

ANNUAL
REPORT

2016
2017



syilx
Okanagan Nation Alliance

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Message from the Chairman

Last year at this time there was cause for optimism. The Canadian public had elected a majority government that promised to correct many of the past injustices inflicted on Canada's Indigenous population. The new parliament even had ten Indigenous Members of Parliament.

The government soon announced a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, pledged to adopt the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and began a review of pipeline project proposals. These are worthwhile initiatives, long demanded by First Nations, but what effective progress has the government made. Have our lives and prospects for the future improved?

So far, the MMIW inquiry has limped along, hampered by bureaucratic snarls and poor communications. It is unlikely to complete its mandate on budget, or issue a final report within its two year time allotment.

Endorsing the UN Declaration was a "feel good" moment, but the implications of the document are complex and have had little effect on government actions, especially concerning Indigenous rights to "free, prior and informed consent" on policy matters, or authority over lands, resources, and territories.

Like the TRC recommendations, the government hopes to implement them "over time through legal and legislative means."

During the last Federal election, Trudeau committed to completely overhaul the Canadian Environmental Assessment process as well as the National Energy Board review process. In fact, Trudeau said, "No major project should be approved until this work is completed". However, the pipeline review resulted in the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline and Enbridge's Line 3, while Northern Gateway was rejected and Energy East must resubmit its application.

At the end of the day, we can no longer depend on the courts or governments...we need to realize that we can only depend on each other. I think 2017 is going to be an incredibly intense year.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, December 31, 2016

Keystone XL now has US approval and may move forward.

The Trans Mountain ruling is especially devastating for British Columbia. It will transport dangerous Tar Sands product through Syilx/Okanagan Nation territory and inevitably put all BC residents at risk of a toxic pipeline rupture or a tanker spill. The ONA has long opposed this project and will continue to do so by any means necessary.

Joan and I had the privilege of briefly joining the water protectors and land defenders at Standing Rock in North Dakota. Their fight was symbolic of the battles being waged across the globe by Indigenous People and their allies. The protest was about clean water versus oil. On February 23, 2017, the final protesters at Standing Rock were removed in a military style takeover approved by the new President, Donald Trump.

The old politics of division are back with a vengeance. Alongside the challenges here in Canada, the United States has elected a President who vows to "make America great again" tearing up trade agreements,





slashing taxes, and eliminating most of the country's environmental protection laws and standards, which have the potential to deeply impacting parts of our territory and processes such as the Columbia River Treaty.

It is clear that we are on our own.

A positive legacy of Standing Rock is exemplified by the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. It was formed in September 2016, uniting 85 First Nations and Tribes from Canada and the northern US in a pledge to protect the environment by stopping all proposed tar sands pipeline, tanker, and rail projects in their respective territorial lands and waters. The Treaty Alliance now has over 120 member First Nations and Tribes.

Last year, my message stated: "About 55% of children in care in British Columbia are Aboriginal...seized under antiquated child protection laws. It is imperative that First Nations re-assume full control over the health and well-being of our children. We have the knowledge and expertise to do so, and the time is now."

This year, I am pleased to acknowledge two new programs, BRIDGES and You Empowered & Strong (YES) that are positive steps toward taking back control over our children's health and well-being. Both programs draw upon Syilx knowledge, culture, and tradition to achieve better outcomes for youth.

For children and families exposed to domestic violence. The You Empowered & Strong (YES) program, in particular, will decrease the chance of our children being taken into care, and greatly reduce instances of family violence within our communities. The programs have been recognized as innovative best practice in working with youth and community development.

We must never underestimate the challenges we face. Governments and corporate interests are skilled at sowing division among First Nations and their Bands. They have been doing it for much longer than Canada's 150th anniversary would have you believe.

It is imperative that we consider the greater good of the Nation when we make our decisions. We must strive to complete the Syilx Protocol and Governance process, and to create a Syilx Constitution to strengthen and solidify the Syilx Okanagan Nation. If we do not achieve this goal, our very future as a Nation is in jeopardy.

I would like to offer with an inspirational quote from Melina Laboucan-Massimo of the Lubicon Cree First Nation in Alberta:

The Spirit of Standing Rock has not diminished, it's tracking northward as people across Canada act in solidarity...refusing to let attacks on Indigenous people for the sake of oil profits go unnoticed.

These winds of resistance in British Columbia and across Turtle Island should be a signal to our governments and investors. When we rise, we rise as one. A light breeze becomes an unstoppable gale."

We can only depend on each other.

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Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
ONA Chair



Message from the Executive Director

Way,

It has always been incumbent on us to ensure we protect and manage our *tmx^wulax^w*: clean air, pure water, food security, sustainable development and responsible equitable sharing of resources for our families, our Nation and all generations to come. As we look back at 2016-17, we see a changing political landscape with emergent opportunities for our people to realize self-governance. Yet we also continue to face substantial challenges and restrictions in regards to the Federal Government. Our leadership are tenacious at both seizing the opportunities and taking on the challenges. We are always ready and prepared to engage in a new relationship – for the Nation.

At the same time we witness our people moving away from their Indian reserve communities. Some are seeking access to education, employment and better living conditions, while others

are escaping violence and poverty. This move away from Indian reserves impacts our shared Indigenous way of life. Indigenous people continue to risk assimilation, perhaps in a kinder, more fluid way but at the end of the day: assimilation. Syilx peoples are no exception. In regards to this there is a sense that now more than ever, we must remain mindful of our foundation, including *captíkwt*, Syilx laws, protocols and *nsyilxcen*. From these, come our cultural teachings that shape who we are as peoples.

The constant question in my role as Executive Director is: how do we move forward operationalizing the path set out by the Nation, our Elders, the Youth, the Chief's Executive Council and elected Councils and our many Nation working committees while preserving, renewing and invigorating our broader Syilx cultural framework – nation building, nation rebuilding and being

transformative – like Senklip and those who have gone before us had done? How do we create opportunities that foster change so that our people can live in their territory, on their own lands, speak their own language and practice our way of life in healthy safe communities?

The management team continues to build capacity and develop processes to support and empower Syilx communities. We no sooner address one challenge when it becomes apparent there are still so many issues we have yet to take on. From the Syilx Nation Water Forums, *sq^wəlq^wItula?x^w* Voices on the Land (web atlas), The *kł cǰəlk stiṛn* Hatchery, and First Nations Health Council matters to the Aboriginal Women in Health Project, our staff are working to ensure that Syilx cultural framework and Unity Principle are present and central to all our initiatives. There is so much important collaboration and work with our communities

and partners it is difficult to capture it all within these pages. The important recognition of hard work, commitment and dedication of the staff within our member communities by their contribution to these Nation based initiatives cannot go missed, lim'limpt.

We cannot compromise on Syilx cultural principles. The management team challenges each other on this very key issue which has led to another year of exceptional growth. Our projects, regardless of their origins, must reflect our unique cultural lens. As seen with the launch of the BRIDGES program, this requires innovation, creativity, persistence and partnerships. Through this ongoing evaluation process, we learn what needs to be adapted, changed, modified and altered, and then we respond by making changes. This environment has lent itself to a growing partnership with UBC Okanagan, Research and Innovation. Our initiatives have attracted environmental awards and international accolades.

As we transition from a non-governmental organization (NGO) providing services to our people that have been built upon in the assertion of our Title and Rights to a Syilx Nation lead government fully supported and financed by our own source revenue;

how do we manage the multiple demands? ONA is directed to respond to demands within the strategic plan provided to us by our leadership. We finance this through proposal writing and innovative approaches that advance our collective work with our own personal and professional accountability intact.

Needless to say, we are working within a dynamic environment where the challenges at times seem discouraging. Aboriginal women and girls continue to be murdered and go missing, Indigenous children continue to be over represented in provincially operated child welfare systems across Canada, and our young people are incarcerated at alarming rates. Governments around the world are desecrating our lands of Natural Resources. Standing Rock, the Site C Dam, and Kinder Morgan loom. Where is the Balance? These are not easy issues to resolve however how we take the stand "of the art of possible".

Indigenous peoples, despite our many challenges, are leading this charge for sustainable environmental development. Our own Chairman Grand Chief Stewart Phillip stands firm and steady. It's up to us to challenge Federal and Provincial Governments to ensure that the Murdered and Missing Women and

Girls Inquiry, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling that "Canada discriminates against children on reserve" is upheld and addressed. These are all fights that must begin at home, in our own communities, among our own people. We must continue to advocate and fight for the right to raise our children, on our land, speaking our language and learning our culture.

In the same way that I imagine our predecessors faced daunting trials, so today we are called to face the challenges of the new millennium.

Finally, I would like to thank the many community members who also give of their time to making ONA the success it is becoming, through cultural teachings, sitting on committees or helping at ONA events and conferences. I leave you with this thought:

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

Howard Thurman

Lim'limpt

Suiki?st

A Year of Growth

Over the last year the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) has experienced rapid growth and change as an organization. The initiation of innovative new programs and projects, progression of legal activities, and continued development of infrastructure have all contributed to enhancing ONA's capacities as an organization. These developments have required the acquisition of more staff to support this growth. In the face of all these advancements we remain committed to ensuring our foundations form the base to all the work we do.

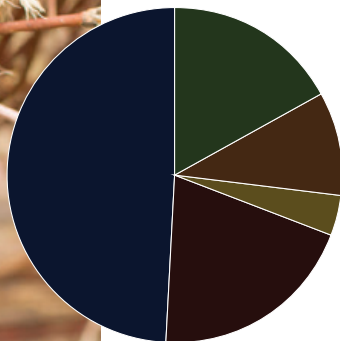
At the forefront of the ONA's work is the principle of unity. This principle is central to all of our decision-making and actions. Since contact, and through to today, the forces that attempt to erode our bonds as Syilx (Okanagan) people persist. We are stronger together, and need to continue developing actions that support the collective as a whole and one another. In this regard, we must be vigilant that our Syilx Cultural Principles and Protocols are not compromised, and that they frame all of the work that we carry forward. ONA recognizes the importance of having our Elders guidance, input and participation.

Partnerships, innovations and capacity building are key to ONA's work, but are only successful if they engage and reflect our Syilx worldview, language and sense of responsibility.

Regardless of the task at hand we are dedicated to fulfilling the mandate of asserting Syilx Nation Title and Rights over Syilx territory. This includes many of the legal processes and actions, but extends out to the protection of the tmx^wulax^w and empowering community and individuals in the process of restoring our identity, culture and territory. As such, all ONA endeavors are rooted in serving the bigger picture of Title and Rights.

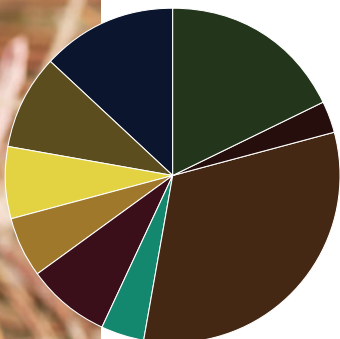


2016 - 2017 Revenue Analysis



REVENUE BY DEPARTMENT

Administration	17%
Natural Resources	10%
Policy & Governance	4%
Wellness	20%
Fisheries	49%



ACTUAL REVENUE

USA PUD	18%
USA CCT	3%
Other Income Indiginous and	32%
Northern Affairs	4%
FNHA	8%
DFO	6%
Other Gov of Canada	7%
Prov of BC	9%
BC Hydro	13%

* See Audited Financial Statement under separate cover



Standing Strong Together Governance through Unity

Our Nation continues to face infringements and violations on our territory. These take place in a world with increasingly complex social, political and environmental challenges that are rapidly expanding. In the face of these challenges, the potential to advance and assert our Title, Rights, and responsibilities is deeply enhanced by our ability to unite and work collectively. By coming together as a Nation we

have a greater ability to ensure that issues, from the expansion of extractive industry development to the violence experienced by our communities, are recognized and addressed in a meaningful and lasting way.

The Chiefs Executive Council (CEC), through their Title and Rights strategic approaches, advancements and planning, strengthen our Syilx governance structure. They are resolute in their knowing that Syilx Title and

Rights are held collectively. At the same time they see their responsibilities to work through and identify structural changes required to support the governance work that has evolved over time. These discussions provide the mandate and direction to their Legal, Policy and Negotiators Team resulting in developing processes and priorities which support this important work.



skc'əḥ^wəḥwipla? ut stəttat

2016

- APR 20** Special Meeting with Upper Similkameen Indian Band “Syilx Decision Making Protocol”
USIB Hedley Office
- APR 25** MOU Meeting Hosted by WFN
- APR 26** Special CEC Title & Rights “Revenue Sharing”, Westbank BC
- MAY 04** Special CEC Meeting “Internal Prep May 19th Government to Government MOU Meeting”
- MAY 16** Okanagan Nation Energy Executive Committee Meeting, Hosted by Upper Nicola Band
- MAY 19** Special CEC Meeting “Government to Government MOU, Hosted by Westbank First Nation
- JUN 07** ONA CEC/Okanagan Basin Water Board/Stewardship Council Joint Session
“Post Tsilhqot’in Workshop” by Dr. Roshan Danesh, Coast Capri, Kelowna BC
- JUN 14** Special CEC Meeting with Upper Nicola Band and Kinder Morgan Presentation, ONA
- JUN 30** CEC Regular Meeting, ONA
- JUL 15** Special CEC Meeting - “ONA Audit Review”, ONA
- JUL 20** Okanagan Nation Chiefs and Council “Syilx Title and Rights” Session, Hosted by WFN
- JUL 21-22** ONA Annual General Assembly, Hosted by WFN, Westbank, BC
- AUG 23** Special CEC Meeting with INAC Joe Wild,
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister or Treaties and Aboriginal Government Sector, Westbank BC
- AUG 25** Special CEC ONA CEC UNB Chief and Council Joint Session on Kinder Morgan,
The Cove Lakeside Resort, Westbank BC
- AUG 25** Special CEC and NRC Session “Joint Session”, The Cove Lakeside Resort, Westbank BC
- AUG 30** Special CEC Meeting with Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association, ONA Westbank BC
- SEP 15** Chiefs Executive Council Meeting, Westbank BC
- SEP 19** Minister Mary Polak - Minister of Environment
“Enhanced Protection Measures of South Okanagan” Hosted by LSIB, Cawston BC
- OCT 11** “Chiefs Executive Council & Wellness Committee - Conference Call -
“Preparation for Interior Caucus and Gathering Wisdom”
- OCT 19-23** Desautel Hunting Case - Court
- OCT 26** Special CEC “Kinder Morgan Follow-Up - Consultation Report”
- NOV 02** Special CEC Meeting with Wellness Committee “Service Delivery Mandate”
The Cove Lakeside Resort
- NOV 09-10** CEC - Joint CRT Tribal First Nations Leadership Meeting, Portland, Oregon
- NOV 23** Chiefs Executive Council Quarterly Meeting, Westbank BC
- DEC 12-13** Special CEC “Title and Rights Planning Session”, Westbank BC
- DEC 14** Chiefs Executive Council Meeting, Westbank BC

2017

- JAN 25** Chiefs Executive Council Meeting, Spirit Ridge Resort, Osoyoos BC
- JAN 26** Special CEC & Wellness Strategy Meeting, Spirit Ridge Resort, Osoyoos BC
- FEB 21** Special CEC “Follow-up from January 26th Revenue Sharing” Westbank, BC
- MAR 27** ONA CEC Update, Desautel, Court Decision



Amplifying Our Voice: Title, Rights and Decision-Making

The ONA's legal team has been involved with many files that advance the interests of the Okanagan Nation and paving the way for substantial governance opportunities for both communities and the Nation. As the political and social system continues to shift with the Crown we remain prepared for new relationships with the Okanagan Nation.

The Syilx Nation upholds its responsibility for *suxwxtm* (taking care of the land) that carefully considers environmental, social, and economic interests of the Nation. The current environmental assessment legislation, policy, and processes fall short of addressing potential impacts on our Title and Rights.

The CEC continues to advocate the government to address our Title issues. We have highlighted the historically inadequate processes in addressing indigenous Title and Rights issues and as a result a meeting between the CEC and Indigenous and Northern

Affairs Canada (INAC) Assistant Deputy Minister Joe Wild took place August, 2016. This meeting set the stage to discuss the development of Nation-to-Nation process that would address Syilx (Okanagan) Title and Rights with our territory. The CEC has since directed their legal team to draft an approach for the Nation's consideration. This will advance a proactive approach that is in sync with Syilx values and priorities, including issues such as self-determination, governance, jurisdictional issues, Syilx laws and customs, Syilx culture and language, and the development of a Syilx Constitution.

As part of the Nations key internal governance agreements and traditional protocols, the Syilx Cooperative Decision-Making Protocol is playing an essential role. The Protocol is a mechanism that is based upon Syilx values, principles, and approaches to address major impacts and land development within the territory. The CEC continues

to further articulate and discuss the Syilx Cooperative Decision-Making Protocol to provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of the communities and the Nation in our collective decision-making.

The CEC has maintained a strong and unified approach to protect and advance the complexity of Okanagan interests in the territory and continue to do so with the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) review process.

The CRT created one of the most significant and ongoing infringements of Syilx Title and Rights, leading to the construction of 3 major Canadian dams that flooded much of the Slocan (Arrow Lakes) valley and converted the upper Columbia watershed into a massive reservoirs system. Until now, there has never been any consultation or involvement of the Syilx /Sinixt, or any other First Nations in the design, negotiations or implementation of the original treaty.



We must work together to ensure our collective voices are a part of the CRT renewal process. In collaboration with the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Okanagan Nation continues to advance its united position on the CRT. The connection between hydroelectric and water flow operations and its impacts on our constitutionally-protected fishing rights is distinctly an Okanagan issue. This matter provides the Okanagan with a unique responsibility to engage in future discussions with both levels of government, due to the critical nature of those rights.

There are many critical aspects of the CRT review that must be addressed, including vast impacts to Syilx land, water, relatives, and people. ONA has worked on this file for the past several years and will continue with the expectation to have a significant and meaningful role when the renegotiation process begins.

Through the CRT and other issues the ONA and CCT will continue to be united through our cultural, familial, territorial, economic and political ties.

In 2010 hunting charges were laid by the Province against Rick Desautel of the Colville Confederated Tribes. In March 2017, the court acquitted Desautel and held that the descendants of the Sinixt continue to exist and hold rights in the Arrow Lakes. The Sinixt had previously been declared extinct by the federal government back in the 1950's. As Grand Chief Stewart stated, "The court has confirmed what we have always known – that the Sinixt were the original inhabitants of the Arrow Lakes region long before the Europeans arrived. Descendants of the Sinixt are now part of the ONA in Canada and the Lakes Tribe in the U.S. Neither the

Court's decision nor an imaginary line at the 49th parallel can affect the relationships of our people and the Rights that belong to us."

It should be clear to the Province now that the Arrow Lakes region falls squarely within our territory and is subject to our Title and Rights. As such, we continue opposition to the Province's Incremental Treaty Agreement with the Ktunaxa Nation Council, which sees the transfer of land on Wensley Bench located in Syilx territory. These legal proceedings have been put on hold in the hopes that a resolution could be found at the MOU table with the province.

The Desautel decision affirms that the Arrow Lakes region is Sinixt territory, further strengthening our legal claim, though it should be noted that the province will most likely challenge this decision.

In upholding our responsibilities, in December, 2016, the ONA presented a Submission to the Expert Panel on the Review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). Until now we have not been included in the federal environmental assessment process, nor has its standards met the federal government's legal duty to consult and accommodate First Nations interests and rights.

The Crown is currently reviewing and revising the CEAA. Our submission reflects both legal and technical perspectives on the CEAA and had been organized in response to the questions posed under the CEAA review process. It also recognizes that the CEAA process is too focused on socio-economic values and mitigation rather than understanding environmental impacts, and currently provides too narrow a definition of "environmental effects" that does not consider Indigenous values.



Extending Our Influence Through Partnerships

The ONA continues to cultivate effective partnerships and working relationships to find solutions for a more sustainable future. We strive to partner with member communities internally and with outside agencies, to explore how we might work together to build potential partnerships for a more resilient future. These partnerships amplify our presence, while allowing us to assert a broader range of influence in multiple areas of interest.

Wellness

In the latter part of the 2016 ONA and First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) initiated the Nation Shared Service Delivery Model. All services and activities related to the model are aligned to one or more of the three strategic areas: Traditional Wellness, Mental Wellness & Substance Use, and Primary Care. This prototype will maximize benefits by shared delivery

of culturally appropriate services that are centered in a traditional wellness, people centered model that allows for seamless access to a continuum of care.

With the Nation Shared Service Delivery Model we are responsible for hiring and managing positions, collaborating with FNHA and Interior Health and participating in evaluation activities. As a result of the funding provided to our Nation through Joint Project Board, Health Actions and Interior Health we have been able to expand on the services provided to the Nation and also to bring services closer to home.

Some of the assets from this service model include:

- A Registered Social Worker
- A Registered Nurse
- A Medical Office Assistant
- A Nurse Practitioner
- Community Driven Traditional Wellness Activities

- Unity Run support
- Elder Youth Gathering support
- Aboriginal Patient Navigator top up.

One emergent working relationship ONA is cultivating is with the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society (BCSS). The BCSS provides services, support, programming and advocacy for people diagnosed with schizophrenia, alongside education, support, programming and services for other serious and persistent mental illness. In August 2016 ONA started meeting with BCSS to create a facilitator training for Okanagan Nation members in a new program called “Strengthening Families Together, First Nation Edition”. This will be a 10 session program that provides awareness on mental illness and mental health services, understanding of recovery, support for families whose



loved ones are diagnosed with a mental illness and helps families with problem solving, coping, advocacy and communication skills around mental illness. Delivery for training facilitators will take place in June, 2017.

Water

ONA remains committed to how water is managed and recognized in the region and how we might move towards effective partnerships and working relationships to find solutions to a better water future in the region. In response to the increased regional water management challenges, including the destabilizing effects of climate change being experienced in the Okanagan, ONA and Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) hosted the Sustaining Our Headwaters Forum on April 19, 2016, at the Westbridge Community Hall, Rock Creek, BC. Over 65 people were in attendance, and included Okanagan Nation Band councilors, traditional knowledge keepers, RDKB representatives, along with regional water leaders, youth and other concerned citizens.

Partnerships have enabled the ONA to continue with the protection of our territory. The Environmental Flow Needs (EFN) project is a collaborative monitoring project between ONA, FLNRO and OBWB, with OKIB, WFN, PIB and OIB providing key contractual support services. The goal of the project is to develop Environmental Flow Needs (“target flows”) and Critical Flows (“minimum flows”) for water management in Okanagan streams. The ONA is monitoring 16 streams that will enable a deeper understanding of the water needs and challenges in the region. ONA and member communities greatly contribute to the data collection taking place

out in the field. The project will conclude with the development of EFN recommendations for each stream and a final report by March 2018. It is anticipated that EFNs and critical flows will be used in water licensing and drought management decisions by FLNRO following completion of the field work.

Energy

In the context of a rapidly evolving energy sector, the importance of looking at the big picture, including the past, present, and future industry developments is critical to ensuring the Okanagan Nation’s energy needs are met and that our territory is protected. The Energy Executive Committee (EEC) is a CEC sub-committee whose mandate is to oversee all daily matters related to energy developments on the territory and to make recommendations to the CEC for decisions. This committee continues to identify the key priority of ensuring that actionable, tangible, and relevant objectives are achieved for our communities and for sustainable energy development, particularly in regards to partnerships with BC Hydro and Fortis. The EEC Committee is chaired by Chief Clarence Louie and alternate Chief Harvey McLeod with CEC representatives for the major project initiatives as Chief Byron Louis (OKIB) and Raf DeGuevara (WFN) as full participants.

This process includes the evolution and progression of our relationship with BC Hydro under the Enduring Relationship. These EEC Chiefs work directly with BC Hydro executives and through an EEC Working Group on a regular basis to monitor progress, resolve issues and overcome any barriers that may arise. As part of the Enduring Relationship, the CEC meets with BC Hydro’s CEO and

The Social Life of Water was a collaborative community exhibit that explored fundamental relationships with water throughout the Okanagan Valley, organized by the Kelowna Museum. ONA contributed with content and media from a Syilx perspective.

senior executives on an annual basis to share successes and discuss barriers.

Some of the main points of discussion have included:

- Establishment of procurement and employment targets, including creating a

strategic approach to support Okanagan youth;

- Exploring a pathway to address past infringements;
- Establishment of a working group that creates space for additional issue specific Project Review

Committees (“PRC”) to occur. Project Reviews are led by member communities that are most impacted by BC Hydro projects such as the Rev6 (OKIB) and West Kelowna Transmission Line (WFN).

For more information on the Enduring Relationship and the historic signing of the ILM as part of ONA’s work on energy:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7aDTRv9cBU&lc=z121y5nixyf3ijop004cfp5grnhx1np4tg0k

Community Voice

In order to have a truly effective united voice we must ensure that the full range of voices from our communities is represented in the progression of our work. Central to this recognition are the various committees that contribute to all the work that we do. Through the establishment of committees and councils, Syilx Nation communities work collectively with cultural and ecological knowledge keepers on all major issues to address project and policy impacts, benefits, management concerns, while reinforcing the Syilx Nation’s collective interests on their traditional territory. The key role of committees is to assist and provide technical advice to the CEC on various issues and topics.

Committees include:

- Wellness Committee
- Health Sub-Committee
- Child and Family Sub-Committee
- Natural Resource Committee
- Forestry Working Group
- Culture and Heritage Working Group
- Referrals Working Group

- Energy Executive Committee
- Syilx Indian Residential School Committee

Our committees continue to evolve and often respond to work being done on the ground. The Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) initiated a Timber Supply Review (TSR) for the Okanagan Timber Supply Area (TSA) in September 2016. The Okanagan TSA stretches from Seymour River and Shuswap Lake in the north to the U.S. border in the south, and from the Monashee Mountains in the east to the Okanagan Mountains in the west. This review process determines new allowable annual cut (AAC) for the next 10 years in the region.

The TSR was discussed by the Natural Resources Committee in October, 2016. At that time, the ONA was requested to organize a special forestry meeting to discuss the TSR and other related forestry issues. The special NRC forestry meeting was held on January 6th with presentations from FLNRO, and a follow up

meeting on January 20th. At that meeting, communities identified a need for a Nation-wide approach to responding to the TSR.

As a result the NRC Forestry Working Group was formed and has supported Syilx forestry discussion. Membership includes both natural resource staff and community forest company staff to ensure a balance of perspectives. Working Group discussions with communities will assist in informing the CEC around what volumes of timber are required by their communities and regarding forestry practices that need to be in place for sustainable harvest as part of the TSR and a move toward management of timber harvest in the territory.

Some key issues with current forestry practices identified by community forestry crews that may be addressed include: cumulative effects of over harvesting, degradation to water quality, adverse impacts on plants and animals, loss of wildlife cover/habitat, increased access to areas, and adverse impacts to overall food security.

Community Capacity Development

The commitment to developing the capacity within Syilx (Okanagan) communities can be acknowledged through a wide range of the programs and projects that are currently being implemented in communities across the Okanagan Nation, in addition to the resources that are shared with community, as well as the transfer of knowledge. Some of these programs are highlighted:



23 participants from the 7 member communities were provided training by Public Safety Canada (PSC) on how to create a Community Safety Plan (CSP). This was a 3-day training that took place at The Cove in Westbank. The training enables participants to guide the community in the creation of a CSP. The CSP has committed to look for sustainable funding for the completed Plans and was part of the official launch of the You Empowered and Strong program.



Community Action Initiative (CAI) aims to engage our Syilx Elders and their caregivers to increase elder mental wellness literacy, which is understood as the knowledge, beliefs and abilities that enable the recognition, management or prevention of mental health problems. This program developed curriculum that will be shared with the Nation's elders on a variety of mental wellness topics including isolation and addiction.



Syilx Indian Residential School (IRS) Workshops and Committee met to discuss healing strategies and projects. This included workshops delivered in most Syilx communities in the school districts.

The Mental Wellness Service Map is a map that identifies the mental wellness services available in the Okanagan Region. The mental wellness service map is available to Okanagan Nation employees that can be shared with all members of the community. The mental wellness service map includes therapy, counseling, outreach and addiction services and treatment programs. The map also includes crisis line phone numbers and links to websites that provide education, awareness and information on mental illness and wellness.



Serving the People

You Empowered and Strong (YES)

23 participants from **6** of the member bands in the Community Safety Planning (CSP). Communities were provided with funds to meet and work on the CSP using community input. The **6** communities are in the process of completion of those Plans.

Child Welfare and Youth Justice

40 Family Decision Making (FDM) Circles were held to develop plans for their youth and children
47 Families participated in FDM program
61 Children/Youth were planned for
8 Youth Justice Circles were held
10 Youth Participated in Youth Justice Program
8 Youth were planned for

Okanagan Nation Response Team

10 adults serviced that made suicide attempts
7 youth serviced that made suicide attempts
8 youth serviced that had suicide ideation
9 people serviced that witnessed violence
32 people supported thru the Louie/Robotti Trial for 25 days in total
134 people serviced including family members in total

Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health

Worked with **40** children, one-on-one
Worked with **50+** children and youth in groups

Health Care Advocates

Total number of persons served: **1657**
Individual appointments with Clients: **34**
Community visits: **207**

K^wu xast

54 children between the ages of 6-12 years have participated in the k^wu xast program for 2016-2017

R'Native Voice

17 Youth/Community Workers participated in IndigenEyez Capacity Building Workshop
13 Youth/Community Workers participated in Catch the Fire Capacity Building Workshop
2 Youth representatives participate in Columbia River Basin Leadership Gathering
25 Youth attend Wellness Gathering
35 Youth attend Elder Youth Gathering
70 Youth participate in Unity Run

Syilx Early Years

Number of persons served (**1148**)
Site visits – outreach to AECD programs (**91**)
Support to new staff (**20**)
Number of meetings (**73**)
Annual Early Years Gathering (**84 participants**)

Indigenous Principles for an Economic Fishery

A Continued Testament to Perseverance

The kł c̓p̓alk̓ stīm Hatchery is a testament to the perseverance of the Syilx people to realize their dream of restoring the n'titxw (Salmon) – one of our Four Food Chiefs – to their original habitat and rightful place in our territory. This hatchery represents a critical stage of our Nation's restoration initiative and is part of a long-term program to restore the historical range of Sockeye in the upper Okanagan watershed, Okanagan Lake, and Skaha Lake systems, and

a region of the Columbia River Basin.

With the 2016 broodstock collection being high the 2017 fish release goal will be very aggressive, thus we have needed to focus on training. A training program was developed to enable our staff to gain further knowledge and experience so that they could become Certified Fish Culturists.

In an effort to further reduce the impact on wild Sockeye adults by our

conversation hatchery we have experimented with bringing broodstock from the capture site to the hatchery. The fish stayed in our rearing tanks until they had ripened and were producing gametes. A total of 700,000 eggs were collected from these fish. It is believed this procedure will be very useful in years when the run has lesser returns and we do not want to manage too many fish for fear of having a negative impact on the wild stock runs that we support.

Okanagan Aquatic Enterprises

ONA recognizes the need to diversify and be competitive, so that our goals of incorporating Indigenous and sustainable principles are aligned with our Syilx responsible harvesting practices in the development of a fishery. As such, the Okanagan Aquatic Enterprises (OAE) acts as an economic extension of our fisheries restoration work, seeking to support our food fishery initiative through the development of a complimentary, sustainable economic fishery. OAE has extended our uptake of activities of networking with regional, national, and international members, developing media that communicates our initiatives, and looking to develop alternative markets for niche-

based products.

OAE's Okanagan Select products include canned, smoked, candied and fresh frozen Okanagan sockeye salmon. The 2016 marketing strategy focused on maintaining and growing our sustainable regional sales base. This model cultivated markets that support the broader values of the cultural significance and environmental sustainability of Okanagan sockeye, and has proven highly successful with growth exceeding previous expectations. Part of this success was based on the successful application of a Buy Local BC grant that assisted in farmer's market participation. Okanagan Select products are currently sold at over 20 retailers

within the region.

We also continue to nurture our relationship with the Inland Salmon Producers Association (ISPA) who are the other 5 Inland Tribes of whose Tribal work includes the economic aspects of Salmon harvest management.

Our marketing vision extends beyond the sale of goods, to include the need for education and advocacy for indigenous food sovereignty based on the differentiation of our product as both environmentally sustainable and culturally significant. ONA continues to be dedicated to advocating for Syilx communities and the return of sc'win, both regionally and internationally.

Highlights from Our Technical Work



124 Projects currently in progress

Hatchery

Release of **357,578 sockeye** into Skaha Lake.

Release of **9,994 sockeye** into Okanagan Lake (first contribution to restoration).

Receipt of **15,000 Chinook eggs** from the Colville Tribes hatchery to allow us to make releases for the beginning of our Chinook Restoration Program.

Did **42 tour** total to almost **600** people (599).

Food Fishery

Two 16 foot lunds (with trolling gear, accessed by all bands, > **100 trips** per year).

One **37 foot spookaleech** with troll and gillnet drum, accessed by all bands, > **100 trips**.

One purse seine used to catch **over 150,000 sockeye** of which > **25000 sockeye** distributed to FSC all bands.

Three large lake sunken gill nets provided over **30,000 sockeye** for membership food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fishery.

Two river tangle nets provided to all bands to fish at OK Falls, > **3000 sockeye** caught to date for FSC fishery.

OK falls fish trap provided to all bands, > **300 sockeye** caught to date.

Dream Catcher CCT vessel assisted ONA for FSC fishery.

PIT Tagging

Installed a second PIT antenna downstream of Road 18, Oliver BC. Allows for redundancy in detections, as well as detection efficiencies and travel directionality.

This site is vital to our stock assessment estimates entering the Okanagan River.

Painted Turtle Restoration

Captured and tagged **112 turtles** through trapping and hand catching.

FinS Program

Donated **15 aquariums** to schools so they could observe the hatching and development of sockeye fry.

Skaha Lake Sockeye Re-introduction Program

Collected a total of **7,350 adult spawning sockeye** from the Okanagan River.

A record for the Re-introduction Program, more than tripling the previous record, this broodstock collection was to support the collection of **5.2 million sockeye eggs** for the hatchery program.

Fisheries Department tagged **10,241 sockeye smolts** with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags that were purse seined in Osoyoos and Skaha lakes.

Tri-Nation Collaborative Native Mussel Detection Project

91 sites were visited in 2016, with several sites observed to support mussel, some in very high densities

Pass Creek Regional Park Riparian and Fish Habitat Enhancement

In collaboration with Regional District of Central Kootenay, Castlegar and District Wildlife Association, local Elementary Schools and Selkirk College Recreation Fish & Wildlife students planted **over 300 trees** to improve riparian (streamside) conditions.

Harvest

Increase in sockeye translated into higher than average food fishery by local Okanagan fishers, as well as ONA distribution of over **33000 lbs** of sockeye, **2000 lbs** of Chinook, **300 lbs** of whitefish, and **75 lbs** of carp.





Recognizing the dedication of our community members

Each and every one of our community members has a unique gift received through their connection to their ancestors and territory. It is the brave expression of these gifts that continues to bring innovation, cultural connection, hard work, and strong families forward every day. The dedication our People have not only to our survival but to our resilience and sovereignty is what inspires us to continue our work. We recognize and acknowledge our community members for their steadfast and unwavering commitment.





tmx^wulax^w: Honoring Our Responsibility

As Syilx people we are required to act as caretakers of *nx^wəlx^wəltantət* (that which gives us life) and in return we will be reciprocally nurtured. This bond of reciprocity and responsibility has flowed from our ancestors and will continue to be passed on through the generations.

Today our *tmx^wulax^w* is under sustained threat from a number of modern use and management practices including, but not limited to, extractive industries, damming, industrial agriculture, and urban development. All of this is further intensified

by the effects of climate change, destabilizing natural ecological cycles and flows. In the face of these challenges the Okanagan Nation continues its dedication to initiatives that ensure we reaffirm our responsibilities to the *tmx^wulax^w*, to safeguard our territories lands, waters and wildlife for everyone in the Okanagan for all time.

Supporting Our Relatives

We continue to promote the recovery and resiliency of our *tmixw* relatives. Initiatives such as caring for the land and water where the *tmixw*

lives is key to upholding the value of protecting the four legged and those that swim and fly. Protecting the quality of water and land is fundamentally improved by restoring and reconnecting floodplains, measuring flows, and making fish and waters decisions based on real time data.

ONA responds to technical requests brought forward from member bands and/or community members. The requests range from technical assistance to bands for referrals that they receive to individual band members needing help with bank erosion questions,



harvest questions and fish health inquires. On top of this we attend a wide range of workshops, conferences, and career fairs held by the bands, allowing us to inform the communities what ONA is currently working on, alongside job opportunities. In addition, staff participate in meetings throughout the Territory where we can voice our issues, concerns, and agreements in favor of our mandate.

In September and October, 2016, Fisheries staff collected a total of 7,350 adult spawning sc'win (sockeye) from the Okanagan River. This was a record for the

sc'win Re-introduction Program, more than tripling the previous record of 2,344 adults collected in 2014. This broodstock collection was to support the collection of 5.2 million sc'win eggs for the hatchery program. The overall goal of the Skaha Reintroduction Program is to rehabilitate the sc'win stock. To date, the program has been able to help recover the stock where now it comprises 80% of the Columbia River Sockeye population. This has benefited the Nation with food fish and the intrinsic, ecological value of having Sockeye return to their former range.

In addition, rehabilitation of sc'win stocks has benefitted Colville Confederated Tribes, who can access migrating salmon through their fishery on the Lower Okanagan River (US portion) and at the Columbia River confluence.

ONA continues to monitor the Okanagan River Restoration Initiative (ORRI) sites to assess how they are evolving over time. Currently all sites are exhibiting biological and hydrological benefits. We are continuing to evaluate how this work can be up scaled and improved.

On October 3-4, 2016, ONA hosted "15 Years of Restoring Salmon Habitat in the qawsitkw (Okanagan River)". The workshop went over stream analysis and hydraulics that directed the restoration designs and describe the planning, construction, monitoring methods and successful results on qawsitkw. As the ONA in collaboration with many project partners have been successful in restoring

spawning and rearing habitat for Columbia River sockeye in their Canadian headwaters, this workshop aimed to transfer this knowledge so that other can be successful in restoring natural habitats.

The ONA CEC passed a tribal council resolution in 2014 declaring kilawna at risk and in need of recovery throughout Syilx territory. The status of kilawna populations are an indicator of the ability of the land to sustain the Syilx people. This wildlife initiative was aimed at gathering TEK information and constructed an initial inter-band network and inter-tribal connections indicative of the broader support for the recovery of kilawna in the North Cascades ecosystem. In 2016, we held a Grizzly Recovery workshop in Manning Park that brought together tribal representatives of the Syilx, Secwepemc, Sto:lo, and the St'la'imc people to build the collaborative inter-tribal relationship and actions necessary to recover and protect kilawna within the North Cascades ecosystem.

Alongside these actions ONA has continued to progress with a 10-year Western Painted Turtle life history and habitat use monitoring study in the drawdown zone of Arrow Lakes Reservoir. This study is intended to address the relative influence of the current reservoir operating regime on the life history and habitat use of painted turtles occurring in habitats within Revelstoke Reach.

The ONA works towards meaningful involvement in all areas of field work, data analysis, project



development, report writing and project management with BC Hydro in the eastern part of the territory under the Water Use Planning studies.

Major initiatives include:

- Wildlife Effectiveness Monitoring and Enhancement Area Identification for Lower and Mid-Arrow Lakes Reservoir,
- Revelstoke Reach Western Painted Turtle Monitoring Program,
- Monitoring Wetland and Riparian Habitat in Revelstoke Reach in Response to the Wildlife Physical Works,
- Wildlife Effectiveness Monitoring of Revegetation in Kinbasket Reservoir,
- Kinbasket and Arrow Lakes Reservoir: Amphibian and Reptile Life History and Habitat Use Assessment,
- Monitoring Mica Dam Total Gas Pressure for fish suitability,
- Mid-Columbia River and upper arrow lake juvenile sturgeon monitoring,
- Arrow Lakes Reservoir Monitoring of Revegetation Efforts and Vegetation Composition Analysis, and Arrow Lakes Reservoir Inventory of Vegetation Resources.

The ONA is committed to upholding major projects in the Columbia to prepare the way for the return of our salmon to the Upper Columbia. This work includes monitoring with BC Hydro, aquatic habitat improvement initiatives, and continued baseline research for historical inflows of nutrients.

Work at Revelstoke Dam includes monitoring research on the physical habitat and productivity with focuses on water levels, algae, aquatic invertebrates, and temperature as well as fish

indexing to determine common fishes. We also include fish indexing in the Lower Columbia River at Hugh Keenleyside Dam. This work in the Columbia region includes kokanee enumeration, bull trout migration study, and fish productivity at Duncan Dam and around the reservoir.

Aquatic habitat improvement projects are focused on kokanee access enhancement at Deer Creek in the Drawdown Zone, Pass Creek Regional Park riparian and fish habitat enhancement, and Eurasian water milfoil suppression pilot study in Robson Reach. We engaged the Syilx elders and knowledge keeper's on the topic of historical salmon knowledge in the Arrow Lakes and their likely contribution to the nutrient cycle as well as finalized a literature review. This project provides a partial view of historical, natural nutrient contributions as a comparison for future salmon reintroduction efforts.

We continue our collaborative work as part of the Columbia Basin tribes and First Nations, in developing research and review on how salmon could be reintroduced into the Upper Columbia River Basin. Over the last year this has included working collaboratively on studies for habitat potential and risk assessment. Published studies are forthcoming.

Calling the salmon back is not strictly a technical task. A cornerstone to our sacred responsibility, salmon ceremonies are carried out by Elders empower Syilx people throughout the territory, providing the opportunity to both honor our ancestors and continue to conduct ceremony for the successful return of the salmon. Such ceremonies are key to *kí c̓p̓áłk stiṛṛ* (cause to come back) and are central to Syilx

communities' food security. All locations for these ceremonies are historical fishing and harvesting sites of the Syilx people.

Innovations in the Field

With the exploitation of both our lands and water comes the continued demand for innovative approaches for restoration and protection. The ONA is recognized for our capacity to engage with the most appropriate, cutting edge science, instilled with Syilx traditional knowledge and practices to rejuvenate ecosystems. This must be met with the recognition of our inherent right to protect our territory from further exploitative activities.

We are exploring opportunities to develop and lead new processes forward involving water and stewardship. Resulting from the project Syilx Sub-Basin Watershed Management Plan pilot project, the ONA has currently established a Syilx Water Responsibility and Planning Methodology to guide the development of watershed management plans that are grounded in

the process and inclusion of Syilx TEK. Specifically, this particular methodology is utilized to apply TEK in both existing and new watershed governance processes. This methodology is founded in the gathering of information related to indigenous values and standards by engaging with TEK holders and Syilx scholars through a series of meetings and workshops while applying Syilx constructs and concepts into water management regimes.

In 2016 we partnered with LGL Limited to develop an innovative approach to present products and data in an easy to use interface known as *Shiny App*. This creative design emerged from joint project of monitoring Mica Dam in the Upper Columbia region. This particular use of technology articulates complicated data to generate a variety of outputs including graphs and charts.

Since 2012 ONA has been tagging a portion of Okanagan Sockeye smolts with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags. About the size of a grain of rice - PIT Tag contains a unique code. When a tag

passes by an antenna's electrical field, a transceiver detects and stores the unique PIT tag number and the time that the tagged fish passed through the field.

As part of this work we have continued the work with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission collecting crucial data on fish. These tags allow the nation to identify and track individual fish from their release as juveniles to their return as adults.

The installation of a secondary PIT array downstream of Oliver included the assistance from OIB, PIB, and UNB. The team is working towards installing a PIT array within Pentiction Channel to improve the estimates of sockeye and kokanee.





[water] as the most powerful of all things giving life- as much respect as part of the acknowledgement of the creation/creator, it is the physical manifestation of creation/creator as the life force of the land.

Dr. Marlowe Sam,
Sustaining Our Headwaters Water Forum, April 2016.

The Language of Water

Syilx peoples' relationship to water contrasts current modern values that treat water strictly as a commodity and utility. We recognize that all beings require intact and healthy aquatic systems to ensure their health and well-being. The CEC of the ONA is dedicated to upholding our inherent responsibility to care for the siw+tkw through a number of different projects and initiatives.

We are now pursuing a new initiative called "Syilx Sub-watershed Pilot Management Plan: Policies and Protocols informed by Traditional Syilx Knowledge." This new initiative includes mapping analysis, gathering and utilizing indigenous knowledge, and the development of management plans and a pilot implementation plan for four watersheds in the Okanagan Basin. This project will address the localized impacts and cumulative effects on water resources in the Okanagan Basin due to climate change, over-allocation of water licenses, population growth, environmental flow needs, and other identified pressures.

As part of the project, we are seeking to develop a process to integrate indigenous values into land and water management practices which will dramatically improve collaborative efforts for decision-making at the community level within the Okanagan Basin. This water initiative will provide a better

understanding of Syilx standards and traditional land and water management policies for the protection of natural resources, allowing for the effective collaboration of local and provincial governments, First Nations, academia and various stakeholder groups to develop and implement strategies for protection of local fish and aquatic resources and habitat needs.

Resulting from the need to research the fragmentation of impacting projects, the ONA has successfully completed a watershed fragmentation analysis to determine the intact landscapes under the Revelstoke 6 and the West Kelowna Transmission Line projects.

In continuing with upholding water for decision-making processes the Fish Water Management Tool, a modelling software, is designed specifically for the Okanagan basin. The software provides in-depth information and models for making weekly water releases from Okanagan dam that account for flood, drought (irrigation concerns), protection of sockeye eggs in the river and kokanee eggs in the lake. This water tool is utilized for major objectives including: minimizing flood damage, protecting fisheries values, satisfying domestic and irrigation water supply demands, and supporting recreation tourism.

PowerPoint presentation: www.syilx.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Syilx-Water-Perspectives-Valuing-Knowledge.pdf

The Okanagan Nation Alliance continuously draws upon the vast knowledge, experience, and expertise among the Nation including those with specialized knowledge in all of the water initiatives among the territory. As part of the Syilx (Okanagan) responsibility, the ONA will be releasing the booklet in 2017 titled *nsiw+kwcn: The Language of the Water* that will highlight the importance of water in the context of a Syilx perspective and grounded in the work around water.



Building an Approach to Energy

As global populations exponentially rise, the demand for new forms of energy production continues to put pressure for energy developments. The ONA hold a new vision for sustainable energy development within the territory and is dedicated to ensuring that further energy development projects have direct and lasting benefits for Okanagan communities and individuals, while remaining steadfast in our demand for involvement with all energy projects that take place in our territory.

The Revelstoke Generating Station Unit 6 Project (REV6) is actively engaged in the Provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) process to upgrade the current Revelstoke Dam with a sixth turbine. A Project Review Committee (PRC) was established is being led by the Okanagan Indian Band in collaboration with the Westbank First Nation, Penticton Indian Band, and the Okanagan Nation Alliance to work with BC Hydro in a new collaborative approach forward. The Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River is significant to the Syilx Okanagan people and their Title and Rights.

BC Hydro has committed to improving the second largest distribution substation at Westbank to increase the reliability of supplying power. The CEC has identified and is ensuring that carrying forward actionable, tangible, and relevant objectives are achieved for the nation and the communities. Arising from this energy initiative, a Project Review Committee (PRC) was established and consists of the communities who are directly involved in the West Kelowna Transmission Line project. Representatives on this committee include Upper Nicola Band, Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, and the ONA. These models of collaboration are clear advancements of our collectively responsibilities to protect the *tmx^wulax^w*, while gathering critical data and resources of our history and opportunities for the transmission of cultural knowledge of all our members who are involved.

In part of these innovative opportunities the ONA partnered with the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) in hosting a workshop to move forward in developing more capacity

in dealing with energy efficiency approaches in communities.

This workshop was aimed at advocating for energy efficiency in Okanagan communities, championing the importance of energy conservation to the environment and assisting community members in reducing energy consumption. This collaborative event brought forward a chance for FBC and ONA to work with community members to encourage and support energy conservation behaviours and actions provide a source for information about energy consumption and energy conservation and efficiency opportunities.

The ONA CEC is committed to access resources and build upon Partnerships to support our member communities to have access to resources and information to support topics such as energy conservation, economic, employment and training opportunities, Research and collect information as well as to bring information between Fortis and communities to CEC Energy Executive Council Table.



A Shared Responsibility Supporting One Another

A collective perspective gives rise to a collective responsibility; this is our Syilx way of caring for and supporting our families. Coming together to problem-solve and share in our responsibilities to care for one another is based on our values of communal responsibility that we share with families, community and our service providers.

As part of our shared work the ONA continues to develop capacity in the members it serves and gather resources for the use of the Okanagan Nation member communities.

Everybody had somebody. It didn't matter if they were family or not, if anybody needed help, they would help them in any way they could.

Syilx elder

Creating Community-Based Solutions

The ONA remains dedicated to creating community-based solutions to decrease violence and suicide and to ensure that the principle of being there for community when called upon is upheld. The Nation has taken meaningful action with the creation and continuation of Initiatives that are solution focused in dealing with and

addressing violence and suicide in communities.

Our initiative, You Empowered Strong (YES), is a community safety development project to address violence against women and children who witness abuse. This program seeks community-based solutions for families who have to deal with the

harmful impacts of family violence. Each community will determine how they provide the service based on individual community needs.

The goal of the project is to stop the abuse and create a safe environment for children. The project will develop resources that educate youth about healthy relationships,



We put our footprints and mark on the eastern portion of our territory from south of Castlegar over to Salmo, north to Kaslo and then back towards Nakusp.

Though a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women was launched by the federal government these gestures must be met with meaningful action.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip 2017



enhance knowledge about abuse, difference forms of violence and to support families to heal.

Similar to the Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT), that currently responds and assists community in crisis and suicide prevention, YES will utilize this same model to create a team to assist communities to address violence. The team will be comprised of formal or informal community leaders and natural caregiver volunteers who will be trained and will partner with the YES Project Lead and Community Coordinator. The team will monitor, mentor, support and respond to disclosures and facilitate help for families at risk.

Our communities are resilient through tragedies and injustices because we continue to hold each other up and be there for each other in times of crisis. The Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) assists Nation communities in various ways, from just being present and taking care of those who need support to providing specialized crisis intervention advisement to communities and families when requested. Understanding the impact and effects of intergenerational trauma, our teams respond to a range of

incidents including violence, unexpected death, violence in relationships, mental health and addictions (anxiety and depression), and suicide. These Teams provide training, are a resource in community, all the while supporting social change. Such dedication was illustrated in the presence of ONRT in supporting community during the late Roxanne Louie trial.

The Unity Run continues to be a cornerstone event to be solution focused in educating and empowering youth about suicide and violence. The Unity Run is encourages and strengthens Okanagan Nationhood and healthy lifestyle through action, providing Syilx youth the opportunity to experience their territory as a means to address a broad range of issues from suicide and mental health to cultural rejuvenation and reconnection with territory. While leaving their mark on the land, the runners learn about our history through stories from our elders that helped strengthen our connection to the land and each other. Youth who have a strong sense of identity are more likely to be secure in who they are as individuals.



A Story of Healing Moving Forward

In a perfect world, there is no crime there is no prison, there is no oppression, marginalization, racism and colonization. Unfortunately this is not a perfect world and humans survive the best they know how.

This story may not seem like the strongest success story one has ever heard, however, success is subjective and can only truly be measured by the one who makes the changes. I have learned that success means meeting the person where they are at in their life and recognizing any positives changes they have made. This success story is just that, meeting a youth and family where they are at in their life and trying to work with them. This youth was 17 years old while I first started working with him and he is now 18. For confidentiality reasons I will call this youth Billy.

This young man Billy was involved in gangs, drugs, fights stealing and breaching his probation. I got to know Billy and found out that all of his detrimental behaviours came from a place of hurt. He isolated from family and stole money to use drugs whenever he could. When I

first met Billy he was high but agreed to have a family circle to help him make better choices in life. I organized a family circle and met his family on multiple occasions. They are a loving family hurting from past trauma and current family addictions. With all of their hurt in their lives, they made room for a family circle. The first circle was full of hugs and love sent to Billy, this was a room full of support and love and avoided judgment.

Before the first circle the family was disconnected from each other in regards to what to do with Billy. They felt detached from one another and also felt like they were enabling Billy by giving him money and a place to stay when he was at his worst. After the first circle the family had a sense of calm and ease and had created a family plan on what to do with Billy.

Weeks later Billy was caught committing another crime and was sent to prison. Some may ask what is the success in this story? To be honest there is no perfect ending to this story. However, Billy is now serving some time, has been sober for weeks, has been in contact with me

to have a follow up circle where he is ready to listen and stick to the family plan. This is not to say that prison has cured him, this is saying that connections were made by Billy and I spending time together and working with his family. He is connected with his family and plans to stay sober and spend time with his younger siblings when he is out of prison.

When I first met Billy's family they had no connection in regards to Billy and were all trying to solve the problem alone. I look at the success in this scenario as a connected family ready to meet again in a family circle when Billy is out. Some family members have thanked me and stated that they feel a sense of connection with each other and feel like there some sort of plan for the future. The family is optimistic for a future circle and remain in contact with me and Billy. This story is not perfect but is a story of meeting a person in pain where they are at and creating an open dialogue and a safe place to share at a circle.

Youth Justice circle is to serve those youth ages 12-17 that are in the criminal justice system and/or are in gangs or are vulnerable to gang involvement. This includes the youth's core support group and family members come together to assist the youth to develop their plan of success for their future.



Shared Care for Members: Filling the Gaps

The Aboriginal Patient Navigators (APN) assist Aboriginal patients within the regional hospitals but a gap remained for additional support at the community level. To assist in filling these gaps in service the ONA has two health care advocates that assist Nation members to overcome barriers, ensure Nation members are heard, increase access to health services and ensure the services received are holistic and culturally safe.

Another gap that was identified by ONRT was issues in youth discharge at the regional hospital. Nation youth who were taken to emergency were being discharged from hospital with no direct calls to the community band or discharge planning for the youth. ONRT lead met with the South Okanagan Division of Practice and the Community Crisis Team

and after much discussion discovered similar gaps in service that both teams wanted addressed, therefore supported the development of the SOS team which eventually changed its name to “Widening the Circle”.

Our group’s purpose was to explore gaps within all of our organizations and work together to start addressing the issues. Our team worked on developing discharge pamphlets for parents and workers of the youth, looked at internal systems within the hospital emergency room and explored ways to change information intake from clients in order to provide better discharge service and communication lines to frontline workers at the community level.

The Family Decision Making (FDM) and FDM Youth Justice circles are one of the best

examples of shared care amongst families. The FDM circle is a process where extended families gather to plan for their children. Coming together to problem solve in this manner has been happening in the Okanagan since long before contact. The FDM circles have been highly successful in keeping our families unified, safe and strong. Based on our values of collective responsibility, our model treats the wider family network of kin and community as a source of strength and seeks to actively involve them in decision making. As a collective perspective gives rise to a collective responsibility, this is our Syilx way of caring for and supporting our families. Through this process we ensure connection to ancestral lands, culture and language for our children.



Our Syilx Way

For Syilx People to live a good life we must be interconnected with one another and with our land; wellness is holistic and includes all. The Syilx perspective that we are stronger together has allowed us and our land to be here since the beginning and to continue for our future generations. As such, it is a fundamental principle of the Okanagan Nation Alliance to uphold this conviction; the enduring support of our communities' priorities and their leadership is central to upholding our responsibility as your tribal council. The ONA continues to work towards and support the safety, health and wellbeing of our children, families, communities and land – together.

Gathering Together

We have always gathered together as Syilx people, to celebrate, to pray and to share with one another. The act of gathering is what builds our Nation, communities, and friendships; coming together is what keeps our people connected and strong. The ONA holds 10 annual events, alongside a range of meetings, forums and programs that continue this long standing practice.

Our Annual Events include:

- Water Forum
Apr 14, 2016
- Elder Youth Gathering (2016)
Apr 22-24, 2016
- Unity Run
May 12-15, 2016
- Syilx Early Years Gathering
May 16-18, 2016
- Sockeye Fry Release
May 18, 2016
- Kettle Falls & Castlegar
Salmon Ceremonies
Jun 17-18, 2016
- AGA & Youth
Leadership Gathering
Jul 20-22, 2017
- Salmon Feast
Sep 16-18, 2016
- Wellness Forum
Oct 12-13, 2016
- Elder Youth Gathering (2017)
Mar 10-12, 2017

Contributions to Reconnecting with Syilx Food Sovereignty

Cultivating Syilx food sovereignty within our communities is central to supporting the health, well-being and cultural vitality of the Nation. For decades the work of reinvigorating diverse traditional Syilx food systems has been carried out by communities, organizations and individuals throughout the territory.

ONA contributes to these actions through a wide range of projects, initiatives and actions that further support and enhance such activities. As an organization our contributions include the continuation of partnerships that affirm Syilx values and perspectives in the rejuvenation of our first foods. Our work moves towards protecting, enhancing, and preserving the ecology, cultural ceremonies, relationships, and Syilx first food systems.

The 2016 sc'win food fishery exceeded forecasts and expectations, with three times more fish returning than originally expected. At the same time we also witnessed a marked increase in the number of community members who participated in the food fishery. The food fishery was a cause for celebration, with the distribution of 13,000 sockeye to Nation members and organizations. Such a harvest ensures that our communities have the ability to be sustained by some of the healthiest foods we know. To see more of the harvest visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSk7FX5Cyh8&t=25s

As always, the Salmon Feast provides a weekend long celebration focused on environmental responsibilities, community health, and cultural practices. Bringing together both

nation and non-nation community members in this way, we ensure that the sacred connection and importance of our salmon continues to be understood by all. The activities that are offered throughout the weekend are geared towards connecting physically, emotionally and spiritually to one another, the salmon, and the land. This event exemplifies the importance of taking care of our land, water and animals as strong caretakers.

The kl c̓p̓á'k st̓im Hatchery provided hundreds of thousands of sockeye salmon fry for ceremonial fry releases that took place at 6 Mile Creek (OKIB), Trout Creek (PIB), and Mission Creek (WFN). These ceremonies are critical given that sockeye salmon were nearly extinct in the Okanagan Basin. In the face of such challenges as climate change supporting and working to ensure food security is underlying principle and work in addressing the current challenges to our Syilx food sovereignty.

One of our key partners in enabling these commitments continues to be Slow Food. The Okanagan Sockeye artisanal fishery has received international recognition through Slow Food International, including presentation of sc'win in Italy at Slow Food's international food festival, Terra Madre. Through the Slow Food network we were able to support community participation, with Danielle Saddleman presenting on Syilx food sovereignty at the Slow Fish forum. ONA was also requested to present and participate at the Slow Food Canada's National Meeting in Invermere, BC.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgiH5nfWXBO





2016 Food Fish Distribution

Organization	# Sockeye	lbs
Canoe Paddle	24	71
CCT	593	1779
Enowkin	119	356
Isib	1004	3013
Nkmip	41	124
NRC	296	889
OIB	1429	4286
OKIB	1927	5780
ONA	506	1519
PIB	1482	4446
UNIB	1749	5247
USIB	237	711
WFN	593	1779

The Syilx people are at the forefront of the Indigenous food sovereignty movement. The En'owkin Center and their leadership are committed as their mandate states to always ensure the cultural integrity and protections of our Indigenous foods is central to our Tribal work. From July 15-17th 2016 they hosted the 18th Annual BC Food Systems Network Gathering, which included a side event "Gathering of Indigenous Food Trading and Sharing (GIFTS)", which provided the opportunity to experience and trade indigenous foods from across the BC. En'owkin hosted this important event and has led the critical work of Food Sovereignty as a necessary element to our Tribal Governance development which they guide and inform the work of ONA staff in particular our Fisheries conservation effort such as our Reintroduction of Sockeye Salmon, program, Chinook Recovery etc. As a key partner, ONA was honored to have been

involved in the event, and continue to learn from such experiences and gatherings.

The ONA is committed to rejuvenating all indigenous fish stocks back to our territory, which includes the revitalization of chinook stocks within the territory. In December, 2016, as part of a collaborative effort ONA received 15,000 chinook eggs from Colville Confederated Tribe's Chief Joseph Hatchery. These eggs were incubated, thermal marked, and reared at the kł c̓p̓əl̓k̓ st̓im̓ Hatchery as part of the Chinook reintroduction program in the Okanagan region. Expectation is to release the thermal marked fry in May 2017 below McIntyre dam.

In 2009, BC Hydro developed and implemented the, "BC Hydro Fish Passage Decision Making Framework," which would allow planners and BC Hydro to enter into a formalized process to determine the viability of Fish passage at a number of its dam sites. We have highlighted Wilsey Dam as

one dam site for such work, and over the last six years have undertaken a leadership role in the establishment and chairing of the Wilsey Dam Fish Passage Committee and the BC Hydro Bridge Coastal Restoration Program. ONA continue this work in order to move forward in the improvement of these affected Fish habitats fish passage to restore our food fishery chinook, coho, sockeye, bull trout, adfluvial rainbow trout on the Shuswap River.

This year the committee submitted a proposal that will allow us to work on Step 4 of the BC Hydro Fish Passage Decision Framework process. In the previous fiscal it was decided by we no longer need to work on the Environmental Feasibility Studies and can move onto Preliminary Technical Feasibility Consideration that will involve engineered solutions (options) and plans.

One of the many complex environmental challenges we currently face is the

increased number of invasive species that have begun to disrupt the balance of the timwx. In the face of this, as Syilx people we have always been adaptable to change and have the ability these invasive as potential opportunity to address such issues as food security for our communities.

In collaboration with OIB, the 2016 Asia carp harvest included a catch feasibility and marketing testing. This project led by Colette Louie an OIB member and ONA fisheries supported with gear, testing in Vaseaux Lake, ORRI side ponds, and oxbows in Penticton Channel. Over 100 carp were harvested, with a novel sunken lake trap, using willow thatches as cover to attract fish. Biosampling and carcass testing for yield and biological traits were collected. Interesting aspect of this specific work was that Chefs from Indigenous World wineries assessed a variety of methods to prepare the meat, with a pate being a top pick among consumers.

Since 2003 ONA's FinS (Fish in Schools) in-class program has been educating regional students and teachers about the salmon lifecycle and the importance of their habitat

so that they may become future advocates for both salmon and their habitat. FinS supply the necessary equipment and support needed in order for students to raise fry from the egg stage. This program is pivotal to reconnecting our youth with deeper understandings of n'titxw. ONA provides a 29 Gallon tank with cover, stand/cart, aquarium chiller, and start up supplies; gravel, filters, filter replacements, siphon, insulated cover, thermometer, water conditioners as well as the salmon spawn.

This last year we provided tanks to 14 schools including: Sensisyusten, Columbia elementary, Wiltse elementary, Carmi Elementary, Outma, Enowkin Centre, Cawston Primary, Ntamqen, KVR middle school, OK Falls, Oliver elementary, Senpokchin, Tuc-el-Nuit, and Osoyoos Elementary.

This program provides our children with direct experience of bringing our salmon back with classroom science education that keeps the protection of our wild sockeye salmon at the front of our minds. Teaching our children the importance of our food chiefs n'tyxtix in

relation to land and water helps to develop a sense of pride and responsibility. Every aspect of the event from the ceremony and release to the activities afterward followed the theme of environmental responsibility and cultural pride. This was the second year we were able to successfully release fry from our Nations hatchery.

The combination of landscape of fragmentation due to unchecked development and modern resource management practices continue to undermine the health and wellbeing of our four-legged relatives, who are also an integral to our traditional food systems. Based on past CEC direction, ONA has been meeting with the Province of BC regarding the development of an MOU for the shared responsibility for wildlife and wildlife habitat within has been working with member communities to document oral traditional and current laws, practices, and protocols concerning Syilx hunting and wildlife use and management with a view toward protecting tmixw by ensuring that all hunters are aware of and following them.





Connecting to the Land and Our Identity

The essence of who Syilx people are is reflected and intrinsically connected to our lands and waters. In order for our people to continue to heal, grow, and prosper it is paramount that we create opportunities to build community on and with the land. It is a common teaching amongst many of our Elders that if we don't know our land we don't truly know ourselves. Because of this, the ONA strives to develop opportunities for our communities to be out on the land honouring our identity as Syilx and awakening purpose and strength. It is essential that our youth be

supported in innovative and culturally grounded ways to discover more about the strengths and gifts they each have and uncover what difference they hope to make in their family, community, and in the world at large. Creating a space where youth can safely explore who they are, connect to their lands, and build community together is a priority of the ONA. Currently, there are numerous programs being offered and developed to build this space and enhance support for our youth.

This year was the third year kwu xast, for ages 6-12

has been delivered to our communities. One of the primary focuses of the kwu xast program is teaching our captikwl through play; through innovative and fun ways we discussed their meaning, teachings, and protocols with the children while focusing on our key message that 'we are better together.'

Over the past year, the R'Native Voice program sought to build partnerships and linkages with other ONA and community programs and initiatives to increase opportunities for youth participants to have new experiences. The ONA has

heard numerous requests by youth and their communities that an increase of land-based activities be offered through the program. Further, numerous calls to enhance connections and linkages with other programs and cultural opportunities throughout the Nation were also heard. Answering these calls, a review and (re)development of the program will be complete by fall 2017.

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BRIDGES is a three year project that supports Okanagan youth ages 15-30 to find success in employment or education by incorporating Syilx training and activities through a diverse range of innovative methodologies. The program is built upon the understanding that by creating a program that is rooted in culture and place; our youth will experience an increase in confidence and personal strength. The BRIDGES team is working with UBCO research partners to assist in the identification of barriers and potential solutions. The data and information generated by this project will be gathered in order to adequately assess and maximize the impact of the program. Sustained employment barriers and response techniques will be identified through a culturally grounded and individually tailored approach.

BRIDGES includes skills training, cultural activities, and on the land learning to explore resilience through our rich Syilx heritage

while becoming rooted in family, community, and nation.

The project approach is a combination of **(1)** Syilx methodologies, cultural practices, and thought, **(2)** individual assessments, **(3)** skills mentorship, and **(4)** support from industry partners to facilitate our youth to enter (or re-enter) the labour market. Industry partners will provide new employment pathways, offer new and improved employee preparation, and arrange adequate supports in the workplace to ensure ongoing success of Okanagan labourers.

ONA also continues to nurture the bond between elders and youth by hosting the intergenerational Elder Youth Gathering, of which there were two in the last year. This gathering allows for a space where our elders and youth share stories of resiliency, the past, and dreams for the future while connecting and creating life changing relationships.

BRIDGES illustrates how the diversity of skills and resources that culminate in a partnership enable innovation and forward thinking. For example, BRIDGES has partnered with IndigenEYEZ as one of the core facilitators for our BRIDGES programming. IndigenEYEZ provides learning experiences that engage creativity and the arts alongside culture and on-the-land learning activities. This practice of facilitation supports Syilx youth participating to make meaningful and authentic connection and learning that is steeped through our cultural imperative. Other key collaborators include the En'owkin Centre, who provides accredited training and skills development, with UBCO, who have a critical role in conducting the research and analysis of this Pilot project.



Looking to the Future

As we look toward 2017 there are a multitude of uncertainties and challenges that we must face together. The guidance and support from our elders, leaders, youth, traditional knowledge keepers and other community members will ensure that we have the direction and tenacity to address these demands. As we move forward we will continue to take advantage of the opportunities for collaboration, innovation, learning and creation, and in the process create a more sustainable and healthy world for future generations.

We will Strengthen Syilx Governance by:

- Advocating, lobbying, and achieving success in all Nation based initiatives;
- Continuing active participatory community engagement that fosters inclusion input and guidance of elders, youth, and leaders;
- Rejuvenating a diverse range of fish, including chinook salmon, throughout the territory;
- In collaboration with US tribes, initiating a pilot reintroduction of chinook into the Upper Columbia;
- Celebrating and living our culture and language by being out on-the-land;
- Energy Executive Council successfully building capacity for Nation Business Investments and Energy Conservation initiatives;
- Initiating a Hunting & Gathering Strategy;
- Continuing moving our water work forward, including publishing *nsiwłk: The Language of Water* Booklet; and finalization of the Water Strategy;
- Establishing Community Care Circles through the YES program, which will allow for greater ability to respond to incidents of violence in the home;
- Developing a Nation Cancer Care Strategy and Elder Care Strategy;
- Completion of a Mental Health plan;
- Hosting a “Wrap Around Approach to Suicide” Forum as part of the ONA Youth Mental Health program;
- CEC commitment to Governance Development Process;
- Support Annual Band Operated School Conference and initiatives;
- Communication enhancement and support.





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