



Salmon Nation



People. Place. An Invitation.

SALMON NATION

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Running an open-source project, like any human endeavour, involves uncertainty and trade-offs. We hope this essay helps to provoke excitement and enthusiasm for new ways of thinking and being in the world, but we acknowledge that it may include mistakes and that it cannot anticipate every situation.

If you have any questions about Salmon Nation, we encourage you to do your own research, seek out experts, discuss these ideas—and your own—in your community. And we’d be delighted if you would share your thoughts and provocations with us.

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Salmon Nation: People. Place.

Welcome home.

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2019

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Salmon Nation
People

“The most effective point to intervene in a system is the mindset or paradigm out of which the system—its goals, power structure, rules, its culture—arises.”¹

Donella Meadows

¹ Meadows, D., “Leverage Points—Places to Intervene in a System,” The Sustainability Institute, p.2. Hartland VT, 1999.

A Shared Journey

OUR AMBITIONS ARE practical, replicable and geared for profound change.

In Salmon Nation, we champion successful local initiatives, co-creating systems that encourage replication and imitation of those endeavors across watersheds stretching from the Sacramento River in California north to the Yukon River in Alaska.

We accelerate regenerative development throughout the bioregion, moving beyond pilot projects to a wholesale, region-wide re-imagining of our economy and environment in the nature state we call home: Salmon Nation.

We aim to:

1. Spark systemic change by defining, re-naming and celebrating our nature state. With your help, we will paint an increasingly vivid picture of Salmon Nation as a remarkable bioregion composed of local watersheds replete with rich natural systems and growing social and economic diversity.
2. Invite our most creative and dynamic inhabitants to tell their stories through a network of storytellers and problem solvers living, working and playing throughout Salmon Nation. This network will be participant built and owned.

3. Build an **accelerator** that seeks out regenerative development throughout the bioregion. Stories, working examples and capital are the tools for discovering where to invest locally to produce local returns. Be it human, natural or financial, nearly all the capital needs in Salmon Nation can be met, and be recirculated, from within and by residents of Salmon Nation.
4. Welcome inhabitants of Salmon Nation aboard the Magic Canoe—our invitation to all who wish to join the journey of creating a regenerative nature state right here at home.

Change the name—change the system

WE LIVE IN A WORLD tensed by system change. Economic, financial and information systems have all experienced explosive growth, bringing advantages that are unequally shared, but triggering global climate changes that threaten us all. Almost unwittingly, we have entered the Anthropocene, when humans are the biggest force on the planet. While our systems have gone global, our lives feel less like our own. Agency, hope and engagement are diminishing, and for many there is a pervasive sense that our efforts have less influence on systems that feel increasingly out of control. These background conditions have given rise to our ideas for Salmon Nation.

Inspired by Donella Meadows, we will promote a practical and purposeful shift in mindset away from dependencies on global and national institutions that have proven stubbornly resistant to change, and unresponsive to the existential threat of climate change.

Many legacy institutions are fighting to maintain their relevance, their size, their power, their market share, their influence. In the face of disruptions to just about everything, they lack resilience—proving to be too large in their reach, too concentrated in their ownership and governance, too resistant to change. New patterns, new forms of organization are needed that are more suited to the particularities of place, more responsive to our rapidly changing needs.

These patterns are already emerging at the local level—in watersheds, with their diverse ecologies, and among their increasingly diverse inhabitants. Each local watershed is a fractal tile. Taken together, these many individual tiles comprise Salmon Nation, and it is here that a dynamic, resilient regional identity is emerging. We seek to accelerate the weave of a strong fabric of social, cultural and economic life in what we call “edge communities,” a fabric that supports local, self-organizing, independent efforts and applications.

Paint the picture

LOCAL PEOPLE, THE authors of much of the innovation and opportunity in Salmon Nation, are not favoured by existing networks, institutions and all manner of supporting infrastructure that has been concentrated in the bioregion’s cities. Across our region, natural, social and financial innovators outside major centres are not effectively linked to each other and to each other’s experiences and resources, nor to markets of information, capital and power.

Our focus is on rural, Indigenous and urban “edge” communities; on lesser-served places and markets; on remarkable people doing remarkable work. We believe these places and people—near enough to resource centers, yet far enough away to preserve alternate viewpoints—are well positioned for the development and demonstration of new approaches to living that makes more regenerative use of natural, social and financial capital.

In order to deepen a sense of belonging and foster collaboration and attachment to a shared identity with and within Salmon Nation, we will launch and curate a bioregional multi-media platform called the *Voices of Salmon Nation*. We will seek photos, videos and short stories from the region that will, together, help bring to life an increasingly vivid picture of the fabric of Salmon Nation.

We are particularly focused on what we see is an effervescent movement towards innovative, decentralized models of post-industrial development.

Indigenous people, millennials and people living in edge communities occupy the forefront of these fast-changing human patterns of life.

We believe purpose-built human and digital networks can link these disparate and disconnected innovators and promote deeper learning about what works. As Kevin Kelly, editor of *Wired* magazine has said, “The only organization capable of unprejudiced growth, or unguided learning, is a network.”² Our network will be a fabric: mostly flat, diverse, owned by members and decentralized, rather than herded into hubs or pushed through choke points by curators who claim to know better.

A storytelling of Ravens

WHAT WE ARE calling the Raven Network is intended to be a modern embodiment of settlement and trade patterns that have always defined civilization in Salmon Nation. Ravens are community members who are, in the words of systems thinkers, “positive deviants” engaged in the “spiral dance at the edge of chaos—where change is a way of life.”³

Our vision is for these Ravens to contribute to a network fabric (local, open, semi-autonomous, scalefree, self-organizing) that is both human and digital. They will bring to the network their “souls of fire”⁴ which, according to a study into responses to climate change in northern Norway, is exactly the quality of leadership needed in edge communities if they are to thrive as well as survive in the face of climate disruption.

Ravens are thus active, dynamic, entrepreneurial citizens who:

- Have a burning commitment to their home locale;
- Are strongly engaged in successful initiatives;

² Kelly, K. “Out Of Control: The New Biology Of Machines, Social Systems, And The Economic World.” Basic Books, 1995.

³ On Purpose Associates, “Welcome to the Edge of Chaos—Where Change is a Way of Life.” On Purpose, Lansing, MI, 1996.

⁴ Amundsen, H. “Illusions of resilience? An analysis of community responses to change in northern Norway.” *Ecology and Society* 17 (4): 46, 2012.

- Are catalysts and instigators of change: building new community infrastructure, launching local businesses; putting on festivals; starting new organizations or running old ones; convening, sharing, telling stories and unashamedly celebrating where and how they live;
- Are creating or have demonstrated powerful results with innovations that work.

RAVENS, THE PEOPLE—just like the birds—are worth knowing.

Ravens—worth knowing

RAVENS ARE EXEMPLARS of life in Salmon Nation. Ravens are birds worth knowing.



NORTHERN RAVEN
H. J. S. 1875

That conversation you often hear—in a city park, along the shore, or out in the forest—is among ravens. They are talkative. They communicate with each other, and with other animals and humans in the larger community of life. They may have as many as thirty distinct sounds and calls, or dialects.⁵ Their brains are among the largest of any bird.

Ravens know us through our co-evolution over thousands of years around the Northern Hemisphere, in both North America and Eurasia. They have a dominant and widespread presence in the coniferous forests, mountains and rocky shores of Salmon Nation.

Ravens have distinct and diverse personalities. They are problem solvers with unusual avian intelligence. They are omnivorous, scavenging and preying as individuals, in life-long pairs and in flocks. Ravens adventure about, scouting for new opportunities. They fly right side up and upside down for fun.

Linguist Derek Bickerton, building on observations of biologist Berndt Heinrich, believes ravens display “displacement,” the ability to communicate about objects and events distant in time and space. Among vertebrates, this skill is uniquely shared by humans and ravens, and was a critical evolutionary element of human linguistic development.

Young ravens appear to practice the unusual avian behavior of inviting fellow ravens over for a meal when a food cache or carcass is found. They have also been observed to recruit wolves to a carcass, perhaps benefitting from wolves’ greater ability to tear larger animals apart, making more meat more easily available.

Ravens endure hot summers and sub-zero winters in a wide range of habitats

⁵ <https://www.xeno-canto.org/115767> Recorded by Ian Cruickshank in Hakai, B.C.

and seasons. They are smart, playful, alternately affectionate and annoying. They enjoy playing a good trick now and then. They are watching, talking, interacting with all kinds of animals, constantly testing and exploring. Young ravens play with each other and have been observed playing catch-me-if-you-can with wolves, otters, deer and dogs. Anytime you are outside, you may hear ravens calling—the rattling and “clok-clok” sounds, the bill snapping of ravens celebrating another successful caper.

In Salmon Nation, ravens and Indigenous people have known each other for many thousands of years. Ravens feature in creation stories and native mythology and settler folklore in myriad forms. In some mythologies ravens bring death and bad omens, or have superhuman abilities. In others, ravens, by stealing the light, actually came to make day and night.

*The raven is the provincial bird of the Yukon, and the national bird of Bhutan. It features on the coat-of-arms of the Isle of Man. Ravens are referenced in the Old Testament, in the Quran, and, in Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions. The raven was the first animal to be released from Noah’s Ark. Ravens star in some of our greatest literature—in Shakespeare, and in narrative poetry such as *The Raven*, by Edgar Allan Poe. One beloved book in Salmon Nation is *The Raven Steals the Light*,⁶ illustrated by legendary Haida artist Bill Reid.*

One other attribute of ravens is that they aren’t always just talking and playing tricks. They’re watching everything all the time, watching all the inhabitants and all the goings-on in Salmon Nation—and sharing what they know. There are many collective nouns for ravens, one being a “storytelling” of ravens.

In Salmon Nation, we need more storytelling, we need new narratives, and ravens are the smartest, keenest, most collaborative non-human storytellers out there. We think our co-evolution with ravens should be deepened in Salmon Nation, and be celebrated through a Raven Network that is owned and constructed by the ravens themselves.

Ravens—our national bird. And the natural knitters of the human fabric at the heart of Salmon Nation.

⁶ Reid, B. and Bringhurst, R. “The Raven Steals the Light.” Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 1996.

WATERSHEDS FORM THE cells of the Raven Network. Each Raven is associated with their home community and is a conduit for activity in their particular watershed. This dynamic is conducted, first in the dance of local Ravens, and second between distant and proximate watersheds and fellow Ravens in the network. By enhancing the connection and the power of local communities, the Raven Network will stretch and compress our natural, cultural, social and commercial maps and dreams. It will include and connect communities in distant, remote, isolated or edge watersheds and markets, while linking to more settled or urban areas.

The network fabric that is made up of Ravens will include human interactions and digital linkages. This network will engage with Ravens in person, maximizing human contact, empathy building, agency, collaboration, integration and innovation. The Raven Network is explicitly held together by humans in a way which privileges and celebrates them, rather than subordinating them as happens in centrally controlled networks.

Our network will enable Ravens to find many points of mutual reinforcement, facilitating more frequent and purposeful communication; prompting storytelling about what works; enabling collaborative actions; staging regional festivals and local gatherings and learning opportunities; and, ultimately, accelerating exchanges of natural, social and financial capital in an open and generative way. Critically, unlike all the big centralized networks that profit by diverting people's attention, often creating family, neighbor and community isolation in the process, the Raven Network will be owned by the Ravens themselves. The rules of engagement will be set by them, their attention focused on needs within watersheds, and values and practices that are shared between them.

Watershed by watershed, Raven by Raven, the hybrid human and digital network fabric—the storytelling of Ravens—becomes a harmonic note; a call both recognizable and actionable. It becomes the clarion call of Salmon Nation and its Raven Network.

Accelerate what works

OUR ACCELERATOR, CALLED the *Confluence*, is two things:

1. An open source digital clearing house of innovations that work in Salmon Nation. This includes natural, social, and financial intelligence and descriptions of what has worked in each watershed. Geo-coded information, such as already compiled extensively by Ecotrust and other regional and local groups, can be exhibited here. So too stories, recordings, maps, visualizations, and intra-community observations that will further enrich the network fabric. This clearing house archives and actively disseminates the evolution of actions and results by which Salmon Nation shapes and shares and celebrates its increasingly resilient future. *Confluence* will be the outward facing digital portal for access to what works in Salmon Nation.
2. *Confluence* will develop practical ideas, focusing on cultural, ecological and economic regeneration and market development in food, agriculture, energy, forestry, fisheries, value-added harvest and regenerative production techniques. Commercial activity, start-ups, replication, investment and instigation will be operationalized through the *Confluence*. A physically decentralized accelerator for actively replicating local success, in order to begin re-localizing economic life throughout Salmon Nation.

Networks that support the *Confluence* include:

- A **media network** for sharing stories and deepening the development of strong shared Salmon Nation narratives by reporting on positive efforts to create greater social, economic and environmental well being in the region. In the media network, we will share stories of what works in each watershed. The first step is to facilitate each Raven telling their story—singing their song, dancing their dance—of what is working in their watershed. Through their storytelling, they help others hear, imagine and build. Once their story is told, it is available for search and rebroadcast. As more and more stories are told, a market of ideas, practices and capital

develops. What works in one watershed may be needed in another watershed. Or what is made in one watershed is needed in the next. Trade and knowledge transfer occurs across boundaries. Our contention is that what works in one watershed of Salmon Nation may work in another. And indeed the growing library of ideas and contexts—the structure that links each story—may have universal applications. Or at least nature state ones.

- **A capital network.** In addition to skills and experience of what works that may be discovered and shared in the Raven Network, there is capital—natural, social and financial capital. Distributed in the same fabric that connects the Ravens and their stories, capital will be allocated to underwrite Raven undertakings as they replicate across Salmon Nation.

Both the media and capital networks, organized through the *Confluence*, share many attributes. They will be organized as fabrics. This means they are scale-free (size doesn't matter), largely self-organizing (determined by participants), open (meaning that structure, links and standards are not proprietary) and decentralized (not centrally managed or controlled). These network characteristics will encourage the development and application of circular economies, where information, function and resources are recirculated throughout Salmon Nation. This will provide Ravens with access to beneficial capital and know-how in a growing fabric of community enterprises. This recirculation through networks will have additive returns for all participants, increasing the general application of regional values such as creativity, productivity and trust. Local trust and validation may obviate the need for rigid economic value definitions, such as triple-bottom-lines and special categories for socially responsible businesses. In Salmon Nation, we expect that whole economies will become more aligned with the values of their local producers and consumers.

The Magic Canoe All Our Wisdom for Living⁷

AT AGE TEN, a boy named Cecil Paul was removed from his Haisla native village of Mis'kusa on the banks of the Kitlope River in north-central British Columbia. He was taken in his moccasins by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to a residential school in Port Alberni on Vancouver Island, a victim, like thousands of young native children, of Canadian government policies designed to convert native people into proper Christian white children. Generations later, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada would refer to these policies as amounting to "cultural genocide," and no-one disagreed. The government, abetted by the Church, had sought, in the words of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, to "take the Indian out of the child."

In the case of Cecil Paul, it didn't work.

Cecil suffered greatly at the Port Alberni school. Hundreds of miles from his home, forbidden to speak the only language he knew, beaten, sexually assaulted, and then discarded by the school at age fourteen, his spirit broken, not knowing how to get home. He washed up on Skid Row in Vancouver, depressed and habitually drunk. He eventually went north, at one point snagging a job in a fish cannery called Butedale, where he fell in love with a young white woman and she became pregnant. He proposed marriage, the only decent thing to do. Instead, he was called into the cannery manager's office and told, "You have to leave."



⁷ Beebe, S.B., "The Magic Canoe." *It's Not Any House You've Ever Known*, Ecotrust, Portland, 2018.

A boat was coming the next day and he had to be on it. The child, a girl, was given up for adoption. Cecil headed to the fishing town of Prince Rupert and, once again, drowned his sorrows in drink.

But after a time a voice beckoned, an ancestor. It was his grandmother, calling him back to Kitamaat Village, where the survivors of his people, the Xenaksiala people, had amalgamated with the Haisla First Nation. She bade him return to the Kitlope River, to Mis'kusa—to go all the way home.

But home was vanishing before his eyes. The Haisla and Xenaksiala traditional territory of some four-million acres of marine fjordland, islands, mountain streams, huge Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, and cedar were almost all now part of a “tree farm license” that was being rapidly logged, while commercial fishing fleets were depleting rich supplies of crab, shrimp, halibut and salmon. What Cecil called his “bank” was being drawn down by the same forces of colonialism and industrialization that took him from his homeland as a child. The social effects on Kitamaat Village and the Haisla community were taking a deadly toll on youth and adults alike in alcohol, drugs, and suicide. Cecil wondered aloud if there would even be a Haisla people in the future: “Who are we in this strange modern world?”

Then, on a salmon fishing trip to the Kitlope River, something unusual happened to Cecil and his companions. As Cecil tells it, four young white people “fell out of the sky.” In point of fact, a de Havilland Beaver float plane landed, unloaded four people and their gear, and departed.

Around a campfire that night the “Boston people” and the villagers talked. For three more days they talked and fished together and shared stories. These whites had learned that the Kitlope River was the largest pristine coastal temperate rainforest watershed anywhere in the world. No roads, no logging, no dams, no hatcheries. All eight hundred thousand acres from mountain top at eight-thousand feet, high glaciers, waterfalls, magnificent forest, all the way to the estuary where fresh water met salt, and nourished large flocks of migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, and returning salmon and steelhead of all six species. It was about to be logged, and Cecil and his companions were talking about what to do. He wasn't even sure he could convince his own villagers to fight for their land.

Then and there, Cecil—whose Xenaksiala name, Wa'xaid, means “the good river”—and his companions decided to team up with the Boston people. Over the next four years they would work together to characterize their home and share their stories with growing numbers of scientists, journalists, and environmentalists. They just kept falling out of the sky, these people, and together they paddled the territory and explored their many options in what Cecil came to call a supernatural or “magic canoe”: the more people that came, the bigger the canoe grew.

This expanding polyglot of strangers paddled to unknown horizons, to the provincial capitol in Victoria, to Ottawa, to office towers in Vancouver, to make their case to government officials and the forest products company that held the rights to log and feed their sawmill in the north. The Haisla and Xenaksiala ventured as far as Stockholm to visit a folk museum where they found Cecil's brother Dan's totem pole, which had stood at Mis'kusa at the mouth of the Kitlope River before being sawn down and taken to Europe without Dan's permission by a Swedish consul of an earlier age.

Back in British Columbia, they made their case to arrest the planned logging to the minister of environment and took him to the Kitlope—climbed mountain slopes, ate salmon, floated rivers, built campfires—and at every turn, shared their stories.

There was another surprise while paddling that magic canoe. It turned out the minister of the environment, a minister of “the Crown” as they are known in colonial parlance, had a surprising story of his own. Before becoming a politician and eventually a cabinet minister, the environment minister had been an Anglican Church minister in a coastal Indian village near Prince Rupert. He had adopted a daughter and named her Cecilia. She grew up with the minister's family and friends, one of whom was a Haisla woman whom Cecilia called “aunt Louisa.” Unbeknownst to her, Louisa was Cecil's sister, and Cecilia was Cecil's daughter.

That's a whole lot of magic right there, but there's more. The forest company voluntarily gave up its right to log. The Kitlope was protected; it would not be and it has not been logged. The stolen totem pole was repatriated from Sweden to Xenaksiala territory—and in the spirit of gift exchange, a new pole was carved

in Kitamaat and sent to Sweden in its place. And then one day, Cecil, and Cecilia, and the minister, went back to the Kitlope together.

Today, government maps list the place as the Kitlope Heritage Conservancy. “You guys call it the Kitlope,” Cecil once said. “But in our language we call it ‘Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jees.’ That means the land of milky blue waters and the sacred stories contained in this place. You think it’s a victory because we saved the land. But what we really saved is our heritage, our stories, which are embedded in this place and which couldn’t survive without it, and which contain all our wisdom for living.”

AS CECIL PAUL’S story reveals, the Magic Canoe had an exploratory direction and shared purpose—to benefit people and nature. All were invited to join the Magic Canoe so long as they cooperated and were on board for the journey.

So it is today. The journey of the Magic Canoe didn’t end in the Kitlope. It continues throughout Salmon Nation. As more people join, and learn to paddle together, the Magic Canoe expands—and magic happens. Eventually, the canoe holds all the world. It is a container for the changing narrative of our place and our purpose within it. It is where the new myth of Salmon Nation is made manifest.

The initial group of Ravens will set the direction and purpose for the Magic Canoe. They will determine the direction and values. They will learn to paddle together wherever their journey might take them. Early Ravens are nominated based on the criteria detailed above. Balance will be ensured, by an initial rule, to ensure that Ravens come from diverse watersheds covering the whole of Salmon Nation. In order to get started, they will at first be nominated from people that the initiators of Salmon Nation know, or meet through trusted introductions.

Once the founding group of Ravens has been formed and the course for the Magic Canoe has been set, future growth will be managed by the

Ravens themselves according to mutually agreed-on principles. While Ravens will control, own and determine the values in their network, changes to long-term principles and values will be approved by a group of Elders established as Trustees of the Salmon Nation Trust. All will be paddlers in the Magic Canoe. Many already are.

Salmon Nation Place

“The very act of defining this region,
where people and wild Pacific salmon
live, is a homage to our remarkable good
fortune to live here.”

A Nature State

SALMON NATION IS one of the most beautiful and bountiful natural places ever shared by humans. The very act of defining this region, where people and wild Pacific salmon live, is a homage to our remarkable good fortune to live here. Salmon Nation is a nature state, not a nation state. It is where our collective imagination stirs towards new possibilities, a new myth of people and place, one that is coalescing out of our myriad personal stories. It is from all our lives that this more hopeful story emerges.

Salmon Nation is an area of land and sea etched by 50,000 miles of coastline and constantly washed by the Pacific Ocean. Its estuaries, its coastal plains, rugged mountains, forests, farm lands and grasslands are home to vibrant cities from San Francisco to Anchorage; home to busy rural towns,



public and tribal lands; and host a hotbed of creativity and enterprise that adds up to a \$1.5+ trillion bioregional economy.

Our home is blessed by the presence of Pacific salmon, our best biological indicator of natural, social and financial health. The rivers of Salmon Nation are where wild salmon have historically spawned, and to which they return.

This bio-cultural region is easily recognized by a verdant fringe of temperate rainforest along the edge of the Pacific Ocean, and watersheds that reach back into the mountains and the headwaters of our rivers.

Salmon and Indigenous people lived together since the end of last ice age thirteen thousand years ago. Our northwestern home has formed around shared ecological, cultural and economic factors that include: mountain and ocean geography, relatively easy coastal travel between areas for humans and non-human animals, cultural and commercial trade routes and patterns, and a sense of wonder and appreciation for nature's bounty.

All of these commonalities, and more, bind this region together. It is Cascadia, it is the Pacific Northwest, it is the Salish Sea, it is Ecotopia, and it is the Left Coast. But long before that, and still today, it is home to some of the oldest human settlements in North America.

Salmon Nation is where Indigenous people are reclaiming meaningful relationships to their lands and waters on their own terms, and playing an increasingly influential role in their territories' cultural, economic, scientific and legal evolution. It is also where a symbiosis is emerging between old and new ways of living, of re-interpreting—through art, song, theater, new media, language, and unlikely collaborations in all manner of experiments at the watershed level—how we share wisdom and resources in ways that are more equitable, and ultimately richer and more meaningful for people and place.

If you are an inhabitant of Salmon Nation, you share this place not just with its original inhabitants, but with thirty million or so other human residents, and with the plants and animals and diverse natural life support

systems of which you are a part and upon which you and they wholly depend: clean air to breathe, water to drink, productive soil, and a climate moderated by the great ocean that defines us.

In Salmon Nation, we live in watersheds. Watersheds—be they tribal territories, counties, regional districts, river basins, cities or towns—hold pieces of local life, replete with nature, civilization, economy, culture and myth. Salmon Nation’s watersheds have pronounced and distinctive natural, cultural, social and financial capital reserves, which for millennia have attracted and sustained various forms of unusually dense human organization. Our daily lives, our homes, our workplaces, our families are in large measure determined by the boundaries and bounties of our watersheds. They give shape to social organization and to unique ways of seeing and being in the world.

They are the containers where new stories are being written, stories that capture memory and experience, and celebrate and invite new narratives of hope.

Far from the drumbeat of dire, sometimes demoralizing news that emanates from the world’s capitals—especially when it comes to climate change—the watersheds of Salmon Nation are where innovations and opportunities and adaptations to climate change are flourishing. Much of this innovation is local (i.e. at the watershed scale), it is open in the sense that is shared rather than guarded, and it is decentralized in the sense that no single government, corporation or network controls the creativity.

It is here that we see the greatest promise for achieving a new myth for how we live with each other, and how we keep the promises we have made to ourselves, our families, our friends and all our fellow inhabitants of Salmon Nation.

Will you join us on our journey?

If so, what will you do to leave this place better than you found it?

Who will you bring along?

What story will you tell?

Salmon Nation
An Invitation

“What we are trying to do is to create a vivid picture of a healthy place, and to accelerate and replicate local expressions of what works to keep Salmon Nation healthy, bountiful and beautiful.”

Join Us

SALMON NATION IS a human-powered natural system designed to inspire, enable and invest in a common bioregional identity, a commitment to leaving this place better than we found it, and to replicating what works in order to do so. It is a fabric of watersheds networked by Ravens who are actively building regenerative cultures and economies. By painting a vivid picture, facilitating active communication and replicating what works, Salmon Nation aims to shift mindsets in our bioregion, helping people move from individual preoccupations that feel besieged and lacking in control to being part of a regenerative fabric of active, creative and more locally and regionally engaged people.

It is important to us that we state clearly that we are not trying to tell people what to do. We are not trying to prescribe individual behavioural change. We are not trying to create a political movement. To the extent that people feel disconnected or disempowered or maybe just plain disinterested, we think that is another system failure. Frankly, it's exhausting for everyone to constantly have to navigate so much that doesn't work.

What we are trying to do is to create a vivid picture of a healthy place, and to identify and connect a storytelling of Ravens to help accelerate and replicate local expressions of what works to keep Salmon Nation healthy, bountiful and beautiful.

So, we invite everyone to paddle with us in the Magic Canoe.

This is where our journey begins. To make any of this work, we need your help to paint the most vivid picture of Salmon Nation that we can: to reimagine your home. We need a few Ravens to fledge our network. We need multiple examples of what works, and eventually we'll need capital to invest in their replication. We need allies, and all manner of goodwill. We invite you to join us in what promises to be a journey of many lifetimes.

Welcome aboard the Magic Canoe.

Welcome to Salmon Nation.

Welcome home.



Magic Canoe Signup



If you are eager to become a paddler in the Magic Canoe, please email us: cheryl@salmonnation.net

We intend to keep things simple. You email us, and we'll send you a nice note, maybe a photo from Salmon Nation. Pretty soon, we hope to have a website where you can share something about yourself and your community. Stay tuned for that.

When you email us, it would be great if you could tell us:

- What watershed do you live in, or what river do you live near?
- Something about your home that you love
- What do you do for fun
- What do you do to survive (which, lucky you, might also be what you do for fun)
- Something you are doing, or would love to do, to make Salmon Nation even better

Please share our thoughts about Salmon Nation with others, and share our coordinates if you know people who may want to join you, and us, in the Magic Canoe.

Thank you. We look forward to paddling with you!

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE some notes, references and readings that we believe are useful, albeit not essential for understanding the purpose of Salmon Nation, how we seek to achieve that purpose, and what makes our approach unique.

We also provide some guidance as to how we intend to structure our work to avoid organizational pitfalls that often limit the ambitions of the best-intended efforts to create meaningful change at scale.

We hope the following is useful context or elaboration that gives a reader some confidence in our thinking, our methods and our intentions.



Place and trust

WE HAVE TALKED about the importance of place, and have made a case for Salmon Nation as a region that is unique in all the world thanks to its stores of natural, social and financial capital. We have articulated an argument for organizing at the watershed scale. Further elaboration may not be required, but for an enthusiastic reader it might be enriching. To that end, a little more on watersheds, and why working at the watershed scale matters in Salmon Nation.

Watersheds are geographic features defined by the boundaries of river systems. Each river has its own watershed, separated from adjoining rivers by divides and passes. Watersheds, like the Skagit River—which naturally crosses the artificial border that separates British Columbia from Washington State—are the oldest physical formations that have governed and shaped human development. The Skagit River system is one of many watersheds that feed the Salish Sea (see map). Both the Skagit

and the Salish Sea are fractals of Salmon Nation. Notable features of watersheds include that they are scale-free, meaning that their patterns remain constant across scales of perspective. Their river systems are also dendritic, composed of infinitely branched, yet interconnected channels. And watersheds are open, in the sense that there is no gatekeeper and they are not easily contained.

Or at least that was the case until our bioregion was divided by straight lines drawn by “settlers” into provinces and states—separated by borders and, yes, gates and gatekeepers. These borders, these jurisdictional barriers, have interrupted but not destroyed cultural exchanges and trading patterns in and among the communities of Salmon Nation. As artefacts of our globalized economy, they have also diminished trust, a sense of belonging and the feeling of a shared home—which is essential to the relocalization of the communities and economies of Salmon Nation.

The characteristics of watersheds—scale-free, branching and open—typify nearly all naturally occurring networks. Ravens—trusted souls of fire committed to the well being of their communities—are the primary nodes of a local storytelling and regenerative development network. These traits provide us direction as to how Salmon Nation’s Raven Network should be designed.

The storytelling of Ravens

THE RAVEN NETWORK is formed to intentionally empower Ravens in their watersheds. Thus the Raven Network upends conventional network design—the standard seven-layer network model (see Appendix 1)—that reflects neither humans nor nature. Instead:

1. The Raven Network will *integrate* local relationships between and across watersheds;
2. The Raven Network is open—all standards, interfaces and actions will be transparent, and anyone can be nominated by existing Ravens, so long as they subscribe to basic statements of values and activity;
3. Ravens will be public and actively networked with each other to

create opportunities for trust building, federation, idea exchange and belonging;

4. The Raven Network will be owned and controlled by its members, which means that financial (and non-financial) benefits accumulated through their participation will be owned by them. The Salmon Nation Trust will hold limited rights to maintain positive values;
5. Control, ownership and position in the Raven Network is decentral-ized, i.e. it cannot be centrally controlled.

The Raven Network is guided by a hybrid structure shared by Ravens and Elders. Ravens will make decisions that have horizons of two years or less. Elders, as assembled in an associated public benefit company, the “Salmon Nation Trust,” will need to sign off on decisions and initiatives that reasonably impact Salmon Nation as a whole and the Raven Network over time spans of two to one hundred years.

The Raven Network will add new members and new member types from time to time. To start, new Ravens may join by a) self declaration and b) secondment by at least three current Ravens.

Story Network

WE NEED NEW myths for this time in our place. Those myths will rise from shared narratives. There is ample evidence that the atomization of our social systems and the decrease in civic participation, empathy and shared identity correlates with the “silo” effect of social media and the dramatic collapse of local print and broadcast media. There is a powerful opportunity, however, to use digital technologies and networks to accelerate the production and dissemination of new, solutions-focused narratives from “edge” communities, featuring Ravens and other players whose stories are seldom told.

We believe there is a compelling case to be made for a Salmon Nation Media Network highlighting stories from the edge that celebrate what works. Our digital *Confluence* will harvest, display, share and archive stories of the region. We will find and support storytellers and help them

contribute to the network fabric of Salmon Nation. We hope to use an open source platform such as Wiki for this.

Capital Network

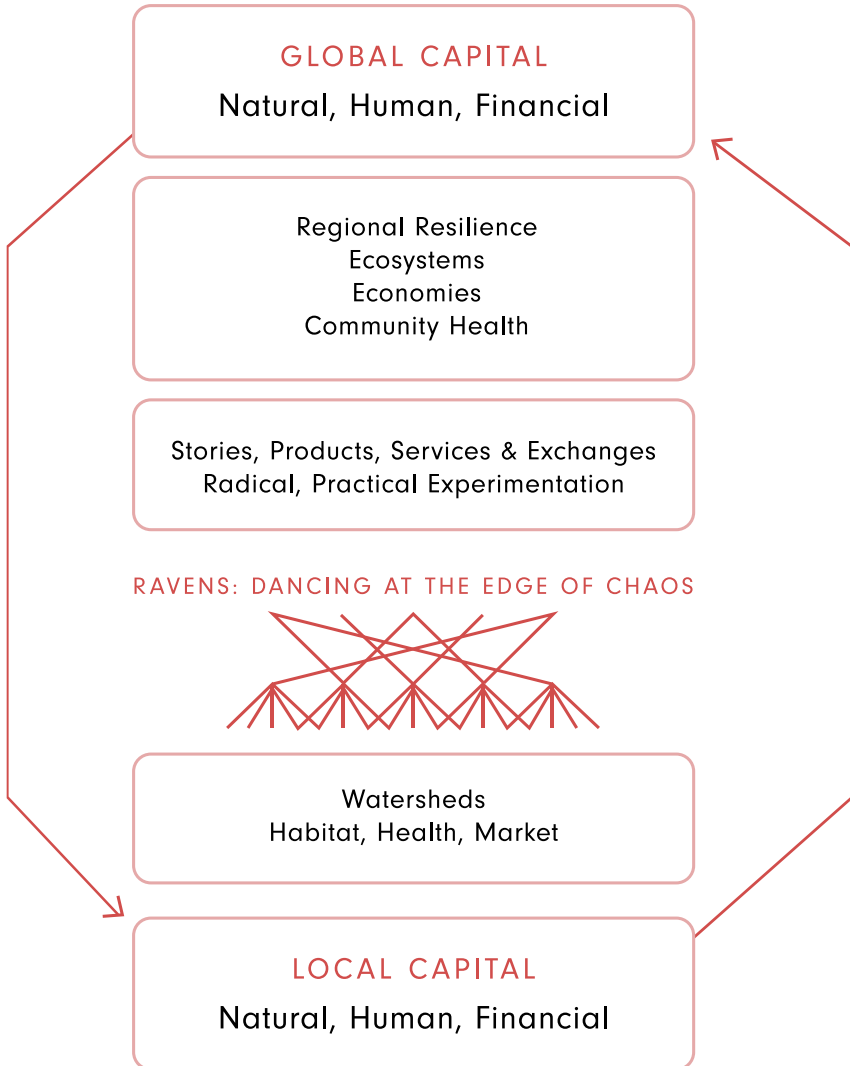
HAVING RAVENS IN place and telling their stories is critical to transferring information about what works. Having capital flowing to what works is critical to growing and replicating local success in Salmon Nation watersheds. We propose a network system that allows Ravens to orchestrate flows of information and capital within their own watersheds. In aggregate, that will maximize capital flows to the benefit of Salmon Nation as a whole.

The Raven Network

ACTIVATING FLOWS OF natural, social and financial capital between and within local and global communities is at the heart of the rationale for Salmon Nation. A key assumption in the design of Salmon Nation is that this region is capital rich—and that the bioregion’s capital assets are organized in patterns that may no longer be optimal and are certainly lacking in resiliency. For example, the City of Seattle is very rich in financial capital, though it is lacking in certain types of social and natural capital. Bella Bella, home of the Haítzaqv First Nation, has abundant natural capital and many types of social capital, yet is limited in financial capital. One of our goals is to promote a regenerative flow of capital that benefits both local and global communities, leading to greater resilience overall.

Markets for products and services in Salmon Nation continue to be organized through hubs that place the Bay Area, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver and Anchorage at their center. This configuration makes it cumbersome and expensive for the edge communities of Salmon Nation to effectively trade. We will experiment with and promote the use of basic tools, like regionally focused craigslists, to trade products and services. We expect that entrepreneurs will develop regional marketplaces, trading and investment tools that make possible a truly localized economy.

Raven Network



There is an opportunity to grow a new kind of impact investment network in Salmon Nation. Current impact investments are linear, do not effectively build community and export profits beyond the intended beneficiary markets. We believe that a full-circle impact investment network is possible. This investment network would source capital from within Salmon Nation for investment within Salmon Nation. By creating a circular market for capital, where the benefits and liabilities of risk and investment are held within this region, we believe that trust can be built while greatly accelerating the pace of watershed regeneration that is more aligned with local values.

The backbone for a circular capital network already exists. The Jobs Act in the U.S. and associated crowdfunding websites provide mechanisms to source capital in the region. Cryptocurrencies and processes such as block chain and Holochain provide inexpensive transactional building blocks. What is missing from these rails are real places to implement, build community and establish and maintain trust. Salmon Nation is designed to jump start the formation of robust local and regional economies.

Structure and Governance

	SALMON NATION TRUST	A STORYTELLING OF RAVENS	CONFLUENCE	MAGIC CANOE
PURPOSE	Name the system, paint a vivid picture, hold future direction	Find and link ravens	Accelerate what works	Grassroots participation
WHEN	Now	Now	Q1 2020	Q2 2020
FORM	PBLLC	Interdependent Raven Holding PBLLC	Interdependent PBLLC	501 (c) 3
SERVICE	Trust, governance, navigation and vivid picture	Network to Natural Watersheds	Stories and capital for what works	Trips, field engagement, access to services and products from Raven Network and others in Salmon Nation
LONG-TERM PURPOSE	Bioregional trust, paint a vivid picture, redirect capital	Growing network of thousands of accomplished creators, collaborators and entrepreneurs	Strong subregional expressions of a nature based economy	Regional and potentially global citizen's movement

THE SALMON NATION TRUST is the apex organization for Salmon Nation, a Public Benefit LLC that provides for external governance of assets held in trust for the region as a whole. It will “hold” the trust of the region. Its Trustees signal that Salmon Nation is real and worth investing time/energy/emotion/work/capital in.

While the Salmon Nation Trust is the apex entity, it is the least powerful in terms of control and operations of the Raven Network and the *Confluence*. It is important that the top-down entity is hobbled, as too much concentrated control will crush local activity and innovation.

THE RAVEN NETWORK will initially be a subsidiary of the Salmon Nation Trust, eventually becoming a company majority owned by Ravens themselves. There will be very few instances where the The Salmon Nation Trust has any control over the Raven Network. Principally they will be around adding resources to the Raven Network, and potentially a veto over changing the criteria of Raven membership. While the The Salmon Nation Trust will not have strong control provisions, it will have strong rights of access, use and transparency. Detailed operating provisions of the Raven Network will be established, in real time, as the Ravens themselves begin to understand the dynamics of their participation.

THE CONFLUENCE IS a physically decentralized accelerator for actively replicating what works to begin re-localizing economic life throughout in the watersheds of Salmon Nation. The *Confluence* will be implemented through a PBLLC. It will have external shareholders. Though much of its work will be commercially oriented, the *Confluence* will support replication and imitation of a full spectrum of Raven activity including social, artistic, celebratory and community building ideas that work.

THE MAGIC CANOE is a 501 (c) 3 and is the grassroots vehicle for Salmon Nation. Its primary activity will be to hold everyday people’s interest in Salmon Nation, to organize relevant local groups and events,

and to promote the vivid picture of, and participation in, Salmon Nation. The Magic Canoe welcomes everybody to Salmon Nation.

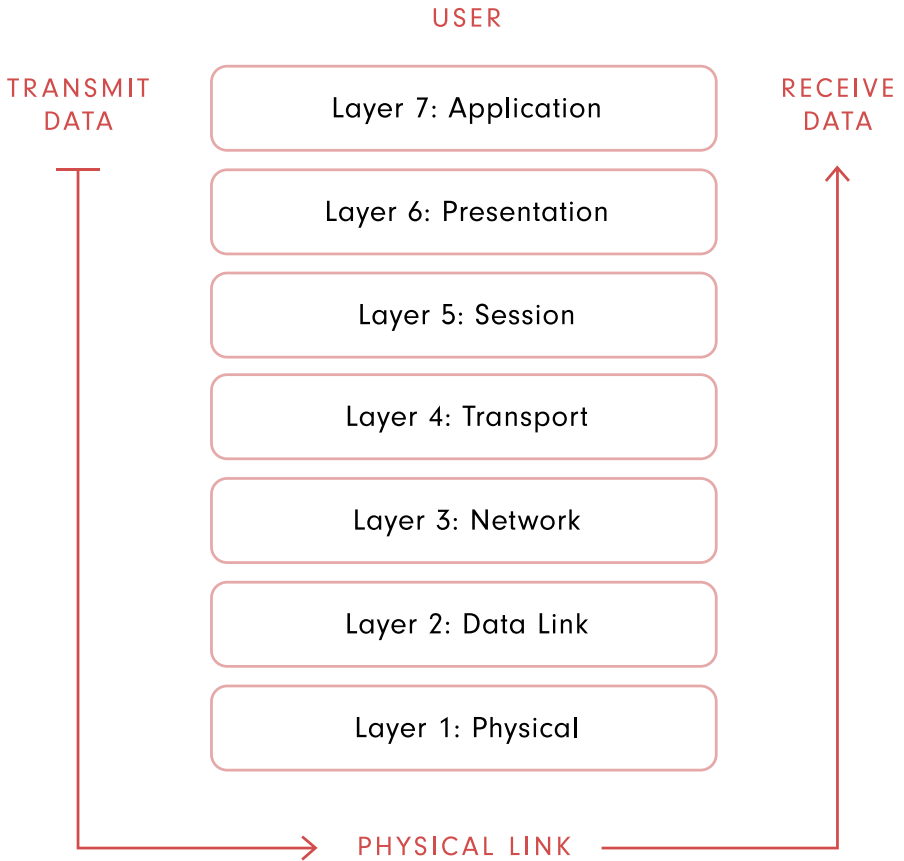
THE SALMON NATION SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND. At an appropriately mature stage of Salmon Nation's development, we envision the establishment of a public facing asset manager or trust company that is held within the Salmon Nation Trust. It will seek to become the de facto manager of legacy financial wealth, converting these assets (private and public, market and philanthropic) into resources for regional community systems. The fund will attract investment capital, grants, and possibly raise and distribute crowd-funded equity and facilitate asset exchanges within the network.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The 7-Layer Model

THE SEVEN-LAYER MODEL describes all modern communications systems: dial tone, cellular, TCP/IP (Internet), SMS messaging, satellite, microwave and laser communications. By virtue of its widespread use and seemingly infinite application, it is considered a valid form of network organization—whether that network is open or proprietary, virtual or real, digital or analog. As such, it provides a valid, if cautionary reference point for how to imagine a Raven Network within Salmon Nation. Notice that the seven-layer model begins at a thin physical layer and ends at the application layer. Many of us mistakenly believe that the applications we use through an interface are the network, when in fact they are simply the network's surface. That causes us to miss or at least fail to place the highest value on the humans that a network is hoping to attract (or in many cases, distract). Neither humans nor nature show up in the standard network model. In Salmon Nation, humans, nature and networks are at the center of all that is done.

The 7 Layers of OSI



Appendix 2: Further Reading

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Appendix 3: About Us

SPENCER BIDDLE BEEBE grew up in Oregon fly fishing, camping and practicing falconry. He has a lifetime commitment to wilderness and conservation and has devoted his professional career to building organizational capacity and exploring new strategies for conservation. He has played a key role in the creation and development of over thirty organizations and programs from Alaska to Bolivia, including helping to pioneer innovative approaches such as debt for nature swaps in developing tropical rain forest countries and environmental banking in the Pacific Northwest. After serving as President of The Nature Conservancy International and founding President of Conservation International, Spencer returned to Oregon and founded Ecotrust, where, over the past twenty-eight years, he created a new paradigm not only for conservation, but for how we organize our societies and economics around nature. He pushed Ecotrust to catalyze “practical, radical change” in the way people bank, manage forests, eat, and exercise their citizenship in communities and landscapes from California to Alaska. He is the author of *Cache: Creating Natural Economies* (2010) with his son, Samuel M. Beebe and *It's Not Any House You Know* (2018). Spencer currently serves as Founder of Ecotrust, but otherwise is devoted to the launch and growth of Salmon Nation. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife Jane M. Beebe.

CHRISTOPHER BROOKFIELD designs networks that empower people. His focus has been on edge communities—places such as the Peruvian Highlands, Rural India and Central Mexico that lack access to essential services. He appreciates what works, including dynamics such as self-organization, trust, locality, immersion, openness, emergence, replication and especially interdisciplinary creative collaboration. He's a founder of Elevar Equity, which within its thesis of human-centered venture capital,

has invested exclusively for edge communities world-wide. Collectively, these investments have achieved 26.5% annualized returns, two IPOs, deployed +\$8 billion in aggregate capital and employed +40,000 people who serve + 20 million customers with services such as education, health, housing and credit. With Northwest Venture Associates and Eagle River, he was an early participant in the development of many network and Internet companies. He is a co-founder of Woolley Market, investor in Skagit Valley Malting and director of Cairnspring Mills, all companies building community with food in Skagit County. Chris has taught innovation at Western Washington University and lectured at many institutions including UC Berkeley, Northwestern University, University of Washington, the London School of Economics, Tufts University, the Indian School of Business and the US State Department. He is also the author of *A Field Guide for Systemic Social Change, Inspired by Culture* (2019, forthcoming). He lives with his family in Bellingham, WA.

CHERYL CHEN IS a systems thinker, connector, and tactical strategist with over a decade of experience in cultivating teams and utilizing technology to disrupt systems and empower communities. As trained human geographer at heart, people have always been at the center of her work. Cheryl's expertise is in building for-purpose organizations from the ground up that challenge business-as-usual systems—in how they operate, and the impact they seek to create. She was recently operations director with Future of Fish, an international NGO focused on ending overfishing by developing strategic and investable triple-bottom-line innovations in under-served coastal communities worldwide. Before that she worked with Point 97 and Ecotrust, where she designed and orchestrated large-scale multi-stakeholder initiatives centered on the development and implementation of marine spatial planning technology solutions. Cheryl received her Ph.D. in Geography from

the University of California, Santa Barbara. She lives in Portland, Oregon with her wife Megan Chen, and two dogs.

IAN GILL IS a writer, and principal of Cause+Effect, a Vancouver-based consulting company focused on designing and implementing strategies for large-scale social transformation. Ian's interest and experience is in media, communications, social innovation, social finance, conservation, and Indigenous community development. Prior to establishing Cause+Effect, Ian spent almost eighteen years as CEO of Ecotrust in three countries—Canada, the US and Australia. Before establishing Ecotrust Canada in 1994, Ian was a documentary television reporter with CBC Television. Ian earlier spent seven years as a senior reporter and editor with the Vancouver Sun. He is a fellow of Journalistes en Europe (1986-87); a past director of Vancity Community Credit Union; and the author of four books, most recently *No News Is Bad News: Canada's Media Collapse—And What Comes Next*. He is an essayist for The Tyee and continues to be published in a wide variety of media. He was president of The Discourse (2016-18); an Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University (2015-2019); and a Senior Fellow with the Montreal-based McConnell Foundation (2015). In 2019 he was appointed as the inaugural Dan and Priscilla Bernard Wieden Foundation Salmon Nation Storytelling Fellow. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, and on a small island off the West Coast of Salmon Nation.

Thanks

THE AUTHORS ACKNOWLEDGE and give sincere thanks to a number of contributors to our early thinking and articulation of Salmon Nation, including but not limited to: Bill Barks, Sam Beebe, David Beers, Steve Brinn, Cory Carman, Cheryl Chen, Wade Davis, Alan Durning, John Fullerton, Briana Garelli, Zoe Grams, Kate Warren Hall, Pete Hartigan, Vanessa Hartigan, Jessie Housty, Larry Housty, Shawn Kemp, John Kitzhaber, Sandor Koles, Dr. Michele Koppes, Marc Pierson, Julia Pope, Ethan Seltzer, Joanna Streetly, Kat Taylor, Bob Warren, Dan Wieden, Priscilla Bernard Wieden, Edward West, Sonny Wong, Eric Young.

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PHOTO OF CECIL PAUL BY Kevin Smith, Maple Leaf Adventures

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