



*Ati k<sup>w</sup>u swi-wi-numtax*  
WE ARE BEAUTIFUL

*Ati k<sup>w</sup>u suknaqinx*  
BECAUSE WE ARE OKANAGAN

*Ati axa? l? tmx<sup>w</sup> ula?x<sup>w</sup>*  
BECAUSE OUR LAND IS BEAUTIFUL

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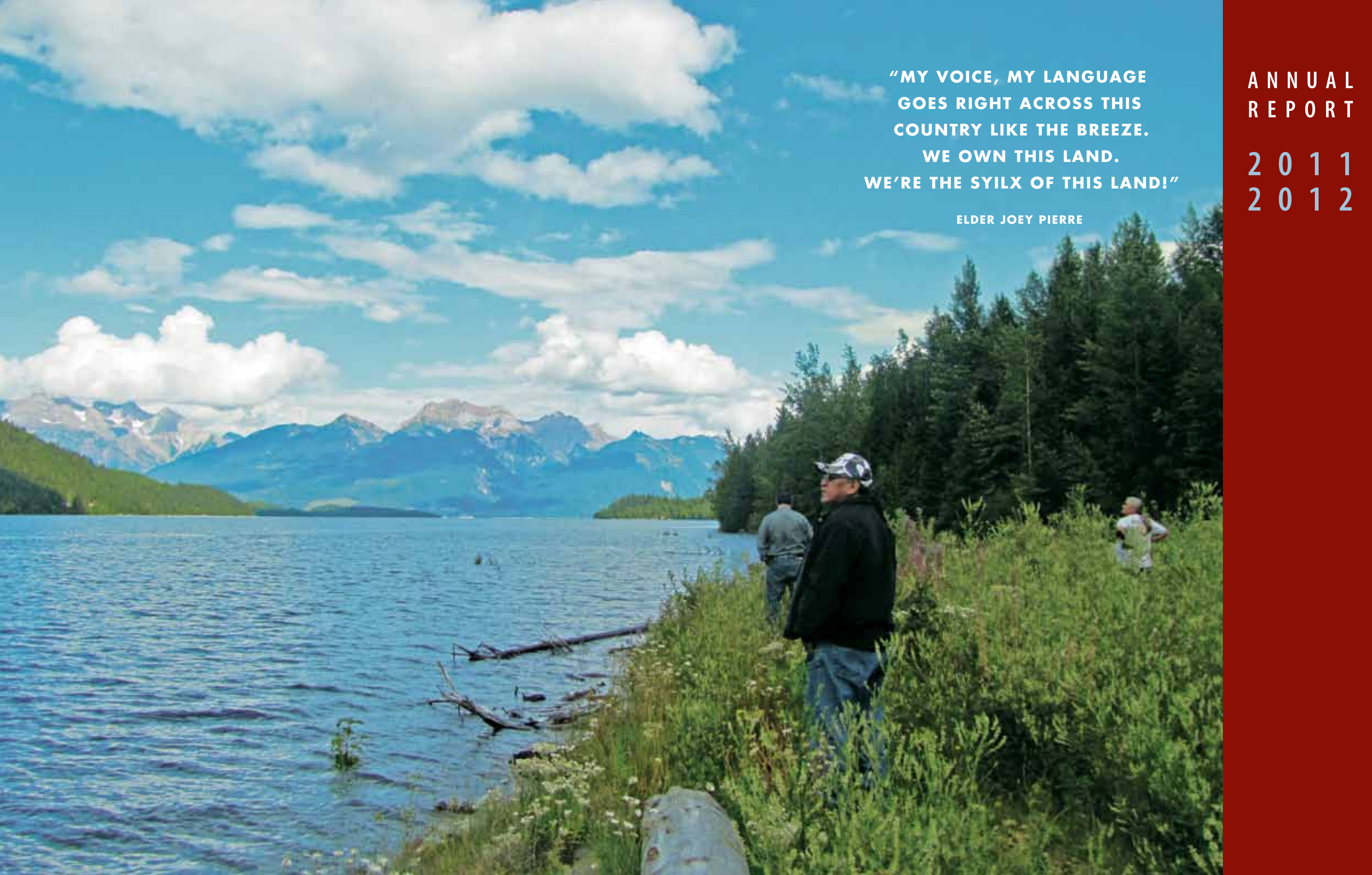
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**"MY VOICE, MY LANGUAGE  
GOES RIGHT ACROSS THIS  
COUNTRY LIKE THE BREEZE.  
WE OWN THIS LAND.  
WE'RE THE SYILX OF THIS LAND!"**

**ELDER JOEY PIERRE**

**A N N U A L  
R E P O R T**

**2 0 1 1  
2 0 1 2**



*Sts-oomsts yeeh  
S-Ooknahkchinx*  
OKANAGAN NATION  
DECLARATION

*Yeeh koo S-Ooknahkchinx kgoohlentem yarpnah shchelhehortt kthlktdekmintet kgel yayart yeeh sentsoo- weeptet. Oothl yalah yarpnah koo tsoot.*

*We, the Okanagan Nation make this declaration today as a sign for every generation to come. Therefore, we hereby declare that:*

*Mneemthlet yeeh koo xahtmaskhilwuk. koo temskchiwohwoh yatlak te temwoolahwoh, yeeh toomhtemhtet.*

*We are the unconquered aboriginal peoples of this land, our mother; Telh kgoohlentsooten swहितetzxtet yeeh toomhtemhtet, ksnpee-eelshmenhtemh, kstxetdenhtimh oothl kskgethikchiwhenhtemh. The creator has given us our mother, to enjoy, to manage and to protect; Telhs meas qchesapihs, yeeh koo xahtmaskhilwuk koos queleewtx cel toomhtemhtet.*

*We, the first inhabitants, have lived with our mother from time immemorial:*

*Yeeh koo S-Ooknahkchinx yeeh tzohchentsootentet koo xeehxechstim koo kgel yayart phelwiktmentem an hchastan yeeh telh toomhtemhtet.*

*Our Okanagan Governments have allowed us to share equally in the resources of our mother;*

*Loot penhkinh ide xeehxeexxmentem yeeh stethltethlet yeeh kgel toomhtemhtet, yeeh telh toomhtemh an hchastantet, yeeh txdeeplahntentet oothl yeeh noonemwohchonhtentet.*

*We have never given up our rights to our mother, our mother's resources, our governments and our religion;*

*Loot penhkinh koo tdeks nzespoolawhahx. Peentk kstxtdiplahntemh yeeh telh toomhtemh an hchastantet koo kgel yayart, telh yarpnah oothl tdeswhoois.*

*We will survive and continue to govern our mother and her resources for the good of all for all time.*

CHIEFS AND COUNCILS

OSOYDOS INDIAN BAND

Chief - Carole Lewis  
Councils - Vanessa McGinnis  
- Thomas Rice

RENTICTON INDIAN BAND

Chief - Adam Enns  
Councils - Jeannette Whittington  
- Les Orland  
- Joseph Pines  
- Annie Jack

UPPER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND

Chief - Hazel Squawish  
Councils - Karen Holmes  
- Carrie Allison

LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND

Chief - Eamon Adams  
Councils - Richard Tomaset  
- Ryan Bass  
- Pauline Tardif

OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND

Chief - Murray Niles  
Councils - Craig Allen  
- Johnny (Tim) Goss  
- Albert Saldeman  
- Carl Lewis  
- Matthew Bennett  
- Holly Bennett  
- Herbert Simpson  
- Raymond Oregon  
- David Wilson

WESTBANK INDIAN BAND

Chief - Robert Lewis  
Councils - Harold Davidson  
- Ross Davidson

NICOLO INDIAN BAND

Chief - Fred Harris  
Councils - Harvey McLean  
- Walter Anshelton  
- Glenn Lindley  
- Richard McLean

## Message from the Chairman

*“We will survive and continue to govern our mother and her resources for the good of all for all time.”*

In last year's message to our Nation's Annual Gathering I quoted these words from the Okanagan Declaration as the foundation of our vision and as a benchmark to chart our way forward. These visionary words would be needed to sustain me, time and again, throughout what has proved to be a very troubling year.

That said, I would first like to mention several positive developments that are a tribute to the leadership qualities of our BC Chiefs. I am pleased to report that Grand Chief Ed John of the Tl'az'ten Nation has been named the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Grand Chief John is a strong voice dedicated to raising awareness of the struggles of Indigenous Peoples and of their need for social justice.

Our National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Shawn A-in-chut Atleo of the Ahousaht First Nation, recently declared at the UBCIC Chief's Council meeting that he would stand for a second term, receiving a standing ovation from those present. National Chief Atleo deserves our support since he has proven to be a strong advocate for First Nations and our rights. Also encouraging was the recent release of the Lornie Report and its recommendations which, those First Nations outside of BC treaty negotiations acknowledges the issues including their concerns of overlaps.

Within the Nation, our Chiefs have made real progress toward the Syilx Cooperative Protocol which received agreement in principle on May 23 of this year. The Protocol is an important document that will establish a mechanism for revenue sharing and dispute resolution that will unify the Nation and strengthen our position in negotiations with outside third party interests that wish to access our traditional territories and resources.

I should also mention our dedicated staff and all those who give of their time and expertise to fulfill our obligations for health care, social services and education, as well as our commitments to the fishery, to our land, our language, and to our youth. Your consistent and ongoing and constant effort is a credit to our Nation, especially our Syilx youth who always greatly impress and inspire me.



On a less optimistic note, we have been faced with many challenges over the past year and can only look forward to more of the same for the foreseeable future. Given the realities of Bill C38 and the obvious priorities and direction of the Federal Government, along with many outstanding issues and concerns at the provincial level, one can only conclude that First Nations communities across Canada

and particularly in British Columbia are under attack as never before. The Enbridge Northern Gateway project and container port expansion, extension of the Kinder-Morgan pipeline, Taseko Mine Ltd.'s New Prosperity Mine, the Site C Dam proposed in Treaty 8 territory and the Jumbo Ski Resort development all threaten First Nations Title and Rights and could have devastating impacts on First Nation communities.

The Federal Government's stance was apparent at the Crown-First Nations Gathering in Ottawa on January 24,

2012. The Gathering was attended by close to 100 Chiefs and representatives from BC along with 400 Chiefs from across Canada. The Crown was represented by the Governor General, the Prime Minister, various cabinet ministers and senior government officials. Deep program and service cutbacks within the recent Federal Budget prove that the January 2012 – the Crown First Nations Gathering was simply a matter of public platitudes and a glorified photo opportunity for Prime Minister Harper.

As President of the UBCIC, I made the following comment on the lack of First Nations involvement in a recent trade mission to China: "By ignoring First Nations and inviting industry representatives like Enbridge, the Government of Canada is signalling they like the status quo relationship where they continue to ignore our deep concerns about such mega projects. Indigenous Nations in BC are loud and clear. Our inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights are constitutionally-enshrined, judicially recognized, embodied in the United Nations' Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples and we will not hesitate to defend them."

*continued...*

Of utmost concern is the omnibus budget Bill C38. It is an assault on everything First Nations communities believe in and cherish. This bill has dismantled Fisheries legislation, gutted environmental protection laws and regulations, and turned the project review process into a rubber stamp formality. In every instance, multinational businesses are the beneficiaries while First Nations interests are marginalized. The Federal Government does not respect First Nations. It is unwilling to include First Nations in the decision making process and clearly sees First Nations as a "nuisance" and a problem. At the end of the day it will mean more lawsuits and conflict on the land itself.

The Federal Government is unmoved by facts, statistics, scientific research or reasonable argument. It has passed tough-on-crime legislation of the type that has been an abject failure in the United States, and established mandatory minimum sentencing requirements that will increase the prison population dramatically with disastrous consequences for many First Nations individuals and communities. Within British Columbia, much time has been devoted to the flawed Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. But apart from the inquiry, the Native Women's Association of Canada has documented "the disappearances and murders of over 600

Aboriginal women and girls in Canada over the last 20 years." This is a national tragedy, but the Federal Government has so far chosen to turn a blind eye to this reality, to this crime against our women.

Much of the past year was spent in preparing and presenting formal objections to disastrous Government legislation on behalf of UBCIC. It is unlikely these objections will receive consideration, and even less likely any will succeed. What then is to be done if all our efforts prove fruitless?

I believe that our Elders, and those who have gone before, would wish us to stand firm and redouble our efforts. At this year's Annual Gathering it is more important than ever to share ideas and to mentor our children and our youth. Our vision to protect our mother and her resources for the benefit of our children and those generations yet to come is ongoing. It is a difficult path that will require dedication and sacrifice to realize. This is our only way forward.

*Lim'limpt*

*ᑎᐱᑎᓂᑦ ᑎᑦᑎᑦ*

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

## Message from the Executive Director



Moving forward is also the Syilx Child and Family Framework, it is our goal for the Syilx Child and Family entity to begin the start up phase by January 2013.

The implementation of the Nation's Health Plan has begun with various initiatives one of which is the development of a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Interior Health, which we believe is a foundational piece required in order to establish a partnership in Health. It is our desire that by June 2012 we will have a signed document. The LOU will be one of the first steps required for the implementation of the Nation's Health Plan.

We are consumed by strengthening a governance framework that is grounded in Syilx culture, language and world view – thus indigenizing our work, our relationships and our world. This approach puts the land, our language and the people at the centre of all our initiatives and ensures that our ancient knowledge and cultural practices are conveyed from one generation to the next. This will be our legacy for years to come. Every accomplishment, however large or small will be remembered. The re-introduction of Salmon back to the Okanagan came as a result of this approach. It has also shifted our relationships with government and it has benefited our people in northern Washington. It has enhanced our fisheries and improved aquatics habitat and is a sustainable model for Syilx development. We have much to strive for and fight for and good hearts to sustain us.

Let the good work continue, let it evolve and let it be purposeful and meaningful for our members who we serve. I remain honoured to serve and remain committed to good results, admirable achievements, best practice and new opportunity that will cause us to be better and do better.

*Lim'limpt*

*swikiᑎᓂᑦ*

Pauline Terbasket, Executive Director

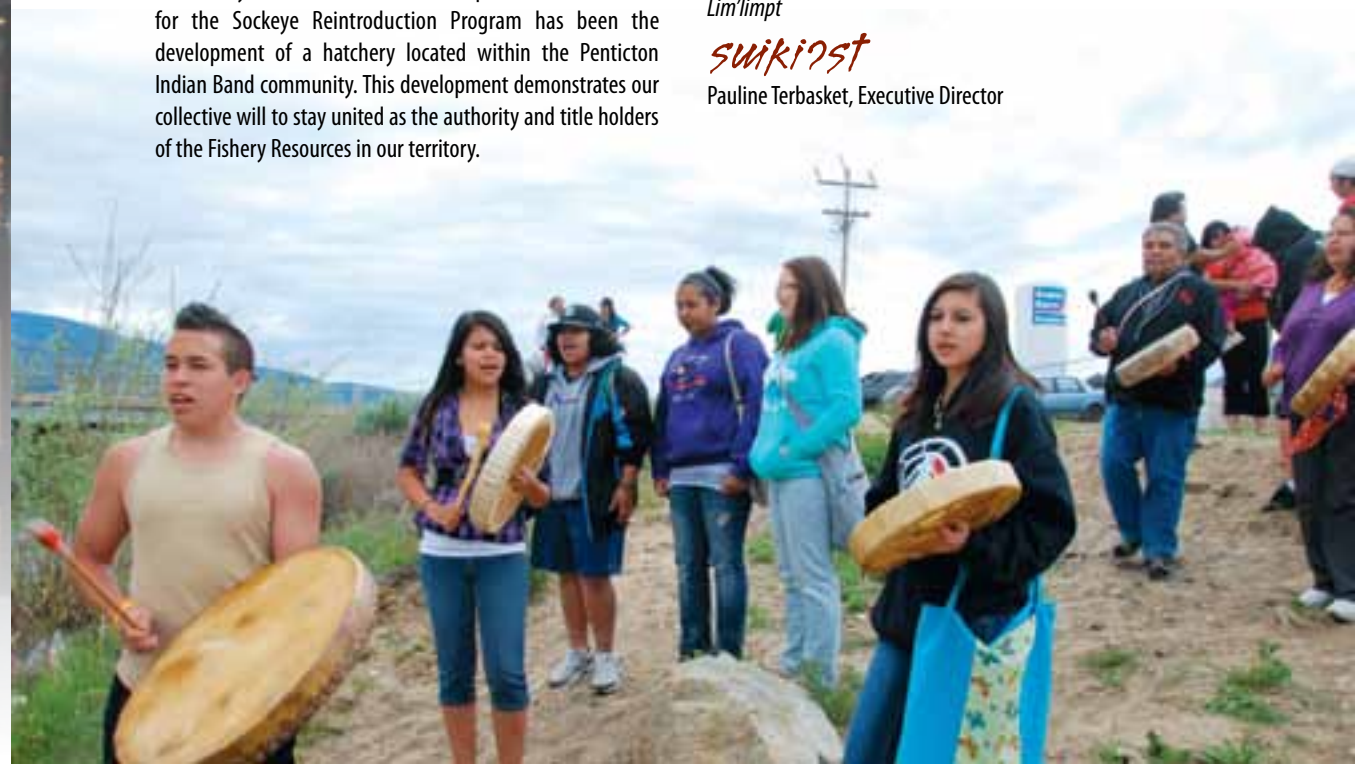
Throughout the year, we reflect on the accomplishments of our members, our communities, and our nation. They inspire us and motivate us to continue the important work of advancing our Nation's agenda.

Within the limits of current capacity, we at the ONA continue to do our best to respond to the needs of the Chief's Executive Council (CEC), the communities and the pressing work of the Nation. This year saw many highlights and accomplishments for the Nation in Natural Resources, Fisheries and Aquatics, Wellness and Administration.

Since May 2010 the member communities have been working on a Syilx Cooperative Protocol with the intent of finalizing this protocol and signing it at the 2012 Annual General Assembly.

This year's annual report highlights our Nation's work in the return of sockeye; an important food source not only for our people but the *tmix*. This year saw a return of 183,000 Okanagan sockeye salmon to the Columbia River, a direct result of years of hard work. An important advancement for the Sockeye Reintroduction Program has been the development of a hatchery located within the Penticton Indian Band community. This development demonstrates our collective will to stay united as the authority and title holders of the Fishery Resources in our territory.

Court of Appeal  
Supreme Court



# Syilx Title and Rights

We, the Sovereign Syilx Peoples, are the recognized owners of the lands and resources, living in political, social, cultural and economic unity for the purpose of exercising our inherent responsibilities, preserving and practicing our language, culture and traditions. Together through the work of the ONA, under the direction of the CEC we seek to:

- Promote and support ONA members to enhance Syilx culture, language and education
- Improve the health, well being, safety and quality of life of Okanagan Nation community members
- Implement Syilx law into governance and operations planning
- Preserve and promote Syilx laws, culture, language and education

In order for the Nation to truly achieve the mandates and directives supported by the CEC it is necessary to protect and defend our Syilx Aboriginal Title and Rights consistently and persistently. Defence of our First Nations Title and Rights will help to secure the future “for our children, grand-children and future generations”- preserving our Nation’s unique and deep relationship to our lands.

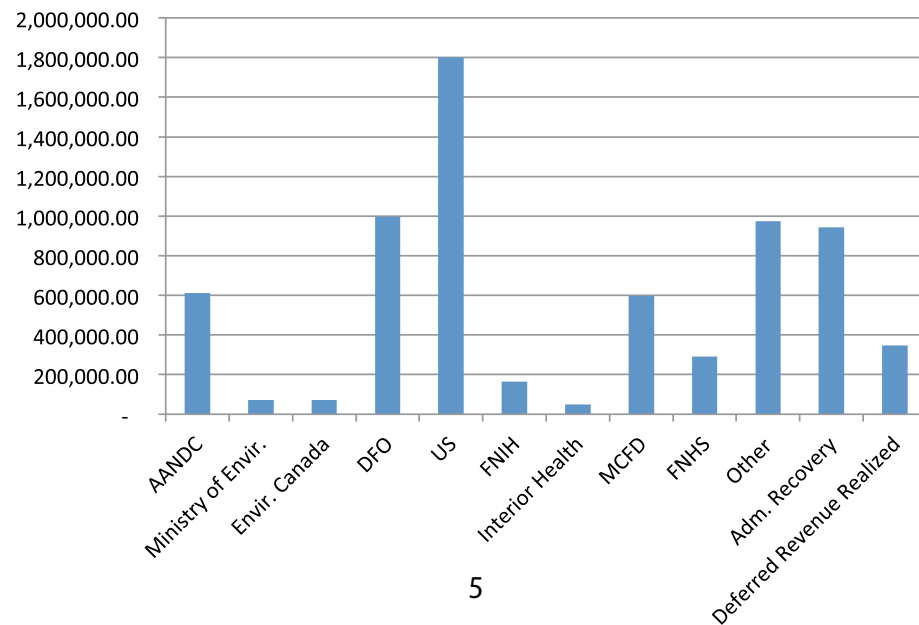
This past December the Chiefs Executive held a strategic planning Retreat to discuss a number of strategic issues including a framework for moving forward. At this session Chief Byron Louis first circulated a paper to focus the discussions titled *Syilx Political Organization – Economizing Political Energies of the Okanagan Nation Governance*. The Chiefs agreed to continue their commitment to dialogue and an on-going review of ONA current circumstances. ONA has to continue to adapt its mandate and scope to respond to funding cutbacks, diminishing opportunities and changes in

the Political, Social and Economic landscape. These changes are no more apparent than when AANDC partnered with BC First Nations Leadership to host the Joint Forum in February. It was very disconcerting event as AANDC presented the federal Government’s budget reductions as an indication of intentions of an unprecedented federal retreat programming and First Nations engagement processes. During this event First Nations leaders raised the issues of increasing equitable access to programs and capacity support as internal and external demands on communities continue.

In the wake of this tighter fiscal reality, the Chiefs reviewed their collective legal strategies and determined that these expenses are strategic and necessary because of the failure by both the Federal and Provincial governments to act. If government action or inaction is not challenged through legal means, then we risk further abrogation of our Syilx Title and Rights. The CEC are conscious that the burden of legal fees can have on operation and continue to balance competing costs while ensuring that the collective interests of the Nation are protected.

The combination of the ONA’s department and project requirements in addition to the legal strategy costs is a reminder of the pressing need for our Nation to access discretionary financial resources to sustain current operations and to meet the increasing demands in the protection of our inherent Title and Rights throughout the territory.

The following diagram demonstrates the amount of funding accessed this past year through various sources including CEC lobby, community partnership, proposals, and grant submissions. (2011-2012 ONA Financial Audited Statement under separate cover).



# Key 2011/2012 Initiatives

## Syilx Cooperative Protocol

Since early 2009 the member communities and the ONA have been working on a Syilx Cooperative Protocol. The purpose of this agreement is to manage and interface with the Province of BC Land Referral system. This Protocol is a mechanism based upon the values, principles and approaches of the Okanagan Nation to advance collective Syilx inherent rights by responding more effectively to land referral notices occurring on our Territory such as pipelines, forestry, mining, parks, hydro developments, the Run of the River and the Mega Ski Projects. This Protocol is primarily administrative; and provides our Nation with a shared understanding of our collective interests; and reciprocal responsibilities and mutual accountabilities.



It is one step in a long journey to articulate how our Nation works more closely together to advance our collective interests. The next step will be to finalize this protocol and have it signed as directed by the CEC and to begin immediately to establish various Nation working committees. It is understood by the CEC that their local member Bands have been concurrently developing processes and internal referral systems while at the Nation level, the ONA has worked towards protecting and advancing the collective interests of the Syilx peoples and has designed a number of management tools, data bases and project screening criteria to support both Band and nation-based decisions.

## Health Governance

The ONA has continued to raise concerns about the establishment of a First Nation Health Council/Authority. This is an administrative agreement that will see the devolution of First Nation Inuit Health (FNIH) funding from Health Canada to FNHC/A. The ONA CEC and the Health committee representatives believe that this agreement will effectively undermine our Nations ability to negotiate directly with the Federal Government and thereby abrogate Syilx Title and Rights. The Syilx Nation and member Bands are very aware that FNIH funding has been notoriously inadequate to meet community needs and demands.

**What will change with FNHC?** The issue of health governance has dominated the Provincial agenda and has been driven by the FNHC. There was strong external pressure on the Nation to conform to the Governance framework advanced by the FNHC. Unfortunately, this approach has appeared to be contradictory to The Indigenous ‘Nation to Nation’ principle which the Okanagan Nation has proposed for over four years. This is a governance model that reflects these principles and demonstrates a willingness to dialogue and collaborate through participation at the Interior Region table. Nevertheless, the ONA CEC must continue to work within this now approved system or forfeit access to existing resources. Our leadership and communities commitment to collaboration for influencing policy direction as it directly related to impact

their citizens and communities remains active. The CEC advances their Syilx position at every opportunity to ensure their member communities specific needs would benefit from the healthcare resources that they so desperately need. The CEC Health committee played a vital role in supporting the CEC and the ONA by providing input, advice, guidance and recommendation on a wide variety of Health related issues. We want to thank Chief Jonathan Kruger for his hard work and commitment as the health representative for over two years. Councilor Mic Werstuik, WFN took up this appointment on April 25, 2011 with equal commitment. This past year the Interior Region First Nations representatives signed a Unity Declaration, approved of a Terms of Reference, provided input into the FNHC Governance Workbook and began work on their Partnership Accord with Interior Health. There were:

- 3 ONA CEC presentations
- 5 Interior Region Hub Coordinators meeting
- 1 Provincial hub coordinator meeting
- 3 Interior Region Governance Caucus meetings
- 2 Interior Nation Executive meetings
- 1 Nation Assembly

continued...

## Breakthrough Agreement on BC Hydro's ILM Line

*"This [agreement] serves as a strong reminder of the power of the unity our Nations possess. As a result, BC Hydro has committed to a new era of reconciliation, trust and meaningful strategic engagement for all their activities on our territories."*

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip (Chair, ONA)



In the late 1960s BC Hydro cleared a right-of-way and built two high voltage transmission lines and substations in Okanagan and Nlaka'pamux Territory to supply the lower mainland with electricity from hydro-electric dams on the Columbia River without adequately consulting, involving or accommodating the First Nations. At the time, BC Hydro anticipated adding an additional third transmission line at a later date. That date came, and the new 500 kV transmission line – the Interior to Lower Mainland Line (ILM) which goes from Merritt to Coquitlam – was planned by BC Hydro in 2005 and scheduled to be built by 2013.

Upper Nicola and ONA, collaboratively with the NNTC, worked consistently, diligently, and strategically to ensure that our Title and Rights were respected regarding the proposed new line. After multiple judicial proceedings, and intense negotiations over many years, agreements were achieved with BC Hydro in the fall of 2011. Upper Nicola Band (UNB), Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), and the Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council (NNTC) Jointly Reach Landmark Agreement with BC Hydro on their Interior to Lower Mainland Transmission Line (ILM) which was signed on August 26, 2011 at Glimpse Lake.

As part of the agreement, the parties have created a new approach to working together in Okanagan Territory, called the Enduring Relationship. This Enduring Relationship is built upon principles of respect, early involvement, greater transparent communications and meaningful resolution of the concerns of our communities – including opening up regular communication channels between Chiefs and the Senior BC Hydro Executive. BC Hydro and the Nation will now work together to develop an integrated, multi-year plan regarding future energy projects and infrastructure on Okanagan Territory and will work collaboratively to identify opportunities for positive outcomes for both BC Hydro operations and Indigenous communities. In addition to the Enduring Relationship, and as part of the overall agreement, the Nation will receive lump sum payments, dedicated job and training opportunities; have regular involvement in project decisions; participate in changes to the mechanisms of interaction and communications with BC Hydro and obtain a clean energy opportunity. This is a historic agreement for our Nation.

While the results are significant, the road getting here was long and challenging. Upper Nicola, ONA, and NNTC decided in 2007 to stand united to ensure meaningful engagement, and to defend and protect Title and Rights. A major turning point was when the British Columbia Court of Appeal agreed with Upper Nicola, ONA, and NNTC that meaningful consultation and accommodation had not occurred with respect to one of the major permits for the project. This helped lead to multiple years of negotiations to try to find a collaborative outcome.

Early in 2011 the leadership of Upper Nicola, ONA, and NNTC met with the Chair and CEO of BC Hydro to discuss making a last push towards a negotiated settlement. This led to a final round of negotiations that resulted in the settlement agreement.

Throughout the four plus years of litigation and negotiations that led to the agreement, Upper Nicola led the charge with the support of the ONA, and legal assistance from Mandell Pinder. Chief Dan Manuel was the lead negotiator throughout the process, with support from Jay Johnson (ONA) and legal counsel. The Nation stood firm and consistent, with all Member Communities supporting this collective effort to protect and defend our Title and Rights.

While many more challenges remain in addressing BC Hydro's expansive infrastructure, operations and impacts on the Okanagan Territory, the Enduring Relationship is one touchstone that may help the Nation pave the way toward resolution of these many issues.

*"We have always believed that developing mutual solutions leads to greater certainty for all. This is truly a historic day for our communities; one that will set the stage for recognition of our unique and enduring connection to our lands."*

Chief Daniel Manuel (Upper Nicola Band)



**Key 2011/2012 Initiatives** *continued*

**Columbia River Treaty (CRT)**

Canada and British Columbia's pending decision on the Treaty is an opportunity to address one of the most significant and ongoing infringements of Syilx Title and Rights.

Columbia River Treaty is a 30 year renewable multi-million dollar water storage agreement between Canada and the USA on the development and operation of dams in the upper Columbia River basin designed for maximizing power generation and flood control. It led to the construction of three major Canadian dams in the late 1960s that converted the upper Columbia water system into reservoirs for the storage and management of millions of acre feet of water.

The earliest date by which either Canada or the United States can give notice of its intention to withdraw from Columbia River Treaty is 2014. BC Hydro and Bonneville Power

Administration have begun studies of possible scenarios for the continuation or renegotiation of the Treaty.

As early as 2005 the Okanagan Nation began the preparatory work needed for advancing a comprehensive strategy and approach with respect to the Columbia River Treaty.

The present Columbia River power and flood control system operations, do not manage for ecosystem needs and continue to negatively impact First Nation rights and cultural interests throughout the Columbia Basin.

**THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY:**

- Was negotiated and continues to be implemented without any consultation and accommodation and without regard to the tribes' unique legal and political relationship with the federal government.
- Is narrowly designed for the benefit of power and flood control.
- Does not include ecological considerations for critical tribal natural resources.
- Does not include considerations of critical tribal cultural resources.
- Created a power and flood control system that degraded rivers, First Foods, natural resources, valley bottoms and tribal customs and identities.
- Significantly affects tribal economies.
- Excludes tribal participation in its governance and implementation.
- Limits what can be accomplished with non-Treaty agreements to meet tribal resource priorities.

The Columbia River Treaty is under review by the USA and Canadian governments for reconsideration in 2014. Reconsideration of the Treaty provides an opportunity for the tribes to seek benefits not realized in 50 years of Treaty implementation.

In the fall of 2011, Columbia River Treaty discussions took place with the Okanagan Nation, Ktunaxa and Shuswap in Invermere, BC. A decision by respective leadership was made to create an interim technical working group to provide options of how the three Nations might be able to work

together on the CRT. The participating Nations have involved their respective natural resources representatives, fisheries representatives, legal representatives and coordinators. To date, the group has been working on developing a Canadian Columbia River Nations *Common Views* document, strategic options for working together and the researching of legal options, all of which are still in progress.



**Okanagan Youth Alliance**

To build a stronger youth leadership, with an emphasis on Syilx culture, language and unity; thus developing responsible role models, individual wellness and positive change for future generations.

In July 2010 at NK'MIP Spirit Ridge, a group of 14 youth began to establish the Okanagan Youth Alliance (OYA). The Alliance is to give the Syilx youth an opportunity to be heard by voicing their opinions on their needs and wants throughout the Nation. Several youth have committed to be a part of an interim working group in order to formulate the structure of the Youth Alliance. The working group is in the process of receiving financial aid in order to create a successful Youth Alliance. The interim Youth Alliance working group members and the portfolios they hold:

JC Richter	Fisheries	LSIB
Kirsten Lindley	Sport & Recreation	LSIB
Antonio Pulido	Fisheries	OIB
Justin George	Youth Mental Health	PIB
Sarain Squakin	Culture & Language	PIB
Viola Brown	Health	OKIB
Dina Brown	Culture & Language	OKIB
Sylvester Chilihitzia	Natural Resources	UNIB
Thelma Chihiltzia	Child & Family	UNIB
Quentin Scott	Sport & Recreation	WFN
Sacheen Lindley	Education	WFN

Each member of the Youth Alliance has a portfolio – an area of focus on various aspects of the Okanagan Nation. Throughout the year Nation youth representatives have attended several meetings within the Wellness department, assisting in opening of ONA events and have come together to work towards the formalization of a Nation Youth Council.

The objectives of the Youth Alliance are to encourage unity and promote nationhood among youth throughout the Okanagan territory; to promote and preserve Syilx culture and language; to empower youth through connectedness and pride of being Syilx; and giving youth the opportunity to be heard by becoming an advisory body to the Chiefs' Executive Council.

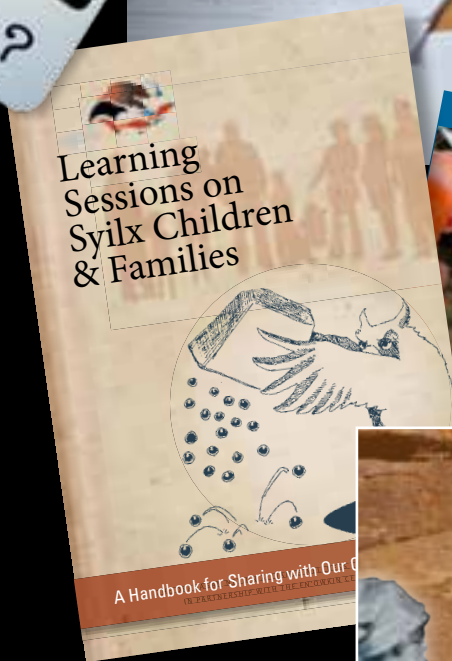
The Okanagan Youth Alliance plans to formalize the youth council at the 2012 AGA with two appointed youth members (ages 15 – 29) from each member community.



# Language & Culture

The ONA CEC is committed to the preservation and practice of Syilx language and culture.

Through numerous nation-wide initiatives the ONA has supported, assisted and promoted the development of Nsyilxcən language and culture resources through our partnerships with En'owkin Centre, Paul Creek Language Association and the Interior Salish Language Associations. This work is guided by the Elders and Speakers throughout the Okanagan Nation communities. Currently, William (Bill) Cohen is our ONA representative on the First Peoples Language and Culture Council (FPHLCC) BoD – a Provincial organization mandated to support First Nation languages, arts and culture.





# 2011 - 2012

**SOCKEYE FRY RELEASE** | May 2011. Due to unsafe, high water conditions the annual Sockeye Fry gathering was cancelled. A small ceremony still took place to pray for the return of the Salmon with the release of fry.

**CHINOOK FRY RELEASE** | May 2011. ONA, in collaboration with the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission, hosted the Chinook Fry Release "Restoring Salmon Upstream of the Dam" on the Shuswap River. The ceremony was led by elder Madeline Gregoire with just over 40 community members and guests gathering to participate. The ONA – part of the fisheries restorative work with salmon restoration within the Sub-Okanagan basin – hope to return Chinook, Interior Fraser Coho, and Sockeye to their former habitat and migration range in the Thompson Basin, and to revitalize the salmon fishery.

**SPIRIT OF SYILX YOUTH UNITY RUN: Suicide and Violence Awareness** | May 2011. ONA hosted the third annual Spirit of the Syilx Youth Unity Run to promote awareness of the high rate of suicide and violence in First Nation communities. The run from Douglas Lake to Christina Lake, BC covered over 350 kilometers of our territory with over 230 participants from each of the eight member communities. The run was supported by the RCMP Aboriginal Policing unit.

**ONE NATION ONE VOICE YOUTH GATHERING** | June 2011. ONA hosted the Gathering for participants who took part in the R'Native Voice Program. The event brought over 63 participants from throughout the Nation. Youth gathered for three exciting days at Komasket Park on the Okanagan Indian Band reserve to attend workshops that included: an adventurous Geo-Cache treasure hunt, a theatre workshop with Michelle Thrush, Nsyilxcən workshop with Chad Marchand and Richard Armstrong, and a canoeing workshop with Richard Louis. There were many games and activities that were enjoyed throughout the weekend.

**ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY** | July 2011. Celebrating the Voice of the People: Elders, Youth and Community. The ONA's AGA was hosted by the Westbank First Nation at the WFN Pavilion. Over 250 community members, elders and youth participated in the two-and-a-half day assembly. Highlights included a recognition ceremony by WFN for Stan Jack, as well as a ceremony to honour the Chief and Councils of the Okanagan Nation. Other highlights included an Elders Forum on the Okanagan Nation territory, and honouring the Syilx Basketball Teams for their achievement at the Junior All Native.

**OKANAGAN NATION YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE** | July 2011. ONA hosted the Okanagan Nation Youth Leadership Conference as part of the Okanagan Nation Annual General Assembly. Over 70 youth participated in the three day event with presentations/workshops from a number of cultural, community based presenters on topics of education, language, and entrepreneurship. Keynote presenter, Gene Tagaban, a noted Tlingit storyteller and actor, shared his wisdom and talent via dance, native flute and storytelling. His gift was a powerful mode of storytelling and he used stories by family members to create a value for learning and culture. Gene's mantra:

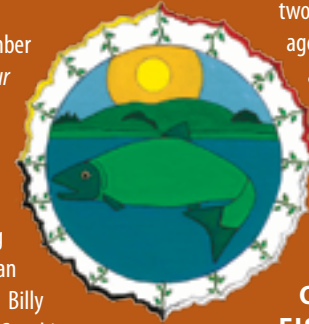
*I am Beautiful,  
I am Strong,  
I am Worthy,  
I Belong*  
was what the youth took with them.



**NSYLXCEN FISH CAMP** | July 21– 29, 2011. Gallagher Lake, Oliver, BC. Co-hosted with the En'owkin Centre. The fishing camp incorporated Syilx culture and language to bring our people together to practice cultural protocols for harvesting and processing salmon, drying and smoking salmon, rebuilding traditional forms of community fishing, language revitalization, learning to work with *spitsn* and different areas and plants of our territory.

**CANADIAN COLUMBIA TOUR:** | August, 2011. The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) organized a tour that brought together First Nations representatives from Canada and the USA to help increase collective understanding and awareness about important water management issues in the Columbia Basin. By visiting sites such as Mica Dam and Arrow Lakes Reservoir, participants had the opportunity to share perspectives and educate each other on what some of these issues are. By having First Nations representatives from the USA and Canada together, many shared ideas and concepts emerged through trans-boundary dialogue.

**SALMON FEAST CELEBRATION** | September 2011. The celebration to "honour the sacredness of the river" was attended by over 400 people throughout the three day event. The event included a Stick Game tournament; canoeing from Skaha Lake to Okanagan Falls; entertainment from Billy Walker, Shayna Desjarlais & Kim Gouchie, Corinne Derickson, Warren & Austin, Justin George, Kaykaitkw, and Maiya Robbie; and children's activities. The purpose of this event is to preserve the traditions and culture of the Syilx people, while raising awareness about the environmental issues that are impacting fish stocks in the Okanagan watershed. Planning has started for the 2012 Salmon Feast Celebration which will be held the third weekend of September.



**COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON CEREMONY** | September 2011. ONA organized the first Columbia River Salmon Feast Celebration to be held in over ten years in Castlegar, BC at Millennium Walkway Park. There was a need to reconnect with the Columbia River and continue the Salmon Feast Celebration traditions to ensure Salmon continue to come back to the area. The event brought together a hundred community members and special guests to participate in the celebration and ceremony which was led by elder, Tom Louie, Kettle Falls.

**OKANAGAN NATION HEALTH FORUM** | October 2011. ONA hosted the Okanagan Nation Health Forum in Penticton, BC to inform community about the First Nation Health Council (FNHC). Eighty-five Nation members attended – including leaders, health staff and members. The FNHC leadership and Interior Health Authority Aboriginal Health team were also in attendance.

**COMING TOGETHER: FOOTPRINTS TO THE FUTURE: En'owkinwix™** | November 2011. Two two-day sessions resulted in a commitment from 13 various agencies to "Strategize to create inter-agency relationships and develop an effective delivery process in order to work as a team and gather resources to help individuals, families, and community achieve the ultimate outcome of healthier families." Project planning incorporating En'owkinwix™ strategies as directed by participants of key agencies continues.

**OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE FISHERIES FORUM** | February 2012. The purpose of the Forum and Open House was to provide opportunity to our members and partners to create awareness regarding the number of Okanagan Nation Fisheries projects underway to revitalize our Nations fisheries and management responsibilities. The event was well attended by our community members and students. The Fisheries Department was able to hear the voice of the community members and address their concerns.

- Chief & Council Quarterly Meeting
- En'owkinwix™ – Natural Resources
- Around the Kitchen Table Training

- Sockeye Fry Release
- Chinook Fry Release
- Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run
- One Nation One Voice Youth Gathering

- Chiefs Executive Council
- Chiefs Executive Council
- Okanagan Nation Forestry Forum

- Oliver to Orville Border Crossing Paddle
- Annual General Assembly
- Okanagan Nation Youth Leadership Conference
- Chiefs Executive Council
- Nsyilxcən Family Fishing Camp
- ILM Agreement Signing

- Hunting Camp
- Family Decision Making Model Forum
- CBT Canadian Columbia Tour

- ONA Salmon Feast
- Chiefs Executive Council
- Columbia River Salmon Ceremony

- Chiefs Executive Council
- Okanagan Nation Health Forum

- Coming Together: En'owkinwix™
- P/CF Fisheries Network Conference
- Wilson Trial

- Chiefs Executive Council Retreat
- Chief & Council Quarterly Meeting

- Chiefs Executive Council
- Taxation Seminar

- ONA Fisheries Forum
- Chiefs Executive Council: CCT

- Chiefs Executive Council: Children & Families
- Interior Caucus on Health
- Chiefs Executive Council

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December  
2011

January  
2012

February

March



# Wellness

*Reclaiming and Restoring Syilx way of being and knowing (world view) through development of wholistic Wellness programs and services grounded in a Syilx-centered framework.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

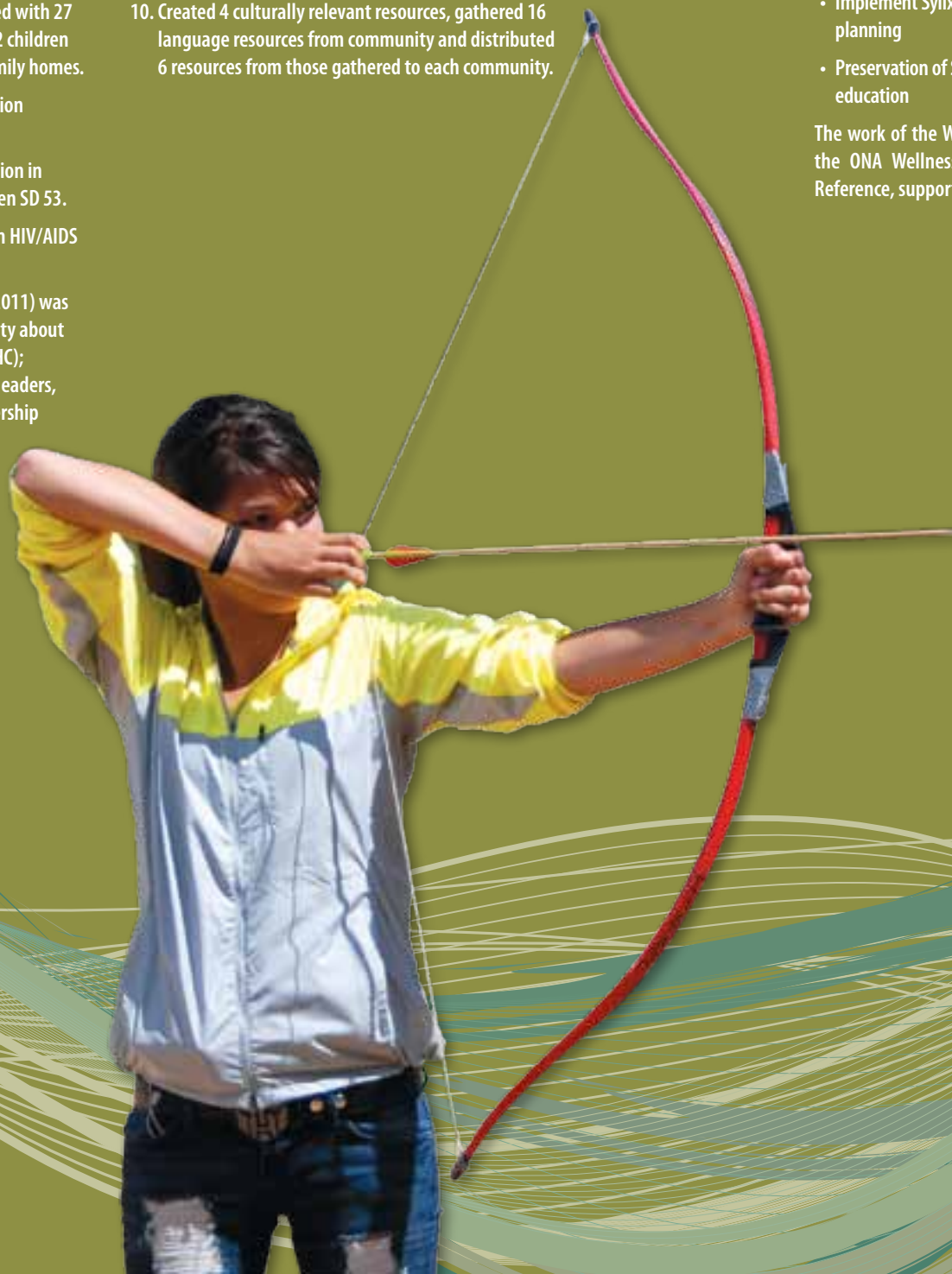
1. A Tribal Council Resolution was adopted to move forward with the “start up phase” of the Child and Family services.
2. Developed a Letter of Understanding with Interior Health Authority.
3. Aboriginal Family Group Conference worked with 27 new families, effecting 55 children with 42 children being supported to return/stay in their family homes.
4. 96 people supported by the Okanagan Nation Response Team.
5. R’Native Voice program receives accreditation in Penticton SD 67 and Okanagan Similkameen SD 53.
6. From the Nation 23 women were trained in HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness.
7. Okanagan Nation Health Forum (October 2011) was hosted in Penticton BC to inform community about the role of First Nation Health Council (FNHC); 85 Nation members attended – including leaders, health staff and members. The FNHC leadership and Interior Health Authority Aboriginal Health team also attended.
8. A Syilx Workbook on children and families was developed to share information with community.
9. Presented Syilx Family Decision Making Model at the American Humane Societies International Family Group Decision Making Conference in Toronto.
10. Created 4 culturally relevant resources, gathered 16 language resources from community and distributed 6 resources from those gathered to each community.

This year we have seen many changes, developments and successes as ONA Wellness continues to work toward implementing the Chiefs Executive Council (CEC) Business plan priorities.

- To improve the health, well being, safety and quality of life of Okanagan Nation community members
- Implement Syilx law into governance and operations planning
- Preservation of Syilx laws, culture, language and education

The work of the Wellness Department is guided through the ONA Wellness Committee who, through Terms of Reference, supports the program implementation.

Ongoing development of a Nation Wellness Plan to integrate all aspects of wellness is being worked on. The Wellness Plan will include not only the Syilx Health Plan, and Child and Families Plan which have been developed, but the Youth Mental Health framework – an essential component that will need to be developed in the near future. To address some of these challenges the ONA Wellness Department has developed three clusters: Health, Youth Mental Health and Children and Families.



## HEALTH

*Okanagan Nation Health Mandate: to advocate for Syilx control and management of their health, programs and services.*

For the 2011/2012 year the ONA Wellness committee has focused on these priorities as originally identified by communities in the 2010 Syilx Health Plan:

1. Addictions and Mental Wellness
2. Chronic Disease Management
3. HIV/AIDS
4. Violence and Abuse
5. Early Childhood Development
6. Elder Care

The Okanagan Nation Alliance will continue to coordinate regional activities and support local initiatives of the Communities to enhance current health services.

## AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

This year numerous opportunities to share information with the community and public arose including:

- 1 presentation at the Western Canada Aboriginal Health Conference February 2012
- 1 ONA Health presentation to UBCO nursing students March 2012
- 7 Health Plan and Information sharing presentations to member communities
- Presentation at Nsyilxcən Family Fishing Camp
- Booth at Fisheries Forum and UNB AGA

Resources were also created to increase awareness in areas of cultural safety, chronic disease and health governance including:

- Movement is Medicine Audio – consists of Syilx members sharing their personal stories about living with chronic disease
- Weaving the Strands of Health DVD – consists of 6 modules on cultural safety for health practitioners
- FNHC Interior Region DVD – the December 2011 meeting to finalize and adopt the FNHC Interior Governance Entities Terms of Reference

**HEALTH HUB** is a place where Health Information can be shared with local Syilx communities. The goal of the Hub is to reduce the gap in Health status between our people and other British Columbians. Five meetings (1 in person and 4 via video conference) and one two-day Nation Health Forum were hosted by ONA Health Hub to provide updates and to discuss, plan and collaborate on areas of common concern. From the December 2011 Interior Region Caucus meeting there were changes being made to the role of the community engagement hubs, and that will be implemented in the 2012/13 fiscal year.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- To increase HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, a partnership with CheeMamuk was created.
- Developed a Letter of Understanding with Interior Health Authority at a Nation level with Health Directors taking the lead on the working group.
- Paths to Wellness: a pilot project to improve the management of chronic disease among Aboriginal patients. 50 'bundles' were distributed to Kelowna and West Kelowna practitioners to distribute to Aboriginal patients who are suffering from chronic disease.



## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

*It is the goal of ONA Wellness to develop a Youth and Child Mental Health Framework. This will ultimately integrate with the Syilx Child and Family Governance Model. The work of Youth Mental Health is essential and currently in the absence of a Youth Mental Health Framework.*

This cluster has three main components: the Okanagan Nation Response Team, R'Native Voice, and the Aboriginal Child & Youth Mental Health Wellness Coordinator. It is hopeful that upon the creation of the Children and Family Services that this cluster will expand.

**OKANAGAN NATION RESPONSE TEAM (ONRT)** ONRT is a team of First Nation community practitioners who have received extensive training in the area of suicide education, community mobilization and critical incident response. 2011 – 2012 Team Capacity Building included:

- Grief
- Captikwł
- Suicide Clusters
- Goal Setting
- Suicide Refresher
- Funeral Protocols
- Beliefs and Values
- Emotional Freedom Technique
- Media Minding
- Emotional Integrity
- Train the Trainers

Responses	#	Age Range	# people supported
Suicide Attempts	9	5 (10 - 18)	8
		2 (25 - 25)	4
		1 (36 - 50)	2
Suicide Completion	1	(25 - 35)	24
Self Harm	3	(10 - 18)	8
Violence	2	1 (25 - 35)	8
		1 (36 - 50)	6
Tragic Death	2	1 (10 - 18)	6
		1 (36 - 50)	21
Trauma (health related)	1	1 (25 - 35)	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>96</b>

**R'NATIVE VOICE PROGRAM** delivered curriculum in the following communities/friendship centres: Lower Similkameen / Upper Similkameen, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Oonakane Friendship Centre, Westbank First Nation, Sookinchoot Youth Centre, Okanagan Indian Band, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and Upper Nicola Band.

Community	# @ start	# @ completion	Start Date	Completion Date
Osoyoos Indian Band	11	8	01/2011	05/2012
Okanagan Indian Band	8	6	02/2012	05/2012
Upper Nicola Band	14	10	01/2011	04/2012
Lower /Upper Similkameen	20	18	10/2011	02/2012
Penticton Indian Band	12	10	10/2011	02/2012
Oonakane	7	7	10/2011	02/2012

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Currently we have been successful in the following school districts in getting the R'Native Voice Program school credits for our youth participants:

- Penticton School District # 67
- Okanagan Similkameen School District # 53

We are currently working with the school districts below to accredit the R'Native Voice Program

- Nicola Similkameen School District #58
- Vernon School District #22
- Kelowna School District #23

The youth participants that are in grades 9 – 12 will receive 4 credits for completing this program.

## COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Eight participants from the Member Communities and Friendship Centres attended a two day training session for the Community Liaison Workers/Youth Workers.

Training was given in the following areas:

- Critical Incident
- Culture and Programming
- True Colors
- R'Native Voice Program Overview
- Captikwł
- Child and Youth Mental Health

It was a great opportunity for the youth workers to get together, network and share program ideas.

## ABORIGINAL CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS COORDINATOR

*Help Aboriginal communities to respond to children and youth with mental wellness concerns.*

The Aboriginal Child & Youth Wellness Program is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and is a partnership between the ONA and the Oknakane Friendship Centre. The Coordinator position is out of the ONA and the Clinician position is with the Friendship Centre.

The development of the program is ongoing with four main areas: providing treatment and support, providing community collaboration and linkages, promoting mental wellness and awareness and to build capacity in community.

The program faced a few challenges. These include different world views of Aboriginal Community and MCFD or Government, the numbers of clients on wait list, and communication and information systems for clarity of roles to ensure families are not left on hold for long periods. There is also a need for services in the central and northern Okanagan, and additional services in terms of clinician/coordinator roles.

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Currently the Children and Families cluster includes the Child and Family Services Planning, Aboriginal Family Group Conference Program, and Aboriginal Early Childhood Education.

The ONA Wellness Committee has articulated a VISION for Syilx service delivery (operations) that implements a Syilx cultural framework. The service delivery model will result in a continuum of services from Prevention and Support to Protection. Section 20.1 Delegated Statutory services would be one component in a range of services. Syilx Child and Family Services would care for all Aboriginal children residing in the Okanagan Territory. As components of this future vision the ONA has already implemented the AECD and the AFGC as part of prevention services.

ONA, Children and Family working group (Social Development workers from all seven member communities), has engaged in extensive community engagement. This has included incorporating culture and language as a big component of the vision by looking at Captik'4 and Nsyilxcən. This work has assisted the Committee to begin realizing this vision. A handbook and several resources have been created to share with the communities.

### Program Statistics

- Ages 0 – 12 years 22 children (9 on wait list)
- Ages 13 – 18 years 18 youth (5 on wait list)

The Member Community services provided:

- 2 Osoyoos Indian Band
- 5 Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- 10 Penticton Indian Band
- 2 Upper Similkameen Indian Band
- 7 Métis, Inuit off reserve or non-status individuals

This year fifteen applicants required no service from our program. They were referred to agencies appropriate for their specific needs. There were also ten discharges. However, as representative of the past, some discharges do come back into the program for services.

The ONA, in planning for Syilx Children and Family Services, has engaged the community and public as follows:

- 18 Community visits
- 3 Bi-monthly meetings with MCFD/AANDC and ONA
- 8 Wellness Committee meetings
- 5 Presentations to Chiefs Executive Council
- 7 Community workshops
- 5 Meetings with Urban Friendship Centres
- 3 Nation-wide events
- Presentations to 6 of 7 Band Councils

We have also provided support and participated at Provincial and Federal events in Child and Families, including: First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council initiatives, AANDC events, and the Provincial First Nations Directors Forum.

**Syilx Child and Family Plan/Framework** will guide the work of Child and Family Services and planning with MCFD and AANDC for funds to support this work.

The plan will outline:

- Cultural Framework
- Community Voice
- Administering Authority
- Service Delivery Model
- Implementation Plan including Financials

In 2012 we plan to finalize the Syilx Child and Family Service Plan, present to MCFD and AANDC and in 2013 begin the start up phase of Child and Family Services.

## ABORIGINAL FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE

An Aboriginal family group conference (AFGC) is a circle meeting where members of the child's family come together with significant others and members of the child's community who are, or might become, involved to assist the family to develop a plan to care for their children. AFGC helps to promote and develop the capacity of Aboriginal families and communities to care for and protect children and supports child and family development. AFGC often helps to avoid the need for court involvement, ensures families know about and have access to resources and services that can help. AFGC builds stronger relationships by helping families work out problems together. AFGC recognizes and acknowledges the right and capacity of Aboriginal families and communities to care for and plan for their children, and it respects and understands Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

The program has worked with 27 new families and re-engaged three additional families. Over the course of these circles there were 55 children and youth impacted. The overall impact that the circles saw included 13 children remaining in care; 35 remained with parents or were returned to parents, and 7 children came out of care and went into the care of family.

A stuffed chipmunk that is wearing a ribbon that says "Naqsilt" (Family) has been introduced to the program to further incorporate culture into the process. Often the families we are working with are in crisis and the chipmunks will offer them comfort and reassurance as well as a visual reminder of the strength they have as a family.

In 2012/2013 we will be incorporating the *Chipmunk and Owl Woman* captik'4. We will start to use the chipmunk when working with our families and have Chipmunk teddies that can be used for the children and adults that we work with. We will also be developing a picture book resource tool to assist in explaining the AFGC process to children. This book will be based around Chipmunk and a plan for him and his family.



## ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The program, started in January 2011, works to support and integrate all 0 – 6 programs that are administered within the Okanagan territory which include the 7 member communities, 3 urban Aboriginal Friendship Centres and Métis AECD programmes. AECD programs can include Aboriginal Infant Development, Aboriginal Supported Child Development, Aboriginal Headstart, Preschool, Daycares, and Aboriginal Success by 6 programs, Early Childhood, pre- and post-natal programs and any other programs supporting Aboriginal children aged 0 – 6 and their families.

### AECD Program Goals

- To provide AECD advocacy to Aboriginal children and families in the Okanagan
- To ensure cultural competency principles and practice are incorporated into the delivery of the AECD services
- To build capacity within communities and share knowledge for accessible and equitable AECD services throughout the Okanagan

### Successes of AECD

- Development of a "Syilx" Aboriginal Early Childhood development strategy for the Nation.
- Developing and strengthening the AECD communication strategy.
- Strengthening relationships with local AECD tables which include the Aboriginal Infant Development Regional meetings, Supported Child Development, Aboriginal CATCH meetings, ULLAS South Okanagan Success by 6 table, North Okanagan Success by 6 table, which supports local ECD initiatives.
  - Training of AECD staff in the Ages and Stages3 Developmental screening tool and the ASQ/SE – Social Emotional screening tool to AECD staff in the community in December 2011.
  - Development of resources: Syilx board books and flashcards

## Bursaries

The Okanagan Nation Alliance and Fortis BC (previously Terasen Gas) have established a Financial Award for Okanagan Nation Alliance members who are committed to building a better future for themselves and their community through post secondary educational studies. Each year 2 awards are presented. The 2011 recipients were:

- Carmella Alexis of the Okanagan Indian Band
- Bernadine Marchand of the Okanagan Indian Band



# Natural Resources

*The Okanagan Nation has the inherent jurisdiction to manage the land and resources within its territory.*

The Okanagan Nation Land Management Vision is to conserve, manage, co-manage and where appropriate, develop the natural resources of the lands and waters of the Nation's territory. In doing so, the Nation will be true to its spiritual and environmental values, mindful of the economic and social needs and aspirations of its individual bands, and strong in its assertion of the Nation's rights and title to its entire area of traditional occupancy and use.

The Natural Resource Department is a technical resource to the ONA and each of the ONA member communities. We continually develop key processes and tools which are specifically designed to assist and support land and resource management strategies for the Territory and to increase land use decision making and management capacity for the ONA and member communities.

The ONA utilizes **Five Key Processes** to inform natural resource management:

- Land Information Systems
- Research
- Natural Resources Committee (represents the ONA and all member communities)
- Syilx cooperative protocol
- Land Use Vision

When all processes are functioning and effective, then a comprehensive set of solutions, tools and processes work together to protect title and rights and enhance the capacity to seize opportunities, promote knowledge and support negotiations.

## LAND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Integral to land and resource management is the use of technology to compile data and develop maps based on identified priorities. The ONA Decision Support System (DSS) and Voices on the Land Web Atlas were developed to support land use planning goals and allow communities to make their own land and resource management decisions.

ONA Decision Support System: a tool that aids in referrals response and land use decision making processes. The tool uses digitized cultural research and base map layers to visually and statistically represent cumulative impacts throughout the territory. This tool and the DSS process help to ensure the protection of Syilx title and rights.



**VOICES ON THE LAND WEB ATLAS:** an information sharing tool for all community members to use. This tool is a voice for the Syilx people that can be heard around the world.

The ONA Decision Support System has been launched

- Referral System to centrally store and make available all the referrals within the Territory
- Allow baseline data to also be accessed for Bands to support decision making
- Designed to be a quick first pass analysis tool for crown land referrals
- Currently being piloted at Lower Similkameen Indian Band

Web Atlas [www.voicesontheland.org](http://www.voicesontheland.org) has been launched

- 120 video place names are accessible
- 14 Land Use layers
- 3 Key Themes: culture, water and land
- 5 types of Multimedia options
- Partnering with First Nation Technology Council to implement the web atlas with other First Nations in BC
- Featured by Google Earth Outreach

## NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE

The NRC was established to facilitate the collaboration of the Okanagan Nation communities TEK to work on major natural resource issues to address impacts, benefits and management concerns, while re-enforcing the Okanagan Nation's collective interests held in common on our territory. The NRC has representation by the ONA, each of the eight ONA communities and TEK. The NRC meet on a regular basis to discuss land and natural resource opportunities and challenges.



## SKAHA RE-INTRODUCTION

*k̓c̓p̓alk' st̓im̓i*: "cause to come back"

The Okanagan River sockeye population is one of only two remaining populations of sockeye salmon in the international Columbia River Basin. This experimental twelve-year initiative to reintroduce sockeye back into a portion of their historic habitat is now in year eight. There are five major components to this program: habitat restoration, broodstock, monitoring and evaluation, harvest, and the hatchery.

**HABITAT** The restoration of the Okanagan River habitat continued with the post-construction aquatic and terrestrial monitoring, as well as, riparian vegetation planting at Phase I.

The Okanagan River Restoration Initiative (ORRI) Steering Committee also selected the design option for Phase II, which involved the creation of a side channel on the east side of the Okanagan River immediately upstream of Phase I. This year, we completed the engineering designs and secured the majority of the funding required for the Phase II construction works. The engineering designs are complete, and funds are secured for modifying the Vertical Drop Structure (VDS) 13, in order to enhance Sockeye spawning habitat.

At McIntyre Dam we continued to assess the fish jumping efficiency at the dam, in order to optimize the operation of the new gates for Sockeye adult migration.

**BROODSTOCK** Collection and egg-take occurs on the Okanagan River near Oliver in mid-October. Eggs and milt are delivered to the Shuswap River Hatchery for fertilization and incubation. **1.07 million eggs were collected.**

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION** Monitoring juvenile sockeye salmon is one component of a larger research study to assist with the reintroduction and recovery of salmon populations. Monitoring adult behavior and fish passage at Skaha Dam and Penticton Channel occurred. An estimated 20,000 adult sockeye escaped and spawned in Penticton Channel. Plans are underway for fish passage by 2015.

**HARVEST** Sockeye harvest in 2011 was three-fold less than 2010 because of the high water which limited fishers' access to the river. The high water also resulted in an estimated 3,500 sockeye migrating upstream of Skaha Dam, and spawning in Penticton Channel.

During the 2010/2011 year harvest plans were discussed with community members during community Chief and Council meetings and community meetings hosted by the ONA Fisheries Department. A total of 6,000 adult sockeye were harvested in 2011 by in-river angling, and gill net/fish trap at s̓xw̓əx̓wnitkw (Okanagan Falls) and seining and trolling in Osoyoos Lake.

Communal access to harvested sockeye ranged from 6% by Upper Similkameen Indian Band members to nearly 24% by Okanagan Indian Band members, based on population. *See figure 1.0 below.*

**FORECAST 2012** We are forecasting above-average returns for 2012. With over 275,000 sockeye escaping above Wells Dam. Assuming 50% of the sockeye survive to the spawning grounds, pending water conditions, (temperature/flows) we could see 135,000 in the q'awsitkw (Okanagan River).

**HATCHERY** The Hatchery Project is an important component of the Sockeye Re-introduction program. The construction of the salmon hatchery requires specific technical expertise; consequently the CEC has established a project team to provide oversight on this venture. Construction of the hatchery, located within the Penticton Indian Band Community, is slated to begin in the fall of 2012, barring any unforeseen circumstances. So far, working with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) bureaucracy has been a challenge. Their full assent and approval is required on lease agreements before the final permit can be issued. The Okanagan Aquatic Enterprise, directed by the CEC, is providing oversight on the Hatchery project.

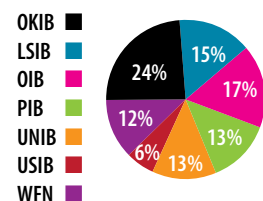


Figure 1.0  
ONAFD Communal Fish Distribution 2011



## HABITAT

**OKANOGAN BASIN MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM (OBMEP)** In 2011, we completed the year 7 of this 20 year monitoring program done in collaboration with the Colville Confederated Tribes. OBMEP targets the status and trends in habitat features for Steelhead/Rainbow Trout and Chinook Salmon.

**OTHER HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS** In 2011, we worked on conceptual options and funding research for future habitat restoration projects, including providing fish passage at the sediment basin in Shuttleworth Creek, and preventing fish entrainment in a water withdrawal diversion in Shuttleworth Creek.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Through a partnership with the Colville Confederated Tribes we are seeing an expansion of the Salmon Program and vegetation and wildlife to include the following activities:

- Collaborated to assist with communal harvest at Osoyoos Lake.
- Mid Columbia Sturgeon Project expanded to be an ONA/CCT population assessment of adult sturgeon in the middle Columbia.
- Assisted in staffing a biologist and a dedicated field office in the Castlegar area to include expertise in vegetation and wildlife.
- Initiated plans on Chinook Recovery to the Okanagan River. We anticipate the plan being operational by 2015.

**COLUMBIA RESERVOIR ENTRAINMENT STRATEGY; COMMUNITY FISH PREFERENCES SURVEY** The fish preferences survey began as a part of the BC Hydro fish entrainment strategy. The purpose of the survey was to learn if there was a preference of fish species the community members would give priority to. The survey tool was amended to fit the needs of the Syilx people by a working group, and in collaboration with the En'owkin Centre. The overall messages from community members from this process were:

- That any surveys need to be created in-house and from a Syilx perspective.
- Entrainment of any fish is unacceptable.
- The restoration of fish passage for salmon, the well-being of all fish and the territory should be the priority.



## RESPONSIBLE TRADE

This year the Okanagan Nation led the way in reinvigorating the concept of Responsible Trade – bringing this historical practice back to the forefront today.

The Responsible Trade Principles & Criteria are based on Syilx Peoples' historical practice of sourcing natural products for sustainable use-and-trade including bitterroot, hemp, bison robes, copper, ochre, cedar baskets and dogbane.

Designated trade sites were venues for social and cultural events – peace agreements, celebrations, and marriage ceremonies. The principles of honour and respect for our relations and the natural resources that surround us are still relevant. Syilx teachings honour the Four Food Chiefs who gave/traded their lives so that we, as humans, can exist. Syilx history, culture, language and spirituality embrace this understanding and wisdom of our ancestors.

The Inland Salmon Producers group – a province-wide group of First Nations who fish throughout the Fraser, Skeena, Somass and Okanagan watersheds have come together and have now incorporated these principles into the work that is being undertaken as well as promoting this concept at a national level through the Assembly of First Nations, with the ONA leading the way.

Principles and criteria are practiced and met through:

- Natural ingredients for sustainable use
- Equitable benefit-sharing for local community
- Preservation and conservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity – minimizing catch of endangered species (Okanagan Chinook salmon), monitoring of invasive species, and genetic conservation plans for salmon reintroduction.
- Respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Value of relationships between people and environment in achieving global peace through respect. (UNESCO)

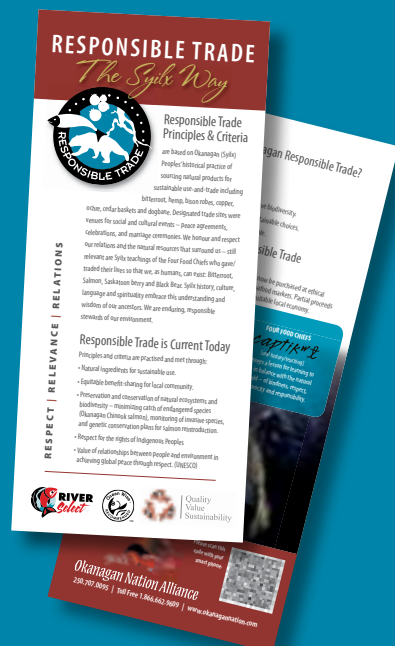


Putting the principle of responsible trade into practice, we were able to broker a premium price for other First Nations who wanted to bring fish into the Okanagan Territory and who practice stewardship. We were able to generate \$30,000 in fish sales and a 10% margin went back to the ONA stewardship initiatives. Fisheries support included the following First Nations: Lake Babine, Tsilhqot'in, Harrison and Secwepemc.

## OKANAGAN SOCKEYE DEMONSTRATION FISHERY

We harvested 778 sockeye in Osoyoos lake by trolling and seining for a limited number of days. Over \$7000 in sales that were cut at Sen Pok Chin School were distributed to Choices Market Kelowna, Burrowing Owl, RauDz Regional table in Kelowna and NK'MIP Passatempo Restaurant. All proceeds from the sales went back into the community fisheries including conservation and community programs for the Nsyilxcən Fish Camp, Cultural Centres, Sen Pok Chin School and funding to enhance the Osoyoos Indian Band Fisheries compound.

The Okanagan Select Product was featured throughout BC and showcased at special events in Alberta and Nova Scotia. It was also a featured item at the Vancouver Aquarium Oceanwise Gala. We were product-tested by a taste panel of Executive Chefs from Earls Canada. Comparing Fraser salmon and Okanagan sockeye, *we were chosen as the preferred salmon!*



We, the Syilx People,

feel a deep connection with our land, our relatives,  
the animals and the trees, rocks and all living things

that share the environment.

Our native nsyilxcən language grew out of our  
relationship with the land and the natural resources

that surround us.

Our traditional stories reflect this deep connection

and help to pass down cultural, spiritual and  
historical knowledge through generations.





*Okanagan Nation Alliance*

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