

three rivers journey (2003)

Lower Canyon on the Bonnet
Plume River, Three Rivers
Journey, Summer 2003 [JP]



In July of 2003, artists, writers, photographers, and other notable Canadians from across Canada and North America joined members of Yukon (Nacho Nyak Dun) and Northwest Territories' (Tetl'it Gwich'in) First Nations communities on voyages down three tributaries in the Peel watershed, the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume.

Launched by CPAWS-Yukon in cooperation with First Nation community participants in Mayo and Ft McPherson, Tetl'it Gwich'in First Nation, Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon, and Yukon Conservation Society, the Three Rivers Journey took a total of thirty-seven paddlers down the Three Rivers to drive home the power of this wild river landscape and its cultural significance.

Gwich'in gathering on the Peel River;
Three Rivers Journey, 2003 [JP]
Mary Teya at the gathering. [JP]



After the journeys, the paddlers gathered with First Nations elders and other invited guests where the Snake and Peel River meet. They celebrated the beauty and importance of the Three Rivers with the first elders' feast held at this site in many decades. The Three Rivers Journey will result in a national touring art exhibit, *Three Rivers: wild waters, sacred places*, a series of slide shows and video presentations, and a variety of printed works to raise awareness and appreciation of the Peel watershed.

The community trips organized by CPAWS during the past 5 years allowed for an exchange of ideas and provided community representatives with an opportunity to see parts of the watershed where their ancestors used to live and travel. Youth and elders alike participated in the trips.