

BRINGING THE SALMON HOME

Twenty-one young people from the Ktunaxa, syilx Okanagan and Secwépemc Nations gathered together in late August 2022 for the first Youth Salmon Warriors Gathering at the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River. They made new friendships and connections with one another and the land and waters that hold them. They learned about the journey of the salmon from place itself – up through their feet and out through their hearts they told us to never forget that the salmon are coming home. This powerful gathering provided a critical grounding for the Bringing the Salmon Home initiative; we honour our youth and trust that they can show us the way. This is their statement...

we are salmon warriors

We have come to the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River from our strong Secwépemc, syilx Okanagan, and Ktunaxa Nations where we have created true connections and honour one another.

We are here as salmon's witness.

Our sacred relative has been gone from these waters for too long, but even still, their spirit is here because we are here, and we will never stop fighting for their right to come home.

Our bodies yearn for our salmon.

Salmon teaches us to never stop, to never give up.

Salmon is us, and we are salmon.

We returned our salmon relative's bones to the water while we sang and prayed.

We have reminded these waters that our salmon are coming home, just as we have come home to ourselves and to one another.

With our fists up and our hearts open we raise our voices and tell you that we are strong just like salmon.

We know that by honouring our creativity we learn to express our true selves, that part of us where our ancestors sing and where our salmon hearts beat strong.

We are standing up for our salmon and we are raising our voices for the people to hear:

Put aside politics and keep our salmon and us young people at the centre because we can show you the way.

Because we are walking forward with the truth in our hearts that our salmon are coming home.

We are salmon warriors.

