

Alaska Salmon Fellows

REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS



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*Report prepared by Catalyst Consulting
Design by Dean Potter Design*



ALASKA
SALMON
FELLOWS
ALASKA HUMANITIES FORUM

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / ABSTRACT

THE ALASKA SALMON FELLOWS is a program designed and delivered by the Alaska Humanities Forum, funded by a three-year grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The program entailed selecting and working with two cohorts of Fellows and engaging each in an 18-month program focused on personal and leadership growth, network and relationship development, and systems awareness and impact.

The overarching purpose of the program was to promote greater equity and sustainability for Alaska's salmon and people system. The theory of change for the program was that through personal growth for a diverse cadre of leaders in Alaska's salmon system, along with the development of rich relationships and new networks across differing perspectives, the Fellows would identify and begin to implement innovative approaches to positively affecting systems impact for Alaska's Salmon and People.

The Forum has a long track record developing individuals, leaders, and cultivating relationships with people from differing perspectives. The Salmon Fellows program built on this foundation and added an experiential, experimental approach to explicitly advance systems awareness and impact around the shared goal.

Key results include high success with building trusting and diverse relationships among participants, expanding networks in new ways. Personal growth was also highly successful in the areas of self-awareness, understanding other perspectives, and using the power of dialogue and conversation to create connections. The Fellows acknowledged a greater systems awareness and that while the overall program met their expectations for systems impact, the level of systems impact achieved within the 18-month program was not as high as the personal and network growth areas. Many Fellows shared their perspective that impacting systems was inherently a long-term process, not readily done in a short timeframe. They also acknowledged how the relationships formed and awareness of systems and leverage points offers a strong foundation for continued work toward systems change.

II. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

IN 2015, THE GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION (GBMF) had been investing in sustainable wild salmon for roughly a decade, investing millions of dollars in Alaska and throughout the Pacific Northwest in efforts ranging from land conservation and scientific research, to policy and advocacy. As the timeframe for continued investment was beginning to end, they initiated an innovative approach to what seemed a fundamental issue at the root of the concern, “Salmon have a people problem.”

As evidenced by David Montgomery’s *King of Fish*, the science and sound management principles for sustainable salmon have been well understood for hundreds of years. Yet in spite of this, the actual practices that humans employ have led to the decline and even the extinction of salmon fisheries in watersheds in Europe, the Atlantic, and the Pacific Northwest. Alaska and the North Pacific retain the strongest and healthiest salmon fisheries in the world, which is largely a function of a relatively healthy natural habitat. However, as pressure grows from human populations living and working in Alaska, these watersheds are also seeing declines and disturbances in salmon abundance, in addition to decades of conflict over the allocation of available salmon across user groups.

In response to the ‘human’ issues that drove so much of the system, GBMF created an innovative and informal affiliation of organizations called “Salmon Connect” to explore and address the concerns. The original group included leaders from the Salmon Project, First Alaskans Institute, the University of Alaska, Alaska Humanities Forum, Nautilus Impact Investing, and the Foraker Group. Without a specific agenda, the diverse group met and explored, “How can people begin to make changes personally, interpersonally, and systemically to shift the negative trends and promote a more equitable and sustainable salmon and people system in Alaska?” From this, the Salmon Fellows program was born.

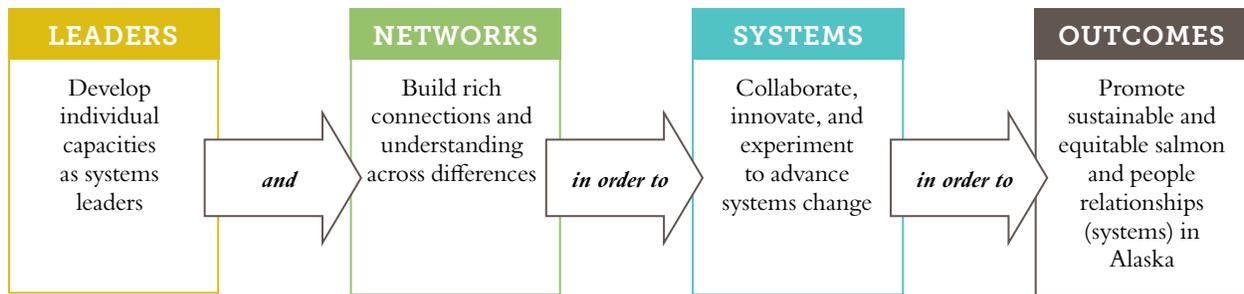
The Salmon Fellows program was itself another experiment in bringing together diverse organizations

and their leaders to link and leverage their talents. It was one of the initiatives developed by the Salmon Connect founding partners, with a goal to recognize, strengthen, and accelerate the work of diverse Alaskan salmon leaders. Other initiatives included Racial Equity Dialogues, State of Alaska Salmon and People data synthesis, the Salmon Project public engagement platforms, and Indigenizing Salmon Management.

The Alaska Humanities Forum was selected to design and deliver the Salmon Fellows program, bringing decades of experience in both individual and leadership development, as well as depth in community building and creating connections across differences. The Salmon Fellows program was a clear fit for the organization’s mission to connect Alaskans through stories, ideas, and experiences that positively change lives and empower communities.

What was relatively new to the Forum’s approach was to explicitly apply their theory of change to influence a distinct system / focus area; that being the larger system of relationships between people and salmon. Opposite is the Theory of Change for the program.

The fundamental design of the program was to select 16 diverse Fellows per cohort, and to engage each of the two cohorts over an 18-month period. See a listing of the 32 Fellows in Appendix A. The program included four in-person gatherings that were typically 4-5 days. The Gatherings were held in communities across Alaska and were selected to expose Fellows to the broad range of relationships that Alaskan communities have with salmon. Venues included Kenai, with its high concentration of sport and personal use fishing from Alaska’s urban center; to small fishing villages such as Igiugig (Lake Iliamna) and Ruby (Yukon River), where small, indigenous communities sought to sustain their 10,000-year relationship and management of salmon for the sake of vibrant and healthy communities and ecosystems. Commercial fishing communities included Petersburg and Kodiak. In each community, Fellows engaged with and learned from the local residents about their distinct views about salmon,



gaining a deeper appreciation for difference while also discovering common human values.

The overarching design of the program was to first cultivate deep and trusting relationships with others who come from very different backgrounds. This was followed by collaborative inquiry to raise awareness about the complexity of the system, the issues, and the potential leverage points. From these foundations, Fellows were then asked to explore new ideas to align with others around areas of potential action for learning. See Appendix B for a summary of the ten projects Fellows developed.

The first two gatherings focused on creating trusting relationships and learning about the salmon system through each other’s diverging perspective. Initial work to understand the salmon and people system was done in order to promote systems thinking about potential initiatives for action. During the first summer for each cohort, participants were asked to advance a ‘small experiment with radical intent,’ applying their personal interest and insights to advance a small but potentially meaningful prototype for change. Participants also participated in a racial equity dialogue hosted by First Alaskans Institute. This powerful experience revealed for many the deeply inequitable and painful nature of Alaska’s salmon system due to colonization and the dominant Western culture. Fellows learned how the deeply damaging results continue to negatively affect people’s lives, communities, and the system as a whole. For the first cohort, the third gathering was designed to engage a wider audience of salmon allies at the Alaska Forum on the Environment. The focus at this point and through the fourth gathering shifted to supporting the efforts of project teams, while continuing to cultivate deeper relationships within the cohort.

The intent from the outset of the program was to evolve and adapt the model with each cohort, learning lessons and building on the increased systems awareness and growing networks formed. The long-term goal is to discern from the first three years what is most meaningful and impactful for Fellows and for the work to impact systems. This report offers a summary from the first three years, with initial results on the three impact areas: personal growth and development, relationships and networks, and systems awareness and impact. The report concludes with a reflective assessment of many lessons learned throughout the program, and some initial ideas for potential next steps that can be considered both by the Alaska Humanities Forum, as well as the network of Fellows from both cohorts and the Founding Partners.

III. DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

THE FELLOWS PROGRAM was an innovative and experimental model for the Alaska Humanities Forum and all those involved. It was grounded in clear theories and proven practices for personal growth and building diverse and rich relationships and networks, but some aspects were new to all of those involved, particularly the effort in laying a foundation for systems impact and the focus on the salmon and people overall. It was thus imperative that a Developmental Evaluation method be applied throughout the entire process, rather than a traditional evaluation that presumes certainty in the overall approach. Developmental Evaluation serves the purpose of learning, developing, and adapting the approach during the experience—especially critical for innovative programs and initiatives that are unfolding in dynamic and complex conditions. The approach taken in this evaluation was a hybrid of a developmental evaluation, aimed at understanding the dynamic and emergent nature of a highly innovative program that was expected to adapt and be uncertain; and a more summative account of the program upon the completion of the first three years' work.

Over the course of time with both cohorts, data and information were continuously gathered from Fellows, Founding Partners, and the Forum team. This allowed for regular opportunities to reflect and make adjustments to design and approach at all levels. From communications, recruiting, and selection, to design, delivery, and evaluation, the Forum and their partners were continuously assessing:

- **What was supposed to happen?**
- **What actually happened?**
- **What did we learn from this?**
- **How can we apply the lessons in the future?**

Evaluation components included daily feedback during gatherings, occasional surveys of participants for key data, dialogues and debriefs, engagement with the Founding Partners as advisors, as well as regular and open interactions with individual Fellows.

Throughout the program, the Forum team earnestly sought, heard, and responded to the generous feedback about what worked as well as ideas for improvements. A final program evaluation was conducted upon the conclusion of each cohort's experience. A summary table of the Lessons Learned is provided in Section IX. See Appendix C for the survey questions and results that provided the quantitative data used throughout this report. The quotes offered throughout this report came from individual and team interviews conducted during early 2020.

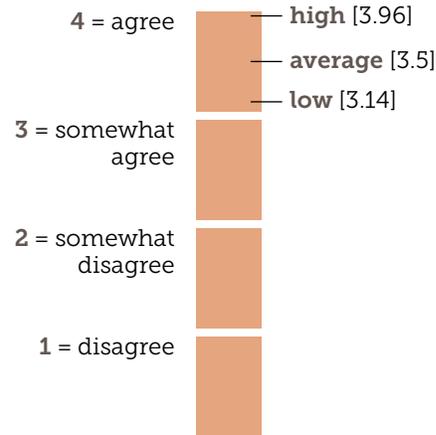
IV. HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY OF DATA

THE IMPACT RESULTS from the Alaska Salmon Fellows program are broadly positive, with some diverging opinions in various areas. The results were validated not only through the quantitative data gathered via survey, but also through the qualitative information gathered through interviews with Fellows individually and in groups/teams. This section provides an overview of these broad themes and differences. Subsequent sections provide further detail regarding each of the impact areas with supporting quotes and data from the Fellows themselves.

At the conclusion of the program, Fellows were asked to indicate their relative agreement with 42 impact statements using a four-point scale: 4 = agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = disagree. See survey questions and results in Appendix C. Overall, the impact assessment indicates that Fellows generally agree or somewhat agree with each impact statement. The average of all ratings is 3.5, with a high of 3.96 and a low of 3.14.

Fellows also responded to three questions regarding the extent to which the program met their expectations using a three-point scale (3 = exceeded expectations, 2 = met expectations, 1 = did not meet expectations). Relationships and Network development was

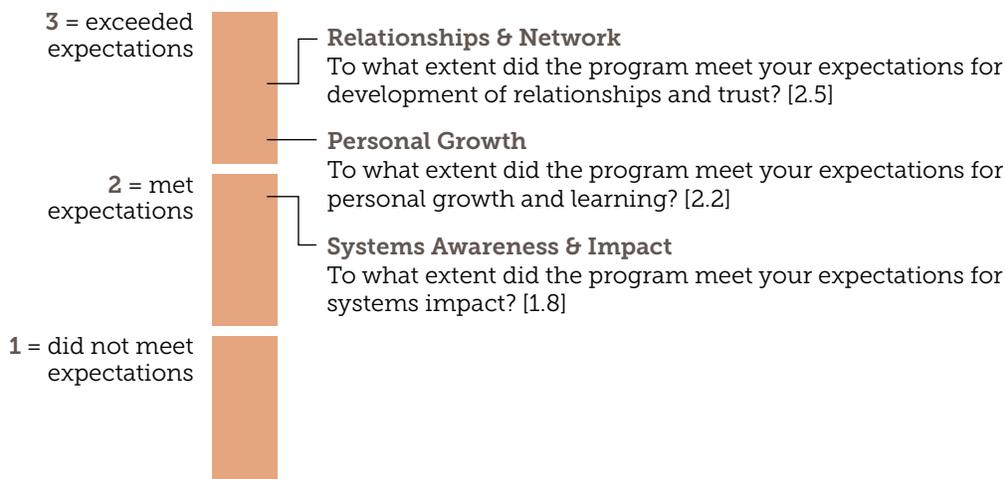
AGREEMENT WITH IMPACT STATEMENTS



rated the highest at 2.5, meeting expectations and in many cases exceeding expectations. Personal Growth came in slightly lower at 2.2, although still meeting expectations for most and exceeding expectations for some. System Awareness & Impact was rated third at 1.8, reflecting more of a challenge in meeting expectations around this dimension of impact.

As noted, the program's greatest area of impact came in building new and positive relationships, as well

MEETING PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS

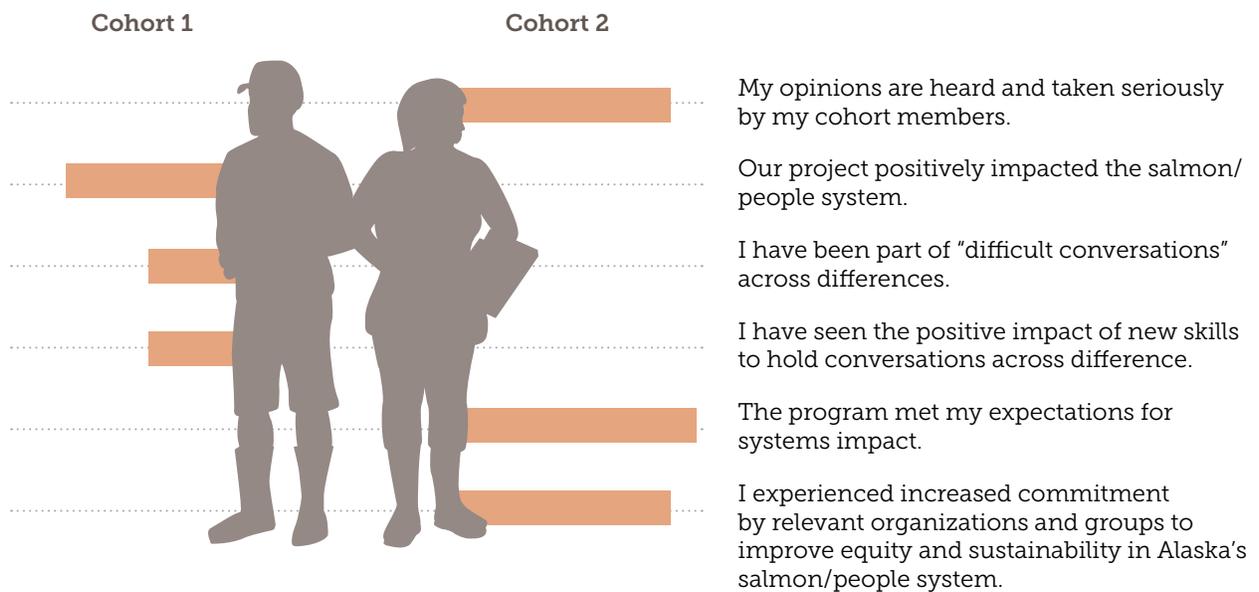


as wider networks. The diversity of participants, as well as the design and duration of the experience that promoted deep connections, even across differences, resulted in the most meaningful impact as reported by the Fellows. The nature of these relationships is viewed as the most significant value to participants and also is cited by many as a lasting source of ongoing potential for future systems change Fellows can continue to develop and leverage.

There were also some differences identified between the two cohorts that are worthy of note. In terms of Relationships and Networks, Cohort 2 reported the highest level of impact at 3.8, including 100% agreement on several dimensions [Q# 19, 20, 21]. The

deep and trusting relationships formed within the cohort was reiterated numerous times in the reflections and comments offered by this cohort. Cohort 1 also reported Relationships and Networks as their highest area of impact, however the ratings were slightly lower at 3.8. Of potential relevance is that Cohort 1 reported a slightly higher level of being part of “difficult conversations” [3.9] across differences as compared to Cohort 2 [3.7]. From a qualitative perspective, staff and participants believed that the diversity in backgrounds was slightly greater with the first cohort, while the second cohort was far more aligned from the outset on salmon related issues, finding fewer areas of disagreement.

AREAS OF GREATEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COHORTS

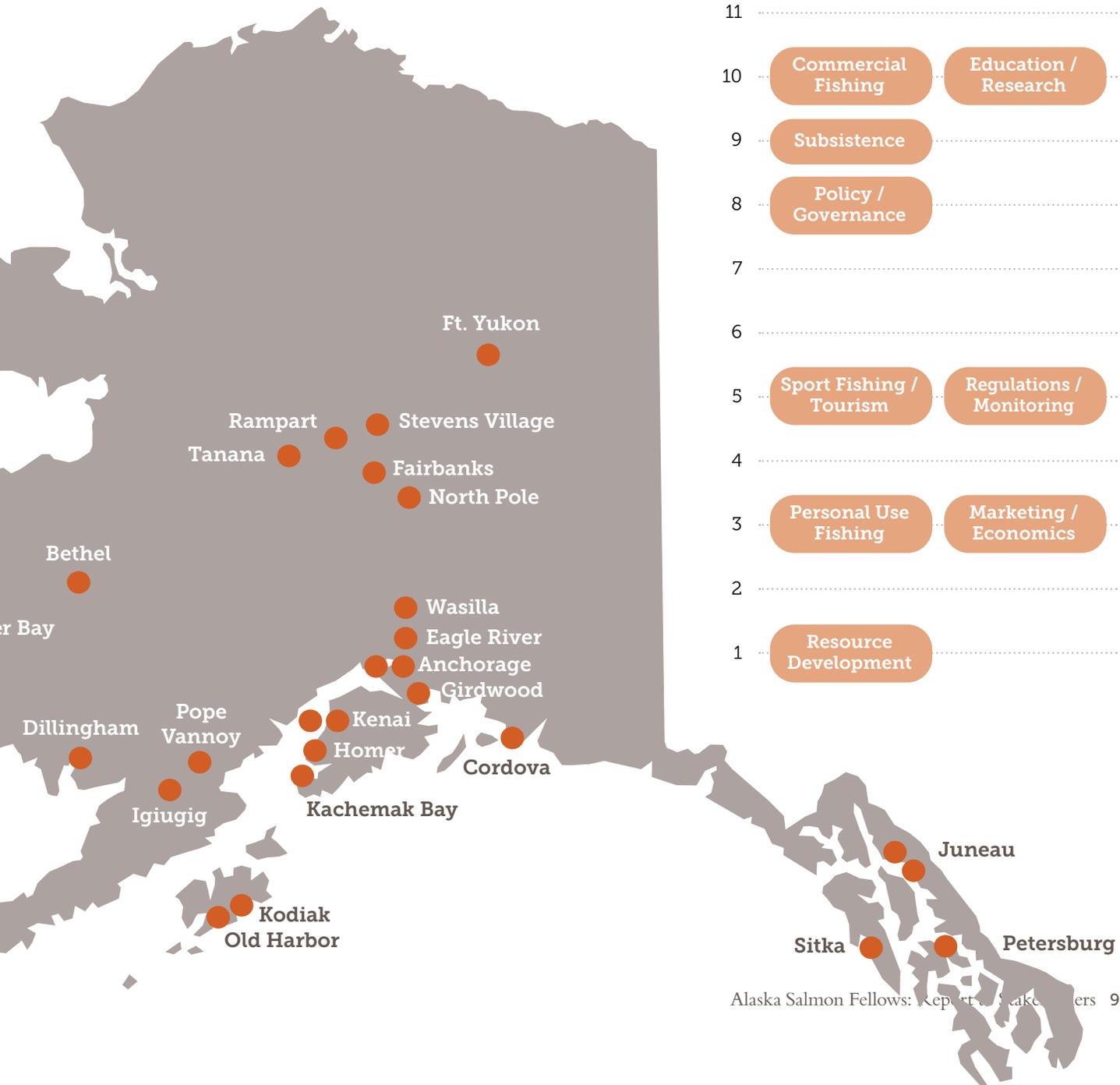


ROLE AND SECTOR DIVERSITY

Total representation of roles and sectors. Fellows may represent more than one role and sector. Thirty-two Fellows total.



GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY



V. BASELINE PERSPECTIVES ON SALMON AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

1. PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

UPON APPLICATION to the Salmon Fellows program, participants had personal expectations to do something for the well-being of salmon – either by elevating the importance of salmon, representing its role in the surrounding community, or helping others to establish a greater “salmon worldview.” This is how and where the desire for leadership surfaced – participants wanted to use their leadership skills and abilities to benefit salmon. Many mentioned their familial ties to salmon and hopes to carry salmon traditions forward for future generations.

Participants openly expressed their interest and desire for continued personal growth. This seemed to be a pre-existing value of both cohorts, in that they saw it as an essential component to thriving personally and making an impact professionally. Personal growth and development was embedded into the program design through activities that instilled personal reflection and a more finely attuned level of self-awareness in groups.

Participants also expressed a desire to push their own boundaries in understanding and appreciating others’ perspectives, including that of key stakeholder groups that they may have had less exposure to. Upon program entry, cohort members already understood that differences in opinion and perspective exist in current systems. Cohort members’ inherent desire to accomplish something for the greater good of salmon helped them understand the need to lean into diversity with curiosity. This program allowed them to experiment with that dynamic, given they may not have had a lot of opportunities to be in such diverse company.

Lastly, Salmon Fellows mentioned an interest in developing a larger system view of their environment. The program experience allowed them to develop a robust and more complete perspective of the complex system. It also allowed them the opportunity to interact with the various stakeholders in the system in new and different ways.

2. RELATIONSHIP AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Participants in Salmon Fellows saw the program as an opportunity to build positive and sustained relationships where dialogue was met with mutual respect and open hearts. Developing empathy and openness while listening to each other were foundational hopes, in addition to simply meeting other salmon leaders. This hope or expectation was met by the program, in that cohort members were able to develop strong trusting relationships, even across their many dimensions of diversity.

“I’d like to lower the hurdles between the mind and the heart in relation to our conversations about salmon. If you are too deep in either the cerebral or the emotional, you’re missing a significant part of the conversation.”

“I would change entrenched, closed minds so folks can honestly ponder different perspectives, better understand the whole issue and engage in meaningful dialogue.”

Salmon Fellows also had an expectation coming into the program that their network would be developed and strengthened, all while better understanding the different players within the system. This wider understanding of a constantly developing and evolving network was achieved by the program and it was done with an eye towards compassion and understanding.

“My hope is that the AK Salmon Fellows Program will be a platform for different salmon user groups to learn about each other and see a reflection of themselves in each user group.”

Participants also hoped for their peers to be resources to each other and to the broader community throughout the program and into the future. Partici-

pants were able to establish strong relationships with one another, which led to ripple effects of potential systemic change for years to come. This hope or expectation was also achieved within the program, with the formation of new relationships being a huge benefit of the program.

“Part of my success will be my connections, and pathways to work with salmon long after the program is over.”

Salmon Fellows also requested deeper dialogue and difficult conversations, which challenge many beliefs around salmon. Some hoped to find common ground in the midst of disagreement and divergence. Although the program succeeded in surfacing common ground and leaning into difficult conversations, it was more challenging for the group to align around specific goals that were shared by all.

“My hopes are our relationships remain and we can find common ground when issues arise and there are disagreements. As much as we may disagree w/each other – we have shared experiences that create relationships which lead to open, honest, and respectful communications.”

3. SYSTEMS AWARENESS AND IMPACT (SYSTEMS CHANGE)

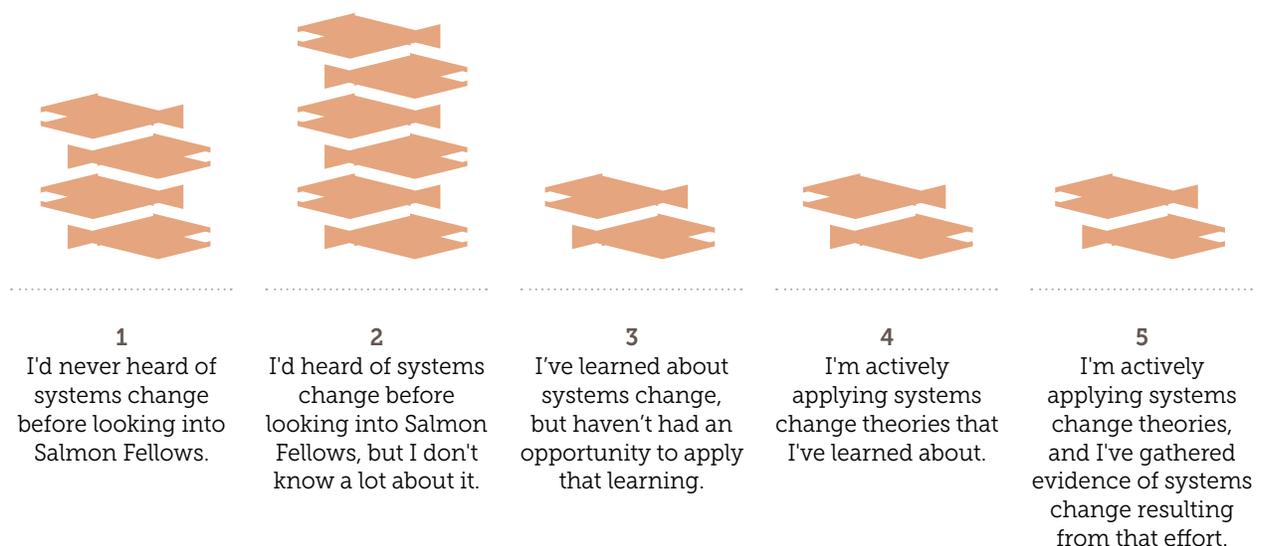
Participants had many differing definitions of systems change based on their own lenses and backgrounds. Systems change was not bounded or defined by the Salmon Fellows Program upon entry, therefore participants brought their own perspectives and definitions to the table, based on their backgrounds. Given this, they each brought their own unique interpretation of what systemic change could look like. Some participants desired to make specific shifts in equity, policy, funding, or land and river management, while others kept a blank and open mind to possibility.

“Alaskans from across the state are looking for this group to have important conversations ... how to change the laws, or funding, or ideas to offer solutions and partnerships for the well-being of our natural resource.”

“The most important change I’d like to see is a cooperative, robust, cross-cultural, cross-user group, cross-stakeholder dialogue about our shared interest in sustaining salmon for generations to come.”

BASELINE KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

Cohort 2 (average = 2.5).





Salmon Fellows had a desire to make some sort of positive change, whether it was through idea generation or working together to develop solutions. Regardless of what the intended change could be, the group had a preference towards making a difference through taking action.

“I believe the ability to network with others who are passionate about salmon, strategize on long term sustainability of salmon and salmon dependent communities, and move towards strategic action is a humbling opportunity and one that inspires me.”

Fellows first established a deeper understanding of the network, to help in the process of identifying focused leverage points for systemic change. Some leverage points were discovered through the program, with actions showing up within projects and personal initiatives.

“I also am really interested in the idea that you need to bring people together from all sectors and have them work together to find the connections that bind them, no matter how disparate they may seem on the surface. If we can find those interconnections, we can build from it and use them as our starting point for the conversation.”

“Applying pressure at critical points in a system is enough to change it, and creative work that influences how people see salmon is a good way to apply that pressure.”

The aspiration to find collective, common understanding of the system, or alignment to achieve specific systemic shifts was not reached in the first three years of this program. This is attributed to the experimental nature of the program and the real-time learning by both the Forum and the Fellows about how best to advance systems change. It was also due to the complexity involved in enacting systems change anywhere. The expectation to change the face of the salmon system during the three-year program or 18-month fellowship was perhaps more aspirational than realistic. This could have been more transparently communicated and discussed throughout the program with the Fellows.

VI. PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

PERSONAL GROWTH was an outcome from the Salmon Fellows program and is an important part of impacting systemic change. It strengthens a clearer, more differentiated sense of self, which enables more purposeful and conscious impact.

Personal growth is defined here as Salmon Fellows displaying a heightened level of self-awareness and an increased level of leadership effectiveness as a result of the program. Participants personally grew through becoming more aware of themselves and their humanity, deepening education, practicing leadership skillsets, and consciously engaging with others.

Participants in the Salmon Fellows program became more aware of themselves including their presence and behavior. It was through the Salmon Fellows experience that they were reminded of how they show up, relate, and connect. The program acted as a catalyst to growth.

“It has sent me to the moon, you guys have really opened up my mind a lot. Salmon Fellows was a wonderful experience for me. I learned how to be a stronger public speaker. I met new people and discovered new avenues to get things done. I was slowly heading in this direction, and Salmon Fellows accelerated this for me.”

“I used to speak with a very serious tone. I’ve changed it to a softer tone, like how I talk to my niece. Why don’t we talk to each other that way? Why don’t we engage in conversations that way? If we approached issues as wrong, that is how the solution will look.”

“We do a lot of negotiating with our companies and companies we don’t get along with. I used to feel very uncomfortable in those situations. The program put us in that uncomfortable feeling all the time and we learned it’s okay.”

Salmon Fellows succeeded in building bridges between members. Many reflected on the fact that they

BUILDING BRIDGES

“I look at everybody different now—we’re all linked together through salmon. All trying to struggle and make a living. Made me realize we’re more alike than what I grew up thinking. The fight is real for everyone and it’s the same song & dance all over the place.

“It’s so important to see others’ humanity before you see their political stance or preference.”

had more similarities than differences, and the underlying connecting factor is our inherent humanness.

Other participants mentioned continuing education through attending diversity leadership programs, listening to podcasts, reading self-development books, attending trainings, and going to conferences focused on self-development, leadership, diversity, and equity. This exploration provided a platform to dive deeper into sensitive issues of racial equity and raise issues among peers and colleagues.

“I’d never been as exposed to Native culture. To sit in those circles. I’d never been exposed in my 25 years in AK. I’d never been to a village in the Yukon, although I had been to the Yukon many times. That was an eye-opening experience and has influenced me greatly in the book that I’m working on. In every chapter, I am incorporating a small part that includes the Native culture. That was a big shift for me.”

“I gained a lot by having the racial equity dialogue combined with the ability to get to know and develop trust with others in the program. At the

same time, I was in a separate leadership program that had a large diversity perspective. I feel like I'm in a different place as a result of those—I have opened my eyes to the degree of privilege I have as a white man from the burbs.”

Salmon Fellows also personally grew through their application of leadership skills, which they were able to practice in the program and take into their professional roles. Fellows gained public speaking and facilitation skills, and a higher degree of awareness around tools that promote leadership effectiveness and change navigation of organizations or systems. Fellows have expressed practicing aligning key stakeholders within and across organizations, developing training programs, and explicitly connecting with people who offered differing perspectives.

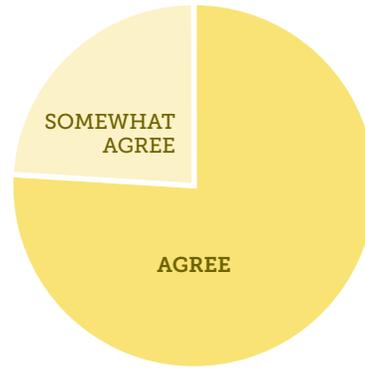
Salmon Fellows have grown to be more conscious of how they engage with the unfamiliar. Many expressed slowing down and leaning into inquiry with a humble attitude. This curiosity encouraged open dialogue and led to greater empathy. Because the program was designed to create a safe space, participants leaned into engaging consciously, versus refraining from speaking up at all. This type of exploration also created a more balanced, pragmatic view of a situation, which aided in building and softening network relationships.

“When we lose track of our humanity, we start to go wrong.”

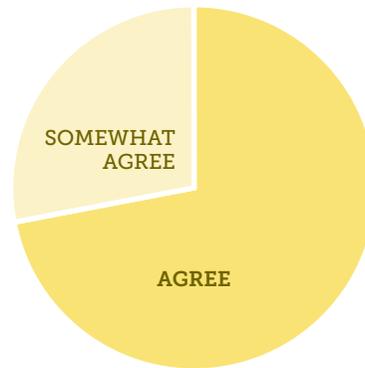
“The program definitely had an impact on my personal and professional life in how I look at issues and problems. I focus on where other people are coming from versus where I am coming from. I try to have a better understanding on how others think.”

“I am less hesitant to talk to someone who comes from a different perspective and I feel I can be receptive to that and can handle that. Now I have more comfort going into a potentially uncomfortable situation. I might have felt like I had to convince them in the past. Now I don't have to tell them where I'm at; now I take the opportunity to learn from them. By getting my point out—I might have created a conflict.”

PERSONAL GROWTH



I have new perspectives



I experienced personal growth

“Some of us when we got into the program were on different sides of the table regarding how we feel about salmon management. I learned respect, new ideas, and had a seat at the table with everyone else. There are entities I didn't even know existed. That has been by far a huge life and game changer for me. I've made lifelong friends. Having that in my back pocket is hugely beneficial.”

One of the most memorable moments in Cohort 2's experience was a conversation around the impacts of Limited Entry. Although the Limited Entry experience was created to sustain fisheries, it had unintended consequences that negatively impacted local subsistence fishermen, who lost access to the fishery. This led many to experience depression and a lack of purpose in

their communities, contributing to suicide and other social issues. One cohort member’s father was instrumental in creating the regulation for this new policy and another cohort member experienced firsthand the damaging impact on his friends and community. Seeing this powerful realization and interchange created a transformational impact on the cohort, including on the mindset of the two individuals directly involved.

The program strengthened a Fellow’s identity and courage in standing up for who they are, which enabled their empowerment as a leader. The container created was safe, guided by respect, and the people within it honored all cultural backgrounds. This level of respect helped Fellows feel empowered to represent their culture and to actively lean into issues such as diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“For myself I felt my voice coming out very strongly. I have spoken up for different things and rarely for myself. I felt like being a minority in that group, I had to share what I really felt and truly thought. What was cool about that situation was that I trusted the group and the people around me. I don’t trust very easily. I felt like regardless it was okay to say and share those things and it was powerful for me. I’ve really started looking at issues of equity and incorporating them into my work with youth. I started seeing the imbalance of the system and started to become more aware of how to add something to it.”

“I am working to take what I have learned about

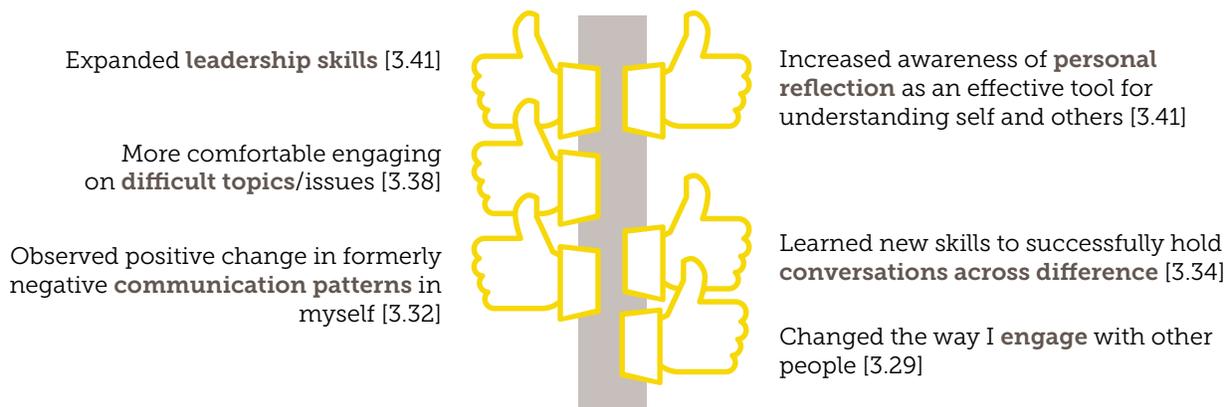
LIMITED ENTRY CONVERSATION

“The Limited Entry conversation really changed who I am and who I was going into Salmon Fellows. I anticipated a major difference with one of the participants. I prepared my points of view. It ended up coming up and taking a weird turn that I wasn’t expecting. I found myself shifting inside and not saying anything I had prepared to say. When I responded, the other person also heard new points of view. We had this amazing respect for each other and our families as a result. It was mind blowing. I think a lot of people in that room were affected by that.”

my sense of privilege into my direct work every day. I raise money and help grant money, and am now working to change the dynamics and make equity a core part of how system works, for example by engaging more Alaska Natives on the boards that make decisions. My eyes are opened a lot. The actor mapping project data confirmed what I thought I knew, so this perspective has really been reinforced.”

“It’s easier for me to lean into these conversations in my role and take a stand for under resourced or underserved communities.”

PERSONAL GROWTH, AREAS OF BROAD AGREEMENT



VII. RELATIONSHIP AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

THE SALMON FELLOWS PROGRAM strengthened relationships within cohorts and across networks. These relationships help to build a stronger, more powerful network of Alaska leaders. Cohort members navigated diversity as they formed relationships in their cohort and as they worked together on specific, smaller team projects. Fellows debated the value of aligning or uniting around a single mission, given the complexity of their affiliations and associated perspectives. At the time of this report, nothing had yet emerged and many believe it is unrealistic to expect all Fellows to agree to a universally shared perspective or initiative. That said, the value of simply being engaged respectfully across differences was embraced by all and seen as a high leverage point for future systems change.

Navigating diversity is defined here as the increased ability to navigate differences of backgrounds including perspective, worldview, and personality / style. It also is defined as the increased ability to hold the tension between differing viewpoints with respect and understanding.

Salmon Fellows expressed an increased level of acceptance of diversity and acknowledged the humanness of everyone, regardless of a professional title or personal affiliation. The act of seeing past a role, allowed the development of a more neutral container to explore new facets of diverse thinking. Participants also acknowledged the impact of accepting one another. This opened up new network connections, ripe with potential.

“In the past, I looked at agency folks as non-human, guided by a set of rules they didn’t create that are set by higher ups that are molded by a system that they did not create. It allowed me to soften how I approach discussions toward people who I think are on a totally different level. It’s opened up many more partnerships than I can handle. I’m grounding into my wisdom in how I relate and connect to people and people feel that. It’s overwhelming. It makes me realize how people crave that connection.”

FROM SPECIFIC TO GENERAL

“For me a big breakthrough was that I became more impartial and a more neutral part of the salmon system because of those I met. I had a big commercial fishing background. I felt really aligned with those interests or ‘that tribe’, so getting a broader picture of the salmon system made me feel less aligned with any one sector. My affiliation went from specific to general.”

“It makes me realize, we as a people are not accepting the diverse points of view. If we all fought for the same things, we would be going off of a cliff. How boring would that be? How do we allow people to have their beliefs without wanting to call them names? I think that that’s a large point of why this experience was valuable to me. I want to figure out how to allow our community to come together and understand where our differences come from even if we’re never going to agree with each other.”

Although there has been an increased competency in navigating diversity, there is still opportunity to lean in and navigate complex, emotionally charged issues. Both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 danced with the complexity of ‘heat’ and tension, and yet did not allow charged issues to create rifts within their community. Salmon Fellows’ respect for each other prevented the creation of and driving in of wedges that divide.

Cohort 1’s experienced tension through the Salmon Shadows project and the way the call for art was framed with strong statements about the impact hatcheries have on Alaska’s wild salmon. While this generated concern in the cohort and the wider community, the heat was ultimately de-escalated through implementation. This maintained a level of group integrity

but may have missed an opportunity to learn how to artfully frame issues so that people can have a safe place to dive respectfully into deeper dialogues on highly charged issues.

“The Salmon Shadows was probably one of the biggest heat issues for Cohort 1. I was pretty shocked that our fellow Fellows were angry. We thought the point of the program was to talk about these difficult issues and to embrace the complexity and the difficult conversations. When we did—we received feedback and it was painful and somewhat shocking. It showed that even though we were a cohort—all of us were still carrying our affiliations.”

“We were really nervous taking Salmon Shadows conversations out to small communities, but it went fine. Partly this is because we didn’t get the artwork that forced us to dive into the hatchery issue. Partly I wish we’d been more open in the way the hatchery issue was framed and also been more mindful about creating powerful questions that ensure people feel safe.”

Even with polarizing topics, strong bonds kept heated issues at bay. The high level of respect within the groups prevented any strong, emotionally challenging disagreements.

“We laugh about that very thing—we don’t have much friction. Even when we talk about semi-polarizing topics, we are all pretty levelheaded. Many of us thought ‘when will something be cast into the pond that would be a divisive event?’ People had the look like, ‘Oh here it comes!’ But we were always willing to work through it and put our heart on our sleeve. Collectively we haven’t had a lot of divisive topics. Hatcheries was one, with commercial fish and the idea of hatcheries. It can engender a lot of emotion, but people have been very open. No matter how much someone supported a topic, they always acknowledged it’s a complicated topic and at least some aspect of it or the science is on shaky ground. By acknowledging the uncertainty and the concerns we worked through it. We didn’t have two camps and that made a big difference.”

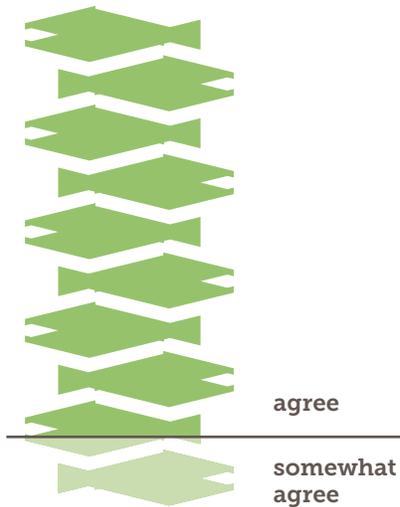
DIVERSITY



agree more →

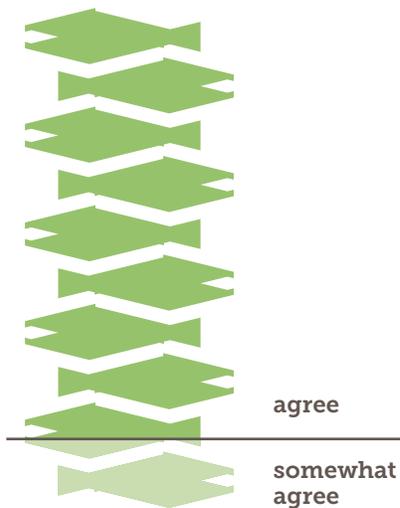
NETWORK DIVERSITY

My Salmon People network has become more diverse:



GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

My Salmon People network has become more statewide:



“I hoped that would be a result, that no one in the program would dig the kind of trenches you see in public battles and push on those wedges. It’s not respectful and doesn’t drive leaders to good outcomes.”

Salmon Fellows shared that they had increased their level of team effectiveness with one another as they worked together in the program. Team effectiveness showed up primarily through the team projects as they had to work together to accomplish a specific goal.

During project execution, teams gained an appreciation for the people they were working with, which led to stronger relationships maintained outside of the program. Project success was dependent upon team member engagement and availability. Having an available and committed leader, who could take on the additional work of coordination, helped the project succeed. Although projects helped form trust and deeper relationships within sub-groups, they took a tremendous amount of time and energy, which felt draining to many cohort members. If a project was not supported, it impacted team member level of engagement, which also impacted the level of team effectiveness. Regardless, team members looked out for each other, including thinking of one another for other fellowship opportunities.

“I would attribute success to [our leader for] keeping an eye on task. She set deadlines for our deliverables. Having someone committed to a clear timeline is what made this work successful.”

“Our project gave us the opportunity to know where we come from, who our families are, and I don’t think we would have had the opportunity otherwise. We got to meet together in places where we otherwise would not be. I feel like we all came from different places and our relationships became stronger.”

“I struggled with both projects. The first one was that we didn’t get any funding or support. I felt like that project would have been a lot of fun. The second one I couldn’t wrap my head around it so I couldn’t really get engaged.”

Salmon Fellows strengthened their connections within the network which helped them more effectively work across boundaries. Network relationships are defined here as a validation of strengthened relationships within cohorts and with the external community.

A noticeable, strong bond formed within both cohorts. The process supported organic trust building through personal shares via check-ins and check-outs. Furthermore, Fellows generally respected one another and their knowledge, values, and credibility.

“We have super strong relationships within our cohort. Our cohort had synergy from early on; it was easy to build trust with everyone. We felt like there was a core set of shared values.”

“The power of networks feels much different when you’re in person and forced to sit down and talk to each other.”

Cohort members did not develop as strong of relationships with one another across cohorts, or with members of the Founding Partners.

“The dynamic between the two cohorts felt a little off. There was a tension and lack of trust. The program tried to have an overlap in Kodiak and I feel like it didn’t really go well. That was a little surprising to me.”

Some of the experiences stood out as being especially helpful for creating connections across cohorts, including the Open Space dialogues held in Kodiak where all of the Fellows and many of the Founding Partners were present. Several cited this as one of the most valuable experiences that allowed for deep conversations with diverse people. As Fellows and the Forum look beyond the formal program, they are now building on the existing relationships and shared experience to develop a wider network, including the application of the Open Space dialogues to the way they connect in person and virtually.

Overall, the experience created an increased appetite to reach out across networks and strengthen relationships beyond the Fellows themselves. Participants

acknowledged that the habit of reaching out across networks became easier and more comfortable to do over the course of the program. Fellows now reach out to each other when they are in town and maintain connections personally and professionally. Some also have continued to break down barriers in current professional roles or passion projects.

UNLIKELY BONDS

“One of the things I wanted to focus on out of the program was to create more networks because of the knowledge of the people in the room. That was met 100%. Even the unlikely bonds.”

“I now feel much more comfortable reaching out into my networks for information, instead of relying on doing research on my own. I call the people who really know and they tell me. It’s much easier and I don’t lose anything.”

“I credit breaking down barriers and getting to know people. In my current role, I bring diverse user groups together. I purposefully choose people who are hardest to persuade. In the end, people are very thankful afterwards to learn about each other, and it helps to build respect in navigating issues when they come up.”

“One of the things I’m best at is connecting. Often I see the best thing that I can possibly do is connect two people who ought to be connected, even if I’m not involved in the issue. That’s so important with systems change. In my normal work, I connect people to resources every day. I’m now on this quest to understand the players and actors involved in climate action, and make sure the ones doing similar work are connected to each other.”

Common ground is defined here as the ability to find shared strategies with others from differing perspectives. The Salmon Fellows program was not de-



Cohort 1



Cohort 2

signed for aligned action by all – in that there were no shared initiatives that drove full group alignment or action. There was movement around the increased understanding and acceptance of the many facets of complex issues, and group projects were able to position community dialogue to begin to understand this complexity; but the need to align on any particular common ground for action was absent. The question remains around what level of collective action this group is able to take together, and whether that is predicated on finding common ground.

Projects such as Salmon Circles allowed diverse groups to come together for dialogue and also reiter-

ated the complexity around needing to align around common ground for action.

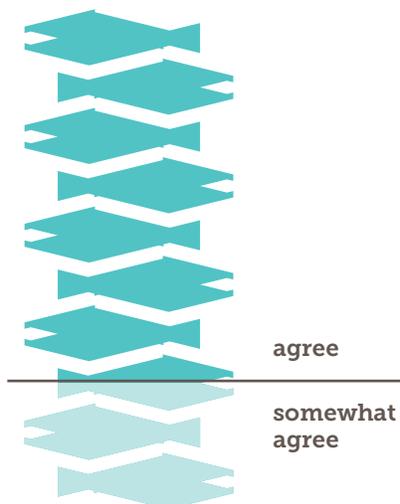
“It made me realize that no matter the common thread, coming to decisions on courses of action to enhance, or protect this resource will be incredibly complicated, for no matter the respect for the resource or people we interact with, coming to terms with the actions needed to accomplish this will not be easy.”

VIII. SYSTEMS AWARENESS AND IMPACT

THE SALMON FELLOWS PROGRAM was unique in the way it sought to advance and promote systemic changes. From the outset of the program and its design, the 18-month experience created a starting point through which new relationships and personal growth would lead to longer term change. The system goals within the program timeframe were to raise awareness and understanding of the complexity of systems; and to explore, experiment with, and learn from potential leverage points. Given the complexity and the long-term nature of the goal to promote a more equitable and sustainable system, it is understandable that short-term systems impact is both more difficult to see in three years and more challenging to measure. While the immediate impact on systems was not as high as the other impact dimensions of (Personal Growth and Networks / Relationships), it was consistent with expectations. The results however were significant in terms of developing a wider and deeper awareness and understanding of the complex system and its evolving dynamics, thus laying a foundation for longer term systems change.

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEM ISSUES

My cohort developed a new shared understanding of issues surrounding the system:



Research and resources shared by the Forum showed that effective systems change is incredibly complex and dynamic, and it can take many years and even decades to see a noticeable impact. Case studies from the book *Getting to Maybe* illustrated this point, as well as discussions that focused on the longer term like the “Back to the Future” exercise conducted with Cohort 1. In the latter, Fellows put themselves ten years into the future to describe systemic impacts that began with their fellowship. This visioning fueled both small experiments conducted in the summer as well as projects that teams developed during the program. Given these realities, the general sentiments expressed by Fellows in both quantitative and qualitative forms was an acknowledgment of the complexity and longer time horizons involved with systems change, even while they came with and retained high aspirations for what could be possible. Many also felt the advances made during the program left Fellows poised for action and offered significant potential for the longer term.

“I don’t think you guys oversold the part about systems change. I realized it wasn’t like kicking a 2x4 and the roof falls in. I saw it like the Xerox Park Lab in the 1950s, where you give them creative stew from which things would bubble up. I think the effects of the program will carry on. It won’t end. Many of our Fellows do have 40-50 years left. Through them, the impact will be ongoing.”

“We all came into the program with different expectations, so I think my surprise was that some of us thought we were going to get something bigger out of it, in terms of either a long term project or a group project we could all agree on. That didn’t really happen because I think naturally everyone had different priorities and came with different community perspectives and beliefs. It was interesting how we self assembled around our projects based on what we thought were the most important things. I think that given there are only

so many resources and so much time, I was a little disappointed that some of those things didn't get realized. But that's not anyone's fault. It's just that we don't have the resources and time to make those things happen. That was the assumption that was most disappointing but when I reflect back, it was also the most realistic thing that could have happened."

SYSTEM AWARENESS AND COMPLEXITY

System awareness and complexity is defined here as an increased understanding of the full systemic picture and the validation of the complex and difficult nature of working across changing systems. All participants gained exposure to the complex nature of systems throughout the process of developing a larger holistic picture.

Salmon Fellows gained an increased awareness of the full salmon and people system, whereas in the past their perspective was heavily based on their individual career path and personal background, as well as perceptions of power and influence. The program increased their awareness and generated a desire to educate the public and share this systems view with others.

"It surprised people to find out more about each other's sectors. When I facilitated the resource development group, I had no idea what the Resource Development Council was. I didn't even know that group existed. We began to understand how complex the systems are that we work in."

"When you are really tied to a place in a season, other places don't really exist in that season. I don't know what happens on the Yukon or other rivers. Even though this fellowship was among Alaskans, it was so important for us to do this because we are all on our own planet in the summer. We don't care about the other rivers on the day to day—it's none of our business. We're focused on our own rivers. It took me a long time to realize that some of these issues were universal Alaskan issues. I never would have known that if I had not done this fellowship."

ENCOUNTERING COMPLEXITY

"When we moved out from being group representative to representing ourselves and talking about problems and issues and solutions, I think we were overwhelmed by the nuance in one hand and the complexity that we were really not able to define the problem in terms of a singular external problem or identify a singular external solution. We were at times very frustrated by that. The reality of that was inescapable. We were moving away from pre-conceived notions or a worldview that is in very simplistic terms that was up against a complex environment."

"As urban populations grow, they take resources away from people who used to use those resources to make a living. That is a big system change and talking about it in the podcast and exhibit will help people see it in a global sense."

Cohort members expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and sadness due to the complexity and issues within the system. Given that political, ecological, and economic factors are constantly changing and evolving, system mapping and current state understanding is never constant. These rapidly changing factors make it difficult to nail down problems and offer solutions.

"Our group could get down and get depressed sometimes. We were examining some issues and feeling the depression of those young people, a lot of who we came to love and it was hard to see them not be very optimistic."

"I learned the system is very dynamic. Even in the course of completing the actor map—the system was changing, and the actor's perception was also changing. We just had statewide election and then in March we are hearing about budget crisis and influence on systems. And then the hatcheries became a really big issue. How people would have

identified the system as if we would have been on Cohort 1 would have been really different. When you are talking about system changes you need to be really aware of it.”

Institutional, political, and economic barriers create difficulties in the navigation of the system. The educational system provides career pathways to powerful commercial industries. Industry provides funding for science research. State and federal government agencies are enmeshed with lucrative industry and Western models of management. These intricacies influence human behavior and decision making within current structures.

“At the University of Alaska, in the School of Fisheries, the curriculum and research is really geared for commercial harvesting, seafood processing and its management. In the private sector for employment, there are very few fisheries advocacy jobs in Alaska outside of commercial fisheries. It is similar in Washington and other coastal states. When you look at the higher educational system, most university degrees are oriented to the seafood industry. In Alaska, there is little higher education support for sport or subsistence fishing. That lack of support then bleeds over into little research support for relevant issues related to sport and subsistence fisheries.”

“Now the commercial fish culture is infiltrating US Fish and Wildlife as a federal system, and the Federal Subsistence Board. The federal system has five agencies in the western part of the state that have a very big emphasis on getting along with the State because of states’ rights. It has helped me to see the bigger fight of how the political mechanics work.”

TOO FAST

“In Alaska there are a lot of supercharged, well-meaning, crazy enthusiastic people who are doing all of the wrong things too fast.”

While the complexity of human beings is not reflected in the institutions they belong to, individuals’ behavior is pre-judged and associated back with an assumed position, which limits possibility in reaching new ground. There is a desire to embrace more flexibility and pragmatism, or to navigate around current structures all together.

“People’s institutional affiliations do not always necessarily impact the individual’s personal viewpoints or belief systems although their presence has the potential of creating a polarized impact (e.g. certain folks won’t show up in the room). How do we get folks to see past the “hats” they wear?”

“Because of the state that we live in, I acknowledge that we’re not going to get anywhere if I am way on one side, even if I do support specific policies. Even though I know this is where my heart lies, I know that makes it more difficult to work together to move forward.”

“The ones that are most involved at the core of the salmon system intentionally stratify themselves. They are fighting policy battles but, in their organizations, they represent insular perspectives. I did interviews—these aren’t hateful people. These aren’t people who identify with the ‘status quo’ of the perspective of their representative organization. They want a different pathway through the system.”

Fellows are faced with a dilemma on how to move forward given the presenting complexity and well-established institutional barriers. They acknowledge their sense of personal responsibility and express interest in the need to bridge across institutions. Creativity and balance is needed to support a new type of system shift. A one-sided solution will not only be difficult to accomplish, but also feels unrealistic. A question remains around the personal motivation to seek out injustice, challenge the status quo, or find a new pathway all together.

“Where’s the noise? Who is putting the heat on the policy makers that says this is unacceptable?”

BRIDGE BUILDERS

“Keeping salmon in Alaska is a long game. It is not always better to do something instead of nothing. The long game usually requires the rarely combined arts of self-awareness and creativity. We need less activists and more engaging bridge builders.”

“We can’t just go back to the way things were. What is the balance? Obviously involving indigenous people more, but we also have to involve all the different corporations and industries. Everyone needs to be a part of this. There is a goal of a sustainable economy, a local economy, and a non-extractive one. I can get behind that, but the way that some view ‘Just Transition’ is a complete reversal, going back to pre-settler contact, which seems hard to do.”

“I’d like everyone to show up with an agenda— are we brave enough to admit what our agendas are? How do we disarm our agency or university or non-profit mandated selves? Is it even possible? What lies do we believe? Are we indebted to maintain the status quo of the institutions that we work for? Or by doing this, are we assuming responsibility for their racism and environmental destruction even though we didn’t put it into place? What happens when we see institutionalized injustice? Can we react? Do we even know what injustice looks like?”

“Fighting the system where we are is a waste of energy. Let’s create a new system or new ideology. The truth of that should supersede these systems. We can bring people into these new systems to help them forget about the past.”

While still showing a majority of Fellows agreed to some extent, the lowest average rating of all questions asked of the Fellows was on this very topic of institutional adaptation for positive systems change:

Q37: I experienced increased commitment by relevant organizations and groups to improve equity and sustainability in Alaska’s salmon / people system [3.14]

Despite all of these facets of system complexity, there are bright spots where progress is being made. On the Yukon River, new dynamics are emerging in the management of rivers by blending Native and Western ways of working. Salmon Fellows in partnership with other network leaders are shifting the structure of the Board of Fish meetings by introducing indigenous values. Fish commissioners are being included to represent every village and the network is being strengthened by having weekly conference calls with the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission. Many people included in this effort represent members of the Salmon Fellows program, and recently these Yukon River leaders have seen greater success for their proposals to the Board of Fish. Although this is one instance, it represents a bright spot of opportunity for further progress in creating more balance in governing structures.

Although there was a perception among Fellows that this program did not accomplish as much as hoped on systems change relative to other impact areas, qualitative data does show that there have been instances of impact, whether it be through testing experiments or identifying leverage points.

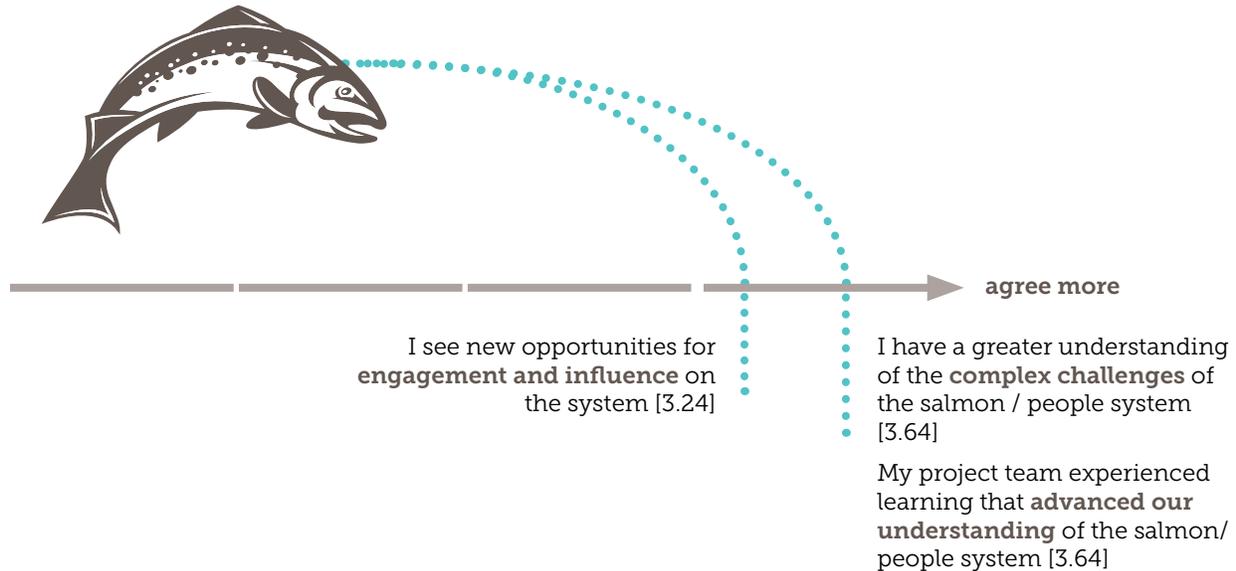
Systems impact is defined here as salmon and people ecosystem impact as a result of cohort learnings and project experience. The group agrees that large systems change or impact was not accomplished; however such large-scale impact was not realistically attainable in the first years of an experimental program.

“I don’t think we have moved the needle all in terms of a salmon-system shift. I think in the projects we’ve done, we’ve raised the level of awareness around salmon. We’re having the conversations and it will take years before a shift like this will be realized.”

“The program didn’t do anything for me when it came to systems change, but it did resonate with me in terms of being together for extended time with a diverse community of people from different areas with different life experiences.”

The experience did develop and strengthen a holistic mindset around systems change.

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEM OPPORTUNITIES



“I’ve never had the opportunity to be guided through lots of thinking on systems. All of my work relates to context, so that I’m familiar with. But thinking about and spending time considering all the connections and systems in a systematic way was very useful. And I think that really is playing now into my work with climate change, as I reach out, learn more about it. I try to learn who is best equipped to tackle certain questions, which people need to be connected etc. The broader, meta picture of systems has been very useful to me.”

LEVERAGE POINT / PULL-OUTS

Fellows were able to use their personal growth insights from their wider network and wider systems mindset to identify leverage points or places to apply their insights. These ideas and opportunities showed up in the Fellows’ team projects and also in their professional roles outside of the program. The following ideas and actions emerged as small experiments around perceived leverage points that created ripples of change:

- **SHIFT THE NATURE of connection to foster more dialogue and communication flow.**

Re-design the nature of engagement between stakeholders by getting to know members more per-

sonally and by structuring in two-way communication flow and dialogue. Accomplish this through small acts like organizing get-togethers, dinners, or structuring business meetings differently.

“We have outreach requirements and have to go into communities affected by the oil spill and do information sharing. In the Western way, scientists like to go in and give a presentation. I’m looking for other opportunities to structure in additional community dialogue. This summer, I’ll be going out to communities in Prince William Sound and I’m hoping to change it all up so there is more sharing and exchange of information.”

- **EDUCATE THE PUBLIC by creating unbiased access to information**

Educate the public by creating museum exhibits, podcasts, and accessible scientific articles to generate awareness and dialogue around the implications of the human control of a natural system on a massive scale.

“When a message is being relayed to those who don’t understand the big picture, you’re sending out a marginalized message. You have to educate audience. You don’t see commercial harvest you see people harvesting on the river. Need to lay

groundwork to understand how commercial fisherman get the lion's share of the fish. If they take too much, the people on the river who need it to survive have to take less. The system is influenced by voters and public sentiment—that is the audience. We have to educate the public better, so they make better decisions.”

TALKING ABOUT IT

“As urban populations grow, we take resources away from people who used to use those resources to make a living. That is a big system change and talking about it in the podcast and exhibit will help people see it in a global sense.”

- **CREATE A CLEAR, strong and inclusive message that everyone can get behind.**

Create messaging that draws out individual values or gifts and minimizes feelings of polarization or competition. Use these new, counter-cultural, and non-commercial tactics to appeal to current institutions and politicians who are in a position of power.

“The messaging that we have is about valuing ourselves, about self-worth, self-esteem, and contributions. They are about people having capacity to contribute and everyone having value. These messages aren't competing—and there is an open market for them. There is an audience that craves some positive messaging.”

- **PROVIDE PLATFORMS for intentional dialogue and cross-sector discovery.**

Fellows mentioned the need to create more opportunities for cross-sector engagement and dialogue, whether it be through conferences or through existing structures.

“This forum can be a great area to get Alaskans talking to Alaskans about what we want to do with our resources in our state and with 230 sovereign tribes. What should we do as a state? What conversations should we have together around salmon?”

RIPPLE EFFECT STORIES

Ripple Effects are examples of positive actions or behaviors that have the potential of rippling out to create systems change.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #1.** Catie Bursch shared a personal instance of leaning into polarizing issues and seeking a humanity that unites across charged issues and political differences. In Kachemak Bay, there was a heated local debate going on about lifting the ban on jet skis in the bay. Catie invited a local power sports store owner, who had been publicly advocating in favor of allowing jet skis in Kachemak Bay, out for coffee to learn more about his perspective. Through their conversation, she learned that this man appreciates and cares about the land and water. He has his special spots on the bay and he recognized the beauty of the natural environment. He and other jet ski proponents may share similar values, yet still might have a different point of view on banning jet skis in the bay, believing the rule was excluding a single user group. The gentleman appreciated the intelligent conversation and said he preferred this type of one-one-one connection over a public space charged with polarized emotion. Catie reflected, “Whenever you exclude someone, they don't like it. Being excluded is the big issue.” What helped her the most was that she was comforted after speaking to him. The ripple effect in this example shows how the Fellows' experience resulted in the opportunity to shift behavior from advocacy to inquiry in polarized environments. This behavior impacts others, and, in return, has the potential to create a larger ripple effect.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #2.** Matt Varner advanced an initiative called Salmon Gold to promote progressive mining work that included the restoration of the land and stream. When the work was completed, Matt submitted a national nomination for a local miner, Dean, owner of the Race Family Mining Operation. Dean won the 2019 Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, which recognizes small mining operations that continuously meet or exceed reclamation requirements with minimal oversight. Since the award, the work has received national media attention. The

mining family's commitment to stream restoration has caught the attention of world-leading companies such as Apple and Tiffany, which uses gold recovered from their Fortymile Mine in their products. Dean and his son Chris have also since met with Congressional staff about the idea of stewardship and using modern mining and reclamation techniques to enhance habitats. Matt reflects that when he first began working with miners it was difficult to establish trust. However, over time Matt was able to bridge across his network and develop new connections which led to actual habitat enhancement thru the Salmon Gold initiative. These strengthened connections across networks have also led to additional interest in the program from other miners, not only in Alaska, but also in the Canadian Yukon and British Columbia.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #3.** Mary Peltola from Cohort 1 and Peter Bangs from Cohort 2 partnered across their cohorts to bring a NOAA group from Seattle and Portland out to Mary's fish camp. Without the program, these Fellows would have not known each other. Peter Bangs noted, "It was a big deal for folks in the program to experience the Fish Camp vs. read about it." Even though these Fellows were not in the same cohort, they still were able to connect across boundaries and enable a larger network awareness to the salmon system.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #4.** Mark Young shifted the way he engaged with his international students who are a part of the business program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Mark hosted virtual classes where he learned a lot with his international students. They had a mutual learning experience, gaining a deeper understanding around the cultural impacts of doing business from a student who was creating gender neutral clothing in Jordan. Mark says, "As a result of the Fellowship, I dig a little deeper with my students in the classroom. I have also found out that I am more interested in learning more about how my international students do business." This style of engagement in teaching is a ripple effect in that it has the potential of translating to both teachers' and students' learning experience for years to come.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #5.** Frances Leach has implemented a new way to bridge across institutions by orchestrating dinners with members of different affiliations. She believes it's much easier to find common ground or a way ahead when there is mutual respect established between parties. She's learned from Salmon Fellows that communications and building relationships is key. In her job, she proactively brings commercial fishers and Board of Fish members together who may share a different opinion on controversial issues. "I tell them there is no agenda other than getting to know one another." Frances sees the humanity behind decisions because, "at the end of the day, it's not just a user group behind choices you make. There is a family or a person that has had struggles. I'm doing that for the commercial fishing industry because that is my job but would like to also see subsistence users have a chance to sit with BoF members and get to know each other." Implications at the board have implications for human lives and the resources that surround them. This powerful action not only helps to create bridges between individuals, but it also starts to create a stronger bridge between the institutions to which they belong.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #6.** Marcus Mueller has applied techniques from the Salmon Fellows in his current role as Planning Section Chief for incident management for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. He is initiating conversations on coronavirus as a strategy for building a front line of community resilience in the face of a global pandemic. Marcus is using a systemic leverage point by building capability to foster dialogue on an issue that cuts across institutional lines. Simple actions such as checking in, listening, and holding space for dialogue are providing a platform for new conversations to emerge around important global issues and their effect locally. Marcus's perspective is to, "bend the system toward greater resilience so that when something happens, it doesn't snap." Leverage points can be seen as organic and adaptive that help create a larger, positive ripple effect.

- **RIPPLE EFFECT #7.** Ben Stevens continues to advance the goals of changing the nature of resource management. Current management decision-mak-

ing is data driven; data and information is developed by agencies. “Our project attempted to quantify the value of the subsistence lifestyle. It’s an economy in itself that has been disregarded and ignored, largely because agencies didn’t know how to incorporate its values. The reason we keep losing regulatory disputes over our people’s ability to hunt and fish is that all decisions are guided by statutes and data. Oftentimes, this data is arranged in a manner that suits whomever is arranging them. When we’re hungry out there and need to harvest a moose to distribute throughout the village, we’re confronted with data that says there’s a conservation concern. According to their data, we can’t harvest. When we appeal to the boards for relief, they use data to deny us opportunity. This project was starting to delve into data on factors reflecting the subsistence lifestyle in a manner the biologists, statisticians and attorneys recognize. That is a fire that was lit – although we’re having problems doing it, we’re making the jump that I think is a critical one that will lead to improved management.”

EQUITY OF SYSTEM

Equity of system is defined here as increasing awareness surrounding the equities or inequities of groups at play within the salmon and people ecosystem. It also refers to action taken as a result of increased awareness around equities or inequities.

Given there are many different types of equity, there was an opportunity to develop a shared definition and understanding of equity with both cohorts throughout the program. While clear inequity relating to indigenous rights and influence on the management system was a predominant theme, other factors came into focus, including economic inequities, gender inequities, and urban-rural pressures on the political systems that manage the fisheries.

Through the Salmon Fellows, participants experienced new realities around perceived inequities including the impact of commercial fishing on the amount of available fish in the ocean, and the resulting limited entry policy that has had multiple intended and unintended impacts on access to fish.

EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

“I went in thinking we are all equal but boy I was wrong. We haven’t had all of the same opportunities. That was pretty naïve of me. Now anytime I get a chance to preach that, I do.”

“Most people when they see salmon, they are siloed. When people think limited entry, they feel exclusiveness. What people don’t always recognize is the limited entry program is one permutation of worldwide effort to control overfishing and monetize it because we live in a capitalist system. It’s a way of adding value to a resource. Salmon is a limited resource whose use is decided by those in power. When you talk about limited entry, it is an interesting conversation and can get emotional.”

As participants strengthened and grew personally, they grew in their self-awareness and through equity conversations also began to realize the inequities within Alaskans.

One participant profoundly reflected on larger systemic patterns of inequity, realizing the cyclical nature of behavior and the risk of inadvertently repeating the same problems of the past again.

“As the minority culture comes to power or the left progressive entities come to power, they need to be careful not to replicate the same behaviors that the dominating culture used previously.”

Salmon Fellows also deepened their understanding of key stakeholder groups’ level of equity in the system. In the Actor Map project, it was discovered that the subsistence user group had little perceived influence, despite the state law managing the resource for subsistence first. This was contrasted with the government, which had a large amount of perceived influence.

“The government sector holds a tremendous amount of power in our system. We don’t spend a lot of time talking about that. When you look at

how successful organizations are at board of fisheries; the government has a 90% success rate. Subsistence is far less likely to get their proposals passed. If you are in a government agency you are holding a lot of power in the system—there are so many actors in that system that are influencing things. It has made me think about how important it is for us to set time discussing equity within those government agencies. And making sure that the board of fish represents the diversity of Alaska or making sure managers in Alaska Dept of Fishing and Game represent the diversity of Alaska. We want to elevate voices throughout Alaska.”

Another perceived inequity is the lack of diversity on governing boards or associations. Having diverse representation ensures transparent acknowledgment and discussion around perceived inequities. This includes ensuring adequate representation of indigenous women, who play a core role with salmon in their villages.

Fellows acknowledged that racial equity dialogues are not only important, but needed to continue and broaden their reach, whether that be through individual efforts or efforts on behalf of the Forum’s and First Alaskans Institute’s future programs.

“There’s a lot of potential in having additional facilitated conversation solely for equity with representation of different sectors. In our [actor mapping] sessions, people were initially reluctant about the 90 minutes, but as we ended, they wanted to keep talking—we were shooing people out. People want to engage on these issues. I dreaded approaching these issues and groups, but felt obligated to do it. And we were left wanting more.”

“I am becoming more aware of my privilege that I hold. I’ve worked on national environmental policy acts where we do stakeholder engagement and there isn’t a great way to engage the community and channel their needs into policy changes.”

One participant mentioned seeing a shift to Native-led values within organizations, as a potential future trend. A question remains around the merging or

inter-relating of organizations that have different values-based philosophies.

“I’m starting to see a shift to really empowering Native led organizations, not just including them. That’s a bandwagon I’m on—toward Native led businesses and organizations, particularly Native women led entities.”

SUSTAINABILITY OF SYSTEM

Sustainability of system is defined here as an increased understanding of what aspects of the current salmon and people ecosystem are unsustainable and what changes are needed to increase sustainability of system. It also includes any specifics indicating action as a result of this increased awareness.

The fishing industry is perceived to be unsustainable and industry blinders prevent a holistic understanding of the impacts on wild salmon.

“I kind of had a rough sense that Alaska wasn’t the best managed fishery in the world but I didn’t really believe that. I thought we were doing a much better job that we actually are. I learned from people who really know politically and socially how those management decisions are going.”

EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

“I don’t think we can sustain [salmon] on the process and approach we are using today. It goes hand and hand with equity. Until we can get opinions to shift, we don’t have a chance with sustainability. We can say we’re operating sustainable fisheries, but we’re not. It’s not working.”

“The legislature is where resources are to be allocated; the executive branch is where decisions are administered. But there is a process in allocating Alaska salmon that is outside the purview of the legislature. The Board of Fish is solely up to the

administration through the State Fish & Game. There is some oversight through the appointment process of legislature. Wild fish do not come first in this state. Decisions about fish are made outside of areas of public influence.”

There is a perceived conflict of interest for both ecological and business minded leaders but with the right type of data informed education, a solution could emerge that feels like a win for salmon. Helping the larger system see and understand itself could save dollars in the long run.

“It’s clear what the buy-in is for people in salmon harvesting, subsistence, commercial and personal use – it is environmentalism and the protection of the resource. Industry outside of that realm wants to make their business look better, and it works out even better for them if they can keep salmon alive while improving their business. It’s beneficial for all parties to better holistically understand the culture of the salmon system as it will inform better decision making that can prevent additional hurdles that cost them millions of dollars.”

There exists a question whether the right types of tools are even available to accurately assess and make decisions around the larger systemic impacts of fish circulation in Alaska. To add to this complexity, there is no fish economist in the State Fish & Game.

“If you don’t have anyone providing economic information to BoF and if there is not regular data collection for economics, you then have a history of making decisions that are based on power allocation instead of maximizing economic benefits to the state of AK. If you don’t have a track system in place of making best economic decisions for AK, it’s easier to make allocative changes between groups and groups will then perceive winners and losers. We end up with a perception power allocation vs. a well-reasoned decision.”

However, Fellows expressed their appreciation for nature and recognize the importance of sustainability. The salmon ecosystem is fragile and yet very in-

terconnected, and Fellows were able to reflect upon the many facets of a human’s relationship to its natural surroundings.

“The program has been rewarding to share stories with other Alaskans across boundaries. So many people are clueless about rural Alaska. We need to get rid of the big boats; if we can’t figure out how to catch fish with our little boats, we shouldn’t catch them at all. We’re monsters and predators with so many drag nets that are seven football fields wide catching 80 tons of fish. Imagine what that does to the ocean floor. In front of our village, the ocean floor is dead.”

“Having our first session at fish camp, out on the land, allowed us space to be together. I can’t think of a better word than decolonizing, which is a buzzword, but it was connecting to each other, the rhythm of life, the fish, the water. That was one of the pivotal moments, among many others.”

EQUITY & SUSTAINABILITY

I have increased my belief that **people whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine** can also be committed to helping increase equity and sustainability of Alaska’s salmon/people system. [3.48]

Alaska Salmon Fellows program is an **innovative approach** to advancing equity and sustainability [3.55]



IX. LESSONS LEARNED

THE FORUM utilized a robust Developmental Evaluation approach to ensure continuous learning and adaptation of the Salmon Fellows program over the course of the three years. This meant remaining open, curious, and reflective regarding what was emerging for individuals, for the cohorts, for the program team, and for the larger effort. The intention of the program was to integrate personal growth, relationship building across diverse networks, with an effort to understand

and advance systems change. The ongoing evaluation of the program uncovered strengths and opportunity areas that will serve as the foundation for informing future work.

Below is a summary table of the key lessons learned throughout the program design, delivery, and evaluation. These are outlined in the form of strengths and opportunity areas for future improvement. The summary points are detailed further in this section.

| | STRENGTHS | OPPORTUNITY AREAS | |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| PROGRAM STRUCTURE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraged proven models for leadership, networks, and systems change Recruiting process, cohort diversity and size Traveling to multiple gatherings and learning from diverse salmon communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understanding in application of systems change models Some sectors not well represented in cohort diversity Demanding team project approach Expectation setting around program, time, and energy commitment | |
| PROGRAM DESIGN | CONTENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salmon knowledge of diverse Fellows Exposure and deep learning about indigenous people, issues, and cultures Foundation in reading <i>King of Fish</i> Systems thinking capability building (e.g., Actor Mapping exercise) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for more salmon specific content Content lacked early skill building in navigating through differences Lack of consistency in theoretical models |
| | PROCESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes that built trust and relationships Diversity of inclusive approaches Open Space and Root Causes style conversations for deeper dialogue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program felt overly structured and tightly packed Allow projects/actions to emerge over longer timeframe Increase involvement of cohort to co-design gatherings |
| | CULTURE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness to new ideas and willingness to be vulnerable Expanded worldview with appreciation for diversity Relationship building within cohorts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of community building across the two cohorts More culturally responsive and Fellow-led design needed |
| PROGRAM IMPACT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal development Understanding of larger systemic factors Knowledge and diversity of networks expanded Developmental Evaluation approach for meaningful learning and measurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership development not focused Further clarity needed around realistic systems change Insufficient measures for progress toward systems change | |
| PROGRAM MANAGEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility and adaptability to iterate and enhance program content and design over time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continuity in program staff Inconsistent communications and connections Experimental nature of program evolution generated uncertainty | |

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: STRENGTHS

Program structure includes the program goals, recruiting and selection of 16 diverse Fellows per cohort, four gatherings across the state, the overall progressive flow across gatherings, and the role of projects.

- **Leveraged proven models for leadership, networks, and systems change:** A set of models were defined and utilized throughout the program, providing a solid foundation for development of individuals, network relationships, and systems change. Fellows reported positive impacts in each dimension.

- **Recruiting process, cohort diversity and size:** Some of the most positive feedback received was on getting the right people in the room. Participants valued the opportunity to develop trust and deeper relationships with their diverse peers. The Forum did learn and incorporate changes to the recruiting and selection process for the second cohort and will continue to aim for maximum diversity of participants. One example of this is to seek greater representation from sectors like Resource Development.

RECRUITING

“I would say finding 16 people and meshing them together like that is a rare accomplishment. I’ve never seen anything like it in my entire life. I don’t expect to see it again. They got the right people in the room. That is what I take out of it—I don’t place anything higher than having the right people in the room. They should do that again next time and continue the structure of creating an environment with intention, ethics, and thoughts.”

- **Traveling structure:** Traveling across Alaska for gatherings and learning from diverse salmon communities was perceived as a key strength to the overall program. The structure offered a wide range

of hands on, immersive experiences that helped to shape a participant’s journey in the program.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Lack of understanding in the application of systems change models:** The greatest leverage for systems change is driven by factors underneath the surface, including the underlying belief systems and unconscious assumptions that drive the way systems are created and maintained by people. The program did accomplish personal paradigm shifts in how Fellows perceived themselves and the system, which was foundational to the potential for change. Creating a stronger understanding for Fellows about the critical role of underlying personal beliefs was a missed opportunity for Fellows’ learning in the systems change model.

- **Some sectors not well represented in cohort diversity:** Although the cohort did represent a wide range of diversity, there is greater opportunity to ensure all sectors are represented. This is particularly true for the Resource Development sector and, to a lesser extent, formal policy makers.

- **Demanding team project approach:** The time and effort required to execute team projects surfaced as a common opportunity area. Fellows valued the deeper relationships gained through the smaller project teams but struggled with the energy drain that felt overwhelming at times. Some groups worked successfully to advance and adapt their goal over time; some generated tangible outcomes and significant insights; while others faltered due to lack of time, resources, or clarity on the goal.

- An alternative for future cohorts would be to form learning groups of 3-4 people. The purpose of these groups would be to support and connect more deeply with one another and explore areas of interest with diverse perspectives.

- In addition, it is recommended to explore how subsequent cohorts could work more collectively and, in between gatherings, to identify and advance areas of shared interest. A design that more inten-

tionally connected the systems work could build momentum in the areas that show the greatest promise.

• **Expectation setting around program and its goals:** In the absence of a track record, it was difficult for participants to accurately envision what an 18-month experience would mean to them. This is a challenge for an experimental program and was especially true for Cohort 1 where there was no precedent to how the program would feel and how it would unfold. In addition, participants entered with mixed perceptions about the focus of the program. Was it about systems change, network building, or personal and leadership development? While the program was aimed at all three, participants formed their own interpretation based on their own expectations and desires. This caused surprise and disappointment.

▪ In the future, the Forum intends to emphasize how these three goals would likely manifest during the recruitment process. It also plans to incorporate explicit reflection on the goals, a clear set of models, and associated tradeoffs involved when all three focus areas are included.

• **Expectation setting around time and energy commitment:** The level of effort required was a significant challenge, expressed most notably by the first cohort. The structure included in person gatherings, assigned readings, project teamwork, monthly virtual Salmon Crossings, and a variety of feedback processes. The Forum was able to better communicate expectations to Cohort 2, who came in with a clearer understanding of the level of effort required. They accepted this more readily and remained engaged throughout the program, concluding with energy and desire to continue their engagement upon completion of the program.

PROGRAM DESIGN, CONTENT

PROGRAM DESIGN, CONTENT: STRENGTHS

Program design includes the program content, the group process, and the culture that emerged within the program.

• **Salmon knowledge of diverse Fellows:**

Salmon Fellows were selected due to their knowledge and passion for the species, and their expertise showed up in dialogue during the program. Participants learned more about the dynamics present in each other's salmon systems.

• **Exposure and deep learning about indigenous people, issues, and cultures:** The Salmon Fellows program allowed greater exposure to indigenous culture and surfaced systemic impacts around sustainability and equity. The fellowship generated a new level of appreciation for indigenous perspectives in the salmon and people system, in Alaska, and in society broadly. This was enabled thanks to the generous sharing and strong leadership by indigenous Fellows, contributions from First Alaskans, and other Founding Partners. It was also due to design choices such as going to Igiugig and Ruby for gatherings and engaging indigenous leaders in other communities where meetings were hosted.

• **Foundation in reading *King of Fish*:** This foundational reading created a new understanding of the complex and pervasive issues facing salmon on global scale. It also helped to create a shared level of awareness in the context of human impact on the tangible dynamics that affect systems change.

• **Systems thinking capability building (e.g., Actor Mapping exercise):** Participants completed a systems actor mapping activity and brought data that helped to bond and bridge networks to one another. This strengthened participants' understanding of the system's complexity and dynamics, building capacity for systems thinking and systems change. The lessons from the Actor Mapping project team was particularly enlightening as it allowed project team members and the participants to become more aware of the power dynamics involved in systems themselves.

PROGRAM DESIGN, CONTENT: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

• **Desire for more salmon specific content:** Participants expressed the need for more subject matter expertise on salmon itself, and more intentional creation of a shared baseline understanding about core factors that affect the salmon system.

Participants also entered the program with an expectation that the content and dialogue would be focused on salmon. While understandable, this was not fully aligned with the Forum’s intention to focus on the “people” issues surrounding the salmon and people ecosystem. This created some disconnects in the hopes and expectations within the cohort.

- **Content lacked tools and early skill building in navigating through differences:** Participants learned how to accept and embrace difference, but they did not get receive early tools to help them navigate such differences. This would would have supported more openness to break the collective comfort zone and lean into discomfort. Integrating the Forum’s skill building workshops on Facilitation and Powerful Questions early in program design could help participants lean into difficult conversations.

- **Lack of consistency in theoretical models:** The core models for leadership, network/relationship building, and systems were shared within the program, but not repeated and applied with consistency. These became forgotten or blurred over time and as additional models were brought to the Fellows as resources.

- In the future, the program will anchor its focus with a key set of models to increase the impact of their understanding and application.

PROGRAM DESIGN, PROCESS

PROGRAM DESIGN, PROCESS: STRENGTHS

- **Processes that build trust and relationship:** The program design allowed for natural trust building and relationship deepening, including many dimensions of “circling” through dialogue, personal sharing, and reflection. This was a strength of the Forum’s contribution and something that participants valued and appreciated.

- **Diversity of inclusive approaches:** The program included and applied a variety of methods to support the journey for the diverse participants. Exercises ranged from fast paced exercises like “Back

to the Future” and issue identification to small group dialogues, “River Story” reflections of each Fellows’ life, and personal journaling. These offered variation in an effort to adapt to Fellows’ diverse cultures and learning styles.

- **Open Space and Root Causes style conversations for deeper dialogue:** Including processes that created intentional and emergent conversation allowed the group to go deeper and create a common understanding. The experiences with Open Space technology allowed people to follow their interests with more time and without rigorous process or agenda constraint. The Root Causes process offered both cohorts a guided process of dialogue to elicit deeper discovery and inquiry around difficult issues and differing perspectives.

PROGRAM DESIGN, PROCESS: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Program felt overly structured and tightly packed:** Feedback was provided by cohort members regarding the desire for less overall structure within the gatherings themselves and more time allotted for deeper dialogue. This was especially true for the latter portions of the program. Structured programming felt overly activity based, which Fellows felt like they began to outgrow. Many times, conversations had to be concluded just as they were getting to the deeper issues that Fellows sought. Balancing the dimensions of time and depth was and will continue to be an ongoing challenge.

- **Allow projects/actions to emerge over longer timeframe:** The desire to promote experimentation and prototyping drove the early development of projects and teams. It was too fast for many and did not allow for more time to understand the system and the potential leverage points. Diverging the energies and action in teams may also have missed the potential synergy and more collective goals that could have emerged.

- **Increase involvement of cohort to co-design gatherings:** The program team learned that involving the participants more in the design would better build leadership while also ensuring that the expressed and unspoken needs were being met.

- A consideration for the future is to plan for a shift in leadership over time, moving from a Forum guided approach in early gatherings to a more distributed leadership model towards the end. After setting a strong foundation within the group of leaders, the Forum could take less of the “authority” role and increasingly empower the Fellows to take a stronger role in shaping their time and work together. The increased role would build greater ownership, develop leadership and facilitation capabilities of the Fellows, and be responsive to what emerges over the entire journey.

PROGRAM DESIGN, CULTURE:

PROGRAM DESIGN, CULTURE: STRENGTHS

- **Openness to new ideas and willingness to be vulnerable:** Participants expressed acceptance in learning new concepts about leadership, networks, culture, salmon, and systems change. They also leaned into their own level of comfort around vulnerability and brought their full self to the experience.

- **Expanded worldview with appreciation for diversity:** The program experience exposed Fellows to a wider range of worldviews than they had seen previously. This developed a greater acceptance of difference and empathy towards differing perspectives, as well as a hunger to bring these wider perspectives to others, and to integrate it into more of their work beyond the fellowship.

- **Relationship building within cohorts:** The program design enabled participants to develop strong and deep relationships within cohorts, which strengthened the culture of their community and provides a foundation for future collaboration.

PROGRAM DESIGN, CULTURE: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Lack of community building across cohorts:** Many Fellows acknowledged that they felt disconnected from Fellows in the other cohort, which is an opportunity for the future. The evolution of the

network is currently underway and being led by the Fellows themselves, with cross-connections being a priority. The upcoming virtual and in person connections are key to this potential, with a focus on building trust between cohorts before delving too quickly into difficult conversations and shared work across the network.

- **More culturally responsive design needed:** There was opportunity to create a design that is more culturally responsive across all cultures, including across indigenous culture. Some noticed the indigenous roots of the Forum’s dialogic and humanistic practices, while others felt that the design was too Western. This came with difficult and painful moments. The lessons left a particularly strong imprint upon the second cohort, when three Native women during the fourth gathering in Ruby stepped forward to lead the gathering. While unplanned, it was an emergent shift and display of leadership that reflected the need to create room for the Fellows themselves to shape the experience they had.

SHIFTING LEADERSHIP

“In Ruby there was a dynamic that was happening that was going somewhere, and I took an observational role. Some of the Native women felt strongly about how the program was going. I felt good for them to be empowered to state their concerns.”

- In the future, cultural considerations will be more strongly acknowledged in the program design and throughout the program experience to ensure that needs are being honored and met. Part of this can be enhanced by greater engagement of Fellows as co-designers.

PROGRAM IMPACT

PROGRAM IMPACT: STRENGTHS

Program impact includes the personal, collective, and systemic results of the Salmon Fellows program.

- **Personal Development:** There was an expressed appreciation for the personal development each gained through the program experience and, for many, the specific development of their capacities as leaders. Participants strengthened their ability to lean into discomfort and challenge themselves by expanding their worldview.

- **Understanding of larger systemic factors:** The program generated a large, more holistic understanding of systemic factors for participants. Participants have a greater grasp on the complexity involved within the Alaska salmon and people system and they can more easily see the many dynamics at play.

- **Knowledge and diversity of networks expanded:** Fellows greatly expanded their networks in that they now have friends in multiple sectors and across the state. They shared many examples of reaching out to one another for support in their personal and professional lives.

- **Developmental Evaluation approach for meaningful learning and measurement:** The Developmental Evaluation approach involved many checkpoints to gather feedback from Fellows through qualitative and quantitative methods. This continuously fueled adaptive design and allowed for a dynamic reflection of program strengths and opportunity areas for future improvements.

PROGRAM IMPACT: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Leadership development not focused:** Some participants expressed confusion about the emphasis on personal or leadership development, as Fellows came to the program with substantial leadership experience. Tools, models and limited personal coaching were provided up front, however the focus on leadership development declined over time as it became a tradeoff in service of other goals, such as advancing systems work.

- **Further clarity needed around realistic systems change:** While all came in with high hopes about what would be possible, expectations for systems change were wide ranging. Some had realistic expectations about systems change requiring a long-term timeframe; others thought the Fellows would have tangible results in 18 months. In the future, providing more clarity on the work involved in systems change, the core goal of shifting perspectives and paradigms, and more realistic expectations about timeframes will be necessary. This will allow participants to remain hopeful and creative, while also realistic and not dismayed by the complexity.

- **Lack of measurement embedded in systems change:** There was strong evidence of impact individually and across relationships. However, more work needs to be done to define and measure appropriate progress indicators of systems change within an 18-month program. For example, shifts in perspectives that lead to new paradigms have great leverage to advancing systems change. These could be better defined and measured as progress indicators towards the long-term goal.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: STRENGTHS

Program Management is defined here as the management and leadership involved in the design and execution of the Salmon Fellows program.

- **Flexibility and adaptability to iterate and enhance program content and design over time:** The design itself was flexible and allowed for adaptive changes to strengthen experience and impact. Numerous means of feedback validated the approach, while revealing insights that prompted adjustments along the way. As a result, enhancements were made within the program to attempt to better meet the needs of the group, and from cohort to cohort.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Lack of continuity in program staff:** Staff turnover during the program caused a bumpy ex-

perience for Fellows. Program leaders had different leadership styles, expectations, and skills, which also created the feeling of a disjointed experience. It also affected the continuity of relationships and communications with Fellows over the course of the program.

- **Inconsistent communications and connections:** Communications were inconsistent and often insufficient for some Fellows and Founding Partners. All had a high degree of commitment and investment, but they varied in the level of information they needed and engagement they expected. Strengthening opportunities for connection between Fellows and external partners would enrich the diversity and potentially the impact of the overall program.

- **Experimental nature of program evolution generated uncertainty:** As a new program, it came with an inherent level of uncertainty. The variables were driven by many factors, including the complexity of the salmon and people system itself, the diversity of participants and the program team, the innovative and experimental nature of the program, and the very real challenges with systems work. To address the uncertainty, shared expectations along with regular and frequent communications among all parties was essential to building trust as iterative adaptation within the program evolved.

- **Leading through uncertainty and challenge:** The emergent and iterative nature of the program required the same adaptive and emergent principles from program leadership as was asked of the Fellows themselves. There was an opportunity to incorporate more practices in holding, respecting and honoring a space; being vulnerable while embodying the role of facilitator and leader.

FUNDING

FUNDING: STRENGTHS

Funding is defined as the funds and resources available to support the execution of the Salmon Fellows program, including the roles of the Founding Partners and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (GBMF).

- **Well-resourced program:** The Alaska Salmon Fellows program was fully resourced, thanks to a

1.3 million dollar grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. This allowed the program participants the ability to participate regardless of their personal resources, to receive individual awards, funding for projects, and travel across Alaska to get the benefit of learning about the salmon culture in different parts of the state.

- **“Hands off” supportive role by funder, GBMF:** The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation was a strong supporter of the Forum’s innovative and experimental approach to advance systems change through a people focused model. The foundation remained “hands off” in terms of directing how the program evolved over time, limiting their needs to receiving information regarding outcomes. This allowed the program to be creative and adaptive without the restrictions typically imposed by a tightly defined grant.

- **Supportive role of Founding Partners:** The Founding Partners were vital in creating the concept and supporting implementation of the Fellows program. They were active in recruiting diverse candidates, selection of Fellows, and served as advisors and participants at various points during the program.

FUNDING: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **Transparency into role of funder:** Clarifying the role of the funder for Fellows would have helped reduce the assumptions about the funder as a driver in all aspects of the program.

- **Deeper engagement between Fellows and Founding Partners:** There was a missed opportunity in engaging the Founding Partners more in the overall Salmon Fellows program. Communication was inconsistent, which also created more questions and confusion around the program design and its process.

- **Level and purpose of individual awards:** The award to each Fellow of \$10,000 was very significant, and potentially misleading to applicants who may have perceived the fellowship primarily as a recognition, without fully understanding the level of personal investment, learning, and engagement the experience entailed. A question remains

whether there should be a significant payment to the Fellows and what the impact is to the quality of the program.

- **Broaden investor base for future:** The Forum is interested in exploring a more blended funding model in the future where participants, the Forum, and funders all make tangible investments to share in the cost of the experience. The concern for a hidden hand of control would be reduced and the ownership in the process would be shared more equally.

CLOSING COMMENTS

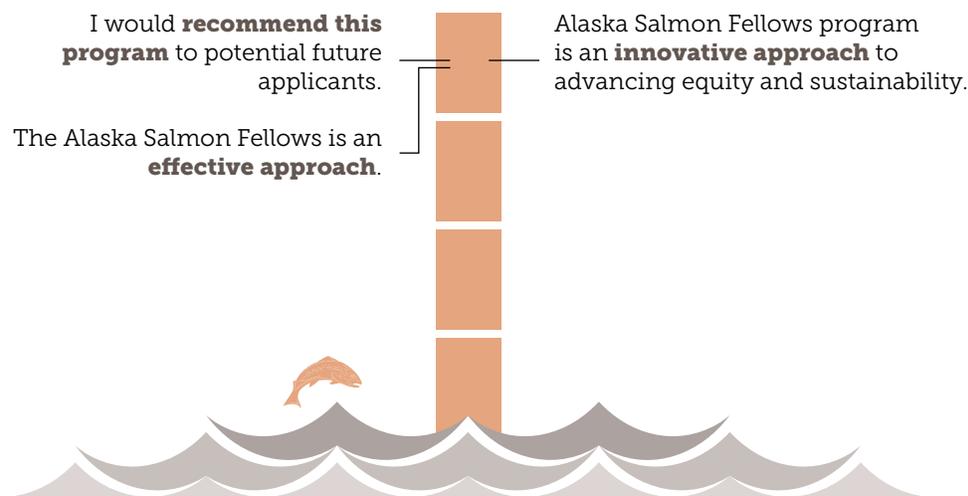
Although there were many lessons learned about the realities of developing and implementing an experimental program, the heart of the focus was and always will be the people. This program was designed based on the fact that the root of the problem in the Alaska salmon system are people. People are the problem and people are the solution. Achieving systems change implies a shift in mindset, perspective and behavior. It is the humanistic factors that lead to noticeable and tangible shifts in the system like policy change or management change. This program successfully created a shift at a deeper personal level, which is the impetus for lon-

ger term systemic change. The deeper understanding gained by participants in the program and the strong relationships they created, position them as leaders for future cross-sector collaboration and systems change.

“It’s not about salmon, it’s about a different ideology about how human beings deal with conflict and problems. If you get all of the actors in the room and create an ethical framework, space for trust building and interaction, you have a chance to change outcomes and that is what we are all trying to do.”

“This was an effort to bring in leaders from all walks of life and create a learning laboratory for human change. We talk about culture, history, ethics, right and wrong, the dominant narrative, power, privilege, oppression, race, gender, ethics, etc. This challenges people to see the world through someone else’s lens, imagine walking in their shoes, and challenge what they know and believe. Systems change was never going to happen quickly. But we believe that when leaders are able to embrace differences and shift their perspectives, they are better able to find clarity in complexity and are better positioned to lead systems change in Alaska.”

LESSONS LEARNED



X. NEXT STEPS

INFORMATION WAS GATHERED through survey and interviews to gain ideas and insights about potential next steps upon the completion of the initial three-year program. A universal sentiment among all of the Fellows was a desire to continue their relationships and to cultivate new connections across cohorts and with the Founding Partners.

“It is a tremendous opportunity for me to meet the rest of the crew and participate with all these people. It’s been a hell of an experience and I’d like it to continue.”

Many also expressed a desire to build upon these relationships and the lessons about systems work to explore potential action areas. Fellows also offered ideas about future gatherings and programming.

“Our cohort feels like we’re ready to start doing something now. We’ve really bonded, and now I feel like what we did the best was bond, what tools and skills we learned along the way was secondary (facilitations, talking, skills, network). I feel like now we’re ready to tackle things, and yet we’re dispersed. Yes, we could self-organize, but if the Forum wanted to keep the fire going and keep the commitment to those who want, I think that now is the time. It’s hard to know when a group is going to get to that point. I feel like we’re there now, and now it’s over.”

To assist in leveraging the momentum established and the feedback on next steps, a Design Team was engaged, including three members from each cohort. They now meet regularly to collaborate, provide leadership, and shape key strategies for moving forward.

Specific next steps regarding the energy and momentum of the program participants will be further refined as this initial program is concluded in June of 2020.

SALMON FELLOWS NETWORK

Fellows reflected on the role of being a Fellow after the formal program comes to a close. They aligned around the “Once a Salmon Fellow, always a Salmon Fellow” principle, where the honor and recognition of being a Fellow continues. To cultivate this sense of continuity and longevity, a new Salmon Fellows Network is taking shape for ongoing connection, learning, and action among members of both cohorts and the Founding Partners. This will hopefully be a springboard for the ongoing development of rich relationships, learning from differences, and exploration of opportunities to improve the equity and sustainability of Alaska’s salmon and people system. It may also grow over time should the program continue with the inclusion of future Fellows.

The network will be both intentional and informal. It will be shaped by and for the members, and serve as their community where they continue to advance as leaders to impact the salmon and people system. The level of participation and engagement will be a choice for each individual, not required nor bounded by time limits. By ensuring it is open, adaptive, and that the ownership stays with the Fellow themselves, the direction should align with the ongoing and emerging needs and desires of members.

The means for advancing the network are still under development, but can include online spaces for engagement, annual or bi-annual gatherings of the Network, virtual events hosted by or for members to connect, and potentially small groups who take on shared goals.

DESIRE FOR FURTHER ACTION

Desire for further action is defined here as the validation of the work done thus far in the program and a desire for a continuation of efforts. Many Fellows expressed the desire to continue the effort established by the Salmon Fellows work. A number of Fellows, upon the completion of the formal program, found them-

selves hungry to now leverage all that has been done, and were ready for “Less talking, more doing!” While not universal to all Fellows, these sentiments were particularly strong among some of the project teams, and within Cohort 2 with their relatively recent conclusion of the program. This desire for future action among many of the Fellows will be a key driver for what happens next.

Some of the project teams have expressed a desire and/or plans to continue their work.

- **The Salmon People Podcast** project is producing a series of podcasts on KMXT radio for statewide broadcast and an exhibit at the Kodiak Maritime Museum.

- **The Salmon Unlimited** project is pursuing new funding and team members to advance their vision to design a cross-sector conference for impact. “I still like the idea of Salmon Unlimited—bringing together all user groups—wow what an idea! We all value this amazing species. I like something that brings together everyone who’s using the resource.”

- **Both the Salmon Shadows and Salmon Circles** teams engaged diverse groups in reflective dialogue. The results and networks formed were well received and team members have expressed the desire to continue bringing such experiences to more audiences.

- **The Actor Map Roadshow** engaged a wide network from across each sector of the salmon and people system, and found significant value in using the approach to widen systems perspectives. Continuing and / or adapting the process for new audiences is an interest for some.

- **Initial steps** have been taken to develop an “issue guide” for salmon that could be referenced as a springboard for dialogues (e.g., Salmon Circles and Salmon Shadows). Such a guide could help to engage people from diverse communities and sectors to increase their understanding of the complexity of the system.

- **The Salmon Values** project sparked the need to create and use new metrics in resource management to better reflect subsistence harvesters; it remains a priority that Fellows continue to pursue.

- **Some Fellows** expressed a particular need and desire to transfer their Salmon Fellows experience and insights into climate action work by cultivating diverse networks for aligned, systems focused results.

Salmon Fellows acknowledge that the ongoing work would take further investment. While no existing funding sources are currently identified, the Forum and the emerging network can continue to pursue opportunities to bring resources to their efforts.

FUTURE GATHERINGS

A gathering for both cohorts of Fellows and Founding Partners was initially planned for April 2020; however, it became necessary to defer the in-person gathering due to the coronavirus pandemic. In preparation for the event, the Design Team made significant progress in developing the purpose, goals, design principles, and a draft high-level session flow. While created for the intended in-person event, they offer guidance for the future of the network and can inform both virtual and in-person efforts going forward.

PURPOSE

- Honor our relationships, leverage our divergence, empower action moving forward

GOALS

- To build **trust and strengthen the sustainable relationships and the network** of Alaska Salmon Fellows cohort members and founding partners

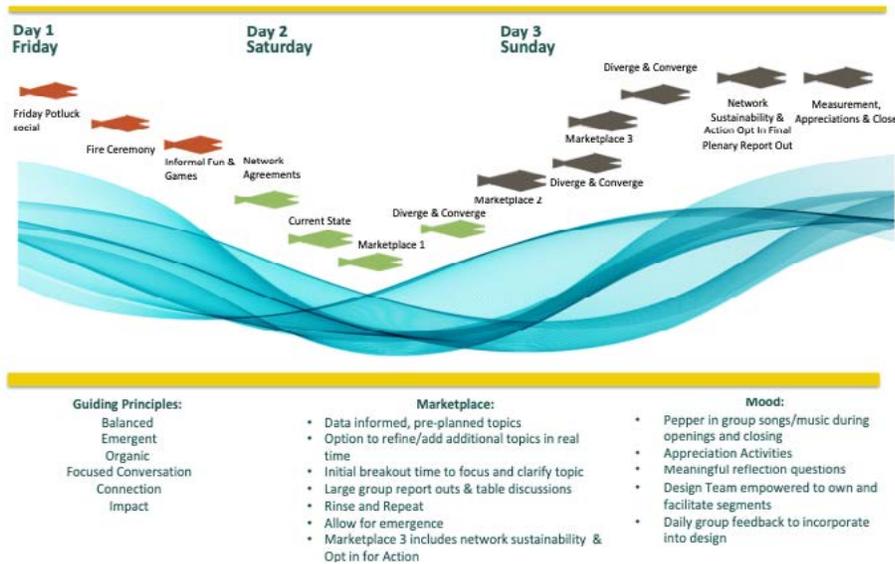
- To **empower** Salmon Fellows in leveraging their relationships to being a **driving force for change** within their communities

- Enabling ourselves to show our “human-ness” in honest and open discussions. Finding **safety**, curiosity and understanding in uncomfortable or dissonant discussions, spaces etc.

- To experience in our network the level of depth and dissonance that we seek

- To launch the future of our network and give birth to a new way of relating to each other

SAMPLE DRAFT, HIGH-LEVEL SESSION FLOW



DESIGN CONCEPTS

- Intentional time for relationships and trust building across networks
- Open Space type of format with sufficient time to dive deep on meaningful topics
- Pre-identified topics with key information and animating questions
- Action oriented mindset with room to align around shared interests
- Informal approach that also allows the group to re-define itself moving forward

The Design Team will continue to work with the Forum to explore alternatives to cultivate connections in the near term and consider the timing for future in-person gatherings.

FUTURE SALMON FELLOWS

When conceived, the Alaska Salmon Fellows program was intended to serve as prototype model that would set the stage for other programs offered through the Alaska Humanities Forum. The main goal is to incorporate what has worked well and incorporate lessons into an updated design, made available to future Salmon Fellows. The Forum will continue this work,

refining and strengthening the overall model, while also beginning to engage potential impact investors. One of the known factors is that program funding will need to change. It is less likely that a single, large funder will step forward to continue the work, and more likely that a blended source of funds will be needed.

Based on the success of Leadership Anchorage, a Forum program that began 24 years ago with grant funds, a transition to a blend could provide sustainability for

the Fellows program. Specifically, Leadership Anchorage (LA) has a shared cost model where the Forum, sponsors, alumni, and tuition funds combine to cover the cost of the program and enable participation by up to 20 participants a year. Scholarships remain a vital part of the LA model to ensure equity of access, so that funding is not the reason key people cannot participate.

In considering future programs, it is also worthwhile to consider the potential of engaging some external institution(s) to support sustainability and focus. While there are many advantages, the key risk to balance is expectations of such external partners in terms of focus and direction for the Funders.

Finally, the Forum may wish to consider the Fellows model in other areas of complex challenge. Interest has been raised about the idea of Alaska Climate Fellows, which is a significant issue facing all Alaskans, and also links in many ways to the salmon and people system. Fundamentally, it is simply worth acknowledging that much about the Salmon Fellows Model showed promise in addressing our state's complex issues that require innovative approaches. Depending on the interest and investments, the model can be adapted to other topics where needed.

APPENDIX A: THE SALMON FELLOWS

COHORT ONE



JESSICA BLACK

Fort Yukon / Fairbanks
Assistant Professor, UAF

Jessica Black came of age in a large family at her maternal *shitsii's* (grandpa's) fish camp on the banks of the Yukon River. That's where, she recalls, her family "learned our culture, our stories, our traditional values, our language; how to become Gwich'in people." Salmon are integral to her Gwich'in culture.



RICKY GEASE

Anchorage / Kenai
Director, DNR - Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, State of Alaska

Since arriving in Alaska in 1992, Ricky Gease has "led a salmon-infused lifestyle." As director of Alaska State Parks, he sees firsthand across the state how important salmon are in the life of Alaskans and visitors. "Salmon are a key component of meaning and quality of life – assuring sustainable, predictable and affordable access for all is a common goal we can all work towards together."



ANJULI GRANTHAM

Juneau / Kodiak
Historian, writer, curator, legislative aide

Anjuli Grantham, originally from Kodiak, is a writer, historian, and producer who specializes in the history of Alaska's seafood industry. Grantham believes that history and culture should be considered "a legitimate part of fisheries management." As she once wrote, "biology and economy dominate policy decisions." Adding the human sciences provides a necessary corrective: contextualization.



HAYLEY HOOVER

Cordova
Commercial fisherman

Hayley Hoover comes from a commercial fishing family. As an Alaska Native woman, she would like to see more women joining the commercial fleet. She envisions a curriculum for girls founded upon salmon-based science, and featuring training in boat safety, net mending and hanging techniques, business strategies, and basic electrical and mechanical skills.



WARREN JONES

Anchorage / Hooper Bay
Philosopher and writer

Warren Jones grew up gillnetting off the coast of Nome before moving to Palmer in sixth grade. He is working on a project to restore the men's house as an institution in Yup'ik communities. A men's house was a central social, political, spiritual, and economic institution that, he says, could be considered the defining aspect of Yup'ik community.



MEAGAN KRUPA

Eagle River

Meagan Krupa is currently a stay-at-home mom to her two daughters, Macy and Zoey. Prior to domestication, Meagan worked as a professor and research scientist at several universities and was a 2006 Fulbright Scholar (Chile). She studied the interactions between equity and conservation in governance institutions.



KEVIN MAIER

Juneau

*Professor, UAS; fly-fishing instructor/
guide*

According to Kevin Maier, “salmon are central to my identity.” For nearly two decades he has been analyzing the cultural impact of sport fishing and hunting. Maier has long been fascinated by various commercial fisheries; he considers himself a student of the industry. Maier is interested in learning more about indigenous technologies and the social systems that enabled generations of healthy human-salmon interactions.



BEN MOHR

Soldotna / Anchorage

*Executive Director, Kenai River
Sportfishing Association (KRSA)*

Ben Mohr is an avid sport and personal use fisherman with a career in public and government affairs. He worked at the Pebble Project, for Senator Dan Sullivan, and was Senior Policy Advisor on hunting, fishing, and public access to Governor Sean Parnell. Prior to KRSA, he managed approximately 640,000 acres of lands for Cook Inlet Regional Inc.



KRIS NOROSZ

Petersburg

Kris Norosz spent nearly 40 years in the seafood industry in various capacities, including as ADF&G field technician and biologist, commercial fish harvester, Executive Director of harvester associations, and Director of Government Affairs for a major seafood company. Kris is now focused on serving on numerous statewide non-profit boards, the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, and does some consulting.



MARY SATTLER PELTOLA

Bethel / Anchorage

*Executive Director, Kuskokwim River
Inter Tribal Fish Commission*

Mary Sattler Peltola, from the Kuskokwim River, is a subsistence fisherman. She and her family harvest salmon and process them at the family fish camp near Bethel. Mary was raised commercial fishing for salmon as well as tendering salmon for Bethel processors. Mary is the Executive Director of the Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission, an organization which has co-managed Chinook harvests on the Kuskokwim since 2015, using Western science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

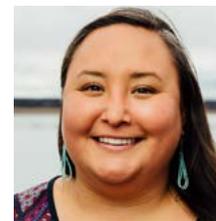


**JULIE RAYMOND-
YAKOUBIAN**

Girdwood

Social scientist, Kawerak, Inc.

Julie Raymond-Yakoubian wants to level the playing field for indigenous people in the administration of fisheries management. She has facilitated the participation of Bering Strait indigenous residents in fishery meetings. Raymond-Yakoubian advocates for tribal representation on fishery management bodies, which includes holding fisheries-related meetings closer to the most affected salmon stakeholders.



CHRISTINA SALMON

Igiugig

*Iliaska Env.; Lake & Pen. Borough
Assembly Member, Village Council
Member*

Christina Salmon lives on the Kvichak River next to the world’s largest run of sockeye salmon. “With my grandmother, I have been splitting, hanging, smoking, and consuming salmon from as early as I can remember,” she recalls. “Ensuring the pristine ecosystem in which we live is maintained in perpetuity is my greatest passion.”

COHORT ONE



ELSA SEBASTIAN

Sitka

Commercial fisherman

Sebastian grew up in a remote village on Prince of Wales Island. She writes: “I often fish alone with the radio as my only company. As I look out at the alive and vibrant coastline, the radio provides moments of dissonance through news stories about ocean acidification, warming stream temperatures, and the dangers posed to salmon by mine development. At these times, I think about what we have to lose.”



BEN STEVENS

Stevens Village / Fairbanks

Tribal Advocate, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Ben Stevens grew up spending summers at his family’s fish camp on the Upper Yukon. He helped with the entire operation, from setting nets to hauling smoked and dried bales of salmon to the boat. Stevens writes that “the last wild salmon runs on earth are in peril... I’m fighting to ensure salmon return year after year.”



VERNER WILSON III

Dillingham / Anchorage

Senior Oceans Campaigner, Friends of the Earth, US

Born and raised in Dillingham, Wilson has been involved in commercial, sport, and subsistence salmon fishing from early childhood. As a member of the Curyung Tribe, Wilson was taught the values of protecting resources for future generations: “I have tried to live up to that my entire life.”



CHARLIE WRIGHT, SR.

Tanana / Rampart

Water Plant Operator; Board Member Yukon River Fisheries Drainage Association

Charlie Wright, lifelong subsistence and commercial fisherman, was raised on the Yukon River around Rampart. Wright believes in the art of storytelling as a way to bring people together, and has been committed to representing his people and culture in conversations about the vital role of salmon for all communities along Alaska’s rivers.

COHORT TWO



DONNA ADERHOLD

Homer, Kachemak Bay

Program Coordinator, GulfWatch Alaska

Donna Aderhold has spent 28 years conducting wildlife research in Alaska, monitoring the impacts of proposed development projects; she currently supports efforts to monitor environmental changes related to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Aderhold is also deeply engaged in her local community serving on several boards and as a City Council Member for the city of Homer.



PETER BANGS

Juneau

Assistant Director, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Peter Bangs began his fisheries career as a volunteer for the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Innoko National Wildlife Refuge near McGrath. He joined the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 2002 and currently serves as its Assistant Director. Bangs believes that building a diverse network of individuals and learning from one another is paramount to making progress on salmon conservation initiatives.

COHORT TWO



CATHERINE BURSCH

Homer

Commercial fisherman, Naturalist, Educator, Artist

Catie Bursch spent 30 years running a commercial salmon fishing business; she has also coordinated community programs; taught classes on the marine environment; and illustrated small field guides and publications. Bursch is excited by the rare opportunity the Fellows program offers to bring together a group of people all interested in embracing different ways of addressing societal challenges.



FREDDIE CHRISTIANSEN

Anchorage / Old Harbor

Commercial fisherman and activist

Freddie Christiansen has commercial fished all of his life—still a child when the Limited Entry program was first implemented, but old enough to recognize the tragic effects the program had on his home community of Old Harbor. Christiansen serves on a number of community boards and runs his own business, Nunuiq Consulting.



TAYLOR HAUK EVENSON

Anchorage / Kenai

Commercial fisherman and Entrepreneur

As a third generation commercial fisherman with ties to Kenai, Anchorage, Chickaloon Native Village, and Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Taylor Hauk Evenson has strong connections to many of the key issues and challenges associated with Alaska's salmon. Evenson is a boat captain, operations manager, and an entrepreneur who has created a business model producing local salmon fertilizer.



KELLY HARRELL

Anchorage

Chief Fisheries Officer, Sitka Salmon Shares

Kelly Harrell is a proud booster of small-scale fisheries and is dedicated to applying her background in policy, social entrepreneurship, and organizational management towards shifting seafood value chains to support local fishermen, communities, and conservation.



FRANCES LEACH

Juneau

Executive Director, United Fishermen of Alaska / Commercial Fisherman

Frances Leach began commercial fishing with her father out of Ketchikan at an early age and worked for the State of Alaska in the Department of Fish and Game and the Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums prior to her current role as Executive Director of United Fishermen of Alaska in Juneau.



MARCUS MUELLER

Kenai

Land Manager, Kenai Peninsula Borough

Marcus Mueller is an ecologist who has worked in land management for the Kenai Peninsula Borough since 2003. He is an avid sport and personal use fisherman, and a longtime supporter of international student exchange programs and local arts initiatives on the Kenai Peninsula. Mueller brings an interest in the study of formal ethics and human virtues to his role as a Fellow.



STEPHANIE QUINN-DAVIDSON

*Anchorage
Fisheries Scientist, Director of the
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
Commission*

Stephanie Quinn-Davidson's traditional education and training comes from growing up hunting and fishing with her family in rural Wisconsin, three summers of interviewing Menominee Indian elders and hunters for an anthropology project, and time spent with Alaska Native fishermen. She has built a career more broadly on bridging groups.



MATTHEW RAFFERTY

*Anchorage
Project Director, Alaska Wild
Salmon Fund and Alaska
Engagement Partnership*

As a professional advocate for social change in Alaska, much of Matt Rafferty's work for the past decade has been dedicated to systems change. He is motivated by a strong belief that engaging, motivating, and mobilizing people can be a powerful force. Through his participation in Salmon Fellows, Rafferty hopes to find connections with people with different opinions and experiences.



MICHELLE RAVENMOON

*Pope Vannoy
Summer Program Director,
Igiugig Village Council
Engagement Partnership*

Michelle Ravenmoon works as the Summer Cultural Program Director for Igiugig Village Council remotely from her home of Pope Vannoy. She is described as one of those rare people who can bridge gaps in understanding between diverse groups of people with wildly different ways of life and world views.



DANIELLE STICKMAN

*Anchorage
Western Alaska Network Coordinator,
the Alaska Conservation Foundation*

Danielle Stickman has worked for various state-wide nonprofit organizations on issues related, but not limited to, fisheries, Traditional and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, environmental conservation, resource management, and regulatory processes. She believes that protecting and sustaining our salmon and environment needs to include indigenous values of honoring the earth in order to create lasting and positive change.



TOBY SULLIVAN

*Kodiak
Commercial fisherman, writer;
Museum Director, Kodiak Maritime
Museum*

Toby Sullivan moved to Kodiak in 1974 at age 19 and began working as a commercial fisherman. He purchased a commercial setnet salmon operation in Uganik Bay on Kodiak Island in 1983 where he continues to fish every summer. In 2002, he began working at Kodiak College, first as an English and math tutor, and subsequently as an English and creative writing instructor before beginning to write professionally.



MATTHEW VARNER

*Wasilla
Alaska Fisheries and Riparian
Program Leader, Bureau of Land
Management*

Matthew Varner has spent the past ten years working as the fisheries and riparian program leader for Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-Alaska, engaged in significant fisheries conservation issues ranging from the remediation of the Red Devil Mine to enhancing understanding of mined stream restoration techniques in Alaska.

COHORT TWO



BROOKE WRIGHT

Fairbanks

Mother, UAF Fisheries

student, Traditional Fisherman

Raised and taught by strong women who have passed traditional knowledge down for generations, Brooke Wright has a rich family history of subsistence salmon fishing and experience on the Yukon River. Wright believes that past divisiveness needs to be overcome in order to build relationships among fishermen for the health of salmon and for the people.



MARK YOUNG

North Pole

Assistant Professor of Applied

Business;

Owner/Operator, Alaska Marine

Guides

Before coming to Alaska in 1994, Mark Young spent most of his life in the southern part of the United States where salmon were not a highly prized fish. In 2009, Young was admitted into the BA in Fisheries program at UAF, which introduced him to the human dimension side of fisheries and allowed him to use his previous education and knowledge in business and guiding.

APPENDIX B: PROJECT SUMMARIES

COHORT ONE

QASGIQ:

The Heart of our Village

Project Team Members: Mary Peltola, Christina Salmon, Warren Jones

Qasgiq: The Heart of Our Village

focused on reviving traditional ways of exchanging ideas, values, and rules of living within salmon communities by bringing back the Qasgiq as a tool to heal and provide purpose. The initiative reintroduced the Qasgiq as a venue and structure for community members to discuss climate change, forecasting, escapement, harvest, and preparation of salmon. It brought community members together for fishing activities, and taught traditional fishing and preparation techniques while developing a direct connection with the land and our role as stewards. Fishermen acted as “citizen managers” as they developed a better understanding of management principles, stock dynamics, and strategies for addressing food security that can be implemented at the local level. The Qasgiq promoted learning through an exchange of ideas and information without an “agenda” or the constraints of compartmentalized thinking.

ROOT CAUSES:

Diving in the Depths of the Salmon/People System

Project Team Members: Kris Norosz, Meagan Krupa

Root Causes: Diving into the Depths of the Salmon/People System attempted to better define the system, identify its challenges and causes, and

surface potential opportunities for change through a series of participatory workshops. This initiative was built on the premise that analyzing problems and understanding causes before taking action is a critical step in developing achievable team initiatives for future cohorts of Alaska Salmon Fellows. The goal is to encourage people to spend the time needed to understand and frame the causes of problems before taking action and provide a methodical starting point.” The team planned and facilitated three workshops, synthesized the data, and produced a final report summarizing the experience.

SALMON SHADOWS

Project Team Members: Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Elsa Sebastian, Kevin Maier, Anjali Grantham

Salmon Shadows gathered creative work that shared and explored shortcomings, critical issues, and fallacies within the Alaska’s salmon system in an effort to lead to greater engagement, advocacy, and shifts in the system. The team of Fellows put together a call for art, writing, and other creative work that they curated into a traveling exhibit to spark meaningful conversations. The theory behind this initiative was that the stories we tell matter, informing the way we think, act, and make decisions. Community conversations about these stories (and, importantly, about what these stories obscure) could change the way people think, act, and make decisions. The program was generative by its very nature, as each stop on the tour provided opportunities to learn of/speak

of new shadows, test new methods of hosting conversations about salmon shadows, and refine methods to engage communities with complex problems through art and story.

SALMON VALUES

Project Team Members: Ben Stevens, Ricky Gease, Benjamin Mohr

The team leading the **Salmon Values** initiative researched how non-economic values of salmon such as social, cultural, recreational, ecological, food, wellness, story, and experiential can be defined and measured. They believe that broadening the definition would help to ensure that non-economic values of salmon are incorporated into salmon regulatory (public policy) and management decisions (implementation of public policy), making the system more sustainable and equitable. In this project, the team oversaw a contracted literature review, identified leverage points in the Alaska salmon/people system, and summarized their findings. Their hope is that this work leads to continued effort by future Fellows to generate a dashboard for baseline measurements of the weighted distribution of factors (economic and non-economic values) used in policy making and management of salmon resources in Alaska. Establishing and making this data accessible will be a critical step toward the ultimate goal to ensure that policy incorporates non-economic values in the delivery of salmon benefits to all Alaskans.

**THE SALMON BLAZERS:
A Youth Camp Curriculum to
Build the Next Generation of
Salmon Lovers and Leaders**

*Project Team Members: Jessica Black,
Charlie Wright, Verner Wilson, Hayley
Hoover*

The **Salmon Blazers** team worked to engage and educate the next generation of young Alaska leaders through the development and implementation of a hands-on, experiential camp curriculum. Youth learned about salmon's life-cycle, habitat, and their human impact – including economic, physical, spiritual and recreational aspects. They also learned about equity and the different ways salmon are governed. The goal of the curriculum was to build a more holistic understanding of the human/salmon system and to develop an awareness of the diversity of salmon users, issues and strengths in Alaska. Youth learned not only about contemporary issues and strengths, but also about the rich history of human-salmon relationships that span thousands of years. Through this process, a future cadre of leaders will be better equipped to make fully informed decisions as they move into positions of leadership regarding salmon management.

COHORT TWO

ACTOR MAP ROADSHOW

*Project Team Members: Catie Bursch,
Stephanie Quinn-Davidson, Matt
Rafferty*

The **Actor Map Roadshow** project was an attempt to determine what the salmon/people system truly looks like based on the perspectives of Alaskans involved in the system. Different people perceive power and influence in the salmon/people system uniquely. Understand-

ing perceptions of key groups can help in more strategically shifting the system. The actor mapping activity offered a visual depiction of the key organizations and/or individuals that make up and/or influence a system and also showed their relationships to a given issue and to one another. The team connected with ~80 people from diverse sectors of the Alaska salmon/people system. They conducted 8 total actor map workshops with ~12 folks each, completing one map with each sector. As a result, participants realized how their sector sees the power within the system, and many were surprised with what they learned. As output, the team generated an Actor Map Roadshow Final Report based on the analysis of the actor maps, the pre- and post-surveys, and conversation notes. Their plan is to present this information at the American Fisheries Society and hope that this work will provide visibility to future groups as they design their projects.

SALMON CIRCLES

*Project Team Members: Donna Aderhold,
Brooke Wright, Danielle Stickman*

The **Salmon Circles** project fostered conversations among diverse members of the Alaska salmon/people system with the hope of better influencing the relationship between people who are placed in adversarial or hierarchical positions. The team conducted 2-hour salmon circle sessions with cross-sector representation totaling up to ~50 participants. They used photographs provided by Salmon Fellows to elicit meaningful dialogue around the state of the salmon/people system. Through a facilitated conversation, individuals were able to truly listen to each other and develop a deeper understanding of different points of view. By placing individuals from dif-

ferent sectors in a position of equity and safe vulnerability in a facilitated conversation, they had an opportunity to share their experiences and listen to others, leading to strengthened relationships and a greater understanding and empathy for different perspectives of the salmon/people system. These new relationships allowed individuals to seek shared goals that lead to sustainability of salmon and greater equity within the sectors. Through this experience, the project team realized that in depth, meaningful dialogue and interactions with opposing stakeholder groups within the salmon community is absent, and very much needed. The team hopes to continue Salmon Circles in response to this need.

SALMON UNLIMITED

*Project Team Members: Taylor Evenson,
Mark Young, Marcus Mueller, Freddie
Christiansen*

The **Salmon Unlimited** team created an organization called Salmon Unlimited with the mission to serve as a platform to bring people together to realize common values and create the best possible outcomes for salmon and people. The mission of Salmon Unlimited concerns the conservation of salmon and the heritage of salmon people. This heritage includes the inter-societal stabilization through forward facing ethics, progressive resource management adaptation through sharing interconnected perspectives, and the empowerment of interdependent relationships across “sectors” through facilitating empathetic viewpoints and illustrations of interdependence. The team worked together as a team to create a logo, educational material, and marketing collateral which helped to stand up an official organization with a presence in Fairbanks. They also had a public engagement booth at

the Fairbanks Outdoor show where they created an interactive fish wheel game, an interactive salmon people system map, and hosted a “Salmonar” – which is a seminar about salmon with participants from subsistence, commercial, sportfish, personal use, and policy/management sectors. The team discovered there is an appetite and interest in bringing together a cross-sector representation of the system to have intentional and meaningful dialogue around the current state of salmon.

STATE OF OUR SALMON

Project Team Members: Michelle Ravenmoon, Frances Leach, Kelly Harrell

The **State of our Salmon** project’s intent was to educate and help inform fellow Alaskans about the who, what, where, why, and how of data, indicators, access to information, and conveyance of traditional knowledge on salmon health. The goal of this project was to shift the salmon system in the short term by providing key indicators that inform us about the health of salmon stocks in a particular region and across the state. For the long term, the goal of this project is to help develop resources and tools that will provide more accessible, trustworthy, and comprehensive information on the state of our salmon. By having a better handle of on the state of our salmon, we will have better tools for management to make better decisions, to see patterns and to see changes from effects like climate change. As a part of this team’s work, they developed a survey to gather data on salmon health, identified key stakeholders in the community to enlist in the survey, and gained visibility into the State of Alaska Salmon and People (SASAP) network that helped to shape and outline a desire and need to more deeply explore salm-

on science and salmon health indicators. They also were able to strengthen networks and relationships, and build new connections with people, organizations, and agencies.

SALMON PEOPLE PODCAST

Project Team Members: Toby Sullivan, Matt Varner, Peter Bangs

The **Salmon People’s** podcast engaged listeners with stories about the history and biology and cultural importance of this great fish, told by Alaskans themselves, with the goal of increasing awareness and challenging assumptions. Through sharing these stories, they have the opportunity of stimulating conversations about salmon, which can lead to better resource policy decisions. The podcast series covers allocation issues between commercial, subsistence and sport fishermen, between rural and urban fishermen, and between Alaska Natives and other people in Alaska. By making listeners aware of these issues and presenting possible solutions, this ongoing podcast can create the social and political will to solve them. The team believes that a wider appreciation of this understanding would enlarge the constituency of salmon sympathetic Alaskans, leading to greater political will to foster public policies that increase the likelihood that salmon will thrive in Alaska for centuries to come. This team created three podcasts for the initial Salmon Fellows project as a pilot for a longer narrative series to illuminate components in the salmon/people ecosystem. As a result of this work, the team enlisted the support of Kodiak Maritime Museum to secure funding and to provide a vehicle to distribute the podcast series and also enlisted the support of KMXT radio to help distribute the podcast on statewide radio.

APPENDIX C: EVALUATION SURVEY DATA

Questions 1–43 use a **4 POINT SCALE**: 1 – Disagree. 2 – Somewhat Disagree. 3 – Somewhat Agree. 4 – Agree.

| | All average | Cohort 1 average | Cohort 2 average | C2 > C1 | C1 > C2 |
|---|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| I. PERSONAL GROWTH | | | | | |
| 1. I feel I have experienced personal growth. | 3.72 | 3.69 | 3.75 | 0.06 | |
| 2. I have expanded my leadership skills in new ways. | 3.41 | 3.38 | 3.44 | 0.05 | |
| 3. I have changed the way that I engage with other people. | 3.29 | 3.08 | 3.44 | 0.35 | |
| 4. I am more comfortable engaging on difficult topics/issues. | 3.38 | 3.23 | 3.50 | 0.27 | |
| 5. I have increased my capacity to listen to others. | 3.48 | 3.38 | 3.56 | 0.18 | |
| 6. I have increased my awareness of personal reflection as an effective tool for building understanding of myself and others. | 3.41 | 3.23 | 3.56 | 0.33 | |
| II. UNDERSTANDING OTHERS AND BEING UNDERSTOOD | | | | | |
| 7. I have new perspectives. | 3.76 | 3.69 | 3.81 | 0.12 | |
| 8. I have a greater understanding of the complex challenges of the salmon/people system. | 3.64 | 3.54 | 3.73 | 0.19 | |
| 9. I see new opportunities for engagement and influence on the system. | 3.61 | 3.46 | 3.73 | 0.27 | |
| 10. I have increased my involvement and opportunities for influence on the system. | 3.24 | 3.08 | 3.38 | 0.30 | |
| 11. I met new people in this program I would not otherwise have met. | 3.97 | 4.00 | 3.94 | | 0.06 |
| 12. I feel engaged with my cohort members. | 3.79 | 3.62 | 3.94 | 0.32 | |
| 13. I better understand the feelings and beliefs of people whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine. | 3.66 | 3.46 | 3.81 | 0.35 | |
| 14. I feel better understood by cohort members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine. | 3.45 | 3.15 | 3.69 | 0.53 | |
| 15. I am more able to see beyond my assumptions or misconceptions about people who are different than myself. | 3.39 | 3.31 | 3.47 | 0.16 | |
| 16. My salmon/people network has become more diverse. | 3.90 | 3.85 | 3.94 | 0.09 | |
| 17. My salmon/people network has become more statewide. | 3.90 | 3.92 | 3.88 | | 0.05 |
| 18. My salmon/people network has more potential for impact on the salmon/people system. | 3.72 | 3.69 | 3.75 | 0.06 | |

| | All average | Cohort 1 average | Cohort 2 average | C2 > C1 | C1 > C2 |
|---|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| III. HEALTHY RELATHIONSHIPS / SOCIAL COHESION | | | | | |
| 19. I feel a sense of belonging to my cohort. | 3.83 | 3.62 | 4.00 | 0.38 | |
| 20. My opinions are heard and taken seriously by my cohort members. | 3.76 | 3.46 | 4.00 | 0.54 | |
| 21. My cohort became closer and more cohesive. | 3.83 | 3.62 | 4.00 | 0.38 | |
| 22. I increased my trust of individuals whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine. | 3.48 | 3.23 | 3.69 | 0.46 | |
| 23. I have increased my belief that people whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine can also be committed to helping increase equity and sustainability of Alaska’s salmon/ people system. | 3.48 | 3.23 | 3.69 | 0.46 | |
| 24. I increased my belief that effective conversation skills can help me feel more connected to others and increase my understanding of others. | 3.55 | 3.46 | 3.63 | 0.16 | |
| 25. I have formed new relationships with people in my cohort. | 3.93 | 3.92 | 3.94 | 0.01 | |
| 26. I have experienced improvements in relationships with people who have different opinions or backgrounds. | 3.48 | 3.23 | 3.69 | 0.46 | |
| IV. WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE ACROSS DIFFERENCE | | | | | |
| 27. I feel more positive or hopeful about engaging with people of different viewpoints. | 3.52 | 3.46 | 3.56 | 0.10 | |
| 28. Using conversation skills can help us understand each other. | 3.76 | 3.77 | 3.75 | | 0.02 |
| 29. Conversation can continue to positively impact individuals and relationships even after the conversation concludes. | 3.83 | 3.85 | 3.81 | | 0.03 |
| V. EQUIPPED TO ENGAGE ACROSS DIFFERENCE | | | | | |
| 30. I have observed positive change in formerly negative communication patterns in myself. | 3.32 | 3.08 | 3.50 | 0.42 | |
| 31. I have been part of “difficult conversations” across differences. | 3.79 | 3.92 | 3.69 | | 0.24 |
| 32. I have learned new skills to more successfully hold conversations across difference. | 3.34 | 3.31 | 3.38 | 0.07 | |
| 33. I have seen the positive impact of these skills. | 3.48 | 3.62 | 3.38 | | 0.24 |

| | All average | Cohort 1 average | Cohort 2 average | C2 > C1 | C1 > C2 |
|--|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| 34. I would like to access additional community conversation training. | 3.46 | 3.50 | 3.44 | | 0.06 |

VI. SYSTEM

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| 35. My cohort developed a new shared understanding of issues surrounding the system. | 3.76 | 3.77 | 3.75 | | 0.02 |
| 36. I experienced increased civic engagement and alignment surrounding Alaska's salmon/people system. | 3.41 | 3.23 | 3.56 | 0.33 | |
| 37. I experienced increased commitment by relevant organizations and groups to improve equity and sustainability in Alaska's salmon/people system. | 3.14 | 2.85 | 3.38 | 0.53 | |
| 38. My project team experienced learning that advanced our understanding of the salmon/people system. | 3.64 | 3.77 | 3.53 | | 0.24 |
| 39. Our project positively impacted the salmon/people system. | 3.24 | 3.46 | 3.06 | | 0.40 |
| 40. Our project requires additional resources to realize future outcomes and impact on the system. | 3.90 | 3.92 | 3.88 | | 0.05 |

VII. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

| | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|--|
| 41. The Alaska Salmon Fellows program is an innovative approach to advancing equity and sustainability. | 3.55 | 3.46 | 3.63 | 0.16 | |
| 42. The Alaska Salmon Fellows program is an effective approach. | 3.46 | 3.46 | 3.47 | 0.01 | |
| 43. I would recommend this program to potential future applicants. | 3.54 | 3.50 | 3.56 | 0.06 | |

VII. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

Questions 44-46 use a **3 POINT SCALE**: 1 - Did not meet. 2 - Met. 3 - Exceeded.

| | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|--|
| 44. To what extent did the program meet your expectations for personal growth and learning? (3 point scale) | 2.24 | 2.15 | 2.31 | 0.16 | |
| 45. To what extent did the program meet your expectations for development of relationships and trust? (3 point scale) | 2.46 | 2.31 | 2.60 | 0.29 | |
| 46. To what extent did the program meet your expectations for systems impact? (3 point scale) | 1.79 | 1.46 | 2.06 | 0.60 | |

APPENDIX D: FOUNDING PARTNERS

Sarah Barton

Consult North

Erin Dovichin

Alaska Venture Fund

Ian Dutton

Nautilus Impact Investing

Erin Harrington

Salmon Project

Helena Jacobs

Salmon Connect

Liz Medicine-Crow

First Alaskans Institute

Andrea Sanders

First Alaskans Institute

Bob Waldrop

Salmon Project

Peter Westley

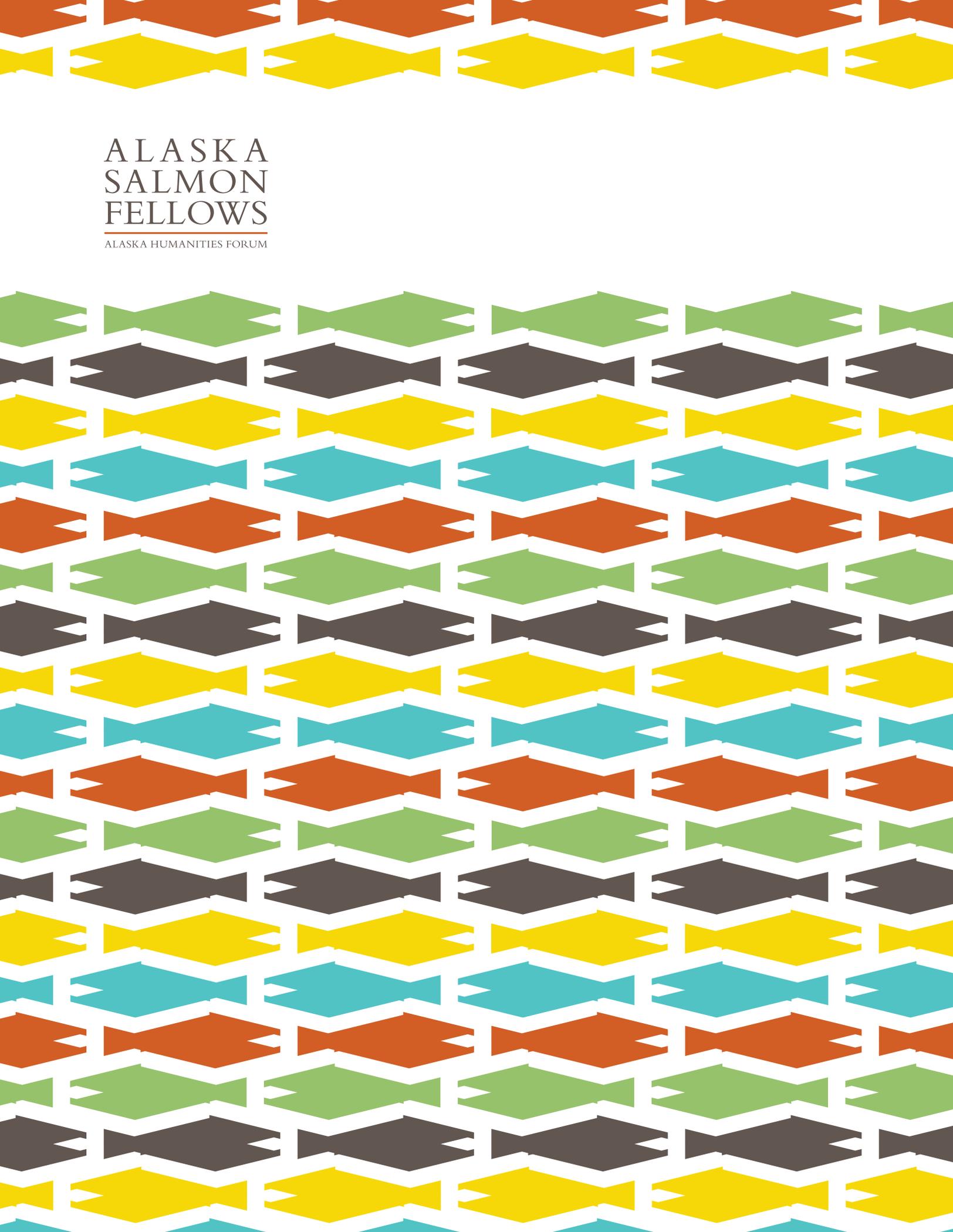
UAF Center for Salmon and Society

Courtney Carothers

UAF College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences

Kameron Perez-Verdia

Alaska Humanities Forum



ALASKA
SALMON
FELLOWS

ALASKA HUMANITIES FORUM