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## Message from the Chairman

Once again, the past year has been one of escalating challenges for First Nations as we confront a federal government that is clearly intent upon resurrecting the paternalistic, colonial practices of the past, and pursuing economic energy policies that will devastate our environment. Closer to home, the provincial government has made senseless budget cuts that have once again put our children at grievous risk.

Fortunately, the Annual General Assembly is a reassuring reminder of our Nation's strength. It is a time to take stock of the past year's events – to applaud the many positive accomplishments within the Nation – and an ideal opportunity to renew our resolve for the many battles that surely lie ahead.

To begin, I would like to thank all of you who have worked so diligently on behalf of the Nation. One of our crowning achievements is the successful return of the salmon to our lakes after years of habitat restoration.

I would also like to say how proud I am of our Youth, particularly those who took part in the Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run. There were over 150 runners this year, and their journey took them across the border into Washington to show the extent of our traditional territories, and to demonstrate solidarity with the Colville Confederated Tribes.

The Chief's Executive Council has been active, as always. The Syilx Unity Protocol and the drafting of a new constitution for the Nation remain on the agenda, as well as the MOU on the Columbia River Treaty, which has been problematic due to deceitful and disrespectful actions initiated by the Ktunaxa that may require legal action to resolve.

In the short term, it is crucial that any outstanding issues within the Syilx Unity Protocol, such as the revenue-sharing formula, be settled as quickly as possible. It is absolutely imperative that the Nation be united in order to speak with one voice and move forward.

The federal government is determined to push through its pipelines, and green light a host of environmentally destructive projects. The provincial government is mesmerized by the possibilities of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), most of which is found on First Nations lands and traditional territories. Both governments practise a “divide and conquer” strategy with First Nations, so the year will be a real test for the ONA and UBCIC to deliver a strong, united and effective response, as we did when we forced the Province to rescind Order in Council # 185 that would have removed requirements for environmental assessments for natural gas developments, ski resorts and year-round resorts.



The opening of the new *ke cpełk'stim'* salmon hatchery in Penticton in September will send a clear message to all that we are serious in our commitment to the land, our mother, and worthy stewards of the environment for the benefit of generations to come.

In December 2013, the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development unilaterally stopped funding the successful, community-based projects known as Indigenous Approaches, effectively gutting the Syilx Child and Family Service Plan. In response, our Chiefs, Elders, Youth and community leaders rallied outside the Premier's office and the Ministry offices in Victoria. We know the MCFD system is fundamentally flawed and its Child Protection process has had devastating outcomes for our children. We issued the following statement: *“The issue is simple, Aboriginal children and families are being offered ineffective, capricious service and we will not be silent until we are allowed to be full partners in planning, strategizing and implementing services that work for the unique needs of our communities.”* This battle is ongoing.

On the national scene, the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act is a classic example of the federal government's paternalistic approach and preference for “double speak.” In fact, the act compromises First Nation rights and gives the federal government too much control over the education of our children. Unfortunately, National Chief of the AFN, Shawn Atleo, was a casualty of the “divide and conquer” strategy. The government was well aware of the “control” objections but gambled that the desperate need for education funding and reform would carry the flawed bill forward. With National Chief Atleo's resignation, the government can now stall the reforms, withhold needed funding and blame First Nations for the debacle.

I was also shocked and saddened by the RCMP's National Operational Review on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. The report came just days after First Nations women and supporters had gathered on Parliament Hill for a 24-hour ceremony honouring victims of violence; and shortly after the release of the UN Special Rapporteur, James Anaya's report, supporting a National Inquiry into the issue.

The report is a self-serving defence of the RCMP's efficiency and due diligence in solving violent crimes against Aboriginal women which, it concludes, are the result of poverty, substance abuse and lifestyle. This is not news. We live with this reality daily. And while the RCMP says it does not blame the victims, the clear implication is that these women would likely not be dead if they lived in different circumstances.

The report identifies 1,017 murdered and 164 missing Aboriginal women since 1980. Although Aboriginal women account for only 4.3% of Canada's female population, they represent 16% of homicides and 11.3% of missing women. Why does the federal government ignore this crime against our women, and refuse to strike a National Inquiry into this national disgrace and international scandal?

Last year, I invoked the spirit of Elijah Harper, who was firm and steadfast in the face of adversity and showed that “one person can make a difference.”

This year, I would like to call upon the enduring wisdom of our Elders, passed down through countless generations, and upon the boundless energy and optimistic spirit of our Youth, for they are our future.

Let each and every one of us resolve to make a difference this year.

*ʔaʔsi wł*

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, ONA Chairman



# Message from the Executive Director

This past year, the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Chief's Executive Council (CEC) has been preoccupied with developing strategies to address the Harper government's continued assertion of a Pan-Indian paradigm. The federal government has abandoned the social contract and places natural resource extraction and corporate concerns above all other matters, especially issues that are important to First Nations. These policies force First Nations to comply (enforced assimilation) and participate in funding streams that are prescriptive and inflexible or to find themselves without resources and outside the process.

We are experiencing funding reductions through AANDC and other federal funding envelopes. Once again, we have had to find innovative ways to address these funding shortfalls. The direction from the CEC has been unwavering.

**We will not assimilate,  
and we will not  
conform.**

We are living in a time of irony and contradictions. Most of this past year, we have seen tabled with Parliament, Bill C-33 – a case in point – titled by the federal government “First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act”. This bill evoked outrage by many First Nations across the country as controversial and divisive within Indian Country. This bill will effectively reduce access to First Nation education funding and ultimately reduce community decision making.

We are aware it remains tabled and we have yet to see or hear how the government will proceed. What this Bill C-33 represents is yet another attempt to prevent First Nations from establishing community-based priorities for those funding allocations, as they will essentially be administrators of a government program. Harper refuses to engage in a dialogue or shared decision-making processes. While he apologized on behalf of the Canadian people for the Residential School catastrophe, he continues to assert the same paternalistic approach to governance that ultimately has left more Aboriginal children in care than at the height of residential schools.

This past year, we have honoured the memory of the Elders who experienced the deprivation of residential schools through community memorials, a media recollection and commemorative book but until we can bring all our children home this struggle is NOT over!

The federal government's exclusionary approach to First Nations issues has shaped the political context of the past year and created operational challenges not only for the ONA but for all First Nations organizations.

Another disappointment this past year, after more than ten years of planning and working in partnership with MCFD and AANDC, the Indigenous Approaches to Child Welfare was abandoned, leaving our Nation's Enabling Agreement unsigned and gutting our Child Welfare plan. In protest our people rallied outside Premier Christy Clark's and MCFD offices and we have lobbied the Representative for Children and Youth. Despite this, the Wellness staff continue to advance our Nation's Family Group Decision Making processes and to date, this program has seen more than 120 children returned to live with their extended families in their communities! The Syilx Child and Family Framework will continue to guide this work.

ONA also continues to work with the Wellness Committee on the Nation's Health Agenda. We have completed a Letter of Understanding with Interior Health and are now working on how to implement changes that will improve the Health outcomes of our people. We are also engaged with the First Nations Health Authority. Mic Werstuik continues to represent the Nation at the Interior Regional Caucus and Pam Crema is now sitting as the technical representative. This is again a balancing act, we either participate in these process or accept that our Syilx Health Plan 2010 remains unrealized. From the first, our Nation fought to assert the principles of community-based service delivery and Nation-driven decision making. These principles have now been incorporated into the Interior Caucus Interim Health Plan. Our mandate now is to ensure that these principles are acted on through the funding and evolving program delivery and implementation process.

**It is our responsibility as staff members to uphold the trust and confidence of the community and follow through on the directives that have come out of our community engagement processes and Chief's Executive Council mandate. The Syilx Unity Principle continues to drive this organization.**

I am pleased to report that despite these challenges, we continue to move forward with some very exciting initiatives.

**The Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run continues to remind of us that our future is here. 150 youth came out and ran for the Nation.**

Other highlights: The Youth Elder Field Tour, the *ke'ep'ek's'tmi* Hatchery Ground-Breaking, the Okanagan Sockeye to the Ark of Taste, the publication of *That Which Gives Us Life – nx'el'x'it'antat*, and the INDspire Award 2014 (formerly Aboriginal Achievement Awards) presented to our most deserving Grand Chief, Stewart Phillip.

It has been a long-standing priority of the Chief's Executive Council to advance the Nation's Title and Rights mandate in a financially accountable manner (before the imposition of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act), and this year was no exception. Fiscal sustainability within the political context of ever-shrinking federal and provincial allocation has required ONA to make some difficult financial decisions. Please be patient with us through this transition, our goal is to ensure that we remain accessible and sustainable. We have also consolidated our offices eliminating our field offices both in Westbank and Penticton.

The Chief's Executive Council has continued to review governance processes in 2013-14. This is important work and has a direct impact on strengthening the Nation to meet its vision for access to full Title and Rights. This work is crucial. Their leadership, along with direction from our Elders and Youth, underlies and guides the work in Natural Resources, Fisheries and Wellness and it has implications for our continued engagement with government.

On behalf of the staff, I am grateful for the CEC's continued leadership, insights and conviction.

**Our future is dependent on our Nation's resiliency and ability to take hold of and leverage opportunities, collectively. We look forward to continuing our work on behalf of the Nation and serving the people.**

*Lim'limpt*

*Suiki?st*

Pauline Terbasket, Executive Director

# Okanagan Youth Alliance

An on-going initiative, helping to build capacity and take on new initiatives at a Nation level.

With a desire to create a path best suited for the youth of our Nation, Okanagan Youth Alliance (OYA) participated in their second two-day strategic planning session at the YMCA Silver Lake Camp, May 24-25.

OYA took steps towards further developing their purpose, with short and long term goals. They came up with a new four-part structure:

- Public Service : Giving Back
- Leadership/Life Training
- Self Sufficiency : Fund raising/Funding
- Youth Advocacy : Our Voice

# Building a Better Future Bursary

FortisBC has 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.

The award provides financial support to eligible Okanagan Nation members enrolled or accepted into a recognized university or college on a full-time basis in a minimum 2 year program.

The 2013/2014 recipients were Sarah Alexis and Terri Lynn Bell.

# Title & Rights

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.



# “We will continue to protect our mother for the good of all for all time.”

— excerpt from *The Okanagan Nation Declaration*, 1987

There were several important matters and files that impacted Okanagan Nation Title and Rights and the collective interests. These governance, policy and negotiation issues were jointly confronted by the Chief's Executive Council (CEC).

These issues ranged from large long standing infringements on the territory, like the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) and discussions about its renewal; to challenges posed by other deals with neighbouring First Nations. The CRT file alone required the focused dedication of the CEC who fought for more respectful and committed engagement processes with the BC government, BC Hydro and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

To protect and advance the collective Title and Rights of the Nation, the CEC directed and deployed the ONA's technical, policy, negotiation and legal teams this past year with more force. They continued to reject top-down government consultations and challenged key threats to the interests of the Syilx Peoples. These teams successfully negotiated new processes, based upon Okanagan priorities guided by Okanagan principles, laws and practices that were designed by the Nation.

A strong united front by the leadership confronted new territorial challenges posed by actions of other First Nations on the territory. The ONA under CEC direction moved toward gaining recognition, seeking restitution measures, and benefits for our lands, resources and peoples.

Strategically dealing with these new and complex issues, the CEC have remained united in their collective strength. Maintaining, this nation-based collaboration is critical as governments and companies increasingly acknowledge the collective nature of title, thus the growing need for joint nation-community based solutions on the land.

**Working more closely together at all levels as a Nation is becoming crucial to reaching positive outcomes on infringements.**

To increase deeper community involvement the Chiefs have identified separate CEC political leads on the various files. This has evolved over the recent years as more major files are managed collectively at the Nation level. Each appointed Chief also works with communities, the all-band Natural Resource Council (NRC) and identified technical teams in a dedicated way. Each CEC lead reports back regularly to the CEC on progress and decisions.

**Under the CEC, the Okanagan Nation is on the forefront of provincial leadership and innovation.**

We have used the ground-breaking agreement Interior Lower Mainland (ILM) Agreement (based on a single large transmission line project with BC Hydro) to build a dedicated and new relationship based on recognition, transparency and respect with the crown corporation in order to address our mutual issues on the territory.

The CEC fought for more respectful and committed engagement processes with the BC government, BC Hydro and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

**Last year under the CRT the Chiefs rejected the stale consultation processes of the Crown and built a new critical path process driven by Okanagan Nation interests and needs.**

Last year, emerging from this CRT work the team negotiated a high level, 'off-the-record' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with senior levels of government. The MOU serves as a negotiations venue with the highest levels of government aimed at identifying big issues, concerns and conflicts to seek negotiated solutions. This non-treaty table uniquely operates at the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister levels. While much work remains to be done to ensure success of the complex issues before us important work has begun to pave the way for results.

There are great challenges and opportunities ahead of the Nation in the near future. The nation is united in its efforts and through the CEC is working hard to ensure that the communities are more involved and aware of the issues and participants in the territory-based opportunities than ever before. There remains significant work to be done both internally on enhancing policy and Okanagan based project engagement standards. Increasing communications, collective problem solving, trust and creative action needs to continue. The process are often complex and successes are incremental but accumulative.

**United, the Okanagan Nation is one of the most powerful and active Nations in the province of BC.**

There is much to be proud of and much work still to be done. Together with continued unity and perseverance the Nations collective efforts will prevail.

The CEC is working hard to ensure that the communities are more involved and aware of the issues and participants in the territory-based opportunities than ever before.



The Okanagan Nation witnesses returning Okanagan salmon stocks and recognizes the critical and distinctly Okanagan relationship emerging between water operations and salmon survival.

## Columbia River Treaty (CRT)

The Columbia River Treaty is a 30-year renewable multi-million dollar water storage agreement between Canada and the USA in the upper Columbia River Basin, designed to hold back water run-off for maximizing power generation and flood control. It led to the construction of four major Canadian dams that began in the late 1960s that flooded much of the Slocan (Arrow Lakes) valley and converted the Upper Columbia watersheds into a massive reservoir system for the storage and management of millions of acre feet (15.5 million acre feet) of new water. This action created one of the most significant and ongoing infringements to our collective Title and Rights.

Through our work we have identified an emerging connection between hydroelectric and water flow operations to impacts on salmon and thus the Nation's constitutionally-protected fishing rights. The Okanagan Nation witnesses returning Okanagan salmon stocks and recognizes the critical and distinctly Okanagan relationship emerging between water operations and salmon survival. Due to the critical nature of our fishing rights, the Okanagan has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government. The ONA CEC has directed Jay Johnson, Rosalie Wilson and Dr. Roshan Danesh, with support from Howie Wright and James Pepper, to make up the ONA's CRT Team to lead this file and to report back to the CEC.

We have identified an emerging connection between hydroelectric and water flow operations to impacts on salmon and thus the Nation's constitutionally-protected fishing rights.

The CRT is up for renewal and re-negotiation and the earliest date by which either Canada or the United States can give notice of its intention to change or withdraw from the Columbia River Treaty is 2014. This triggers an up to 10-year negotiations period between the two countries and related parties before the Treaty expires in 2024. Before this, there has never been any consultation or involvement of the Okanagan Nation, or any other First Nations on the design, negotiations or implementation of the Treaty.

In February 2014, the BC Treaty Review Team filed its recommendations as a set of 12 points that seek a renewal of the existing treaty but one with a greater ecosystem approach. They point to the need for enhanced involvement of the Basin's First Nations. Cabinet will be reviewing and approving them shortly. Then the Government of Canada must respond.

The CRT Team has been diligently working on the following initiatives:

**Technical Collaboration with CCT:** The Colville Confederated Tribes, as a formal and active member of the CEC with unique capacities and insights, has been active in ensuring the Okanagan Nation technical teams (primarily Fisheries) are well-informed and are involved in the USA-based Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) organization. CCT, through its participation on the CEC, and with their own technical and legal experts, remains deeply involved in on-going developments on CRT issues.

### **Okanagan Nation track with BC Hydro:**

The ILM Agreement offers direct and substantive engagement on the CRT with the Okanagan Nation. Any BC Hydro engagement is directed by the Province. BC Hydro has been commissioned by the Province to conduct all of the technical scenarios and the modeling exercises that will help BC advise Cabinet on their preferred option.

**Okanagan Nation Government-to-Government tracks with Crown:** The Okanagan Nation sent numerous letters to the Federal and Provincial Crown that established a formal process, called the CRT BC-Canada-ONA Critical Path. The Chiefs rejected the typical and inadequate "top-down consultation approaches" put forward by BC and Canada. All matters are regularly reported to the Chief's Executive Council.

This next year the team will be completing the first round of the salmon impact and preferences studies, initiating tests of BC's Identified preferred new water storage models – interests and impacts – on Okanagan Nation territory. Further, the team will be working toward establishing a CRT negotiations and involvement agreement that aims to position the Nation centrally in the international discussions unfolding in the coming years.

Before this, there has never been any consultation or involvement of the Okanagan Nation, or any other First Nations on the design, negotiations or implementation of the Treaty.

# Broad External Trends

During the course of the last year some broader shifts have occurred impacting the work of your leadership on your territory. The Okanagan Nation and the First Nations of the southern interior have seen the industrial spotlight shift away from our territory to the north, while new opportunities and challenges have emerged. We began the year with the surprising re-election of the provincial Liberal government. This signaled a massive expansion of the resource development agenda by big industry on First Nation territories, particularly in the north. Provincially, the economic focus has shifted attention away from renewable (green) energy projects and companies toward the government doubling down on fossil fuels (oil and gas), with a focus on northern oil pipelines and Liberal dreams of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports.

Not since the final year before the winter Olympics have we seen the provincial government drop everything so quickly and place such single minded attention on such a narrow agenda. Energy policy itself has also shifted partly as a result of the northern fossil fuel stampede.

This shift dismisses the once-booming green energy sector, and turns away from the more eco-friendly energy policies of recent years.

Not since the final year before the winter Olympics have we seen the provincial government drop everything so quickly and place such single minded attention on such a narrow agenda.

## Provincial Energy Policy

The largest industrial proponent on the Okanagan Nation Territory – with one of the largest foot-prints – continues to be BC Hydro. This crown corporation is controlled exclusively by the government.

Over 50% of all energy produced by BC Hydro comes from 12 dams operating on the Okanagan Nation Territory, primarily in the Upper Columbia. Over the last decade the government policy was to reduce the reliance on BC Hydro by encouraging the expansion of the private green sector. They were offering new Energy Purchase Agreements (EPAs). BC Hydro controls these long-term energy purchase contracts and had offered them up for bid to companies under a ‘clean energy call’, creating a new green energy sector.

The re-elected provincial Liberal government put an end to this by altering the previous energy policy that had required BC to produce all of its own electrical energy inside BC, seeking to make BC energy self-sufficient and greener. Instead, BC will now be buying more imported electricity (often coal fired energy) in the off-hours from Alberta and other markets to support production shortfalls. This shift dismisses the once-booming green energy sector, and turns away from the more eco-friendly energy policies of recent years.

Without the energy self-sufficiency requirements in place BC has the beginnings of a temporary energy glut, thus slowing the recent pace of other related industrial developments. Nonetheless, the projects of the largest energy players remain active priority on the territory. In this environment, the CEC has focused its attention on these infringements, seeking more influence and positive changes in our relationships that will pave the way for a better future.

# BC Hydro – Interior to Lower Mainland Agreement (ILM)

BC Hydro is the largest and most impactful company operating on the territory. They run 12 hydroelectric dams, maintain over 3,000 km of transmission lines and produce over 50% of all of BC’s electricity on the territory. Historically, as a crown corporation, they have been one of the most difficult and complex organizations the ONA has had to deal with. This is now changing dramatically through the ILM project agreement.

The ground-breaking BC Hydro Interior to Lower Mainland (ILM) agreement signed nearly three years ago advances a radical new commitment for the Crown Corporation and the ONA to build a new ‘Enduring Relationship’ – a relationship based upon mutual respect, transparency, recognition, early and on-going engagement and a commitment to address the goals and priorities of the Nation. This year, numerous discussions with BC Hydro (BCH) have resulted in building some of the mechanisms and processes for clearer communication and a deeper involvement with BCH on capital projects and their extensive operations.

Under the leadership of former Upper Nicola Band Chief Tim Manuel and the CEC Designated Energy Political Lead Chief Dan Manuel, the ONA pushed hard to implement the Enduring Relationship and we have been meeting bi-monthly with BC Hydro since the conclusion of the landmark ILM agreement. This effort is continuing while numerous new BCH projects continue to be proposed on the territory. The challenge remains to create the level of corporate change envisioned in the agreement by the ONA and BC Hydro. The commitments to achieving the principles negotiated under the Enduring Relationship are strong and the need for full and open communication has been maintained while CEC pursue the development and implementation of new models and types of beneficial arrangements for the Nation

The challenge remains to create the level of corporate change envisioned in the agreement by the ONA and BC Hydro.

As directed by the CEC the ONA is in the process of addressing a number of significant and proposed BCH Projects and upgrades on the Okanagan Nation Territory. All ONA-BCH relations and communications are being re-worked, informed and designed through the growing Enduring Relationship negotiated through the ILM agreement with BC Hydro and the ONA-UNB.

These current major projects and upgrades include:

**ILM IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE:** Upper Nicola Band, ONA, NNTC Council and BC Hydro. This committee is designed to oversee the implementation of the ONA-UNB-BCH Agreement and monitor the construction and impacts of the project. The Enduring Relationship involves designing a new respectful engagement and consultation processes which will result in ONA-BCH exploring the establishment of an Engagement Committee under the CEC on BCH projects to address project and impact issues with both the Nation and the member Bands.

**NON-TREATY (WATER) STORAGE AGREEMENT (NTSA)** The development of a NTSA process has evolved from the ONA’s long-standing objections regarding the NTS agreement. In February, 2012 BCH unilaterally signed the NTSA with Bonneville Power Company in the USA (as a ‘business deal’) for an extension to the previous 10-year water storage agreement in the Upper Columbia. The ONA has challenged this agreement with serious concerns over water flow impacts to returning Okanagan Sockeye salmon stocks, among other issues. The ONA is continuing to research the issues and impacts of the NTSA and its water flows.

**MICA DAM GENERATING UNITS 5/6 ONA AND BCH NEGOTIATION TABLE** The Impact Benefits Agreement (IBA) has involved several years of negotiations. Over four years ago the CEC were forced to withdraw in frustration. The CEC preserved the demands and positions of the Nation for future discussion. Despite the lack of fulsome agreements with First Nations, BC Hydro is constructing two new generating units (500MW each) into the last two empty bays of the Mica Dam. The CEC negotiators recently re-opened these discussions with the Vice-president of BC Hydro and more talks are planned aimed at reaching a respectful benefits agreement on this facility.

**REVELSTOKE DAM GENERATING UNIT #6** This project pursues the construction of a new and final generator (500MW) in the last bay of the Revelstoke Dam. The CEC has rejected old consultation processes and is designing more dedicated and advanced processes reflecting the new Enduring Relationship.

ONA unity and community collaboration is central to protecting the interests of the Nation.

2013

APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
JULY  
AUGUST  
SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER  
JANUARY  
FEBRUARY  
MARCH

- ONA/Colville - Protocol Agreement and KNC ITA

- Hatchery Ground-Breaking
- Sockeye Fry Release
- Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run
- CEC : Health Updates
- CEC : Child & Family
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting, Omak ,Wa.

- Columbia River Salmon Ceremony
- CEC : Regular Meeting

- July 4 Paddle
- CEC : Special Meeting
- ONA Annual General Assembly
- Okanagan Nation Youth Leadership
- CEC : Wellness

- Hunting Camp

- Special CEC : Children & Family
- Annual Okanagan Salmon Feast
- CEC : Regular Meeting

- Elders Youth Tour
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting

- Wellness Forum
- CEC : Health Governance Meeting
- CEC : CEC/CCT special Meeting, Omak
- CEC : Forestry Meeting

- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- CEC : Retreat, Osoyoos
- "Delicacies of a Delicate Sea" Launch

2014

- Band School Conference

- R'Native Voice Winter Gathering
- CEC : Regular Meeting

- FOOS Conference
- CEC : Quarterly, WFN Elders Hall

# Events

## Hatchery Ground-Breaking May 16 | 2013

The Okanagan Nation and its partners celebrated the *ke'ep'ekst'mi* Hatchery ground-breaking ceremony. Over 500 community members came out to witness this historic event including Elders, Youth and the general public. Everyone was asked to take part in helping dig the ground. The hatchery is set to open in the fall of 2014.

## Sockeye Fry Release May 21 | 2013

The 9th annual Sockeye Fry Release took place where Shingle Creek joins the Okanagan River. The Okanagan Nation and community were joined by the schools who participated in the Sea-to-Stream program, The ceremonial release of sockeye salmon fry into Skaha Lake is part of the ONA's Sockeye Reintroduction Program.

## Unity Run May 31- June 2 | 2013

The 5th annual Spirit of the Syilx Youth Unity Run took place from Revelstoke to Westbank, BC. This run promotes awareness of the high rate of suicide and violence in First Nation communities. 158 runners began the 260 km relay run from the BC Hydro Revelstoke Dam, where the 2012 run had ended. During the run, community members and the public joined in cheering for the runners by gathering on the side of the road as runners passed by, or by cheering as they drove by.

Along the run this year we were joined by Chief Jonathon Kruger, Chief Dan Manuel, Chief Byron Louis, Chief Wayne Christian, Councilor Chris Derickson, Councilor Wallace Michael, Elder/Traditional Support Hazel Squakin, Hilda Belanger, Leon Louis, and Richard Armstrong.

## Annual General Assembly and Youth Leadership Conference July 24-25 | 2013

The Assembly and Conference were co-hosted by the Lower Similkameen Indian Band at Ashnola Campground.

The Youth Leadership Conference included break-out workshops to discuss leadership, water, health, story-telling, hunting, and they participated in hands-on activities: tanning hides, meat cuttings, horsemanship, hemp weaving, and fishing.

The AGA opened with Theresa Anne Terbasket reading the Okanagan Nation Declaration. Presentations were made on Aboriginal Title and Rights, Columbia River Treaty, Ktunaxa Nation Council Increment Treaty Update, and BC Hydro Initiatives. The FortisBC Bursary Awards were presented to Teri Bell and Sarah Alexis. Activities included a stick game tournament, horse races and the *These Moccasins were made to... Run*.

An honouring ceremony for Sarah Peterson and Arnie Baptiste recognized their hard work and contributions to our language and culture.



### Salmon Feast and Celebration September 20-22 | 2013

The celebration to “Honour the Sacredness of the River” was attended by over 350 people throughout the three day event. The event included a Stick Game Tournament; canoeing from Skaha Lake to Okanagan Falls; entertainment 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. The 2014 Salmon Feast and Celebration which will be held the third weekend of September.

### Elders Youth Tour October 18-20 | 2013

ONA departments collaborated to host the 2013 Syilx Elders and Youth Tour. There were 35 Elders and Youth on a tour through the Eastern territory. Representatives from all seven member communities were guided in a bus from Westbank to Revelstoke, Nakusp and back through Needles Ferry. There were site visits, stories, games for Youth and Elders to interact, camp fires, water ceremonies, and painting on culturally-modified trees and drums.

This event was supported by the ONA CEC, and all ONA departments collaborated on this special event to ensure its success. The purpose was to give Elders and Youth the opportunity to get to know each other more and share information relating to culture and the land. Key topics for the tour focused on four themes: *tmix*“, *tmx*“*ulax*“, *sqilx*“ and *siw*“*k*“. Warren Hooley (PIB Youth) facilitated the group and made it an enjoyable learning experience for everybody. Dr. Bill Cohen and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip attended as guest speakers. A very special thank you goes to all the community members who participated on the tour. Thank you for sharing your energy, knowledge, laughter, stories, language and songs!

### Wellness Forum November 5-6 | 2013

Eighty-five participants from communities throughout the territory partook in the Okanagan Nation Alliance Annual Wellness Forum at Spirit Ridge Resort and Spa in Osoyoos. The participants heard updates from ONA Wellness programs, as well as participated in planning for programs and training workshops such as mindfulness, diffusing crisis, lateral violence, governance, creative facilitation and early childhood developments.

The Wellness Forum has five main goals:

1. for ONA programs to share with member communities services offered and information regarding service (stats, trends, new research) and provide space for engagement;
2. for ONA to provide member communities opportunities for training and skill development;
3. to provide member communities opportunities to network with other communities;
4. to engage other nation service providers opportunities to network and engage with member communities;
5. to provide a forum that includes self-care and shows holistic and integrated well-being.

### Future of Our Salmon Conference March 18-20 | 2014

The Future of Our Salmon Workshop and Conference hosted in Spokane, Washington focused on restoring salmon, lamprey, sturgeon, and bull trout passage to historical locations throughout the Columbia River Basin. There were a number of presentations from the FOOS participants focusing on their current salmon restoration initiatives on the Columbia. The ONA presented the story of the Okanagan River Sockeye Restoration, emphasizing the cultural rejuvenation of the *syilx* salmon culture, and the future direction of *syilx* leadership in stewarding this sacred resource.



# Natural Resources

*“The Syilx People have always governed our land according to principles that are entrenched in traditional knowledge, stories, teachings, ceremonies, medicines, dances, and the arts. These principles carry with them a sacred, inherent responsibility to care for the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>*.”*

*(That Which Gives Us Life – *nx<sup>w</sup>lx<sup>w</sup>litant<sup>w</sup>*)*

As part of this responsibility to care for the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>*, the ONA has been deeply engaged in supporting the Chief's Executive Council mandate and working with ONA members and communities to build capacity and continue to support numerous platforms throughout the territory.

Our wildlife program has expanded and grown to include a core staff complement that continually engages on a variety of hunting, trapping, research and restoration initiatives as mandated by the CEC. Our cultural research team has also been very busy working in community, supporting Nation-wide research efforts and coordinating several cultural heritage committees with representation from all ONA communities and tribes. Our information technologies staff support the CEC in their important work and have worked diligently to support community process and engagement related to land use and lands stewardship throughout ONA territory. In addition, our team was able support an incredible Elders and Youth tour this year, which we hope will become an annual event.

It is our role to support the CEC and ONA communities. Our dedicated staff is always available to provide assistance in any way that we can. All community members are encouraged to contact us with issues, concerns and project ideas so that we can continue to build collaboration and work together to support and enhance Syilx principles and practice and our *tmix<sup>w</sup>* and *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>*.

## ONA Natural Resource Council

The ONA coordinates and provides technical and policy support for the ONA Natural Resource Council (NRC). The NRC is composed of two representatives (a political representative and a technical representative) from the ONA and each of the eight ONA communities. There are also two cultural representatives appointed for a total of 20 members. The NRC is the technical advisory body that supports the ONA CEC. The NRC meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues associated with land development and the use and extraction of resources within Syilx territory. The NRC also works collaboratively to develop Nation-wide policies (e.g. land-use planning, parks and protected areas, hunting, fishing and wildlife) and build on the work that each of the communities and Syilx organizations have already completed. By working together and sharing ideas the NRC is able to make strong and meaningful recommendations to the CEC for the Chiefs' consideration, implementation and action.

ONA NR also supports a variety of other Nation-wide committee's including the: Referral Response Committee, GIS committee, Research Working Group and Cultural Heritage Committee, and any ad-hoc working groups as required.

## Syilx Standards and Policy Development for Resource Stewardship and Collaborative Lands Management

The main objective of this work is to collaboratively develop Nation-based policies and standards that can be used by the Syilx communities and the Nation to strengthen and enhance land-use decision-making and resource management in the Territory. The development of Syilx-specific standards is necessary to inform land-use planning and stewardship and ensure accountability both internally between and among ONA communities and externally with all levels of governments, other organizations and NGOs. The need to develop these policies has been a long standing mandate of the CEC. The signing of the Syilx Cooperative Protocol launched the discussion and strategies to expedite this work so that the Nation could begin to codify their own Nation-based policies to support effective and meaningful land-use planning and responsible stewardship. With the guidance and direction of the CEC, member Bands identified specific standards to develop, including but not limited to:

1. Cumulative impact of activities and developments
2. Protection of Syilx title and rights
3. Land-use planning
4. Environment and ecological issues
5. Syilx land-ethics procedures
6. Syilx territory inventories
7. Archaeological and cultural heritage resources
8. Implementation of *sux<sup>w</sup>txtem* policy
9. Water and air
10. Parks or protected areas
11. Wildlife and fish

*i? k<sup>w</sup>u syilx i? siw<sup>l</sup>k<sup>w</sup>tat*

[our *syilx* water]

It is recognized that this will be an ongoing initiative that will require resources, planning and capacity development. The intent here is to develop 'living documents' that can be refined over time as processes and mechanisms change. Ultimately this work provides an opportunity to articulate the Syilx vision on land management, land stewardship, land protection and the Syilx ways of protecting and respecting all *tmix<sup>w</sup>*. The Creator gave the Syilx people their mother, the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>*, to manage and protect. *We will survive and continue to govern our mother and her resources for the good of all for all time.*

## Water

This year marked the second of a 4-year project entitled “Our Syilx Water”. The goal of this important work is to develop a Syilx water strategy that will protect and respect water through the articulation of the Syilx principles and practices associated with water stewardship. A diverse community outreach strategy has been created to ensure that as many voices as possible (our Elders, Youth, men and women, Knowledge holders, leaders and hunters, fishers and harvesters) will be captured and reflected to create the best and most comprehensive water strategy possible.

The ONA has hosted numerous workshops and on July 30, 2013 a Women's Water Workshop – The Heart Voice – was hosted in Penticton at the En'owkin Centre. Seventeen women attended the full day workshop and shared their perspectives and their teachings on the importance of clean waters now and into the future. This workshop provided an opportunity for Syilx women to meet and discuss the importance of ceremony, dialogue, and creativity in their roles in the protection and care for our natural life source – water. The importance of creating a space for Syilx women's views to be heard is critical to the success of the Syilx water strategy project.

“The Syilx People have always governed our land according to principles that are entrenched in traditional knowledge, stories, teachings, ceremonies, medicines, dances, and the arts. These principles carry with them a sacred, inherent responsibility to care for the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>*.”

# Natural Resources, *continued*

We intend to develop a unified strategy to restore fish passage that allows Columbia River Basin fish to return to their entire historical range.

## Wildlife

In 2013, the Natural Resource Department added a full-time wildlife technician and a full-time biologist to its program staff and also employed several technicians from our member communities to conduct seasonal wildlife field work. New and continuing projects included:

- Projects in the Arrow and Kinbasket reservoirs of the Columbia River Basin to assess the relationship between reservoir operations and the plants and animals that use their edges and shallows. Newly added projects involve the monitoring and tracking of herons, songbirds, snakes and other reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, ungulates, insects, and other species including plants.
- Developing working relationships with provincial government biologists to help explore and further build upon a necessary shared decision-making process for wildlife management in Syilx territory. Issues include the conservation and recovery of species-at-risk, wildlife population management, habitat protection and enhancement, hunting regulation, harvest allocation, revenue-generation, trapline and furbearer management, compliance and enforcement, and acknowledgement of Syilx hunting and gathering areas.
- Finding ways to more fully engage Syilx Youth, Elders, hunters, and trappers in community wildlife management and conservation issues, and so help to more fully integrate traditional ecological knowledge and practices into wildlife management decisions for now and into the future.

## Cultural Research

Cultural research is vital to providing highly valued and critically important information that supports the broad goal of strengthening Syilx Title and Rights. The ONA CEC have mandated the ONA to work with community researchers to develop research strategies and methodologies that reflect the Indigenous perspective and respect cultural protocols concerning the handling and sharing of such information.

The Syilx have their own worldview rooted in Syilx stories and teachings and how we relate to each other within *tmx''ulax''*. These underlying perspectives influence the processes that the ONA has developed to conduct contemporary research that respects the Syilx worldview. Rather than trying to conform to dominant or western system research methods, the ONA and member communities are developing an Indigenous research paradigm that adheres to the principles of community based research and Indigenous Research approaches that respects Syilx views, ethics and morals as Indigenous peoples.

**Use and Occupancy Mapping (UOM)** is one of many methods that have been used in cultural research. UOM is an interview process that maps harvesting sites and cultural sites. The data from a UOM project provides information about the relationship between people and the land. This information is useful for supporting informed decision-making, land-use planning, and the protection of Syilx Title and Rights.

The ONA and collaborating Bands have now completed six UOM projects. This year we worked on UOM projects with the Osoyoos Indian Band and the Penticton Indian Band and added 3,500 more use and occupancy sites mapped in the Syilx Territory. Collectively, we have conducted use and occupancy mapping research on approximately 14,000 square kilometers within Syilx Territory.

**Placenames** research is one of the most prominent research methods and provides critical evidence of long-time occupancy of Indigenous people on the land. Placenames data supports the Okanagan Nation to advocate and preserve the Syilx culture, language, land titles and natural resources. This year, the ONA and OIB worked together to map and record placenames in the OIB area, adding 67 new placenames to the database and bringing the total number of placenames recorded and mapped at ONA to 327 (see [voicesontheband.org](http://voicesontheband.org) for PIB placenames which have been made public).

### Canada Research Chair

This past year the ONA was actively involved in working with Dr. Jeanette Armstrong in her role as Canada Research Chair (CRC). The ONA was engaged in the Chair's Research Plan and process and have provided direction on research priorities throughout the Nation. ONA has helped to facilitate this engagement process through the provision of NR staff and drafting of input and direction provided by the CEC and NRC. Dr. Armstrong will act as the CRC for five years and work to complete important research on CEC directed priorities and objectives. The ONA will provide support to this process as required.

## Information Technologies

The ONA Natural Resource Department continues to develop a series of tools intended 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 Decision Support System (DSS) helps increase efficiency and effectiveness when responding to referrals and the Voices on the Land Web Atlas ([voicesontheband.org](http://voicesontheband.org)) is a tool that can be used by all communities to compile and share land use information. The DSS and the Web Atlas can be accessed through the ONA website.

## Spotted Lake

For decades, the Okanagan Nation has also collectively stood together and defended Spotted Lake, one of our most sacred and culturally significant sites. *K'it'it'X''* is a sacred medicine lake of the Syilx Nation and has been honoured by our people since time immemorial. As development seeks to further encroach upon this sacred site the Chief's Executive Council (CEC) will continue to stand together to protect it and to address the importance of continued use and access to all spiritually and culturally significant sites in the territory.

Syilx spiritual practices are rooted in the land and waters of our territory. The *tmix''* and *tmxwulax''* are the connecting threads between our ancestors and each new generation of Syilx people.

## Archaeology

Over the years there has been dialogue regarding a policy for archaeology and the protection of cultural heritage resources in the territory. The discovery of *ses'lawses sq'lx''sc'im* (ancestor bones) and *təmtmutn* (ancestor's artifacts) at *sm'aip* (Syringa Provincial Park) and more recently at *sni'kəlitk''* (Slocan Pool/Purdy's Point) highlight the importance of having policies and processes in place to manage cultural heritage resources and more importantly to guide repatriation and reburial of our ancestors in a manner that is respectful to Syilx protocols and ceremonial practices. The ONA, Natural Resource Council, and technical and spiritual leaders from communities, are collaboratively addressing these important issues to ensure that cultural heritage resources are protected and *ses'lawses sq'lx''sc'im* are treated respectfully.

## Upper Columbia

NR worked closely with the CEC, NRC and ONA legal and policy staff to support a variety of important projects within the Upper Columbia basin as mandated by the CEC. The ONA NR department provides technical support and professional expertise on issues associated with: power projects (e.g. BC Hydro generating stations and reservoirs, trans-boundary projects (e.g. the Columbia River Treaty, CCT/ONA joint initiatives), cultural heritage projects (e.g. ancestral remains, archaeology), climate change, cultural research, and the protection of fish and wildlife (e.g. Fish and Wildlife Compensation Board, WLR projects).



# Fisheries

We hit an important milestone in salmon recovery with the ground-breaking ceremony of the *ke'ep'ek'stim'* Hatchery.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Fisheries Department have been working diligently on Fisheries management issues, including the Transboundary sockeye harvest sharing and restoration in the Okanagan, Fraser Basin issues that impact fish stocks, and the renewal of the Columbia River Treaty that ultimately impacts salmon. We have also implemented numerous ongoing technical monitoring and restoration projects as well as staying current on the governments' policy issues that affect ONA Title and Rights as it pertains to fisheries.

One of our large monitoring plans remains the Sockeye Reintroduction project where fisheries program staff monitors sockeye salmon from adult through fry to smolts when they leave the lakes to head back to the ocean. ONA monitors the fish themselves (health, growth, numbers) as well as the water (quality and quantity) that they live in. Other monitoring programs include like the Okanagan Basin Monitoring and Evaluation Program (OBMEP), the Middle Vernon Creek Action Plan, Fish Water Management Tools (FWMT) and lakes within the Okanagan Territory where Acoustic and Trawl surveys (ATS) are conducted: Okanagan, Skaha, Osoyoos, Christina, Mabel and Nicola lakes. In addition, we supported the *lbeidli T'enneh* community with an ATS survey in Bowron Lake.

There was a relatively good harvest in the summer/fall of 2013 for Sockeye in the Okanagan and Chinook in Middle Shuswap River. 3,026 Sockeye were caught by members and ONA for Food Social Ceremonial (FSC) within the South Okanagan. There were also numerous Chinook caught from the Middle Shuswap River.

Lastly, we hit an important milestone in salmon recovery with the ground-breaking ceremony of the *ke'ep'ek'stim'* Hatchery and we will be in full operation next year in October 2014. This will be the first time in ONA history that we will be taking broodstock in the fall of 2014 and raising them for release in the spring of 2015 in our own facilities, as opposed to the Federal fisheries Shuswap Falls facility.

## Partnerships in Action

In partnership with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, ONA Fisheries assisted in the design and construction for soft bio-engineered riverbank stabilization on the Similkameen River where LSIB lands are subject to severe soil erosion and habitat loss.

The goal of this project is to help mitigate land and habitat loss along the river through strategic habitat planting and restoration work.

With guidance from local TEK members, LSIB community input, and with labour from an all LSIB crew, a ~100 m section of LSIB land that was sloughing off into the Similkameen River

was stabilized through a brush layering and fill design. ONA fisheries staff assisted the Band with designing the brush layering to stabilize the bank as well as restore much needed cottonwood riparian habitat that supports at-risk species such as the Yellow-Breasted Chat and Western Screech Owl. This project was funded by Environment Canada. With the support and expertise of ONA Fisheries staff, this project moved forward from an LSIB vision through the successful completion of construction last fall, to seeing the results sprout from the riverbank this spring.



We have implemented numerous ongoing technical monitoring and restoration projects as well as staying current on the governments' policy issues that affect ONA Title and Rights as it pertains to fisheries.

LSIB Environment Department looks forward to continuing the next phase of this project with the skills and experience that ONA Fisheries brings to our community.

# Economic Fisheries

For the past 5 years, the ONA has been piloting an economic fishery for Okanagan Sockeye salmon with focus on local sales and community benefits. We continue to focus our efforts on telling the story of the return of the Okanagan Sockeye.

A major milestone this year was the addition of Okanagan Sockeye to Slow Food's Ark of Taste. The Ark of Taste is a collection of small-scale quality productions that belong to the cultures, history and traditions of a people. The Ark was created by Slow Food to point out the existence of these products, draw attention to the risk of their extinction within a few generations and help to support these products.

Okanagan Sockeye is the only salmon recognized internationally by Slow Food, and one of only five foods on the Ark in Canada.

The ONA has been invited to showcase Okanagan Sockeye as an Ark product at the 2014 International event in Terra Madre, Turin, Italy. This is a major opportunity to showcase Indigenous food sovereignty and the importance of Sockeye as a food source to the Okanagan Nation.

A major milestone this year was the addition of Okanagan Sockeye to Slow Food's Ark of Taste. The Ark is a collection of small-scale quality productions that belong to the cultures, history and traditions of a people.

See <http://www.slowfoodfoundation.com/ark>

A small scale economic harvest continued in 2013, with focus on local troll-caught sockeye. Our partners adapted to the reduced availability by focusing on restaurants where they would feature sockeye on their dinner menu or as an appetizer.

A couple of challenges in the market we face are the myth that salmon caught inland are of poor quality. It is ongoing work to educate the public to dispel this myth. Another area we are working towards is changing the image of First Nation caught fish from "illegally-caught Indian salmon" to that of a high quality artisanal product that supports our local fisherman. It is our goal that when the public buys an Okanagan Sockeye they are not just buying the fish but the story of the success and recovery of Okanagan Sockeye, hence raising the awareness of the importance of salmon as a major food source for the Syilx people.

In addition, we find that the demand to purchase local salmon is high but a continuous supply for local buyers is difficult with just one fishery. The limited quantities that we catch for economic harvest are important in order to ensure we practice sustainable fishing. To meet the demands of buyers the ONA has joined the Inland Salmon Producers Association (ISPA) which includes the Upper Fraser Conservation Alliance, Harrison Salmon Producers and Okanagan Aquatic Enterprises.

When the public buys an Okanagan Sockeye they are not just buying the fish but the story of the success and recovery of Okanagan Sockeye.

This group is comprised of a total of 28 communities with affiliation to six different tribal Nations from six different river fisheries. Each group had their own unique fisheries with a similar issue of providing a continuous supply of salmon. The group operates under a Vision and Charter for Responsible Trade endorsed and signed by the ONA CEC in 2012.

ISPA purchases and sells Okanagan Sockeye, along with the other group's salmon, under a collective brand, "River Select."



Feasibility studies for this group were completed evaluating organization structure for ownership and copyright of the River Select brand (non-profit) and also of the business arm of the group (cooperative). We hope to have the non-profit ISPA and the River Select cooperative formalized in the 2014 year, in addition to piloting the concept of working under a common brand. For more information see [www.riverselect.ca](http://www.riverselect.ca)



Howie Wright, at Delicacies of a Delicate Sea, David Suzuki Fdn. December 2013

# Future of Our Salmon (FOOS) – Columbia River Salmon

The FOOS Conference – March 18-20 involved an umbrella group of representatives throughout the USA including the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) and numerous Federal, State and Canadian entities including Canadian First Nations being involved in Salmon Restoration in the Columbia Basin.

The purpose was to bring together interested parties to discuss technical, institutional and cultural issues associated with restoring juvenile and adult fish passage to historic locations. These gatherings will be held to review recent advances in fish passage technology, identify obstacles, and develop viable solutions.

Out of theses gatherings, we intend to develop a unified strategy to restore fish passage that allows Columbia River Basin fish to return to their entire historical range.

A primary focus was on juvenile and adult passage through high-head dams (100-500'). Tribal Leaders spoke to the values and importance of the cultural and spiritual significance due the direct impacts that the loss of fishes such as salmon had upon the Indigenous Peoples and Tribes of the Columbia River Basin. Both the Workshop and Conference were very well attended by Elders, community members, biologists, engineers, politicians, academics, and interested public.

The information presented included current science and technology and success case studies in safely allowing juvenile (fry and smolt) downstream movement, and adult upstream migration through high-head dams. Currently, salmon returning from the ocean can safely pass nine dams on the lower Columbia to the base of Chief Joseph Dam in Washington.

The outcome from the FOOS Conference was a sense of renewed energy and optimism for pursuing fish passage above Chief Joseph Dam, and the next dam Grand Coulee. Once these two challenges are overcome, salmon will once again swim into Canada in the Upper Columbia – an event not witnessed for over 70 years.

A bi-national *Joint Fish Passage Paper* has been drafted to summarize the losses of salmon in the Columbia River from a legacy settlement, Hydro Electric Dams, – an arduous journey and approach to restoring salmon to their historical range. To do this, ONA will play an important part, using the success of our Okanagan Nation Okanagan River Sockeye Program to guide us. Our next steps are to continue to develop a strategy of specific steps for salmon restoration into the Canadian part of the Columbia River.

The outcome from the FOOS Conference was a sense of renewed energy and optimism.



# Restoration of Okanagan Habitat

Habitat restoration remains a key priority for the Okanagan Nation Alliance. One of the main initiatives is the Penticton Channel restoration. This work has required partnerships with the City of Penticton, the Penticton Indian Band and UBC Okanagan.

The Cultural Knowledge Keepers engaged in this research note the following salmon usage locally specific to Penticton prior to hydroelectric dams and river channelization. Whitefish (*mim'lit*) were noted coming up after the *kikinee* salmon in the river. They ran in schools right up until the snow fell, when they would spawn. There was a smaller stock of *kikinee* that was very good for eating and for drying. This smaller *kikinee* is still in Quelshena Creek. *Skiliv'ist* late-run fall Chinook were noted in the area along with *n'tytyi* spring-run Chinook. There were two runs of sockeye – early run *sc'win* (silver sockeye) and a late run (*tanya*). Ellis Creek had *x'mina*. Steelhead and rainbow trout were caught up near the canyon. Shingle Creek had large salmon (sockeye and steelhead) that made it up past the Shatford/Shingle confluence.

Following the re-engineering of *n'saylintan* (McIntyre Dam; 2009), salmon have been observed in good numbers at *snpinktn* (Penticton). Results from visual surveys, biological sampling, and genetics, have shown that since 2010 the number of spawners in the fall have averaged 40,000.

Table 1 summarizes salmon observations from 2010 to 2013. The majority of spawners are of hatchery origin and have imprinted on Shingle Creek where they were released. Early information suggested some hybridization (<7%) between sockeye and kokanee stocks, with monitoring to continue to assess impacts to both stocks.

Other major findings will continue to guide the recovery process.

Major initiatives are underway to kick-start ecosystem recovery.



Historical photo of Penticton showing Okanagan River prior to channelization.

Lake modelling now is suggesting current capacity for potential sockeye production

- Osoyoos Lake ..... 35 kg/ha
- Skaha Lake ..... 10 kg/ha
- Okanagan Lake..... 5 kg/ha

Future monitoring will “truth” these estimates. Along with genetic impacts to sockeye and kokanee interactions, the ONA is also working with UBC Okanagan assessing whether or not the Hatchery will have domestication effects on our salmon.

Most importantly, due to limited spawning habitat, current activities involve developing and implementation plans for spawning platforms in Penticton Channel. These fish improvement and enhancement type projects related to fish passage in Shingle Creek and Okanagan Falls *sāx'ə ăx'nitk'* (Okanagan Falls) will be projects of focus this coming year.

It is known through the research that what is referred to as the Penticton River Channel used to be “rich in fish; Steelhead, Coho, Sockeye and King (Chinook) Salmon” (Ernst 2000). The migration to Penticton was cut off as early as 1914 with the mostly impassable weir at the base of McIntyre Bluff. Since 2009 it has been passable for salmon.



Table 1. Summary of salmon abundance, run timing, and distribution at Penticton Channel & Shingle Creek, 2010 – 2013

| OBSERVED                | KOKANEE                                                                                     | SOCKEYE     | CHINOOK       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| MEAN ABUNDANCE.....     | 30,000 .....                                                                                | 8,000 ..... | 1 to 20 ..... |
| START OF SPAWNING ..... | 25 Oct.....                                                                                 | 10 Oct..... | Unknown ..... |
| PEAK SPAWNING .....     | 1 Nov .....                                                                                 | 20 Oct..... | Unknown ..... |
| END OF SPAWNING .....   | 5 Nov .....                                                                                 | 31 Oct..... | Unknown ..... |
| KEY SPAWNING AREA ..... | Enhanced section of Penticton Channel....Shingle & Ellis mouths to river .....Shingle Creek |             |               |

Of the total average 40,000 spawners observed by crews in Penticton and Shingle Creek:

- KOKANEE 77% ~30,000/yr
- SOCKEYE 22% ~8,000/yr
- CHINOOK <1% ~10/yr

# *K̓c̓p̓elk' stini'* Hatchery

After several years focused on partnership development, project planning, and approvals, the 2013/2014 fiscal year was a major milestone for the *K̓c̓p̓elk' stini'* Hatchery project as it shifted into the construction phase.

On May 16, 2013, a successful and highly anticipated ground-breaking ceremony was hosted by Okanagan Aquatics Enterprise Ltd. (OAE Ltd.) and the Penticton Indian Band, in conjunction with the Annual Sockeye Fry Release and Ceremony, to mark the start of the construction phase of this project. That same month, a formal bid call was issued to pre-qualified companies to quote on construction of the *K̓c̓p̓elk' stini'* Hatchery project.

In June 2013, Canada approved all site, building, and environmental plans and signed off on the project. In the same month, OAE Ltd. negotiated a final contract amendment with project partners and financiers, the Grant and Chelan County Public Utility Districts (PUDs) in Washington State. This enabled OAE Ltd. to enter into a final 49-year Lease Agreement with PIB and Canada which was signed on July 16, 2013.

That same month, Greyback Construction Ltd., based in Penticton, was engaged as the successful contractor for the project based on their competitive bid. Without delay, construction began in late July with site clearing and site prep. Work was also undertaken in and around Shingle Creek to take advantage of the short fisheries window in which creek/riparian work could be undertaken.

By September 2013, full mobilization on site was underway, with site grading, underground utilities being placed, and building foundation forming. Working steadily through the fall and winter, by March 2014, both the Hatchery and Lab buildings were erected, fully clad, enclosed, and with major interior works well progressed.

Thanks to a tight team consisting of ONA staff and consultants, our construction manager Wally James (Buccaneer Contracting Ltd.) working closely with Norman Goddard Architecture, our counterpart team at the two PUDs, and Greyback Construction Ltd., this project has stayed on track and on budget.

Looking ahead we anticipate equipment start up by the end of June 2014, full commissioning of the facility in July and August, and to be ready for hatchery operations and fish rearing by September.

A ribbon cutting ceremony (coinciding with the Salmon Feast & Celebration weekend) is planned for Saturday, September 20th at the *K̓c̓p̓elk' stini'* Hatchery site.



*K̓c̓p̓elk' stini'*

CAUSE TO COME BACK

# Wellness

**Under the Mandate of the CEC and ONA Wellness Committee we continue to work towards and support the safety, health and well-being for our children, families and communities.**

The ONA Wellness Department has three clusters: Health, Youth Mental Health and Child and Family. There are seven Wellness programs that receive contract funds from Ministry for Children and Family Development, Interior Health Authority and First Nations Health Authority for Nationwide Wellness activities.

The Wellness department continues to be guided by the CEC mandated ONA Wellness Committee which is made up of the Health and Social Development directors of the seven member communities. This committee meets at least bi-monthly on health and child and family topics as well as provides guidance and direction to the wellness programs.

The Wellness team works to provide quality services in a holistic integrated manner to the member communities including direct service, capacity building, training opportunities and resource development and sharing.

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

In 2013-2014 ONA programs engaged with almost **1000 Nation members** in various formats of service, training and events. Through the Family Decision Making program 56 children were supported to remain in the family home and/or come out of Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) care.

The Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) remains a recognized best practice in Indigenous community crisis response and youth suicide prevention and intervention. As well, the Spirit of the Syilx Unity Run continues to achieve widespread acknowledgment for being a youth-driven violence and suicide awareness campaign connected to land, ceremony and culture.

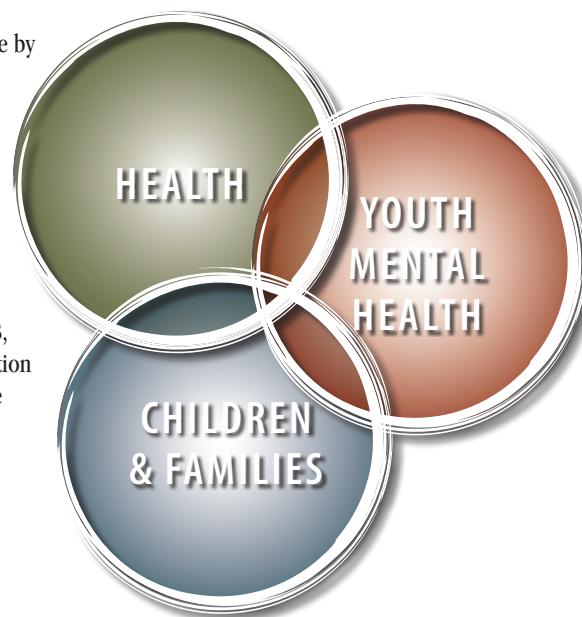
We are leading and remaining adamant in our collective effort to transform the current relationships between our Nation and provincial and federal partners through developed processes such as the Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Interior Health Authority (IHA), challenging the control of IHA over services meant to provide support to community members. This also involves our working relationships and partnerships with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) which officially became a BC First Nations Health Authority on October 1, 2013. This transformation principle is to be embedded in the implementation and roll out of this new FN entity and is also brought forward into discussions with MCFD in outlining where services have not been effective or appropriate for community and determining how they can be changed.

As a result of years of hard work and dialogue by our Nation's leadership and members, the Syilx Child and Family plan was finalized this year and the proposal for delegation was submitted to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) and MCFD in November 2013 **"our way"**. AANDC funding formula for delegation requires 801 status children residing on-reserve. The ONA received five Band Council Resolutions (USIB, LSIB, OIB, PIB, and OKIB) requesting delegation funds from AANDC. With five bands, there are 585 children. With all seven bands there are 869 status children on reserve.

**What is needed is a change in the government systems that purport that their mandate is health and well-being for all people.**

After ONA inquiry and CEC push, AANDC stated they are not willing to support ONA delegation with the current child count. MCFD is not supporting off-reserve delegation discussions and is no longer willing to support planning activities in any way if AANDC is not funding.

Then, as of January 31, 2014 the MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled, along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province. This severely impacts the ONA ability to support and develop culturally and community-based Child and Family programs. The hard work and vision of the communities staff, the children, elder and community member voices that participated and shared their visions and hearts for a better future for struggling children and families was shattered at the announcement of both of these funding cuts and denials. Wellness committee members who have dedicated their lives to these children, and through the changes in Ministers, deputy ministers, local team leaders (government policies) have shown tenacity and strength throughout. The communities remain committed to their members, using whatever resources available to them to make a difference.



The ONA Wellness committee has remained focussed on the Nation health priorities and the Okanagan Nation Health (ONA) Mandate *"to advocate for Syilx control and management of their health, programs and services."*

Our Youth mental health programs have also resulted in identifying disturbing trends in community with high amounts of youth suicide ideation, self-harm and addiction. Drugs such as heroine, crystal meth and crack cocaine have been reported as higher usage among our Nation youth. We continue to see youth active in addictions, violence and not attending school or gaining employment.

In our family support programs we see expecting mothers at risk of losing custody of their children to the MCFD, families struggling with family violence and addictions leaving children at risk in our communities. Our children and youth and their families are still expected to find scarce resources in much needed assessments, supports, healing programs, dependant on band staff and community resources which have to work extra hard to support their community members. What remains, and what is needed is a change in the government systems that purport that their mandate is health and well-being for all people.

Building upon the success of the mobile community-delivered program of R'Native Voice the ONA has started this year a pilot year of a new innovative mental health pilot program *Kwu Xast*. *Kwu Xast* is a 12 session empowerment mobile program that supports children 7-12 years of age to express themselves through creative arts and Syilx culture education. *Kwu Xast* curriculum is based in Syilx values and incorporates Syilx teachings, traditions and world views.

Amongst these demands and pressures we have successfully delivered on other key activities that provide resources and capacity to the communities:

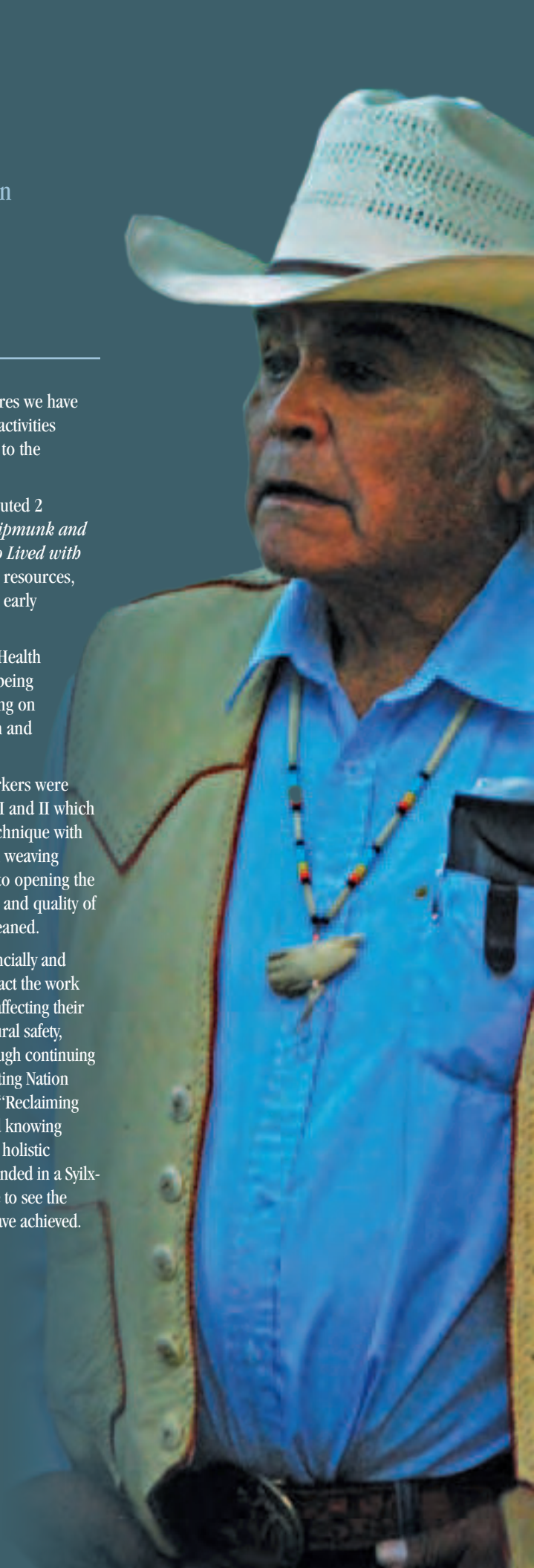
ONA has developed and distributed 2 children's *captik'I* books: *Chipmunk and Owl Woman* and *The Boy Who Lived with Bears* as Syilx-specific cultural resources, identified as a resource gap by early childhood educators.

Syilx Movember for the Men's Health Campaign led to 5 video clips being developed with Syilx men talking on the importance of men's health and prostate testing.

50 Nation youth and youth workers were trained in Creative Facilitation I and II which is a cutting-edge facilitation technique with tools designed to engage youth weaving many different art mediums into opening the mind and increasing the depth and quality of information learned and/or gleaned.

There is much happening both provincially and federally around us – things that impact the work with all children, youth and families affecting their mental, emotional, spiritual and cultural safety, health and well-being. However, through continuing on the path of identifying and supporting Nation and community based initiatives and "Reclaiming and Restoring Syilx ways of being and knowing (worldview) through development of holistic Wellness programs and services grounded in a Syilx-centred framework" we will continue to see the intended healthy outcomes that we have achieved.

As of January 31, 2014 the Okanagan Nation MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province.



# Enhancing Health Services

## Nation Health Priorities

(2010 Syilx Nation 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
- 7. Cultural Safety

The plan is scheduled to be updated and revised in 2014.

The ONA continues to coordinate regional activities and support local initiatives of the communities to better enhance health services.

First Nations Health Authority completed transfer from Health Canada October 1, 2013. WFN Council member, Mic Werstuik, remains the CEC representative on the Interior Nation Executive for First Nation Health Authority providing Syilx input at a table with the other six Interior Nations.

In 2012 the ONA signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Interior Health Authority (IHA) which outlines the intention to develop a real partnership between the Okanagan Nation and IHA to result in increased and effective access to appropriate health services by our Nation members. This year the Wellness Committee identified mental health as the top priority and the LOU implementation working group has been working at identifying all mental health services available and coordinating and accessing services within the communities.

## Health as Partnership II

This year’s project builds upon last year’s Health as Partnership project in the keys activities of developed Syilx cultural safety resources and developing and maintaining partnerships with UBC Okanagan and Interior Health Authority.

This year we have added a couple of new clips to the current modules and have compiled all cultural safety resources to be placed into a one-stop Syilx cultural safety website. This will allow all health care professionals easy access to all cultural safety material. This also provides a resource for each community to review with their partners to develop partnerships.

ONA staff has maintained active engagement with UBCO CIHR project leads and reference group as well as UBCO nursing program cultural safety modules volunteers. The focus has been on coordinating the resources into usable, shareable material.

Cultural Safety remains a priority on the Syilx Nation health plan as well as the recently approved FNHA Interior Regional Health and Wellness plan.

## Syilx Child and Family Planning

ONA Child & Family proposal for delegation was submitted November 23, 2013. This was not supported by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development or MCFD due to the on-reserve child population count not meeting their minimum requirements. ONA also worked with the Local MCFD on developing a Letter of Understanding to better be involved, informed and participate in decisions for program development and implementation under MCFD. Development and implementation of this will continue into next fiscal year.

Also as of January 31, 2014 the Okanagan Nation MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province. This was as a result of the Representative for Children and Youth report that MCFD is wasting money on ‘talking’ rather than services. This severely impacts the ONA ability to support and develop culturally and community based Child and Family programs.

The Wellness Department also developed a Quality Assurance model this year. This provides standards for service and evaluation methods for Wellness programs. This ensures programs are effective, responsive and developed as per community and family needs. Quality assurance shows commitment to building a culture of continual quality review and revisions.

What is needed is a change in the government systems that purport that their mandate is health and well-being for all people.

# Serving the People

The program grew this year by 1FTE with the hiring of the FDM team lead.

## Family Decision-Making (FDM) Program

|    |                                      |
|----|--------------------------------------|
|    | FDM WORKED WITH:                     |
| 47 | families, with                       |
| 91 | children impacted, resulting in      |
| 62 | family meetings being held           |
|    | This saw:                            |
| 2  | children going into MCFD care        |
| 14 | children remaining in care           |
| 13 | children coming out of MCFD care     |
| 25 | children remaining out of care       |
| 19 | children returned to parents         |
| 18 | children returned to extended family |

## Okanagan Nation Crisis Response Team

|    |                                                                                                                  |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 | team members throughout the nation trained 3 times this year                                                     |
|    | ONRT RESPONDED TO:                                                                                               |
| 14 | critical incidents this year involving tragic death, suicide attempt, suicide ideation, and suicide completions. |
| 2  | of these were under 17 years old                                                                                 |
| 10 | were between ages of 18-25                                                                                       |
| 2  | 36-50 years old                                                                                                  |
|    | SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING:                                                                                     |
| 43 | Youth throughout Nation                                                                                          |
|    | SUICIDE AWARENESS WORKSHOP:                                                                                      |
| 12 | parents                                                                                                          |
| 4  | day intensive grief training delivered to OIB and UNB                                                            |
|    | SUPPORT GROUP LEADER TRAINING                                                                                    |
| 12 | Nation members to host and lead support groups in community.                                                     |

## Aboriginal Child & Youth Mental Health Wellness Program

|     |                                                                                                                        |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | WORKED WITH                                                                                                            |
| 18  | children/youth from the South Okanagan                                                                                 |
|     | DEVELOPED YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH :                                                         |
| 9   | community organizations                                                                                                |
| 102 | worker interactions                                                                                                    |
|     | ASSISTED IN AND/OR DELIVERED WORKSHOPS TRAINING                                                                        |
| 115 | participants in various topics such as suicide prevention, mindfulness, Community Family nights, creative facilitation |

## Aboriginal Early Childhood Development

|    |                                                                                                         |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 | site visits completed, supporting early years programs and staff                                        |
| 65 | participants trained in various workshops, Positive Behaviour, Ages & Stages, Creative Felt Board story |
| 7  | committee meetings conducted                                                                            |
| 19 | community events, participated and assisted in                                                          |

R’Native Voice Program: R’Native Voice Program Curriculum revisions utilizing *captik’l* and *nsyilxcen* in all components.

### WEEK CURRICULUM REVISIONS

|   |                                                        |    |                                                                     |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Orientation                                            | 8  | Physical Health: <i>k’u_xi?tmíst</i> (we run)                       |
| 2 | Write It On Your Heart: <i>qayantx l_aspu?qus</i>      | 9  | Drugs & Alcohol: <i>nkncintn ut n’x’us</i> (poison and alcohol)     |
| 3 | Our Roots Our Beliefs Part 1: <i>i?_skc’x’ipla?tət</i> | 10 | Sexual Health: <i>i?_scx’wəl’x’w’ältət</i> (our health or our life) |
| 4 | Our Roots Our Beliefs Part 2: <i>i?_skc’x’ipla?tət</i> | 11 | Community Project: <i>i?_snqsilx’w’tət</i>                          |
| 5 | Depression: <i>sba?ə</i>                               | 12 | Self Esteem: <i>npúta?tn</i> (respect)                              |
| 6 | Grief: <i>qəlspu?us</i>                                |    |                                                                     |
| 7 | Loving Yourself: <i>ǰast spu?us</i>                    |    |                                                                     |

- 13 Bullying: *nxílsm* (respect one’s feelings)
- 14 Social Justice & Current Issues: *sc’ma?má’y* (news)
- 15 Wrap Up: *pałmcín* (end of a story)

RNV program delivered in all 7 communities with 98 youth participants overall.

RNV continues to work with school districts to provide schools credits to youth participants.

# Training and Capacity Building

Collaborating with community, *Cuystwi* promotes and strengthens culture and identity.

## Ensuring Community Capacity Building and Training

### RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

*Chipmunk and Owl Woman* and *The Boy Who Lived with Bears* – children’s books

*This Is What They Have Said* – children’s art book

Ages and Stages Questionnaire – promotion poster

Sylx Culture – resource and curriculum binder

Men’s Health Campaign/Sylx Movember – video clips and promotion

4 training modules developed

- Family Decision-Making
- Advocacy
- Records Management
- CFCSA orientation

Curriculum developed for *Kwu Xast* 7-12 year old program

### TRAINING COMPLETED IN COMMUNITY

Creative Facilitation I and II

25 Nation participants

Navigating Mainstream Health Care Champions training

Around the Kitchen Table training

Indigenous Child Welfare Research Conference

55 participants



## Provincial Health Services Agency *Cuystwi* Indigenous Wellness Project

*Cuystwi* was evolved from Aboriginal recommendations for youth suicide prevention by helping youth understand the history of colonization and the impacts it has on families. *Cuystwi* is a health promotion and suicide prevention interactive on-line training in the form of a quest that sends youth through a series of activities that are both on-line and within their community based youth groups.

### Collaborating with community, *Cuystwi* promotes and strengthens culture and identity.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance sent three youth for training in *Cuystwi* Project in November of 2013. The training was based in team building and facilitation as well as curriculum overview. Each of the seven communities participated throughout the project. There were a total of 60 participants from the age of 10-13 years old.

The three youth that participated in the training and delivery were also involved in planning and implementation of the project. The group was very successful in meeting band and school employees, finding sites for delivery, working with ONA staff and of finding catering in each of the communities.

### NUMBER OF TRAINEES

### TASK

- 8 staff in various communities.....use of mapping: ONA DSS, ONA Voices on the Land Web Atlas and referral response mechanisms
- 5 wildlife technicians.....field training
- 5 individuals.....first aid training
- 4 staff and technicians.....swift water training
- 6 community members.....archaeology training
- 5 community members.....cultural research training: placenames and UOM

*Cuystwi* was one of the first projects delivered to this young age group. It is a demographic that is rarely reached in relation to the history or Aboriginal people and culture.

## Sts-oomists yeelh S-Ooknahkchinx OKANAGAN NAT DECLARATIO

Yeelh koo S-Ooknahkchinx kgoalb-  
kthikidekminet kgel yayart  
yarpnah koo tsoot.

We, the Okanagan Nation  
generation to come. The

Mucemhltet yeelh koo xa-  
temwhoolahwah, yeelh toom-

We are the unconquered aboriginal peoples

Telh kgoalhentsooten swhitzetzet yeelh toom-  
eelshmenhsemh, kstxetidenhtimh ootlil kskgeti

The creator has given us our mother, to enjoy,

Telhs mecas qehasapih, yeelh koo xahtmaskehila  
toomhtemhtet.

We, the first inhabitants, have lived with our moth

Yeelh koo S-Ooknahkchinx yeelh tzohehentsooten  
kgel yayart phelwiktmentem an hehastan yeelh

Our Okanagan Governments have allowed us to sp  
resources of our mother;

Loot penhkinh tde xeehxeehxecxmentem yeelh stelh  
toomhtemhtet, yeelh telh toomhtomh an hehastantet

We have never given up our rights to our mother  
our governments and our religion;

Loot penhkinh koo tdeks ntzspoolawhahx. Pe  
yeelh telh toomhtemh an hehastantet koo b

ootlil tdeswhooa.

We will survive and continue to  
for the good of all for all

i? k'u-sylx i? siwt'k'tat

"Respect and water – all works together. If you don't have water,  
if you don't have respect, you're not going to get any place, anywhere."

Okanagan Nation Elder, Jane Stelkia  
Sylx Water Strategy project  
Interview with Jane Stelkia and Hazel Squakin  
November 1, 2013



*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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