My voice, my language goes right across
this country like the breeze.

Elder Joey Pierre

Iʔ Syilx iʔ sukʷnaqinx scqʷəlqʷiltət

SYILX OKANAGAN LANGUAGE DECLARATION

axaʔ iʔ kʷu_aʔ cnsyilxcən kʷu_cut: —We, the nsyilxcən Language People Declare:

axaʔ iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx kʷu salaʔx iʔ_l tmxʷulaxʷ uɬ wayʔ ƫəsxʷuy—kʷu kˈɬqixʷntm iʔ tmxʷulaxʷtət, uɬ iʔ nxʷəlxʷəltantət, uɬ iʔ aʔ_ nkˈʷulmntət, iʔ sƫəkʷukˈʷxixtət uɬ iʔ syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx iʔ sqəlxʷɬcawtət.

axaʔ iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu¯sukʷnaqinx kʷu cnqilxʷcən ta nsyilxcən uɬ way ƫəsxʷuy uɬ ta mnimɬtət kə ckˈɬqixʷstm uɬ kə ctiɬstm, uɬ niʕip kə ckˈʷulmstm iʔ nsyilxcən aʔ nqilxʷcntət.

əckʷiskʷəstm uɬ kə cyirmistm iʔ sktɬiplaʔtət iʔ kˈəl sqilxʷcawtət. iʔ stəɬtaɬtət nixʷ kə ckˈɬkixʷstm iʔ nsyilxcən aʔ nqʷəlqʷiltntət uɬ iʔ syilx iʔ sukʷnaʔqinx iʔ sqəlxʷɬcawtət—iʔ kˈəl scxʷəlxʷaltət uɬ iʔ kˈəl ksƫəcx̌astət iʔ kʷu¯syilx iʔ sukʷnaqinx.

əckʷiskʷəstm iʔ stəɬtaɬt uɬ iʔ sƫəkˈʷukˈʷxixtət iʔ təl captikʷɬ uɬ kˈɬəṕntim iʔ 1910 Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial, uɬ iʔ Okanagan Nation Declaration, uɬ iʔ 2010 Syilx Unity Protocol iʔ sckˈʷuls iʔ Okanagan Nation Alliance naɬ iʔ Colville Confederated Tribes, uɬ iʔ Okanagan Nation Water Declaration—yʕat əcʕac uɬ əkɬsʕax̌ʷip iʔ təl tmxʷulaʔxʷtət uɬ iʔ təl siwɬkʷ itliʔ ki kʷu ƫəlsqilxʷ uɬ itliʔ iʔ sʕax̌ʷips iʔ nqilxʷcəntət kəl ƫəsxʷuys.

axaʔ iʔ kʷu_syilx kʷu_sukʷnaqinx iʔ_scqʷəlqʷiltət:

We, the Syilx Okanagan Peoples have inhabited our territory since time immemorial—we have been defended by our lands and resources, language, customs, traditions and the Syilx Okanagan way of life,

We, the Syilx Okanagan Peoples have spoken our nsyilxcən language since time immemorial and we are responsible for the protection, revitalization and advancement of our nsyilxcən language,

We uphold and re-affirm our inherent right to self-determination. This right includes our ability to protect our nsyilxcən language and Syilx Okanagan culture—a vital component to the survival and prosperity of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples,

We uphold the rights and responsibilities bestowed upon us, as described by the *captikʷɬ* and re-affirmed by the 1910 Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial, Okanagan Nation Declaration, the 2010 Syilx Unity Protocol between Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Colville Confederated Tribes, and the Okanagan Nation Water Declaration—all of which are inextricably tied to our *tmxʷulaxʷ* (land) *uɬ iʔ siwɬkʷ* (water) and our nsyilxcən Language.

We, the Syilx Okanagan Nation make this declaration:

ARTICLE 1 naqs

iʔ kˈʷəlncutn kʷu ƫwiststm axaʔ iʔ kʷu¯nsyilxcən kə ctxəɬntim axaʔ iʔ tmxʷulaxʷtət uɬ iʔ siwɬkʷ uɬ yʕat stiṁ iliʔ kəl kʷu yʕayʕat kəl ƫəsxʷuys.

The Creator has stood us, the nsyilxcən-speaking people, up here as keepers of our territory, lands, water and resources for the good of all for all time.

ARTICLE 2 ʔasil

iʔ təl a nqilxʷcntət yʕat əcmistim iʔ kˈəl tmxʷulaxʷtət uɬ kˈəl siwɬkʷtət uɬ iʔ kəl tmixʷ. təl tmixʷ yʕat iʔ skˈńniyaʔs iʔ aʔ_ nqʷəlqʷiltn uɬ iʔ sʔums kʷu xʷiɬtəm uɬ yʕat iʔ smimayts təl minimɬəlx ki aʔ cmistim.

Our nsyilxcən language is our knowledge of the land, water and the *tmixʷ*.

The sounds and pronunciations within our nsyilxcən language came from the *tmixʷ* and contain specific knowledge values and meaning to them.

ARTICLE 3 kaʔɬis

iʔ skcˈəx̌ʷəx̌ʷx̌ʷiplaʔs iʔ tmxʷulaxʷtət iʔ ta nqilxʷcntət mi ckʷiskʷəstm.

kmax iʔ təl aʔ nqilxʷcntət mi kə cmistim iʔ sc̓x̌ʷiplaʔ, iʔ cawtət uɬ iʔ nkˈʷulmntət.

The laws related to our territory, lands, water and resources are held in our nsyilxcən language.

Our nsyilxcən language is necessary to fully understand Syilx Okanagan legal traditions, customs, and practices.

ARTICLE 4 mus

aʔ nqilxʷcntət əckˈʷulmstm təl ɋsapiʔ putiʔ iʔ sʕasʕawsc iʔ sʕalˈix cxʔit aʔ nqʷəlqʷiltntət, uɬ wayʔ ʕapnaʔ kʷu¯kˈɬkicntəm iʔ təl xʷʔit sxʷipkst spintk, uɬ kʷu¯alaʔ ʕapnaʔ iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx.

Our nsyilxcən language is rooted in the early Salishan ancestral language and has been passed down through thousands of generations since time immemorial to the modern-day Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

ARTICLE 5 cilkst

yʕat iʔ kʷu¯sqilxʷ atlaʔ tiʔ paput iʔ stəɬtaɬtət ƫə kə cmistimˈ maɬ ƫo kʷu ¯kə cqʷəlqʷiltax ta nqilxʷcəntət.

Every person who is of our People is free and equal in their right to learn and to speak our nsyilxcən language.

ARTICLE 6 taɋmkst

iʔ aʔ nwist iʔ nsyilxcən iʔ təl captikʷɬ, ixiʔ silxʷaʔ smipnwiɬn kˈəl snhaʔlɬtiɬn əckc̓ˈx̌ʷiplaʔ iʔ¯ skmiʔiplas kʷu cʔcunmaʔstm kəl kə cnx̌astmistm niʕip iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx, iʔ nəɋˈʷcwilxtət uɬ iʔ tmxʷulaxʷtət naʔɬ siwɬkʷ.

iʔ laʔ nqilxʷcntət iʔ, skmiʔiplaʔs iʔ captikʷɬ kˈɬnx̌astantət, uɬ iʔ kəl skc̓x̌ʷx̌ʷiplaʔtət, uɬ kə ckˈɬqixʷstm ɬa ckˈʷuləmstm lut kə cʕuˈʷləmsc swit kˈəl niʕip x̌əl iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx.

Our high language words have their origin in *captikʷɬ* and are foundational to our philosophical, ethical, and legal text. nsyilxcən is the collective force that connects and unifies the people with all life.

The integrity of the *captikʷɬ* as told within the nsyilxcən language, must be maintained and protected for the future generations of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

ARTICLE 7 sisɒ̓əlkˈ

aʔ nsyilxcən yaʕt aʔ cmistim iʔ kˈəl x̌aʔx̌aʔ uɬ kəl aʔ nkˈʷulmntət kʷu¯ɬa ckˈaʕncut məɬ itliʔ kʷu¯cx̌astwilx uɬ nixʷ iʔ nəɋˈcwilxtət uɬ iʔ tmxʷulaʔxʷtət naʔɬ iʔ siwɬkʷ əcx̌astwilx.

Our nsyilxcən language contains knowledge of our spiritual values and practices as expressed in words used in our ceremonies to instruct and heal ourselves, our families, our communities, our lands and our water.

ARTICLE 8 timɬ

aʔ nqilxʷcntət cˈx̌itɬ sqiltktət uɬ unixʷəxʷ iʔ snəqsəlxʷiwstət, uɬ iʔ sʕax̌ʷiptət iʔ kˈəl kˈʷiχˈt iʔ sʕalˈix iʔ cwilxʷ.

uɬ kə cmistim iʔ kɬcawtət uɬ kˈəl ksckˈʷultət iʔ kˈəl sncuʔwiptət uɬ kəl kˈʷiχˈt iʔ cwilxʷ.

Our nsyilxcən language affirms the connections between the Syilx Okanagan Nation and other Salishan-speaking Nations.

Our nsyilxcən language will always remind us of these relationships and connections through both our extended kinship and community ties and our associated political kinship structures.

ARTICLE 9 x̌aχ̌nut

aʔ nqlixʷcntət cxʔit təl yʕat tə snhaʔlsnwixʷtn uɬ ka cxʷələstis iʔ snx̌asiwstət uɬ iʔ kəl x̌ast aʔ nkˈʷulmntət kɬnx̌astantət iʔ ¯l¯ tmxʷulaʔxʷtət, naʔɬ siwɬkʷtət.

Our nsyilxcən language contains specific words and phrases that provide guidance and instruction on our protocols that govern our peaceful co-existence with other Salishan Nations and how we carry out our governance responsibilities within our territory.

ARTICLE 10 ʔupənkst

aʔ nsyilxcən naʔɬ timxʷ ixiʔ aʔ nxʷəlxʷəltantət, uɬ kʷu ckˈɬqixʷstm axaʔ iʔ kʷu syilx iʔ kʷu sukʷnaqinx.

The nsyilxcən language protects and defends the Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

ARTICLE 11 ʔupənkstəɬnaqs

iʔ aʔ nwist iʔ nsyilxcən əckˈɬəṕstis ṕnkin ɬəʔ kˈɬkicntm kʷu¯ɬəʔ laqʷmist, uɬ aɬiʔ iʔ tmixʷ nxʷəlxʷəltantət, kʷu cunmaʔstm iʔ l stəkˈʷukˈʷxixtət yʕat stim alaʔ iʔ¯l tmxʷulaxʷ uɬ iʔ l siwɬkʷ.

Our high nsyilxcən language words provide connection to the spiritual order, and gives life to our human purpose as *tmixʷ*, directing our proper conduct and responsibility to the rest of creation.

ARTICLE 12 ʔupənksəɬʔasil

aʔ nsyilxcən kʷu cʔcunmaʔstm iʔ təɬtaɬt iʔ kɬnkʷumntət iʔ¯l sniliʔtntət, iʔ snx̌aʔx̌aʔncutntət iʔ kˈa mnimɬtət iʔ kʷu¯syilxʷ uɬ iʔ kˈəl tmixʷ.

The nsyilxcən language defines and expresses our relationship, responsibilities, and practice in our homelands, our spiritual and ceremonial places, with each other, and with the *tmixʷ*.

ARTICLE 13 ʔupənkstəɬkaʔɬis

iʔ təl ɋsapiʔ aʔ nsyilxcəntət niʕip kə cxʷuystəm kʷu¯alaʔ iʔ¯l tmxʷulaʔxʷtət uɬ iʔ təl aʔ nqəlxʷskʷistət, uɬ iʔ təl qaʔɬ iʔ skʷistət, uɬ iʔ ilalmixʷm iʔ skʷistsəlx, aɬiʔ yʕat əkɬkʂax̌ʷiplaʔ iʔ kˈəl sqilxʷ uɬ iʔ kˈəl tmxʷulaxʷ uɬ iʔ kəl siwɬkʷ.

ksənucxntm iʔ sktɬiplatət uɬ kˈəl iʔ tmixʷ, iʔ ta nqʷəlqʷiltntət ki aʔ cmistim axaʔ iʔ kʷu¯syilx iʔ¯ l sukʷnaqinx iliʔ sc̓x̌ilx ka cmistim iʔ sktɬiplaʔtət.

Our nsyilxcən language is derived solely from our continued presence in our territory as evidenced by our nsyilxcən names, our familial names and the names that our hereditary Chiefs carry; all of which intertwines the Syilx Okanagan Peoples with places within our territory.

Our nsyilxcən language inextricably connects us to our territory, lands and resources and it is through these connections that we are able to trace our ancestral lineages back to the ancient *tmixʷ* and our nsyilxcən language identifies us as Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

ARTICLE 14 ʔupənkstəɬmus

aʔ nsyilxcntət iʔ stqʷəlqʷəltiplaʔs iʔ sncuʔwiptət, iʔ sktɬiplatət iʔ kʷu¯syilx l sukʷnaqin kˈəl iʔ stəcx̌astət iʔ¯l tmxʷulaxʷtət yaʕt aʔ ckˈʷulmstm.

Our nsyilxcən language is the tie that binds the Syilx Okanagan Peoples to our territory, lands and resources.

ARTICLE 15 ʔupənkstəɬcilkst

aʔ nqʷilxʷcəntət iʔ stqʷəlqʷəltiplaʔs təl yaʕyaʕt aʔ nwist iʔ x̌aʔx̌aʔ kə cmistis iʔ sncuʔwiptət, uɬ iʔ lutiʔ iʔ kʷəlkʷull iʔ kˈəl snxaʔcnuxʷstət iʔ syilx iʔ sukʷnaqinx.

The nsyilxcən language is collectively held as a sacred trust on behalf of the unborn and as a right of future generations of Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

ARTICLE 16 ʔupənkstəɬtəqmkst

aʔ nsyilxcən iʔ stqʷəlqʷəltiplaʔs iʔ tmixʷ iʔ cx̌ʷax̌ʷ skcˈəx̌ʷiplaʔs iʔ kstəɬtaɬts iʔ stəlsqilxʷ iʔ¯l scxəlakəks iʔ scxʷəlxʷaltət naʔɬ iʔ tmixʷ yʕat kʷu¯nəqsəlxʷiws iʔ¯l tmxʷulaxʷtət.

aʔ nsyilxcən x̌aʔx̌aʔ iʔ kˈəl aʔ cmistim iʔ kˈəl kə cmipnustm iʔ kˈəl ksckˈʷultət iʔ kˈəl cx̌astaʔx iʔ cawtət iʔ kəl tmixʷ uɬ iʔ kəl tmxʷulaxʷ aʔ ckˈʷulmstəm.

iʔ¯l nsyilxcən mimayt iʔ ksckˈʷultət iʔ¯l skcˈx̌ʷəx̌ʷiplaʔs mi niʕip kə cxʷəlxʷaltaʔx iʔ tmixʷ ikɬxʷəlxʷəltan uɬ iʔ tmxʷulaʔxʷtət iʔ təl captikʷɬ.

The nsyilxcən language describes legal obligations under the *tmixʷ* laws that the Syilx Okanagan Peoples are bound by as well as our greater responsibilities relating to the circle of existence with our *tmixʷ* relatives on our lands.

Our nsyilxcən language is required for the proper expression and understanding of our Syilx governance protocols that allows us to fulfill our responsibilities to each of the *tmixʷ* and to the specific places they require.

Our nsyilxcən language defines practices required to maintain and uphold the laws for the *tmixʷ* to be continuously re-stored to life as directed in the *captikʷɬ*.

ARTICLE 17 ʔupənkstəɬsisɒ̓əlkˈ

iʔ laʔ nqilxʷcən ɔcnɋəyus iʔ kˈəl syilx iʔ kɬsqəlxʷɬcawtət uɬ iliʔ iʔ ncˈəx̌ʷʕiltntət uɬ iʔ kɬnkʷulmntət uɬ itliʔ ka cmistim uɬ ki kʷu¯aʔ¯cmipnwiɬn iʔ təl tmxʷulaxʷ.

The nsyilxcen language contains the pattern for our Syilx way of being; the spirit of the nsyilxcən language as a distinct language. The nsyilxcən language also carries its own discipline and requirements and informs our ability to see, to hear, and to learn from the land.

ARTICLE 18 ʔupənkstəɬtimɬ

aʔ nqilxʷcən iʔ kˈəl kʷu yʕayʕat niʕip kə ckʷulmstm uɬ kə ctiɬxstm iʔ l ʕapnaʔ iʔ l scxʷuytət, məɬ yirmintm mnimɬtət iʔ cawtət uɬ iʔ skc̓x̌ʷəx̌ʷiplaʔtət.

The nsyilxcən language is a collective responsibility that requires us as Syilx Okanagan Peoples, to collaboratively and continuously use, protect and revitalize in a contemporary context as a means of asserting our Syilx Okanagan identity and laws.

ARTICLE 19 ʔupənkstəɬx̌əx̌nut

iʔ aʔ nqʷəlqʷiltntət mat iliʔ ki x̌aʔx̌aʔ tə stəxaɬ iʔ təl tmixʷ.

The nsyilxcən language is a sacred trust from the *tmixʷ*.

ARTICLE 20 ʔasəlʔupənkst

kʷu xʔinaʔ uɬ ka ckʷiskʷəstm iʔ t x̌aʔx̌aʔtantət uɬ iʔ sƫəkˈʷukˈʷxixtət təl snxaʔcintət iʔ təl kʷəlncutn naʔɬ snklip mat iliʔ kˈʷəckˈʷact kə ckˈɬkixʷstm uɬ kə cxʷstustm iʔ nsyilxcən uɬ yaʕyaʕt iʔ skmiʔiplaʔs uɬ iʔ nx̌astantət kˈəl ƫəsxʷuy.

We accept and uphold our sacred duty laid down for us by the creator, *snklip* and the obligations passed down from untold generations, to fully protect, defend, uphold and advance the nsyilxcən language and all its associated teachings and values for all generations.

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Signed this day, July 18, 2018, Okanagan Nation Alliance Annual General Assembly, saʔtikn (Manning Park).