

Of Ice and Salmon

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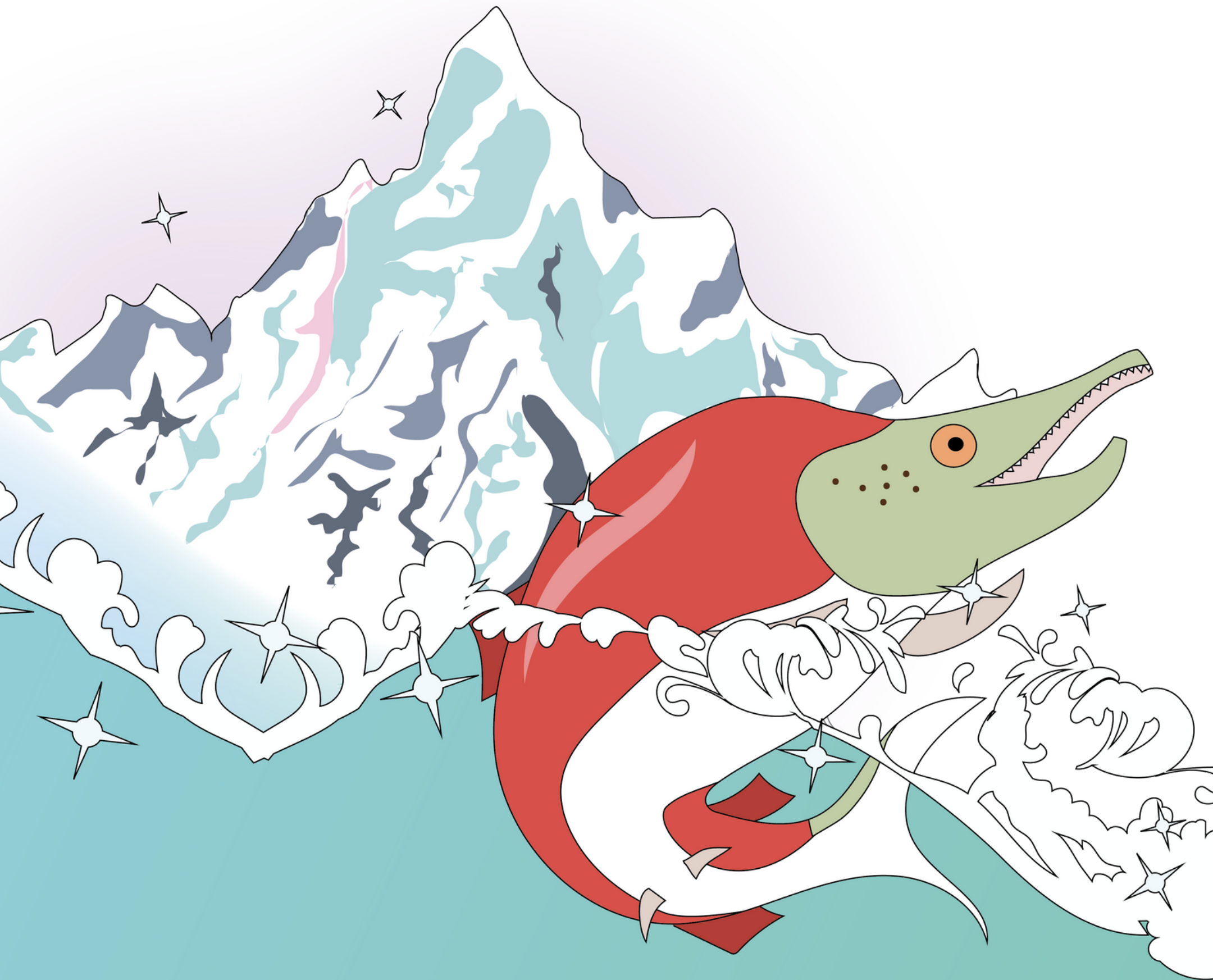


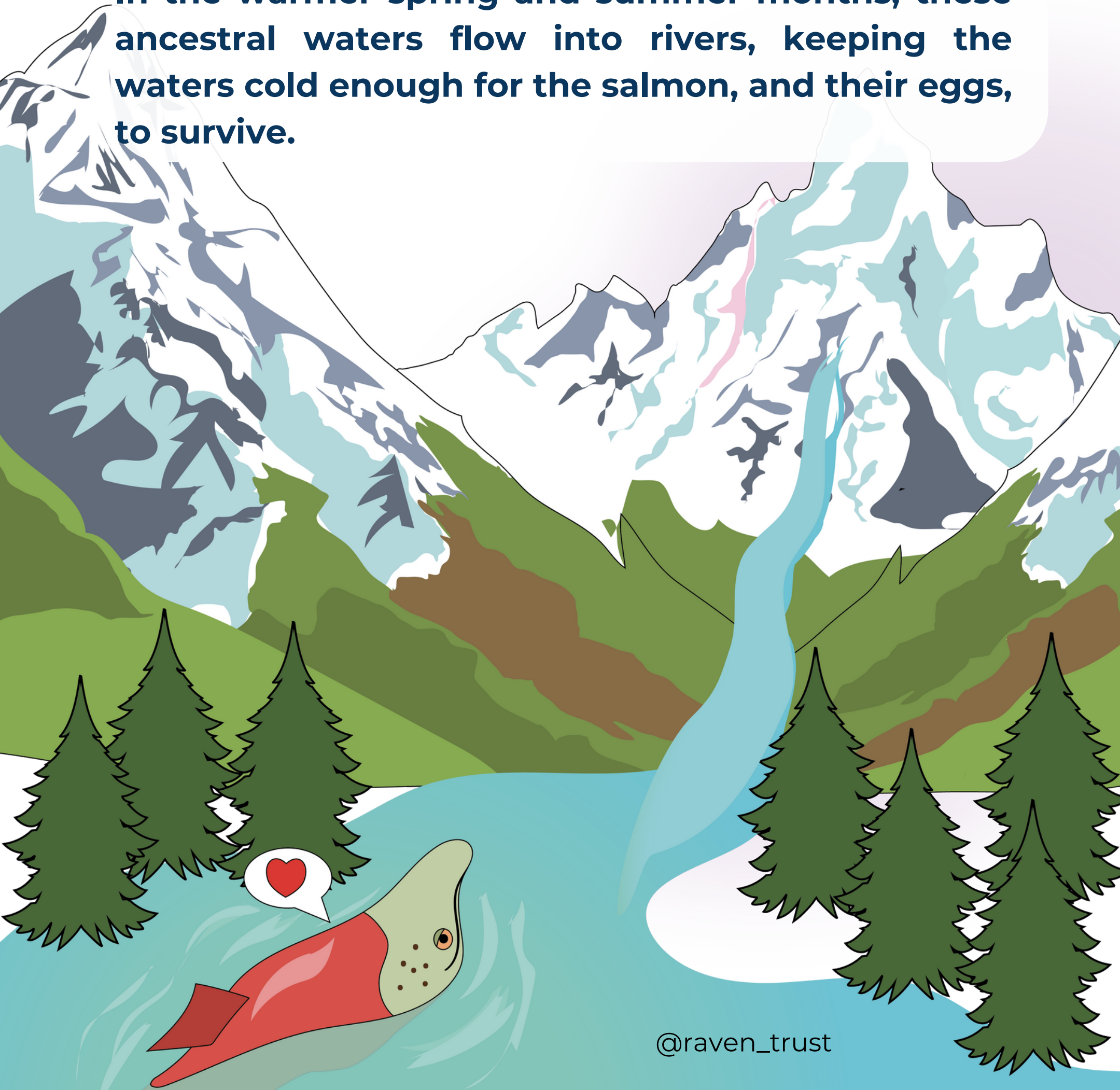
Illustration by Karissa Chandrakate

The link between glaciers and sockeye salmon is one of Earth's most delicate ecological connections, interwoven in an ancestral dance of patience and honour for the Earth and its cycles.



High in the mountains of the Wet'suwet'en Yintah, glaciers have long acted as water reservoirs – holding the ancient snow and ice that feeds the rivers below since time immemorial.

In the warmer spring and summer months, these ancestral waters flow into rivers, keeping the waters cold enough for the salmon, and their eggs, to survive.

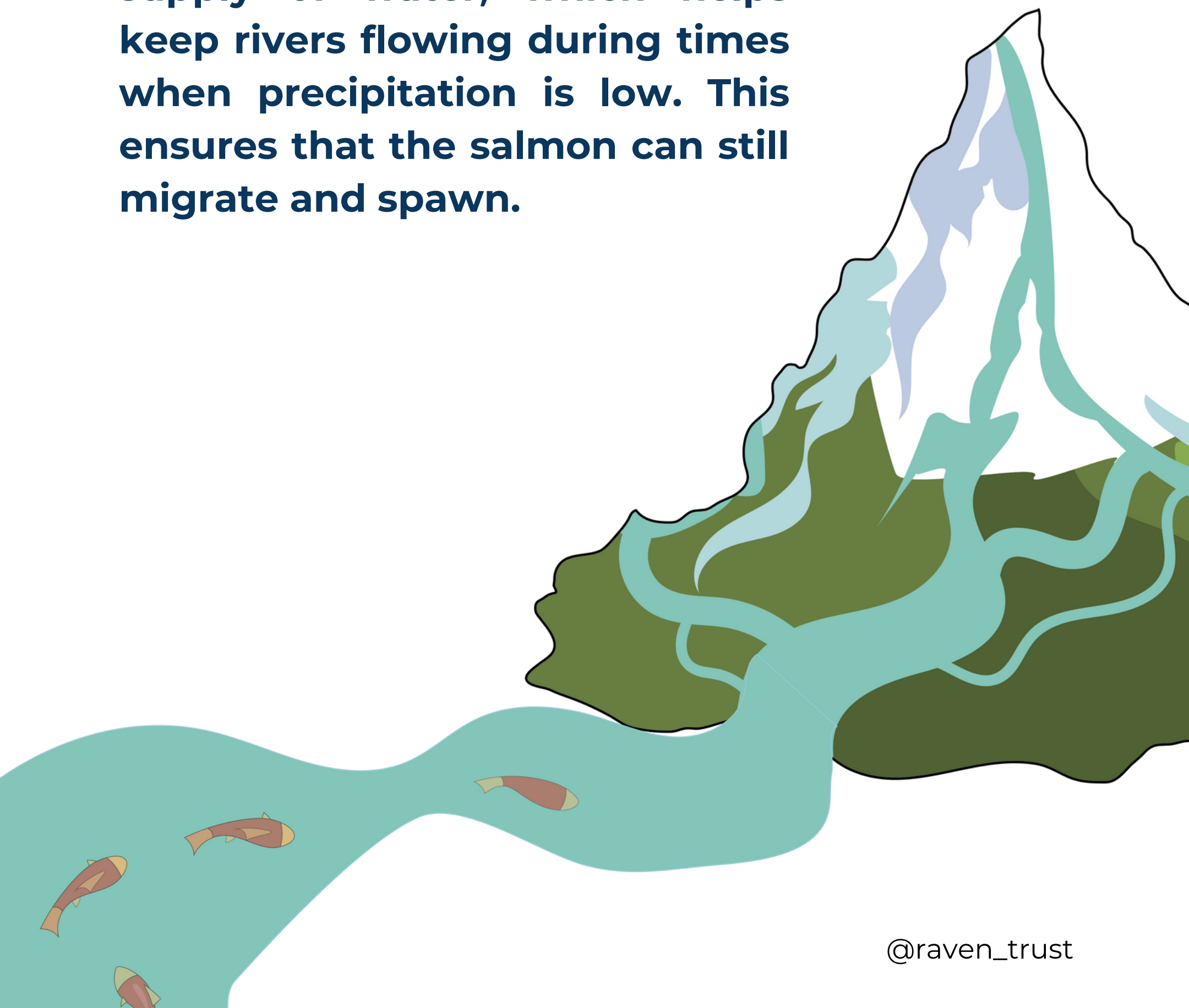


For the Wet'suwet'en people, the salmon are not just food — they are ancestors and relatives with whom they have had relations and living arrangements for millennia. Each year, the salmon return to the rivers in the Yintah from the ocean, bringing back stories and memories from the ocean.



The sockeye, like many salmon species, rely on oxygen-rich waters of the cold, glacier-fed rivers and lakes for survival.

Glaciers help maintain a steady supply of water, which helps keep rivers flowing during times when precipitation is low. This ensures that the salmon can still migrate and spawn.



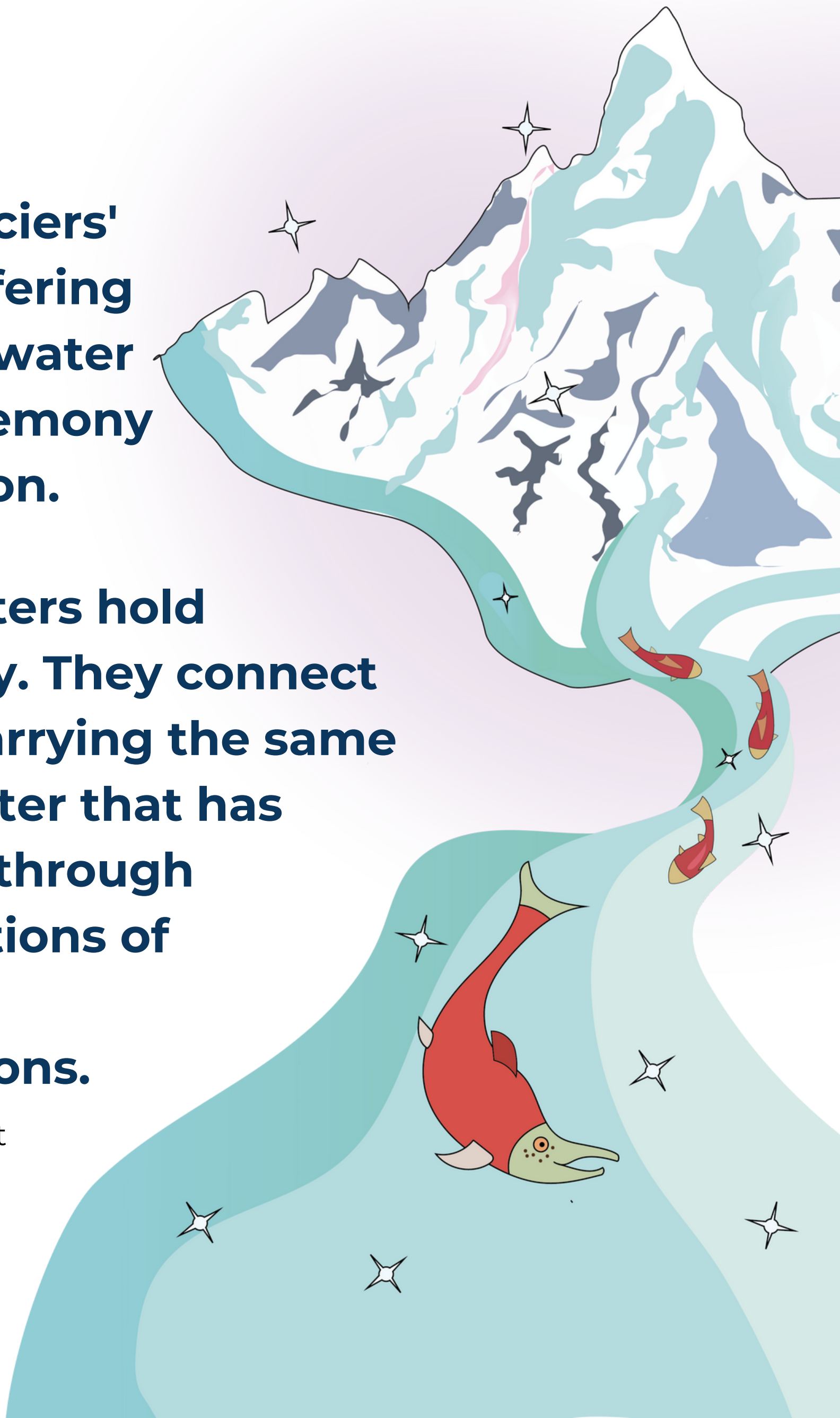
Glaciers also grind rock into glacial gravels, which line the bottom of rivers, providing the perfect bedding for salmon to lay their eggs.



The glaciers' slow offering of cold water is a ceremony in motion.

The waters hold memory. They connect time, carrying the same meltwater that has flowed through generations of salmon migrations.

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The salmon give life to the people, and in return, the people are called to protect the waters. This responsibility is embedded in legends, historical stories, ceremonies, songs, and protocols passed down through generations.

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However, this ancient relationship is under threat. The climate crisis is shrinking glaciers to extinction, causing river and ocean water to warm, disrupting salmon migration. Among the Wet'suwet'en people, there is a prophecy that is understood: **when the glaciers melt, the world will catch fire.**



The Wet'suwet'en people are taking action. Two Wet'suwet'en House groups of the Likhts'amisyu Clan are taking Canada to court to hold them accountable to its failing approach to global warming.

Canada's failure to implement its international and legislated commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions deprives the Wet'suwet'en of their constitutionally guaranteed right to life, liberty, and security of the person under s. 7 of the Charter.

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Their efforts to protect what is sacred in their territory is not just about salmon — it's about asserting their rights, forcing Canada to hold industry accountable to reducing their emissions, and protecting future generations from the worst of the climate crisis.



We are all one planet.

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