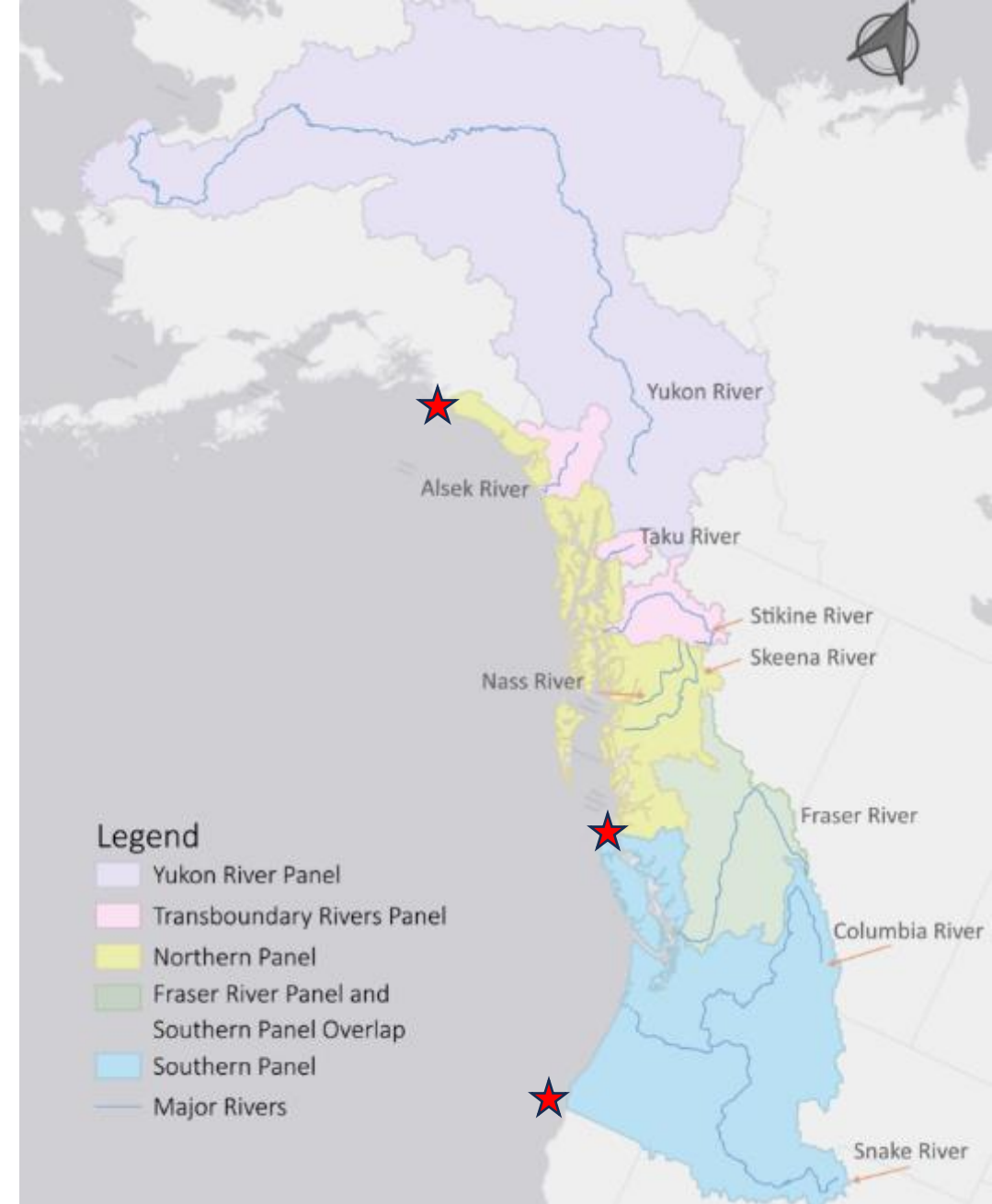
Chapter 6: Southern BC & Washington State Chum Salmon

Chapter 7: General Obligations

Chapter 8: Yukon River (added Dec. 4, 2002)

- Chapters are associated with species and or geographic areas
- Chapters 1,2,4,5,6 & 8 each have panels and technical committees
- Chapter 3 deals with chinook at a coast wide scale.
 - The Chinook Interface Group (CIG) is a subset of commissioners that the Chinook Technical Committee (CTC) and other associated technical committees report to.

Unlike the Treaty, which does not expire, Chapters need to be periodically renewed (or renegotiated) by the Parties - typically every 10 years.



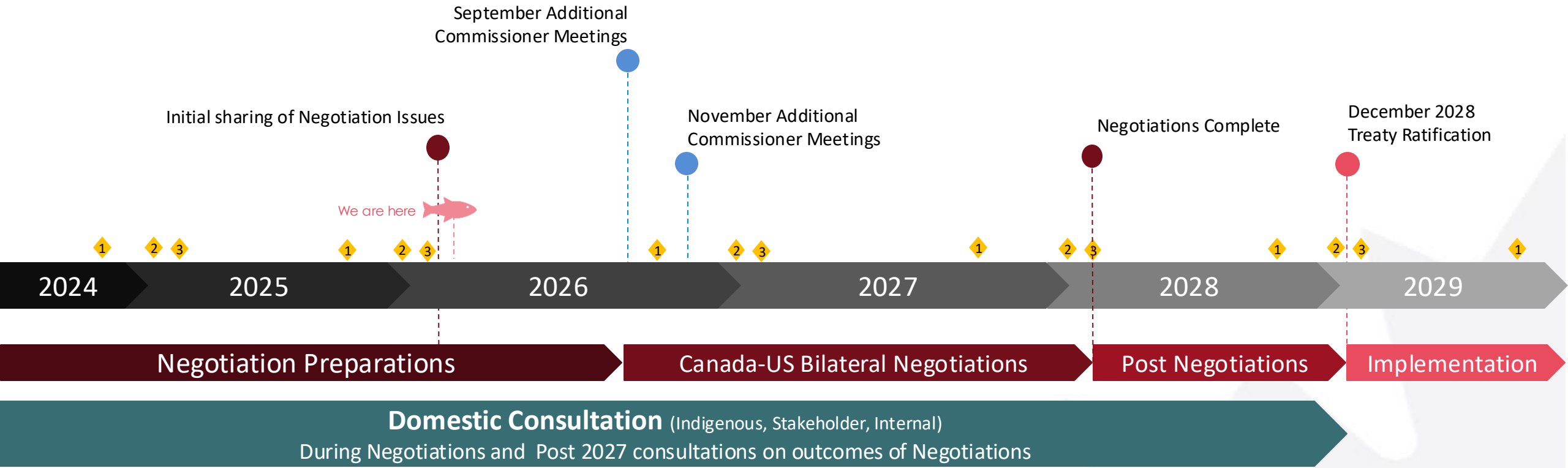
Renegotiation of PST Chapters

- Since initial ratification in **1985**, PST Chapters were renegotiated/ratified in **1999**, **2009** and in **2018**. Chapters **expire at the end of 2028**
- **Preparing for the negotiation** has started with an initial list of high-level Chapter renewal priorities identified by Panel Chairs at February 2025 PSC annual meeting session.
- **Commissioners, Panels, Technical Committee's and the First Nation Caucus have been working to identify Canadian negotiation priorities.** These sessions have helped to build out or confirm the list of topics to focus on.





PSC Renegotiation Timeline



◆ Refers to the 3 big annual meetings: (1) October Fall Commissioner Meeting, (2) January Post-Season Meeting, and (3) February Annual Meeting

International vs Domestic Considerations

International

- **Conservation objectives** and/or **Total Allowable Catch** shares for stocks which migrate through Canadian and U.S. waters and are harvested in each country's fisheries.
- **Data and information sharing** arrangements for fishery catch and spawning escapements.
- **Management strategies** to achieve PST-defined catch shares or conservation objectives.
- Collaborating on **Coded Wire Tagging** and **Genetic Stock Identification** programs.

Domestic

- **Allocation** of each respective Country's PST Allowable Catch share to fisheries.
- Determining **use of fish** (sale, food, social, cultural, ceremonial practices).
- Establishing **Local Fishing plans** and conservation objectives for non-PST defined stocks.
- Defining open **time, area, gear** and **administering licensing, compliance and enforcement**.
- Federal, provincial, territorial, First Nations legislation, policies or agreements (salmon).

International vs Domestic Considerations

Chapter 3 – Chinook salmon example

PST In-Scope

Overall Total Allowable Catch of Chinook salmon and Canadian and US portion of the overall allocation.

e.g. In past negotiations the Parties agreed to overall fishery catch reductions to protect Chinook stocks of concern.

PST Out-of-Scope

Determining the portion of each country's catch allocated to fisheries (or associated reductions).

e.g. domestically each country determines how and where fishery reductions were implemented to achieve PST objective.



Developing Canada's PST Renewal Interests and Priorities

- Experience gained through implementation of 2019 PST Chapters.
- Discussions at the First Nation Caucus, FNC/FNFC sessions and domestic stakeholder meetings over the last two years.
- Scope of negotiation priorities exchanged in February 2025.
- Initial exploratory discussions in January and February 2026.
- January and February 2027 PSC meetings will primarily focus on negotiations.
- Two extraordinary Commissioner meeting sessions set for August and November 2026 to identify principles and scope Chapter 3 negotiations (anticipated to be highly complex).



Example of Priority Themes (Canada)

Environmental Uncertainty:

- There has been increasing uncertainty in salmon survival so there is a need to take a precautionary and flexible approach to forecasting and management.

Cross-Chapter Matters

- Southern Transboundary (Columbia/Okanagan): Conservation objectives and catch shares.
- Northern Coho Salmon: Data sharing, conservation objectives and abundance-based catch allocations.

Updating / Clarifying Chapter Language:

- Fraser River Sockeye Salmon: “small but acceptable” catch overages.

Example of Priority Themes (Canada)

Improvements in Technology:

- Chinook Technical committee is developing a new model to support improved management of Chinook salmon.
- Genetic stock identification techniques, enumeration, E-DNA.

Accounting for all Salmon:

- Are there data gaps and/or limitations in knowledge on specific species (i.e. incidental catch in non-salmon fisheries, steelhead).
- Does PST scope of area apply to majority of fisheries where internationally-migrating stocks are intercepted.

• Changing Fisheries:

- Times and areas where fisheries occur (past, present and future).



Example of Priority Themes (Canada)

Participation and Representation in PST Processes:

- Composition of Panels and Committees; Capacity for PST implementation and domestic First Nations and stakeholder engagement.





Priorities for Chapter 3



US Issues: 7 Priorities for Chapter 3

1. Predicting Abundance for PST Fisheries
2. Alignment of Fishery Impacts and Stock Productivity
3. Performance Monitoring
4. Accountability
5. Adaptive Processes
6. Fishery and Stock Assessments
7. Indicator Stocks (escapement and CWT)





Priorities for Chapter 4



Priorities for Chapter 4

(Fraser Sockeye and Pink)

Priority Theme	Chapter 4 priority
Clarifying Chapter Language	A. Ambiguous language in the Treaty results in conflict and a satisfactory, timely dispute resolution process does not exist.
Accounting for all Salmon	B. All mortality needs to be recorded and reported, and each Party is must be accountable for all of its mortality.
Environmental Change	C. The environmental conditions and fish productivity have changed notably since the last negotiation. We seek to refine our Chapter objectives where the priority objective is not escapement, but rebuilding.
Clarifying Chapter Language	D. Pacific Salmon fishery governance continues to evolve with a renewed focus on Indigenous decision-making. We seek a mechanism to enable inclusion and formally account for this evolution.

Chapter 4

A. Ambiguous language

Priority Theme	Chapter 4 priority
Clarifying Chapter Language	A. Ambiguous language in the Treaty results in conflict and a satisfactory, timely dispute resolution process does not exist.

We seek more clarity on Treaty language and a better process to resolve disputes.

- e.g. “Small but acceptable” amounts of incidental mortality
- Also creates process issues about when PSC provides recommendations

Chapter 4

B. Mortality accounting

Priority Theme	Chapter 4 priority
Accounting for all Salmon	B. All mortality needs to be recorded and reported, and each Party is must be accountable for all of its mortality.

Currently some mortality is not accounted for. Without accounting there are weak incentives to fish responsibly and share the burdens and benefits of conservation.

- Unauthorized harvest, D104 incidental harvest, and SBA permits 'free' fish that is not allocated

Chapter 4

C. Conservation Priority

Priority Theme	Chapter 4 priority
Environmental Change	C. The environmental conditions and fish productivity have changed notably since the last negotiation. We seek to refine our Chapter objectives where the priority objective is not escapement, but rebuilding.

Current chapter language prioritizes meeting escapement targets for aggregated stocks, but does not specifically account for rebuilding and the tradeoffs required.

- e.g. 10. The Parties agree that Panel management actions should meet the following objectives, listed in order of priority:
 - (a) obtain spawning escapement goals by stock or stock grouping;
 - (b) meet Treaty defined international allocation; and
 - (c) achieve domestic objectives.

Chapter 4

D. Governance

Priority Theme	Chapter 4 priority
Clarifying Chapter Language	D. Pacific Salmon fishery governance continues to evolve with a renewed focus on Indigenous decision-making. We seek a mechanism to enable inclusion and formally account for this evolution.

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- e.g. Role of Inter-Tribal First Nation - Treaty Tribe MOU; Indigenous Co-Chair



Priorities for Chapters 5 & 6



Priorities for Chapter 5 (Southern Coho)

Priority Theme	Chapter 5 priority
Environmental change	Considering effects of climate change, and environmental toxins on the productivity of coho salmon stocks in Southern BC.
Accounting for all salmon	Providing best available catch and escapement estimates, including clarity on release incidental mortality rates used in all fisheries, both in Canada and the U.S.
Changing fisheries	Interior Fraser Coho exploitation is currently managed domestically to be between 3% and 5%. A (maximum) 10% Exploitation Rate within each country's fisheries is currently permitted. These measures are resulting in increasing overall abundance, although survival rates remain relatively low.

Priorities for Chapter 6 (Southern Chum)

Priority Theme	Chapter 6 priority
Improving information base	Confirming test fishery requirements and funding sources (Johnstone Strait and Albion). Providing best available catch and escapement estimates, both in Canada and the U.S.
Ambiguous language	Clarify language in the Treaty, including what data are used to determine whether overages occurred and when in-season run size information is communicated.
Changing fisheries	Are the current triggers working for effective management of Southern Chum? Review information that led to decision on 1M threshold. How can the ChumGEM model be used to improve management outcomes in the next Treaty period?

First Nation Caucus Tier 2 PST Workshops Engagement Snapshot

Collaborating Organization	Date
Skeena First Nations Technical Committee	January 2025
West Coast Vancouver Island (Uu-a-thluk Fisheries)	February 2025
Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance	February 2025
Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance	March 2025
Mid Fraser with the Fraser Salmon Management Council	November 2025
Chinook	December 2025
West Coast Vancouver Island (Uu-a-thluk Fisheries) (second session)	February 2026
Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance (second session)	February 2026
Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (second session)	March 2026
East Coast Vancouver Island	March 2026

How is your input utilized?

- All input received is documented and organized
- Relevant input is shared with Canadian Commissioners and Canadian Panels / Technical Committees.
- Validates known issues or topics raised at multiple sessions.
- May be useful to inform unforeseen opportunities which emerge or evolve through the negotiation process.

Where Do I Get More Information?



PSC website - (psc.org) or check out [DFO Pacific Salmon Treaty](#)



Talk to the panel or technical committee chairs or members of the First Nations Caucus as well as existing fishery advisory boards.



DFO PST generic email DFO.PSCNC-CNCSP.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or the senior PST advisor dean.allan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca



Bilateral meetings



Questions





Extra Slides



PST Historical Timeline



1926: U.S.-Canada Convention on the Protection, Preservation and Extension of the Sockeye Salmon Fishery in the Fraser River system.

1937: International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission is established with a focus on Fraser Sockeye salmon.

1970: U.S. / Canada reciprocal near-shore marine fisheries agreement and commitment to negotiate broader “Pacific Salmon Treaty”.

1985: Pacific Salmon Treaty ratified (applies to fisheries for Pacific salmon stocks originating from rivers located between southern Oregon and southeast Alaska, and Yukon River).

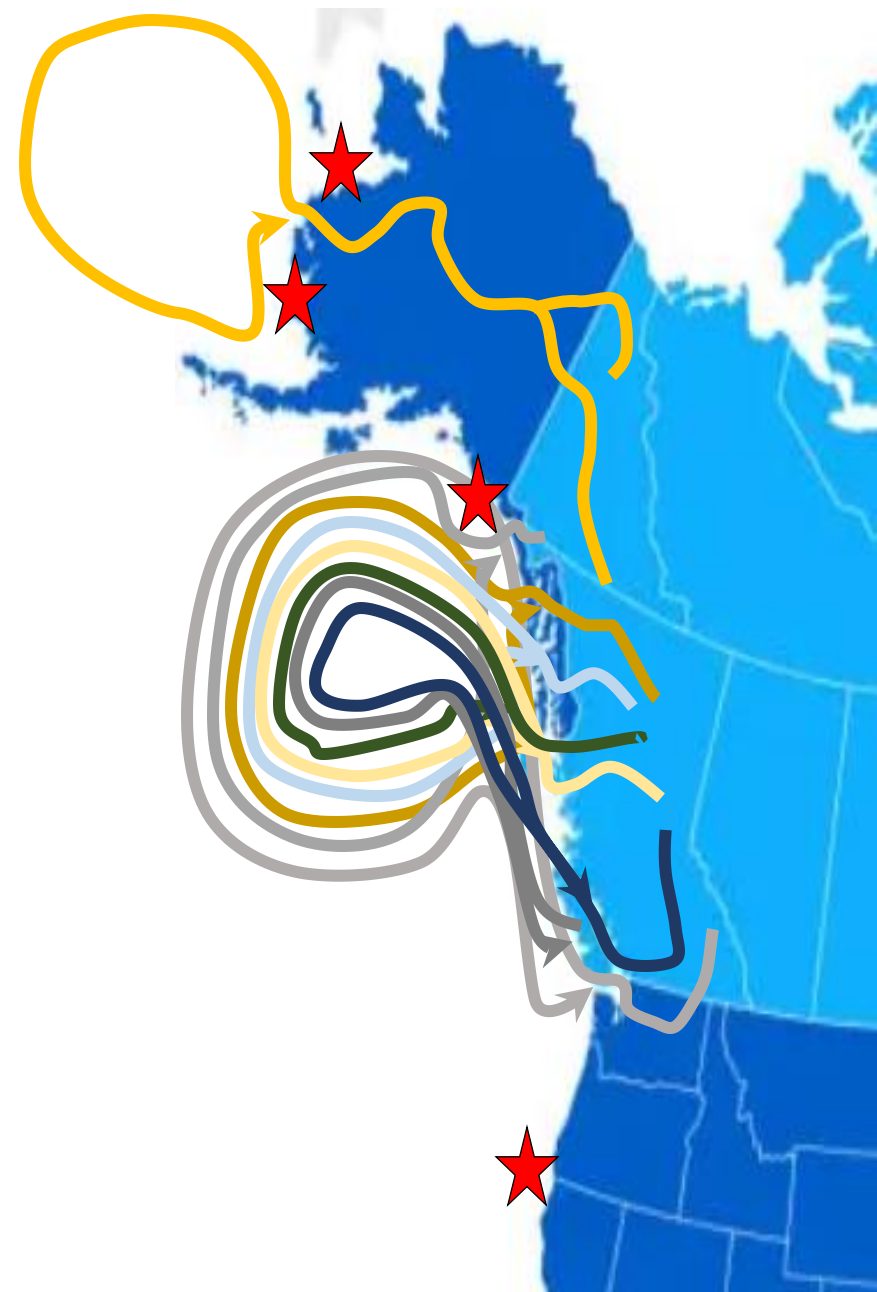
1999: Pacific Salmon Treaty Chapters renewed, Transboundary Panel and Northern + Southern Endowment Funds established.

2009 / 2019: Pacific Salmon Treaty Chapters renewed.

2002: Yukon River Chapter added – applicable to Yukon River in Canada and Alaska as well as U.S. marine approach areas (not overseen by PSC). Yukon River Panel and Yukon Salmon Restoration and Enhancement Fund established

Why a Pacific Salmon Treaty

- **Pacific salmon are highly migratory**, often spending years at sea and travelling thousands of miles over the course of their lifecycle
- **Salmon originating from one country are often *intercepted*** in the fisheries of the other country therefore a **high degree of *bilateral cooperation* between Canada and the U.S. is required** to conserve and sustainably manage Pacific salmon stocks
- **PST helps maintain the collaborative Canada-U.S. working relationship** under the PSC and provides stability for each country to manage fisheries
- **PST enables Canada to meet broader Government priorities**



What is the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC)?

- The decision-making body (Commission) formed by the governments of Canada and the United States to oversee the implementation of the PST
- Includes 8 Canadian Commissioners, two Government of Canada (DFO) and six representing Indigenous, environmental, commercial and recreational fishery interests
- The Commission is supported by several panels, technical committees and working groups, all with representatives from the department, First Nations, and stakeholders.
- The Commission is also supported by the PSC Secretariat (nationally independent body with 37 staff, located in Vancouver).

Commission Structure

Commissioners: 8 commissioners from each Party responsible for overseeing implementation of the Treaty.

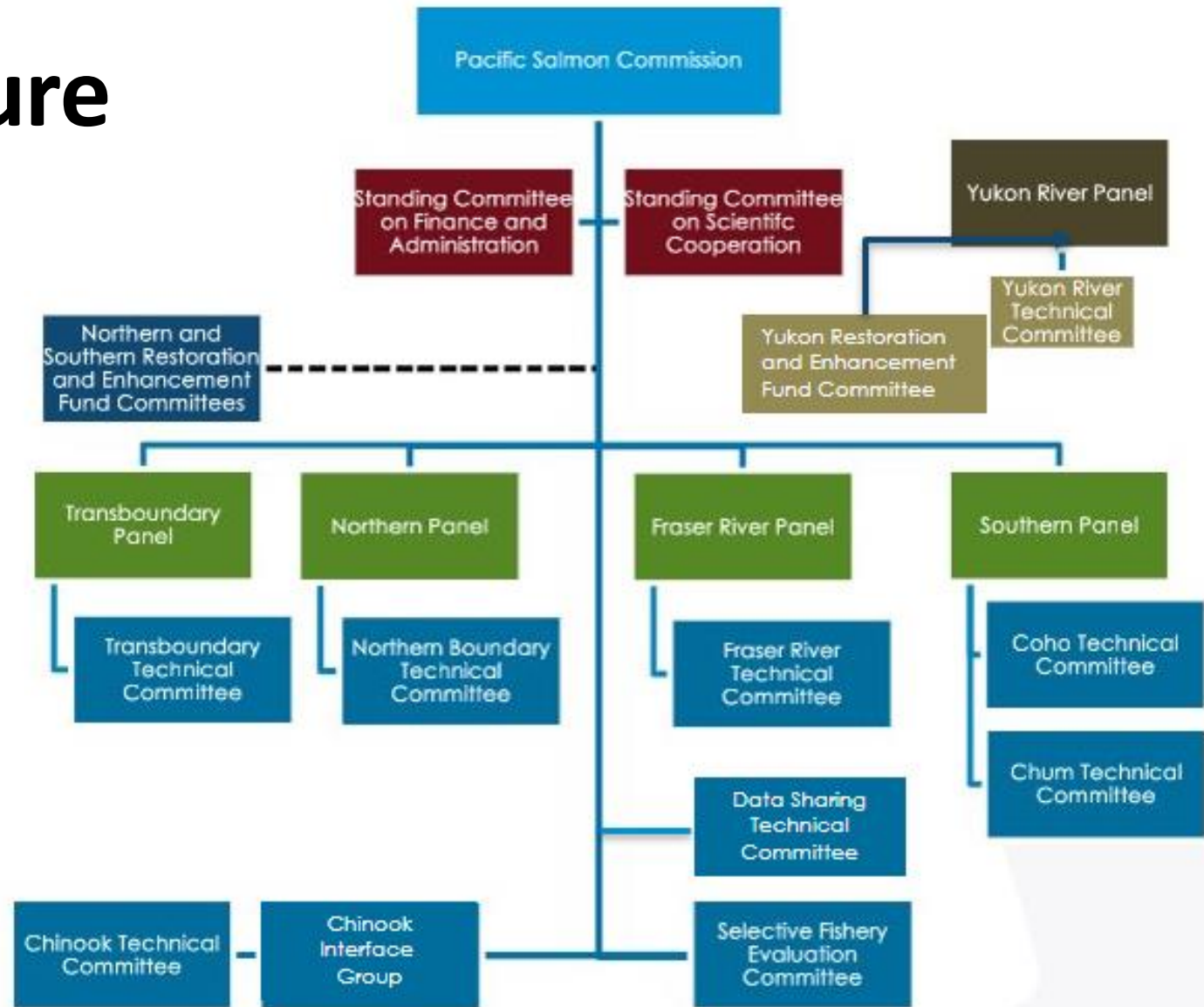
Panels: 5, four of which provide technical and regulatory advice to the Commission. Yukon River Panel reports directly to the Parties.

Technical Committees: 8 bilateral Technical Committees serve the Commission and Panels

Standing Committees: Finance and Administration; Scientific Cooperation

Endowment Funds: Northern, Southern and Yukon River

National Correspondents: One for each Party to the Treaty



*First Nations Caucus members serve broadly across the Commission, Panels, & Technical Committees

Commission Meeting Cycle

1. Fall Executive Session (October) – Commissioner Session

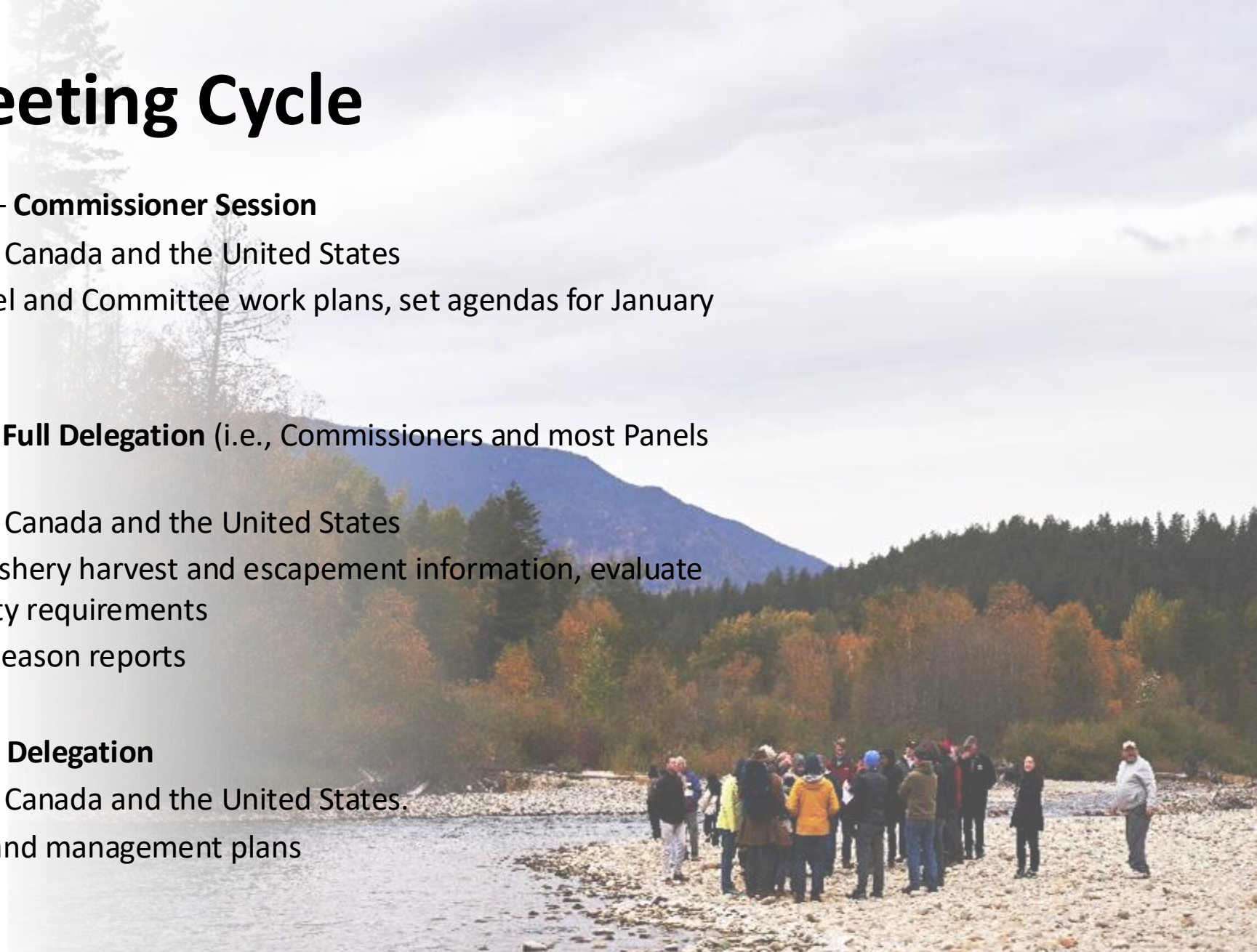
- Location alternates between Canada and the United States
- Commissioners approve Panel and Committee work plans, set agendas for January and February meetings

2. Post-Season Meeting (January) – Full Delegation (i.e., Commissioners and most Panels and technical Committees)

- Location alternates between Canada and the United States
- Panels/Committees review fishery harvest and escapement information, evaluate performance relative to treaty requirements
- Commissioners review post season reports

3. Annual Meeting (February) – Full Delegation

- Location alternates between Canada and the United States.
- Share workplans, forecasts, and management plans



Panel Meeting Cycles

Fraser River Panel:

- Meets regularly through the fishing season to administer “in-season” fishery decisions
- Mix of in-person and virtual meetings, 2 times per week from mid-July to early/mid-September
- Review in-season information and make fishing decisions
- Significant support from PSC Secretariat staff

Other Panels:

- Convene as part of the January and February PSC meetings
- In rare situations they could meet bilaterally in-season if needed to exchange or discuss information
- No in-season decision-making

Yukon River Panel:

- Meets in late January and early April (separate from PSC meetings).
- Meeting locations alternate between Alaska and Yukon.

Technical and other Committees:

- Meetings schedules vary
- Ongoing work and sharing of information throughout the year



Indigenous Nations in the Pacific Salmon Treaty Region



First Nations Caucus



Involvement of the First Nations Caucus (FNC) continues to improve communication, coordination, and strengthen the role of First Nations in the PSC process



The FN Caucus meets three times a year; in summer or early fall then just before the January and February PST meetings.



A small group of some FNC members and DFO meet on a regular basis to discuss PST issues, succession planning and increasing FN participation in the PST process.



The FN Caucus has received another year funding to deliver 6 workshops across BC on the PST as well as supporting other key FNC renegotiation workitems.

PST Fishery Limits

- Coded Wire Tag information from fisheries is collected and provided annually to the bilateral Chinook Technical Committee.
- This information is used by the Chinook management models before the fishing season to set AABM fishery catch limits for Canada and Southeast Alaska.
- After the season, the fishery information is used to assess each countries performance against stock specific Calendar Year Exploitation Rate (CYER) limits in ISBM fisheries.

East Coast Vancouver Island Stocks in the PST Chinook Model

Model Stock Name	Acronym	Number of Systems	Average Terminal Run (1985-2025)
Upper Strait of Georgia	UGS	7	11,000
Middle Strait of Georgia	MGS	5	17,000
Puntledge Hatchery	PPS	1	750
Lower Strait of Georgia	LGS	2	11,500

- 4 Stocks represent the life history and distribution of ECVI Chinook
- Data include ECVI fishery catches (First Nation, sport, commercial) and post-season estimates and pre-season forecasts of terminal run or escapement for each stock (by age where available)

Fraser Stocks in the PST Chinook Model

- 6 Stocks represent the life history and migration timing through fisheries for Fraser Chinook
- Data include Fraser River fishery catches (First Nation, sport, commercial) and post-season estimates and pre-season forecasts of terminal run or escapement for each stock (by age where available)

Model Stock Name	Acronym	Number of Systems	Average Terminal Run (1985-2025)
Fr. Spring-run Age 1.2	FS2	6	16,000
Fr. Spring-run Age 1.3	FS3	24	31,000
Fr. Summer-run Age 1.3	FSS	12	25,000
Fr. Summer-run Age 0.3	FSO	6	120,000
Fr. Harrison Fall	FHF	1	94,000
Fr. Chilliwack Fall	FCF	1	50,000

West Coast Vancouver Island Stocks in the PST Chinook Model

- 2 Stocks represent the life history and maturation rates of WCVI Chinook
- Data include WCVI fishery catches (First Nation, sport, commercial) and post-season estimates and pre-season forecasts of terminal run or escapement for each stock (by age where available)

Model Stock Name	Acronym	Number of Systems	Average Terminal Run (1985-2025)
West Coast Vancouver Island Natural	WVN	18	18,000
West Coast Vancouver Island Hatchery	WVH	3	154,000