

GRAVEL TO GRAVEL KEYSTONE INITIATIVE

FOR PEOPLE, SALMON, AND THE LAND

Since time immemorial, the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Norton Sound region has sustained people, fish, birds, and other wildlife, supporting strong and resilient communities and ways of life. Traditional foods – including salmon, caribou, moose, and migratory birds – have been vital to food security and Indigenous cultures for the more than 100 Tribes who have stewarded the region’s lands and set up fish camp in its watersheds for thousands of years.

In recent years, these communities and the ecosystems they depend upon have suffered as climate change is impacting the Arctic four times faster than other parts of North America. One stark example of these impacts is the decline of Pacific salmon populations, leading to subsistence salmon fishing closures and empty smokehouses for people who have relied on salmon for more than 10,000 years. In recent consultations, congressional field hearings, and other forums, Department of the Interior leaders heard directly from Alaska Native Tribes and subsistence users about these ecosystem changes, their impacts on communities and cultures, and the need for immediate and lasting “gravel to gravel” action by the federal government.

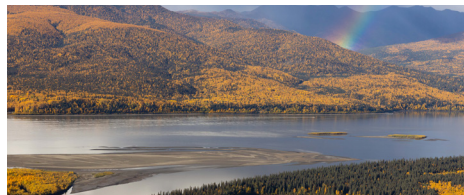
To answer these calls the Department—coordinated through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management – is partnering with Tribes, Indigenous leaders, other agencies, and community partners to launch Gravel to Gravel, designed to enhance the resilience of the region’s ecosystems and communities through transformational federal, philanthropic, and other investments. Through Gravel to Gravel, federal agencies, Tribe, and others will work together to build a strong foundation for co-stewardship, where both Indigenous Knowledge and western science are brought to the table to inform plans for collective action to support resilient ecosystems and communities in the region. Gravel to Gravel will make immediate investments in the foundational science and projects needed to respond to the salmon crisis and invests in projects to heal the broader ecosystem.

GRAVEL TO GRAVEL INVESTS IN



Projects to Help Pacific Salmon

Gravel to Gravel will make immediate investments in projects that will enhance resiliency of wild Pacific salmon and their habitats in the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Norton Sound region. Project investments with Tribal, local governments, and others will help to better understand salmon populations, habitats, threats in the region, and conserve and restore salmon habitat.



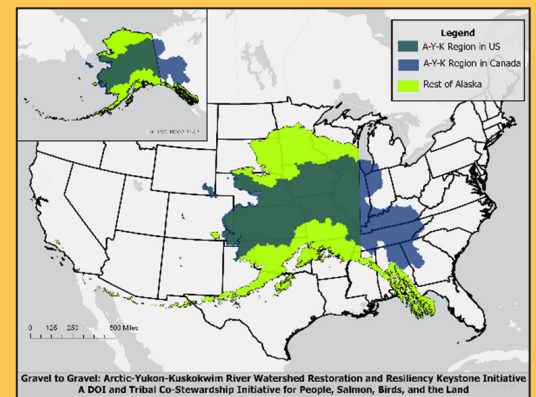
Co-stewardship

Gravel to Gravel brings Tribes and federal agencies together in a new co-stewardship project, building the relationships, trust, and transparency that are essential to the success and durability of this effort. Through co-stewardship, we will share knowledge, set priorities, and invest in projects that conserve and restore cultural heritage and ecosystems.



The gravel is home, where life begins and ends.

Set in motion at birth, the fate of Pacific salmon is like clockwork: each year a new generation returns from sea to spawn where their ancestors’ lives began. Females grind their tails into the gravel, hoping their nests, and the eggs within, will withstand the scour of ice and spring floods. The gravel is home, where life begins and ends. It moves toward sea like the baby salmon do, but the river’s constant movement across the floodplain over the ages will bring more gravel, and the salmon return.



The Yukon, Kuskokwim, Norton Sound (sometimes referred to as the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim) region is a large geographic area covering 419,274 square miles.

The Yukon River, the longest river in Alaska and the third longest in the United States, flows through this region for 1,980 miles. The Kuskokwim River flows for 702 miles. Alaska Native peoples living in this region include Iñupiat, Yupik, and Athabaskan (Dine’).



Responses to Ecosystem Threats to Food Security

Gravel to Gravel invests in partnerships and strategies to address threats to traditional foods, including the migratory birds that breed within these watersheds. These include investments in collaborative forums for habitat restoration and resiliency, tools to share knowledge, and co-developed monitoring and assessment plans.