



ANNUAL REPORT

2018 / 2019





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NATIONHOOD: We are Stronger Together

Since inauguration, the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) has remained dedicated to develop governance structures and operations that uphold the Okanagan Nation Declaration and the rebuilding of the Syilx Okanagan Nation. Over the decades ONA has worked diligently to uphold our mandate to work collectively to advance and assert Syilx Okanagan Nation Title and Rights over the Territory.

Through this work we have developed an organization that has been well-recognized in ground breaking negotiations, internationally recognized initiatives such as the successful salmon reintroduction program, and has developed innovative culturally appropriate programs that enhance services for all Nation members. All of this despite the governments prevailing deficient funding formulas and policies of denial.

Today, not only has the breadth of work become greatly diversified, but we face both the opportunities and challenges of exponential organizational growth as we continue to develop and enact collective services and initiatives that lay the foundation to support the Chief's Executive Council (CEC) in the governance work they are undertaking. As we move forward we remain committed to all of our work being 'For the People'.

We are proud to present this year's 2018/2019 Annual Report.





Message from the Chairman

This is a trying time for our country. The Prime Minister's lofty promises of transparency, integrity, gender equity, Indigenous reconciliation, and enhanced environmental protection have all been shown to have very shallow roots. Words are one thing, but deeds are quite another.

The SNC-Lavalin debacle sacrificed two of the government's most competent ministers, both women, in order to curry favour with big business. The resulting spin put the lie to transparency and is nothing more than cynical political posturing.

“There can be a cost to acting on one's principles, but there is a bigger cost to abandoning them.”

— Jane Philpott, March 4, 2019

The over priced purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline was a similar gift to Big Oil. The cost of this project and all its environmental ramifications, which could well be disastrous for BC, will now have to be borne by the Canadian public if it is allowed to go forward as the government seems determined to do. We must continue our resistance.

Indigenous reconciliation at the federal level is now largely symbolic. While the recent pardoning of Chief Poundmaker is welcome and long overdue, there is limited progress in other areas.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Inquiry has concluded. The final report clearly argues that “we live in a country whose laws and institutions perpetuate violations of fundamental

human rights, amounting to genocide against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people.” It contains 231 recommendations for immediate action. Unfortunately, too many of these recommendations have appeared in previous inquiries and too few have been acted upon.

With an election looming, it will be all too easy for the government to delay and ultimately shelve the Inquiry report. This must not be allowed to happen. As Michele Audette, one of the Inquiry Commissioners stated: “This is not just a job for governments and politicians. It is incumbent on all Canadians to hold our leaders to account.”

Another example of government and bureaucratic reluctance to act concerns the Specific Claims file. As far back as 2016, the Auditor General determined that the Department was grossly mismanaging the specific claims process. In November 2018, UBCIC was forced to write an open letter to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs because of that department's intransigence. To date, 65 percent of claims have not been assessed or reported upon as the Department continues to be derelict in its duties.

Indigenous reconciliation is a long journey that requires patience and persistence. Fortunately, our persistence was finally rewarded in the BC Provincial Budget delivered in February 2019, when the province agreed to share a portion of gaming revenues with all BC First Nations.

We have demanded a share of gaming revenue for over 30 years, but the initiative gained momentum 12 years ago when the ONA took up the cause. After years of stonewalling by previous governments, the current

NDP/Green coalition finally set up a negotiating table to resolve the issue. Grand Chief Joe Hall of the Sto:lo Nation and the ONA's Jay Johnson were the First Nations negotiators.

The negotiations resulted in: 7% of gross gaming revenues being shared with First Nations annually (slightly over \$100 million in 2019); a revenue distribution formula for the 203 BC First Nations; and a 25 year contract commitment for future revenue sharing. The Okanagan Nation will also host the revenue sharing distribution authority.

In another victory, after lengthy and persistent appeals, representatives of the First Nations of the Columbia River system will be granted observer status at the Columbia River Treaty Re-negotiations. This is truly significant, since it sets a precedent for Indigenous representation at international negotiations that affect our traditional territories, and shows a growing commitment to rights recognition and reconciliation.

It is also a tremendous inspiration to me to witness our Nation's dedication to restoring and protecting our lands for future generations. This year saw the release of 4.2 million sc'win (sockeye salmon) fry into the Okanagan Watershed, as well as the release of 100 cəm'tus (white sturgeon) fry at Castlegar to help rejuvenate this endangered species in the Upper Columbia River.

The work of the Fish in Schools (FinS) program has increased and ensures that the youth of our territory will understand that we are stewards of the land, and there is no excuse for damaging or abusing our lands or waters. This is a lesson that will prove invaluable in an uncertain age of climate change.

Another initiative worth mentioning is the return to the ancestral practice of cikilax^wm (prescribed burn) to restore the habitat for bighorn sheep and to reduce the risk of costly and destructive forest fires that have devastated the province over the last few years.

This year marked the 10th Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run which brings together over 100 youth from across the Nation to run through Syilx Okanagan Territory. The run highlights the problems of violence, suicide, and the growing opioid overdose crisis facing the Nation. Each of us is familiar with or has been affected, personally and often tragically, by one or all of these. As I stated in the press release on May 8, 2019: *"The youth that take part in the Unity Run are tomorrow's leaders. It fills me with pride to witness these young people rising up, building and fostering strength in each other and our Nation."* This is our bright future.

In closing I wish to share how excited I am about our Syilx Nation Rising initiative in which our CEC are fully committed and this work going forward. We need to reconstitute ourselves as we were meant to be, as the Syilx Okanagan Nation. The ONA is an important transitional organization until we can create our own Syilx Nation government. We have to stand up our own laws, and we have to do this according to the Four Food Chiefs and our teachings. Our nsyilxcən language is an integral part of this. We have to construct a Syilx Okanagan Nation and a governance system within the contemporary context. One of the primary steps is to establish our Constitution: ank'x^wipla?ntət uł yfat i? ks səctxət stim – Our laws and responsibilities.

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Dr. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
ONA Chair



"I was taught to always be careful what you say, because you cannot take it back. I was taught to always hold true to your core values and principles, and to act with integrity. These are the teachings of my parents, my grandparents and my community. I come from a long line of matriarchs and I am a truth-teller in accordance with the laws and traditions of our Big House. This is who I am and who I will always be."

— Jody Wilson-Raybould, (Puglass),
February 27, 2019



Message from the Executive Director

Way,

We are entering the year with many new initiatives and developments designed to support and implement the CEC mandates. These developments bring about change, challenges and at the end of the day, increased jurisdiction over our territory.

Our people have been unwavering in their desire to regain full jurisdiction of our territory, to protect Syilx Okanagan cultural practice and revitalize our language. The Okanagan Nation Declaration signed in 1987 has affirmed the fundamental basis of our nationhood and collective mandate for the ONA Syilx Title and Rights: lands, resources, peoples. Over the last 32 years, this mandate has guided ONA and provided a vision and direction.

Our staff has integrated the captik^w† and embedded Syilx culture and language in all areas of our work: Fisheries, Natural Resources and Wellness. This work has supported our people to be more active on the land. Whether it be at a hunting camp, restoring our fisheries, youth and elders' gatherings, numerous workshops, the Unity Run, Salmon Ceremonies, or BRIDGES, we are working to reinforce our presence in the Territory and in turn strengthen Title and Rights. Our people have resisted the status quo. Most notably in our Nation's rejection of Section 20.1, we have insisted that child welfare be guided by the Syilx Way. This approach has been described as innovative, cutting edge and even best practices but ultimately, it has been an assertion of how our people have lived for millennia. Every time our staff have resisted governmental programming and instead asserted the Syilx way we have engaged in social activism and resistance and we have honored the spirit of the Declaration.

From my office the oversight grows and expands as I continue to monitor programs and review reports from Team Leads, Project Leads and Departmental Managers. This monitoring process provides us with a mechanism to dialogue and discuss challenges, and successes, to plan for and respond to the ongoing impacts of new strategic opportunities and directions. Operations have grown at an unprecedented rate over the past few years, and while it is exciting to have the resources to provide services to the community, this growth has presented challenges. Each community interfaces with ONA and operates differently. Our staff must respect these differences and manage them effectively. ONA cannot move forward on any initiatives without community engagement and collaboration.

The CEC continues to stand their ground with the principles of Indigenous nationhood. This principled approach has led to "Syilx Nation Rising" and rebuilding of a Syilx Constitution. I am pleased to announce that the Syilx Intergovernmental Affairs sector is finally taking shape, a direct result of our leadership's determination to reclaim and reimplement our cultural governance practices. At the same time, it is important that I inform the community that this is one-time funding. I have no doubt that as always, we will make the most of this opportunity.

I am also pleased to announce that we have expanded office space in Westbank. With the successful and historic announcement of the



BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Agreement on February 19, 2019, the BC FN Gaming Commission has asked ONA to host the first five years of this newly created enterprise. This agreement will provide discretionary revenue to all BC First Nations, allowing them to establish and resource community priorities. As a result of this major development and partnership ONA operations have been able to acquire more leased office space next door. As each department (Fisheries, Natural Resources and Wellness) continues to grow and expand services to the community, ONA has had to expand our physical infrastructure through the Territory including within our Castlegar field office. We are exploring new space requirements as projects in this area of our Territory expand. The new growth within the Upper Columbia has led to new contracts for continued salmon reintroduction, pike suppression and the FinS program. It is critical for assertion of our Title and Rights that the Nation continues to have an active presence in all regions within the Territory.

ONA staff continues to implement the Nation framework. Natural Resources continues to work with the communities on various projects including major project reviews, forestry matters, grizzly bear assessments, referrals, southern interior mule deer, the water strategy and watershed governance projects, Okanagan flood risk assessment, and prescribed burns to mention a few. The Wellness department is also successfully implementing Syilx cultural practices into the development, implementation and delivery of Syilx Child Welfare and Health services as priorities determined by the Wellness Committee. In respect to Fisheries, as mentioned above the profile and specialized expertise continues to grow with guidance and direction from the CEC. These initiatives demonstrate the confidence, strength, cooperation, and unity between us as a people and with our partners, and our neighbours.

ONA has also had its challenges as we bring on more community-based programs like BRIDGES. As a Nation we have had to work through the problems inadvertently created by new programming. BRIDGES will support more than youth employment, it is

teaching us how to develop programming that actually meets the needs of our people and strengthen the communities and ultimately the Nation. Time passes quickly and BRIDGES will be ending in June 2019, the final year of this three-year research pilot. Despite the challenges, more than 250 young people from across the Nation have accessed employment, education, training and entrepreneurial opportunities. This program has demonstrated that Syilx belonging and knowing (on the Land) conducted in collaboration with the communities can support the successes of our young people. The final report will be tabled with CEC this fall.

There are many more initiatives that are improving ONA operations: The Human Resources Staff Onboarding project, Intellectual Property Rights project, and Safety in the Workplace workshop. As our organization grows, our policy, procedures and operations must evolve to accommodate these changes. Finally, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the incredible work of our Communication and Events management team. This winter, they hosted 14 events in 3 months with a skeleton team. This team continues to strengthen internal and external communications, ensuring that our staff, our community members and the broader community are aware of our Nations innovative work.

I want to take a moment to thank all the ONA staff. This has been an incredible year of growth and it can only happen with the commitment of staff to center and maintain the integrity of Syilx Okanagan Title and Rights and governance mandate established by our leadership, the Okanagan Nation Declaration and most importantly by the community. I look forward to an exciting 2019-2020, with our people continuing to assert our Title and Rights in our Syilx Okanagan Territory.

Lim'limpt

Suiki?st

Pauline Terbasket



Strengthening Our Nation

Creating a Constitution is a vital step to strengthen our evolving Syilx Okanagan Nation governance systems. Our captikwł teachings define and inform Syilx responsibilities to our culture, language, tmx^wulax^w, tmix^w, siwłk^w and skc'əx^wəxwipla? uł stətałt of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

In moving forward with the development of rebuilding our Nation, the CEC has directed that it begin with inclusive, transparent and accountable community discussions to create a Syilx Constitution: ank'əx^wipla?ntət uł yłat i? ks səxtəł'stim (Our laws and responsibilities). On December 12, 2018, the Chief's Executive Council released a statement səc k'^wəck'^wəctwil'xstm i? syilx nuk'^wcwilx^wtət, i? kł kt'əkmištntət k^wu yłayłat ks kiyła?mncutmntm: Strengthening Our Syilx Nation, Creating a Syilx Constitution Together, which guides this work. **We are stronger together.**

This vital initiative, Syilx Nation Rising!, takes place at a significant political and legal moment in time: building on Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, Canada's endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action, and further supported by recent Title and Rights court rulings such as the Tsilhqot'in decision.

“I believe that this Syilx Nation rebuilding process is our chance to move away from having to defend our territory at every turn. It puts our Nation in the position to exercise our collective rights and responsibilities, drawing on our strength as a people.”

– Dr. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

Only with an established Syilx Nation government will our people be able to fully govern and benefit from our collective Title and Rights, since Aboriginal Title to territory is held collectively at the Nation level, not band level. The ONA continues to serve as the important transitional organization to support this Nation rebuilding work.

We have a tradition of consensus building. We must all be involved in determining the future of our Nation, reaffirming our laws and rebuilding our Nation's government. A Nation Rebuilding Project Manager has been hired and started in March 2019. This position is integral to having **Nation rebuilding conversations**. Discussions will take place in small groups, community and Nation-wide forums, family dinners, household visits, emails, surveys, by telephone, in schools, daycares, Band offices, workplaces and on the land. We are working on a Syilx Nation member database to support ongoing Nation communications and voting registration.

Telling our story. Just as we've been able draw on our traditional ways of knowing and governance to bring back the salmon to our Territory, the wisdom of all Syilx Nation members is needed to carry us forward in this Nation rebuilding process. This is about reclaiming our autonomy and power. A legacy story that will be worthy of many great stories for our future generations to celebrate and learn from.

Our i? syilx nuk'^wcwilx^w nwaswıl'x – Syilx Nation Rising story is **an inclusive process** about belonging, of family, and of values. As the CEC affirms, we must work together to unite and heal our Nation. Every Syilx Nation member is important and has something to contribute; everyone's voice counts.

For more information on the Syilx Nation Rising! Initiative please visit:



To hear a message from Grand Chief Stewart Phillip visit:



CHIEFS' STATEMENT

səc k^wəck^wəctwil'xstm i? syilx nuk^wcwilx^wtət, i?
k' k'ək'mistntət k^wu yfayfat ks kiyfa?mncutmntm.

STRENGTHENING OUR SYILX NATION, CREATING A SYILX CONSTITUTION TOGETHER

i? k^wu syilx nuk^wcwilx^w i? k^wu xa?xa?tus i? k^wu ylilmix^wəm,
nyfayp ətc k'ul'əmstm i? scunən'ma?tət

As a unified Syilx Okanagan Nation Chiefs' Executive Council, we continue to affirm our mandate to

ks ətc unxcinmntm, uł ks səc k'łqayx^wstm i? sqəlx^włcawt,
ansyilxen, i? tmx^wulax^w, i? tmix^w, i? siwłk^w uł

advocate, practice and preserve and protect the culture, language, tmx^wulax^w, tmix^w, siwłk^w and title

i? stəłtəłtət i? k^wu syilx tə sqaylx^w.

and rights of the Syilx Peoples.

i? naqs i? K'ł tk'wəck'wəctans tac i k'ł ks unix^wux^ws i? sqəlx^włcawts i? syilx nuk^wcwilx^w

As one of the critical and necessary steps in strengthening and legitimatizing the evolving Syilx Nation

ankc'x^wipla?ntət i? sk'uləls, ixi? iks ck'ul'tət cəm yfatswit
ili? əcnxi?, lut t'ə ks wyk^wmntm ks fiq^włuq^wt ax

governance systems and processes, we will undertake an inclusive, transparent and accountable

i? cwilx^w i k^wu ks k'ixtułtəm i? ks ck'ul'tət uł k^wu yfayfat ks
knusəł xikstmntəm i? k^wu syilx ik'ł nak'ula?mntət.

community engagement process to create and ratify a Syilx Constitution.

axa? ts ck'ul' cəm yfat i? cwuwilx^wtət k'ł k'ək'mins uł
ks tiłx^wusysəlx i? tawnix^w i? sqəlx^włcawt uł

This work will be supported in each of our communities to uphold and renew Syilx legal order and

ankc'x^wipla?ntət i? tl anqaylx^wcns i? syilx itli? ki ats k^wiscts atc xə?it ank'x^wipla?tn.

laws, drawing on our oral traditions in which foundational Syilx laws are embedded.

i? captik^wł n'ə'xilt n' i? k'ł syilx suk^wnaqaynx i? ank'x^wipla?tns,
i? sqəlx^włcawts, uł i? xa?xa?tustət ətc ha? stis ixi? i? sk'uləł s.

Captik^wł teachings about Syilx Okanagan laws, customs, values, governance structures and principles

i? ks mymayts łac k'ł lux^wstis i? syilx suk^wna?qaynx i? stəłtəłtəts i? k'ł təm^wula?x^w

define and inform Syilx Okanagan rights and responsibilities to the land

uł i? k'ł sqəlx^włcawtət.

and to our culture.

APPROVED BY THE CHIEFS' EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, DECEMBER 12, 2018



www.okanagannationalliance.com



“For our Nation this is a very important kind of gathering that needs to happen more and more. In terms of learning to heal ourselves and heal our families and ultimately our Nation.”

—Eric Mitchell, Syilx Indian Residential School survivor

Determination Has Led the Way Forward

The Syilx Okanagan People have faced the ravages of colonialism and neo-colonialism - from Indian Residential Schools and the 60s Scoop, to the systemically racist laws and regulations such as the Indian Act – all in an attempt to break our culture and assimilate Syilx Okanagan people. Through the wisdom of our elders, the courage of Indigenous women and the energy and spirit of our youth, we have managed to crawl out from under that colonial rubble. We are here today, to come together as a Nation, tell our stories, and affirm our both our inherent rights and responsibilities.

Leading the way forward, and making a space that allows all of us to ‘Tell Our Truth’, has been the work of the **Syilx Indian Residential School (SIRS) Committee**. The Committee is comprised of representatives from all seven Nation member communities, many of whom are Indian Residential School survivors. They are committed to telling their truth and stories, developing and implementing healing strategies throughout the Nation, and rebuilding family systems. It is important to recognize that long before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Syilx Indian residential school survivors determination has led the way forward. They are devoted to rebuilding their family systems, lobbying governments for redress of this dark era in Canadian history and are always guiding and advocating for healing strategies for the people. The current SIRS Committee provided the direction to keep this work moving forward.

On July 3, 2018, the ONA hosted the **‘Syilx Resiliency: A Day of Discussion on Healing Forum’**. This gathering was part of the ongoing commitment of the ONA’s CEC to support and honor the SIRS Committee, as well as further dialogue and action in regards to Syilx Okanagan peoples resiliency in the face of the Indian Residential School experience. A number of topics were discussed including the development of a Syilx Indian Residential School Healing Strategy, reconciliation with our allies, and personal strategies on healing and wellness. Senator Murray Sinclair was the keynote speaker, and is an Indigenous lawyer and politician who served as Chairman of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2009 to 2015. However, most importantly it was a forum that created further awareness and a reminder to everyone how resilient Syilx Okanagan Peoples truly are and how we can take care of one another and those who are experiencing hurt and trauma attributed to our people’s colonization, specifically intergenerational impacts of Indian Residential Schools.

“We need to find a way to tell these stories and cause no further harm.
Survivors must realize that it’s not only about us, it’s about our children.”

—Senator Murray Sinclair

As part of these sustained actions, during the ONA's 2018 Annual General Assembly the SIRS Committee formally released the **"Take The Indian Out of the Child: Okanagan Syilx Experiences in the Violent and Forced Assimilation of Indian Residential Schools"** book. This publication contains over 50 contributions, the majority of which are first-hand accounts from Syilx Indian Residential School survivors. The Committee guided the development of the publication. It is a testament to the strength of the Syilx Okanagan people in surviving the horrendous experiences of Indian Residential Schools and the aftermath that followed. It also illustrates how truly tenacious and resilient our people have collectively been and continue to be through some of the most difficult times in our history.

Throughout our Territory other institutions and governmental bodies are taking action to formally recognize the Syilx Okanagan Nation. On September 27, 2018, members from the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) community gathered at the UBCO's courtyard to celebrate the permanent **raising of the Okanagan Nation Flag**. The flag raising formally signifies UBCO's recognition of the Syilx Okanagan Nation on whose lands the university resides. This act demonstrates direct action and leadership taken by UBC. UBCO continues to be progressive and has understood the fundamental truth that we are all in this together, and that we need to come together as peoples from all parts of the globe from all parts of the country to learn from our history from our past.

The **City of Kelowna Territory Acknowledgement** has been under development over the last year. The City of Kelowna has been collaborating with both the Okanagan Nation Alliance and Westbank First Nation to incorporate a territory acknowledgement that will be stated at the beginning of Monday afternoon council meetings as well as the Tuesday evening public hearings. They have also been developing guidelines and protocols for these procedures, which will be provided to all of their staff.

"The ONA's Chief's Executive Council continue to encourage all post-secondary institutions and school districts within the territory to establish and strengthen working relationships with the Nation for the purposes of increasing recognition of Syilx Okanagan culture, language, presence and territorial recognition."

— Dr. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Okanagan Nation Building a Better Future Bursary Recipients 2018



SKAYU (DUSTIN) LOUIS

Skayu is currently attending the University of Hawaii taking his Masters in Anthropology. His goal is to continue onto a PhD and pursue community work alongside academic research. He hopes to gain a teaching position with UBCO, Enowkin or the University of Victoria. He is interested in work in Title and Rights, cultural land resurgence, habitat restoration and ethnobiology.

“My education is rounded. I seek to walk my path of education holding space for cultural teachings and academic ability to coexist together. Although it has been explained to me that these two approaches are separate and mutually exclusive, I have found benefits in the ways in which both intertwine. I hope to be an agent of change in sharing that world with more Syilx youth and young academics who are curious about the broad depth of perspective that academia can bring. I hope to provide living examples of how we can utilize the efforts, energies, and momentum of academia in current society to promote Syilx cultural resurgence. As a structure, I believe academia is set up to enable young Syilx scholars to begin to overtake positions of influence throughout the territory, while also enabling students to take a closer look at the forces and personalities behind our history that have caused barriers to our sovereign existence.”



BRIANNA WILSON

Brianna is a member of the Westbank First Nation. Her educational goal is to graduate from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics with a Law emphasis. She is confident that this program will provide her with a better understanding and education on the economic, political and philosophical issues Canadians continue to face. Her future career aspirations are to pursue a career within government, either Canadian or First Nations.

“My education will prepare me to be a leader by providing me with the knowledge and understanding of what policy is and where it comes from. I have the knowledge to establish greater clarity and know what questions to address and how to come up with solutions to arising problems. I think change is a process. It requires transforming promising ideas into concrete positive results by way of implementation.”



Syilx Unity is Fundamental

The CEC is committed to carrying out the mandate to **protect, defend, and advance Syilx Title and Rights**. The CEC upholds its **sux˘txtem (taking care of the land) responsibilities that carefully considers the environmental, social, and economic interests of the Syilx Okanagan Nation**. In the face of these commitments, the Syilx Okanagan Nation continues to face infringements and violations on our Territory. Syilx Okanagan unity is fundamental for moving forward and taking on the wide range of complex challenges that face us, while also seizing on an ever-growing variety of collective opportunities.

Chiefs Executive Council 2018-2019

April 3, 2018

Special CEC Meeting
“Syilx Title & Right, LOU”

Hosted by Westbank First Nation

April 24, 2018

Tri-Nations: Columbia River Treaty (CRT) Meeting, Castlegar BC

April 25, 2018

Special CEC Quarterly NRC Follow-up Westbank BC

May 1, 2018

Special CEC Meeting with Honourable Andrew Leslie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations) Ottawa

May 17, 2018

Special CEC and Tri-Nations Meeting
“Outrage from Minister’s Decision not to include First Nations in Columbia River Treaty Negotiations” Vancouver

May 25, 2018

Special CEC Columbia River Treaty

June 1, 2018

Tri-Nations: Columbia River Treaty Meeting, Vancouver BC

June 7, 2018

CEC Meeting, Westbank BC

June 14, 2018

CEC Meeting with Water Comptroller, Westbank BC

July 3, 2018

Special CEC w Water Comptroller “Rev6”

July 5, 2018

URGENT CALL TO ACTION - Syilx Nation Forum “Drug Misuse, Overdose & Impacts in Community” Penticton BC

July 13, 2018

Special CEC “Audit Review & Child & Family-Title & Rights Legal”, Westbank BC

July 17-19, 2018

ONA AGA Hosted by USIB / LSIB, Manning Park BC

July 24, 2019

Tri-Nations CRT Meeting with Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Leslie, Vancouver BC

July 31, 2018

Special CEC-CCTBC Meeting, Selkirk College, Castlegar BC

August 8, 2018

Special CEC Legal

August 10, 2018

Special CEC Meeting with Arch Branch
“Respectful Treatment of Ancestral Remains”, Westbank BC

September 13, 2018

CEC Meeting, Westbank BC

September 27, 2018

UBCO “Syilx Flag Raising” Kelowna BC

October 15, 2018

Tri-Nations “Grizzly Bear Meeting with Ministers Heyman and Donaldson”, Victoria BC

October 25, 2018

CEC Meeting, Westbank BC

November 21-22, 2018

CEC Quarterly Meeting, Westbank BC

November 24, 2018

Collaborative Process on Indian Registration, Band Membership and First Nations Citizenship, UBCO Kelowna BC

November 26, 2018

CEC Meeting with Minister Sohi, Federal Minister Natural Resources, Westbank BC

November 28, 2018

First Nations Leadership Council “BC Chiefs Caucus: Preparation for BC Cabinet First Nations Leaders Gathering”, Vancouver BC

November 29-30, 2018

Special Meeting - Minister Doug Donaldson, FNLRO Vancouver, BC

November 29-30, 2018

BC Cabinet and First Nations Leaders’ Gathering (MOU/LOU) Vancouver BC

December 3, 2018

Tri-Nations CRT Meeting with Global Affairs Minister Freeland, Toronto ON

December 6, 2018

Special CEC-Wellness Committee
“Syilx AHIP Meeting with Interior Health Representatives” ONA Westbank BC

December 12, 2018

Special CEC Title & Rights Legal Strategy Session, The Cove Lakeside Resort, Westbank BC

January 22-24, 2019

Joint Gathering, Vancouver BC

February 1, 2019

Special CEC-NRC Meeting
The Cove Lakeside Resort, Westbank BC

February 5, 2019

CEC - Collaborative Process on Indian Registration, Band Membership and First Nations Citizenship, The Cove Lakeside Resort, Westbank BC

February 15-16, 2019

Special CEC-OKIB Chief & Council Meeting Coast Capri, Kelowna BC

March 5, 2019

Special CEC Title and Right Legal Strategy Session Vancouver BC

March 7-8, 2019

BCAFN Special Chiefs’ Assembly and Special CEC Meeting, Merritt BC

March 14, 2019

Special Chiefs Executive Council “Mica 5/6 Agreement”



sux^wtxtem in Action

Over the past year, much of the CEC’s governance work pertained to a number of files with federal and provincial governments for the recognition of Syilx Okanagan Title and Rights. The Policy/Legal Team continued advancement of the Nation’s Title and Rights strategy in addition to the important work of developing Syilx Okanagan governance, including the Syilx Nation Rising! Initiative. These files will continue to be a central focus for the Policy/Legal Team over the next year. As with every year, the CEC met with its Policy/Legal Team to map out its Title and Rights Strategy for the upcoming year. This strategy session identified priorities and challenges in relation to our Title and Rights and also sets the agenda for our governance work.

The Columbia River Treaty (CRT) continues to be a central to Syilx Okanagan Title and Rights. The CRT has created one of the most significant and on-going infringements of Syilx Okanagan Title and Rights that resulted in the construction of three major dams in Canada that flooded the Arrow Lakes and converted the Upper Columbia watershed into a massive reservoir system.

The Syilx Okanagan Nation is working with two other Indigenous Nations – the Ktunaxa Nation and the Secwepemc Nations – in relation to the CRT. The three Indigenous Nations meet on a regular and on-going basis with Global Affairs Canada and the BC CRT Review Team. In 2018, Global Affairs Canada had made a unilateral decision to exclude Indigenous Nations from direct US-Canada CRT Renegotiation process. Through the hard work and dedication of Syilx Okanagan leadership and staff, Global Affairs reconsidered this decision and in April 2019, will grant observer status to Indigenous Nations. The first round of US-Canada CRT Negotiations that Indigenous Nations will participate in observer status will be in July 2019.

As a result of the Syilx Okanagan Nation’s work in relation to the CRT, the CEC was able to negotiate a **Letter of Agreement** to secure multi-year commitments and funding to advance **salmon restoration efforts in the Upper Columbia Basin** with Canada and BC, together with the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc. This agreement creates momentum for the Syilx Okanagan Nation’s goals in relation to salmon restoration as it binds both the federal and provincial governments to work to identify and support efforts to restore salmon back into the Upper Columbia River system. The strength of the ONA’s Fisheries Department will ensure that the Syilx Okanagan Nation is leading these efforts.

Since the last annual report, the CEC continues to advance its work under the **Federal Letter of**

Understanding (LOU) process. Under the LOU, a “Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination” negotiating table was established between the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the federal government. Through that table, the CEC successfully negotiated a **Recognition Agreement** with the federal government. That agreement is an enabling agreement and the first of its kind. It affirms that:

- The Syilx Okanagan Nation is a collective of Syilx Okanagan People and sqilx^w i? tl syilx nuk^w’cqilx^ws share a common language, customs, traditions, historical experience, Territory, and resources;
- Syilx Okanagan People have never ceded, surrendered or released any Syilx inherent Title and Rights and live, use and occupy the tmx^wulax^w (lands), siw+k^w (waters) and resources in Syilx Okanagan Territory;
- The Syilx Okanagan Nation has a right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government; and
- Syilx Okanagan People utilize captik^w†, a traditional governance collective decision-making process that encompasses the collective of Syilx Okanagan teachings, laws, governance structures and principles, ankc^w’ipla?ntat ut yfat i? kactxat^wstim, that, together, govern Syilx Okanagan Rights and responsibilities to the land and culture throughout the Territory.

Under the Agreement, Canada and the Syilx Okanagan Nation commit to reconciliation and a renewed relationship based on the recognition of the Syilx Okanagan Nation’s Title, Rights, legal orders and jurisdiction, based on respect, cooperation and partnership. The Agreement provides a vehicle and funding for the Syilx Okanagan Nation to create its Constitution, as it recognizes the Syilx Okanagan Nation as a distinct legal entity and the Syilx Okanagan Nation Government as the governing body for the Syilx Okanagan Nation, once the Syilx Okanagan Nation

Constitution is approved by Syilx Okanagan members. The Agreement also enables further negotiation of agreements and measures to implement Syilx Okanagan Nation's Title and Rights over time.

The Recognition Agreement is tied to the Syilx Nation Rising initiative and constitution-building work that the CEC has initiated. Please see page 8 for more details on the Syilx Okanagan Nation's intent to continue its work to develop its Constitution in the coming year.

The federal government did not immediately pass Recognition and Implementation Framework legislation due to the strong pushback from First Nations leadership across the country. Additionally, **Bill C-262 – the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act** – An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the UNDRIP is currently before the Canadian Senate and is at risk of “dying on the order paper”; in other words, Bill C-262 will not receive Royal Assent and become law if it isn't passed before June 21, 2019 when Parliament is set to rest for the Summer.

Over the past year, progress on the **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with the Province has remained relatively slow, as a result of changes in provincial government policy and processes. However, under the MOU process, Premier Horgan has re-committed to extending and deepening the Province's relationship with the Syilx Okanagan Nation and re-establishing regular high-level meetings between the Province and the CEC. With the negotiation of a Recognition Agreement with Canada, the provincial MOU process can build from that success. This will result in the BC Provincial Government acknowledging and building upon the internal Syilx Nation Rising work. Our negotiations with the Province will result in an enabling umbrella agreement that will facilitate the negotiation of future agreements on a whole range of issues that will respect the decisions and authorities of the Syilx Okanagan Nation on its territory. This work with the Province is ongoing and will accelerate once the federal Recognition Agreement is finalized and implemented.

Shifting the LOU with Canada to the new BC -Syilx Okanagan Nation Accord starts us off with a solid foundation of recognition. Furthermore, this provides

the framework architecture for other government ministries to engage directly with the Nation in establishing various different joint decision-making processes and tables on priority areas. With the provincial implementation of UNDRIP, the Accord seeks to build on the federal self-determination and governance reform processes we are advancing. As the CEC had instructed the Accord is built to dovetail with the federal LOU processes as things progress. Overall, the Province's role has a much larger impact on the Territory and often on the daily and professional lives of the Nations communities. As a result the eventual scope of the provincial engagement and decision-making structures will grow to be more critically comprehensive.

On May 2, 2019, **the BC Court of Appeal dismissed British Columbia's appeal of Richard DeSautel's acquittal** on hunting offences, finding that Sinixt rights continue to exist in Syilx Okanagan Territory and are not “extinct”. The case was an appeal of the BC Supreme Court's affirmation of the BC Provincial Court's March 27, 2017 decision that found that Mr. DeSautel, a member of the Lakes Tribe of the Confederated Colville Tribes and a United States citizen, has an Aboriginal right to hunt in the traditional territory of Sinixt people in British Columbia. The BC Court of Appeal dismissed the Province's appeal and confirmed some key legal principles:

- The Lakes Tribe in the US is not the only successor group to the Sinixt;
- There is no requirement for there to be a modern-day community in the area where harvesting activities take place for an Aboriginal right to exist - this finding reflects the fact that Indigenous peoples were displaced through the process of colonization and that rights in the Arrow Lakes area were never voluntarily surrendered or abandoned.

The ONA was an intervener in the case, and the Court expressly referred to the ONA's submissions in the judgment. The Court's confirmation that the rights held by people with Sinixt ancestry is a win not just for Mr. DeSautel, but for the Syilx Okanagan Nation as a whole. The CEC will continue to represent the interests of people from the Arrow Lakes area of the Syilx Territory.





Securing Health and Wellness Governance for the Nation

As always, the CEC remains dedicated to the improvement of the health, well-being, safety and quality of life of all Syilx Okanagan Nation members. Rooted in the Wellness Committee’s knowledge and guidance, the ONA continues to work towards full self-determination of all Syilx Okanagan Health and Wellness services, regardless of the challenges that are faced.

On May 17th, 2018, the CEC welcomed an announcement to establish a **\$30 million fund targeted towards Mental Wellness**. The much-anticipated funding agreement was a result of collaboration between the Province, Canada and the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), and will provide the much-needed resources to address mental wellness issues at the community-level. The funding announcement is an integral step towards improving health outcomes for Syilx Okanagan Peoples. It comes at a critical time where Syilx Okanagan families and communities continue to battle the impacts of mental health and addictions-related issues on a daily basis. This work will require effective partnerships with the Ministry of Child and Family Development, Interior Health (IH) and other organizations recognizing and respecting the need for Syilx Okanagan-specific approaches to be fully developed and implemented.

These funds will also contribute to our mental health planning, which will see a regional allocation of planning dollars to creating our own Syilx Wellbeing Model. This model will enable us to define wellness from our unique Syilx Okanagan perspectives and experiences. It will focus on understanding what our health and wellness issues are through a cultural lens, which will be a more holistic and inclusive way of accounting for community mental health needs. The CEC has been working at every governmental level, advocating to bring mental health and addictions issues to the forefront, and thus welcome these funding commitments that will hopefully shed light on critical issues. The funding agreement also outlines priorities to improve structuring at the local, regional, and provincial levels aimed at ensuring that the Nation is a full partner in the planning, design, funding and delivery of mental health and substance use services.

“The Syilx Okanagan Nation’s health and well-being is directly tied to the health of our lands. The Syilx Okanagan Nation has a long tradition of healing practices and approaches and the Nation is best positioned to design approaches aimed at improving the mental wellness outcomes for Syilx Peoples.”

— Allan Louis, Syilx Representative FNHA/IRNE

The Ministry of Health continues to advance health care transformation through local Collaborative Services Committees (CSCs), who are tasked with developing **Primary Care Networks (PCNs)** focused on increasing attachment and better integrating primary care with community and specialized services. An overview of opportunities for Syilx Okanagan communities was shared including primary care access directly in community (either from an Nurse Practitioner (NP) or General Practitioner (GP)), improved integration and connectivity with community and specialized services, improved discharge planning and transitions and enhancement of First Nations designed positions and outreach. At the level of the

Nation it has been earmarked that narrow timeframes for participation, synthesis and articulation for developing PCNs have either limited or prohibited community participation in these processes. One of our key successes has been in securing guaranteed funding and resources to ensure proper and timely community participation in the development of PCNs.

Though resource acquisition has continued to be focal point with our health governance efforts, access to quality health data sets is also a central priority. In 2018-19, for the first time ever, **Health Systems Matrix Data**, was formally released to the Nation to assist in health prioritization and planning. As part of our

partnership with First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), significant effort was put towards developing data that is meaningful and benefits communities. This data has been cross referenced with the BC First Nations Client File to provide First Nations specific data related to hospitalizations, emergency department care, most physician services, residential care, and home and community care services provided by the provincial sector. A comprehensive summary of the HSM findings will be provided to the leadership in order to support planning new health services, enhance existing services and to support informed decision-making regarding future investments to address health priorities.

In November, 2018, the **renewal of the Partnership Accord** came up between IH, FNHA and the seven Interior Nations. The Nation took a stand against an initial re-signing, demanding that the Accord be more inclusive, with more of an emphasis on genuine partnership. In particular this was in regards to the way that decision-making and communication was being played out between partners, which was deeply imbalanced in favour of IH. This ignited a whole process of meetings, including with the IH CEO, whereby a new relationship was asserted where further clarity and understanding could be created.

Over the last year significant changes occurred in First Nation **Health Benefits** for Nation members, and in particular regarding vision, dental and special equipment. FNHA recently secured Pacific Blue Cross as a benefits provider, who will now become the first payer, thus making the status driven care the first, not the second provider. This will increase the cultural safety in services and allow more streamlined and easy access for health services when they are needed most. As this change rolls out the CEC will monitor the progress and seek to address any issues that arise.

We continue to face many environmental stresses from a wide range of issues, including mental health impacts that climate change disaster traumas have for Nation members. Through the advocacy of Allan Louis, Syilx Health Rep, we have accessed key funding on the **Tripartite Emergency Management** agreement, provided by Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and Red Cross. As an initial step with this funding we have now received an Emergency Mental Health Lead position, with the posting currently up. Emergency management and services remains a gap and movement is occurring to develop strategies.

Taking a Stand for Family and Children

The health and well-being of our children and families is central to our ability to heal and prosper as a Nation. The ONA is currently taking on a number of family and children governance files to ensure that we are creating safer and healthier families rooted in our Syilx Way.

Over the last year we have begun updating the **Syilx Child & Family Plan**. This plan is an approach to service delivery that addresses complex root causes caused by colonialism and reinforces our community's ability to create healthy environments where children are safe and can thrive, families are at the center, and prevention is the focus. Our Syilx Okanagan culture, the nsyilxcən language, and **Enowkin'wixw** process are the foundation upon which this plan rests. It will remain based on the Child & Family Plans developed in each member Nation community and on our Syilx Declaration, yet is being updated as the original plan is built on the assumption that the goal was to eventually develop a delegated agency. The CEC and Wellness Committee have decided the goal is no longer delegation, but to develop our own systems and laws, as delegated agencies must follow the same rules and guidelines as Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) does, thus reiterating colonial institutional structures. The goal will remain on prevention and early intervention, but be based on individual communities developing their own plans that will help to create a bigger Nation plan. Rather than Nation to community, it is community to Nation process. We are focusing on captik'w; the Syilx Declaration, community plans, and resources like our "Going Back to the Root" book.

On May 25, 2018, the CEC approved a Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC) proposal for a Child & Family Team. DISC approved this proposal titled the **Child Wellbeing Jurisdiction Initiative (CWJI)**, agreeing to provide \$800,000/per year for five years to develop the Child & Family Team, which will further contribute to the Nation Child and Family Plan and model, and support the development of Syilx Child



& Family law. On top of these funds, the CWJI also provides each (non-delegated) community a minimum amount of \$40,000 to support their work towards children and families as well.

The ONA continues ensuring proper Syilx Okanagan representation at a number of strategic decision-making tables and bodies. Jennifer Lewis, ONA Wellness Manager, sits on the **First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC)**'s Tripartite First Nations Children and Families Internal Working Group, which was formally established with a Terms of Reference in 2017, and is developing a plan for moving forward with the new legislation and upcoming opportunities. The FNLC held a meeting in Vancouver on September 26-27, 2018, to discuss the strategy for engaging with the federal government's six-point plan of action that included "exploring co-developed federal legislation," as part of the co-development process. These meetings were an opportunity for collaborative discussion and to listen to First Nations perspectives and advice with respect to co-created options for potential Child and Family services federal legislation.

Our work continues to build relationships and partnerships with other organizations hence we continue to host the **Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee**, a sub-committee of the Wellness Committee (although all seven communities are represented as they are usually integrated into regular Wellness Committee Meetings), plus any urban aboriginal organization whose mandate is service delivery to Aboriginal children in Syilx Okanagan Territory. As per the Terms of Reference, ONA chairs the meetings, which are used to discuss mutual wellness concerns and interests between urban Aboriginal partners and communities. The recommendations from this body go to the Wellness Committee for "further discussion or strategizing", and are then provided to the CEC.

In 2016, one of the main strategies identified at the Children First Forum, was the need to change the legal framework through the creation of our own Syilx laws. Through AGA Resolution 2016-05, ONA Wellness moved forward with developing a **Syilx Child & Family Declaration**. The first draft of the Syilx Child

& Family Declaration was presented at the 2018 AGA, after considerable work and drafting by ONA legal/policy team. From here, this Declaration has been presented at meetings with regards to the redrafting and redevelopment of the Declaration, and will now go to CEC, Nation member communities (upon request), the SIRS Committee, and 2 Nation events before we are able to finalize and have an official signing.

The importance of this work is further highlighted by engagements and input with the federal government regarding the development of **Bill C-92**, 'An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families'. Initial engagement sessions for Bill C-92 were held by the federal government in September 2018 in Vancouver, which was attended by Syilx Okanagan leadership, the Wellness Committee members, and ONA staff. In early February, in preparation for the release of the Bill, ONA staff and members of the Wellness Committee attended a meeting of the AFN's National Advisory Committee for Children and Families, where issues with the Bill were raised, and continued struggles with the implementation of Jordan's Principle were brought forth. There are many issues with the legislation, most important being the lack of funding/resources attached to the Bill. The ONA is developing their own law, the Syilx Child and Family Declaration, regardless of whether the legislation is passed.

Currently, Syilx Okanagan communities are required to collect a large amount of data through burdensome reporting to governmental funders, and little to none of this information is shared back to our communities or is useful to us in any way. Providing such reports is justified to ensure "accountability" but this accountability is not reciprocal as the data provided by our communities is rarely interpreted to provide insights on where programming could be improved and how it could benefit Syilx Okanagan communities. The ONA is currently working toward developing a **Syilx Data Governance Model & Database** where the data collected would be localized and accessible for communities. As the first step in this process we are currently hiring a Research Analyst to determine the form and end product of this process.



Coming Together as a Nation

It is part of our Syilx Way to gather as a People – to share and connect – together, as one. This act of coming together is critical to Nation-building, keeping us united and strong. Over the last year numerous events, workshops and gatherings were held.

May 2018

- 02 Sockeye Fry Release, Shingle Creek
- 10-13 10th Annual Spirit of Syilx Unity Run, Revelstoke – Vernon, BC
- 14 WFN Fry Release, Mission Creek, BC
- 15 OKIB Fry Release, Six Mile Creek, BC
- 17-18 BRIDGES Mountain Top Series 1: Preparing for the Journey, Cawston, BC
- 25-27 Research Trip, qalisu? (Trout Lake), BC

June 2018

- 04-06 Annual Border Crossing Canoe Paddle, Osoyoos BC – Oroville WA
- 22 s̓x̓w̓əntik̓w̓ Salmon Ceremony, Kettle Falls, BC
- 23 s̓x̓w̓əntik̓w̓ Salmon Ceremony, Castlegar, BC
- 24 s̓x̓w̓əntik̓w̓ Salmon Ceremony, Revelstoke, BC
- 24-25 BRIDGES Mountain Top Series 2, Kobau Mountain, BC
- 25 s̓x̓w̓əntik̓w̓ Salmon Ceremony, McIntyre Dam, BC
- 26 s̓x̓w̓əntik̓w̓ Salmon Ceremony, Enloe Dam, BC

July 2018

- 03 Syilx Resiliency: Day of Discussion on Healing, Penticton BC
- 05 Syilx Nation Forum: Drug Misuse and Impacts in Community – Penticton Indian Band, BC
- 09-12 BRIDGES Stories from the Land: A Digital Media Summer Intensive
- 13-15 BRIDGES Mountain Top 3 “Weekend Campout”
- 14-16 Yakama Fisheries Tour, Colville Confederated Tribes, WA
- 17-19 Annual General Assembly Hosted by USIB/LSIB, saʔtikn (Manning Park), BC
- 17-19 Youth Leadership Gathering, saʔtikn, BC
- 17 Syilx Indian Residential School Book Launch, saʔtikn, BC
- 18 Iʔ Syilx iʔ sukʷnaqinx scqʷəlqʷiltət (Syilx Language Declaration) Signing, saʔtikn, BC
- 29-Aug01 Research Trip, Arrow Lakes, BC

August 2018

- 28 Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Skills Training, Upper Nicola Band

September 2018

- 12 safeTALK Training, Penticton Indian Band
- 14-16 Okanagan Nation Salmon Feast, s̓x̓w̓əx̓w̓nitk̓w̓ (Okanagan Falls), BC
- 27 UBCO Okanagan Nation Flag Raising, Kelowna, BC
- 30 Orange Shirt Day Recognition, multiple locations

October 2018

- 11-12 ASIST Training, Penticton, BC
- 12-14 Research Trip, nmiməlt̓n (Whatshan), BC
- 17-18 Environmental Flow Needs Conference, Kelowna, BC

- 22-23 Okanagan Nation Wellness Forum, Penticton, BC
- 22 safeTALK Training, Penticton Indian Band
- 30 Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Skills Training, Westbank, BC

November 2018

- 01 BRIDGES TRU Tour of New Trades Building, Kamloops, BC
- 14-15 ASIST Training, Westbank, BC
- 21 Sisters in Spirit Vigil, Keremeos, BC
- 24 Collaborative Process Session, Kelowna, BC
- 26 Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Skills Training, Osoyoos Indian Band

December 2018

- 07 Syilx Elders Christmas Party, En'owkin Centre, BC
- 11 Kettle River Water Responsibility Session, Joe Rich, BC

January 2019

- 22-24 BRIDGES Entrepreneurial Spirit Business Kickoff, Kelowna, BC

February 2019

- 04-06 National AAROM Collaborative Meeting, hosted by ONA, Kelowna, BC
- 05 Collaborative Process Think Tank, Westbank, BC
- 05 BRIDGES Strengthening our Youth Workshop, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- 07 Syilx Women's Leadership Gathering, Westbank, BC
- 08-10 You Empowered Strong Syilx Men's Gathering, Osoyoos, BC
- 12 BRIDGES Strengthening our Youth workshop, Upper Nicola Band
- 22 Flood Risk Assessment Tour, Shingle Creek, BC

March 2019

- 04-05 Building Meaningful Relationships: A Culturally Rooted Approach to Healing and Wellness, Kelowna, BC
- 04 Flood Risk Assessment Tour, Similkameen River, BC
- 08-10 You Empowered Strong Syilx Women's Gathering, Osoyoos, BC
- 12-13 Syilx Wildlife Responsibility and Hunting Planning Session, Westbank, BC
- 11-13 Community Knowledge Keeper Website Training, Westbank, BC
- 12 safeTALK Training, Westbank, BC
- 22 Syilx Water Forum: World Water Day, Peachland, BC
- 25-26 Syilx Early Years Gathering, Penticton, BC
- 27 BRIDGES Strengthening Our Youth Workshop, Penticton Indian Band

Syilx Women's Leadership Gathering

Overcome, inspire, network and share

The Syilx Women's Leadership Gathering was held on February 7, 2019 at the Cove Lakeside resort in Westbank, BC. This event brought women from across Syilx Territory together to discuss what leadership is, how it shows up in our daily lives, and how Syilx women can better connect with and support one another. Through a range of presentations, workshops and discussions this event created a safe and nurturing space bringing women together to discuss what leadership means and looks like in a Syilx context.

"Syilx women come from a place of power, we each have a unique gift. We also hold the key to resilience."

— Smukaxen Pierre



One Language, One Land, One People

In 2018, the Province of BC formally put the UNDRIP into legislation. The UNDRIP formally recognizes 46 rights of all Indigenous peoples from around the world, ranging on issues as broad as governance, health and wellness, education, language, conservation, economic development, and territory. By systemically acknowledging The UNDRIP, Horgan's NDP government has begun to align policy and procedure to ensure that they are congruent with the Articles put forward. As this Declaration continues deepen it's influence in both the provincial and federal spheres, the ONA's work upholds and furthers all of the rights enshrined in UNDRIP, with a commitment of safeguarding and promoting all aspects of our nsylxcen language, Syilx Okanagan culture, beautiful Territory, Nation and People.

United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

Article 7.1 “Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.”

The safety of our communities and our Nation members is critical to ensuring that healing can take place and that we all thrive as a Nation. In 2017 the ONA established the **You Empowered Strong (YES)** program to create a sustainable model of support to our families and community to begin to address the impact of family violence. YES uses Syilx Okanagan knowledge and strength-based practice to build the capacity of families, while creating a strong peer network that will support the wellbeing of the community. This is accomplished in a nested model that engages the individual, family and community. As this program enters its second year we are witnessing the evolution of programming that takes on an increasingly broader

set of goals and objectives.

As part of this program the **Syilx Family Violence Network** was initiated. This is a network of social services, health, legal and protection professionals and crisis specialists throughout the Nation who are active in the helping services. This partnership supports and guides the YES Team to strategize in the delivery of effective and timely action in dealing with the impacts of violence in families. During the last fiscal this network met on March 26th, November 6th, 2018 and February 5th, 2019 to further enhance our capacities to address family violence.



The YES program is also working towards changing the community norms that support and perpetuate violence, such as the way we speak to loved ones. Over January-February 2019, the YES team distributed nsyilxcen and English 'love language' candies, posters and information, throughout Syilx communities as a means to campaign and create more understanding of the YES program, alongside promoting Syilx culture and values. In it's second year, the **#WElovelanguage campaign** took place alongside broader events, such as the Sisters in Spirit Vigil, which all raise awareness of issues of violence in our communities.

In partnership with the Okanagan Nation Transition Emergency House, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, and Upper Similkameen Indian Band, YES held the **Sisters in Spirit speaker's event and vigil** on November 21, 2018, with a walk to honor the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls across Canada. There was about 100 Syilx Okanagan Nation members and ONA staff in attendance, with YES providing a program overview, song, and closing speech about the importance of addressing violence towards our women and children. YES also had an information booth at this event.

YES also hosted two separate Wellness Gatherings: the **Syilx Men's Wellness Gathering** (February 9-10, 2019) and the **Syilx Women's Wellness Gathering** (March 8-10, 2019), both at Spirit Ridge, Osoyoos, BC. The Men's Wellness Gathering saw 19 Syilx Okanagan men from all member Nation communities including elders, council members, young men and band workers. A wide range of issues were discussed and engaged, including traditional medicine, healing through art, mental health and addictions.

The Syilx Women's Wellness Gathering also had an overwhelming response from all of the Nation communities. After the initial announcement, the 24 spots were filled immediately. Here Syilx Okanagan Women had a safe and supportive space to discuss ceremonies, *captik'ł* and the application of these in teaching our children about healthy families. It was an opportunity to discuss and problem-solve issues in the community as well as with family. Deep concern about the safety in Syilx Okanagan communities were stated, and the desire to see more programs to deal with drugs, alcohol, and violence were articulated. Women also shared their personal challenges, suicidal children, neglected children in their own families, and discussed burnout from supporting those with addiction and mental health problems.

Taken together, the work of YES is facilitating a community-driven process that is cultivating a more holistic approach to addressing violence in community, which deepen safety for all Syilx Okanagan Nation members. Through creating greater stability and

opportunities to heal, such work contributes to the broader Nation-Rebuilding effort that will allow us to move forward as a People.

Article 13.1 "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons."

At the 2018 ONA Annual General Assembly, at saʔtikn (Manning Park) the Syilx Okanagan Nation present elders and member Chiefs endorsed the **Iʔ Syilx iʔ suk'naqinx scq'əlq'iltət (Syilx Okanagan Language Declaration)**. Over the previous year, language speakers had developed the Language Declaration as an expression of Syilx Okanagan legal principles that stand as a valuable instrument to be able to advocate for the importance of our language. Our nsyilxcen language gives us this right and responsibility to be here. Our Elders spoke in nsyilxcen to the importance of the signing of this historic Declaration. The work to develop this Declaration took a long time, this was a very significant day.

During the signing, elder and fluent language speaker Pauline Archacan spoke about our Rights and the significance of the Declaration and how she was fully satisfied with the wording in the Declaration. While the Council and Nation members signed as witnesses, drummers and singers provided spiritual significance to the signing with beautiful songs that filled the room already bursting with so much pride

We want to acknowledge all those who worked on this Declaration and through this work we honour our elders and those who have kept our language alive.

"The work to develop this Declaration took a long time, this was a very significant day."



Article 22.2 “States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.”

Syilx Okanagan children are the future of our Nation. Ensuring their protection and well-being is key to guaranteeing that we move forward as a Nation. Building on the groundwork laid by our cultural values, guidance provided by both the community and best practices in Indigenous family wellness, a model has emerged that allows us to exercise jurisdiction over our children and families. ONA supports the work of both protecting Syilx Okanagan children and supporting member families that addresses complex root causes caused by colonialism and reinforces our community’s ability to create healthy environments where children are safe and can thrive.

The Family Decision Making (FDM) program continues to provide a Syilx approach to ensure the safety and support of families and children. Over the last year this has included providing 78 FDM Circles out in community. 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 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. Through this process we ensure connection to ancestral lands, culture and language for our children. Alongside these general circles, FDM Youth Justice circles 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.

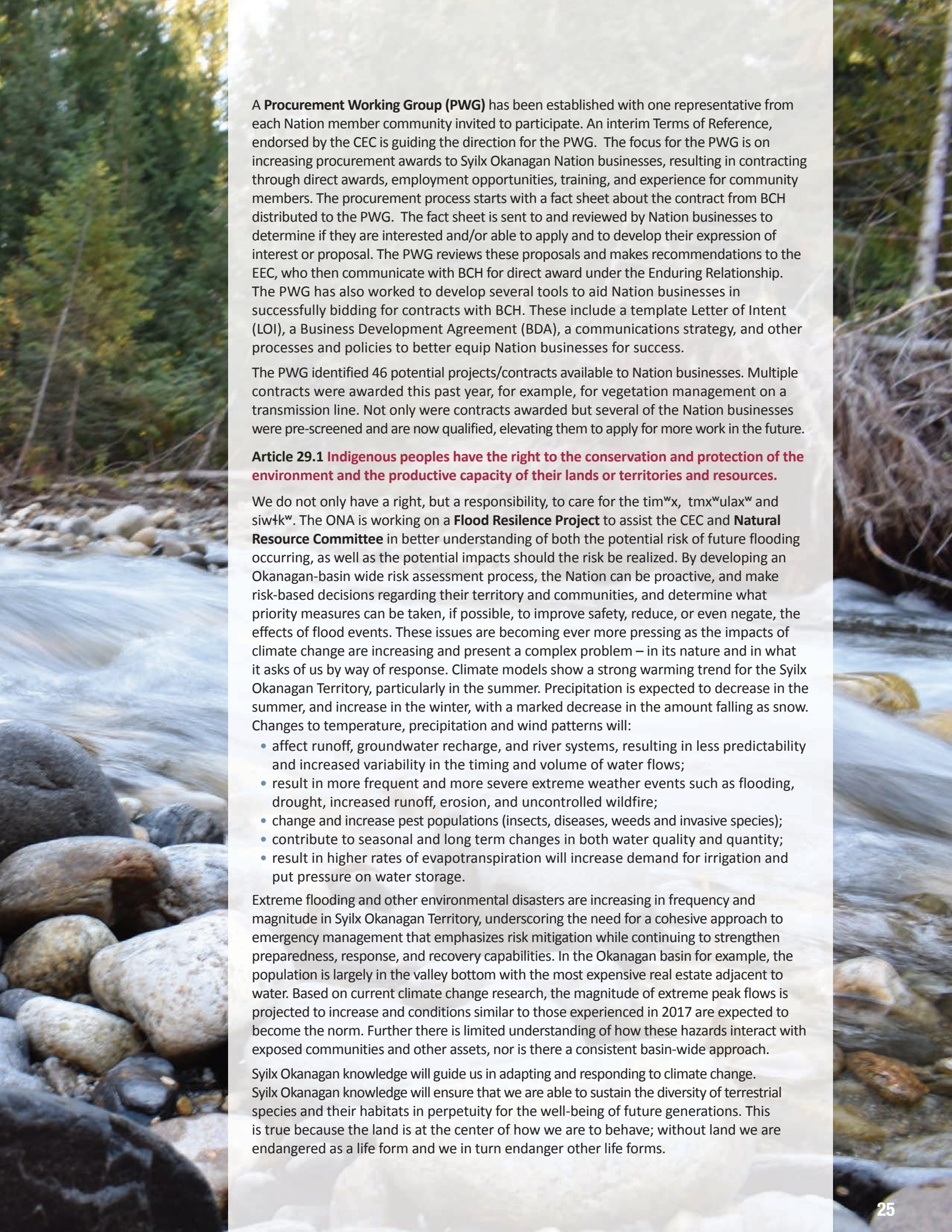
In March, 2019, the FDM team worked to build better relationships and deepen understanding and cultural safety with the MCFD by hosting a cultural teaching event. This event saw 60 MCFD social workers and other that work with our children engaged in teachings from five elders on Syilx culture. These efforts provide MCFD workers, who are often involved with our children, gain a fuller understanding and appreciation of our unique culture and way of being. All attendants were encouraged to practice these teachings in their lives and the work they do in the Territory. These are small steps towards making a big impact in our Territory.

For more on Child and Family Governance see page 17/18.
Child and Youth programs in community on page 46/47.

Article 20 “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.”

The capacity to self-determine how economic development takes place on our Territory, and to be able to prosper from these developments, has been a long-standing body of work at ONA. Therefore, as this work has proceeded and progressed over the years and with the historic signing of the Enduring Relationship with BC Hydro (BCH) a few years ago along with other BCH related negotiations underway provided space for CEC to focus on nation based economic enterprise. This work involving how the energy sector continues to rapidly evolve on Syilx Okanagan Territory, demanding that we coordinate both as a Nation and other organizations to affirm our responsibilities and benefit accordingly from projects.

The **ONA Energy Executive Committee (EEC)** works steadfastly to advance the daily business and economic interests of the Nation in the energy sector. This year the EEC came together five times to provide recommendations for energy-based decisions, to enhance collaborative collective authority, minimize impacts and maximize benefits. One area of focus for the EEC has been to increase the Nation’s participation in BCH contracting and procurement opportunities within the Territory. BC Hydro has extensive contracting and procurement opportunities for the next 10 plus years in the Territory. BC Hydro is committed to increasing the procurement awarded to the Nation Communities and their businesses.



A **Procurement Working Group (PWG)** has been established with one representative from each Nation member community invited to participate. An interim Terms of Reference, endorsed by the CEC is guiding the direction for the PWG. The focus for the PWG is on increasing procurement awards to Syilx Okanagan Nation businesses, resulting in contracting through direct awards, employment opportunities, training, and experience for community members. The procurement process starts with a fact sheet about the contract from BCH distributed to the PWG. The fact sheet is sent to and reviewed by Nation businesses to determine if they are interested and/or able to apply and to develop their expression of interest or proposal. The PWG reviews these proposals and makes recommendations to the EEC, who then communicate with BCH for direct award under the Enduring Relationship. The PWG has also worked to develop several tools to aid Nation businesses in successfully bidding for contracts with BCH. These include a template Letter of Intent (LOI), a Business Development Agreement (BDA), a communications strategy, and other processes and policies to better equip Nation businesses for success.

The PWG identified 46 potential projects/contracts available to Nation businesses. Multiple contracts were awarded this past year, for example, for vegetation management on a transmission line. Not only were contracts awarded but several of the Nation businesses were pre-screened and are now qualified, elevating them to apply for more work in the future.

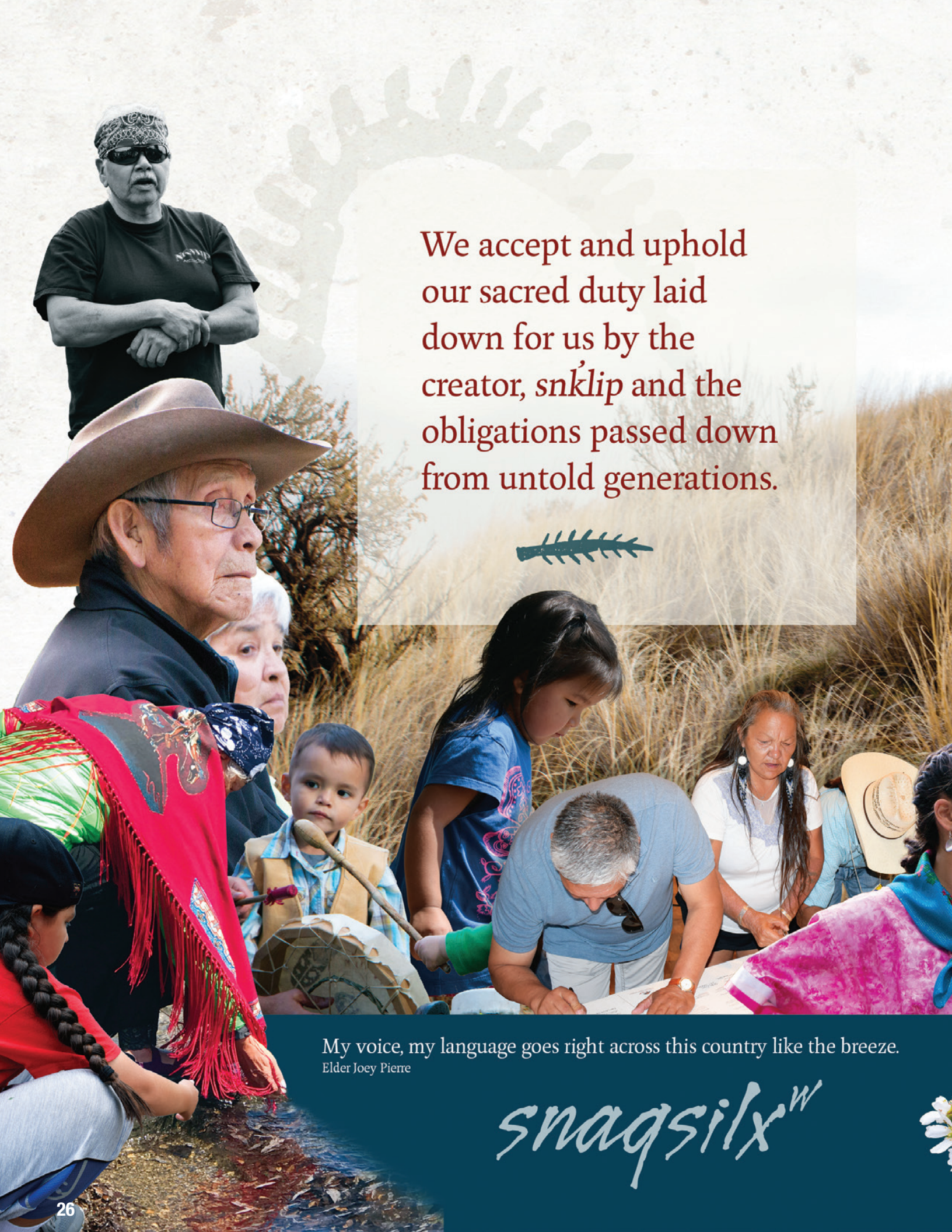
Article 29.1 Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources.

We do not only have a right, but a responsibility, to care for the *tim^wx*, *tmx^wulax^w* and *siw^{tk}w*. The ONA is working on a **Flood Resilience Project** to assist the CEC and **Natural Resource Committee** in better understanding of both the potential risk of future flooding occurring, as well as the potential impacts should the risk be realized. By developing an Okanagan-basin wide risk assessment process, the Nation can be proactive, and make risk-based decisions regarding their territory and communities, and determine what priority measures can be taken, if possible, to improve safety, reduce, or even negate, the effects of flood events. These issues are becoming ever more pressing as the impacts of climate change are increasing and present a complex problem – in its nature and in what it asks of us by way of response. Climate models show a strong warming trend for the Syilx Okanagan Territory, particularly in the summer. Precipitation is expected to decrease in the summer, and increase in the winter, with a marked decrease in the amount falling as snow. Changes to temperature, precipitation and wind patterns will:

- affect runoff, groundwater recharge, and river systems, resulting in less predictability and increased variability in the timing and volume of water flows;
- result in more frequent and more severe extreme weather events such as flooding, drought, increased runoff, erosion, and uncontrolled wildfire;
- change and increase pest populations (insects, diseases, weeds and invasive species);
- contribute to seasonal and long term changes in both water quality and quantity;
- result in higher rates of evapotranspiration will increase demand for irrigation and put pressure on water storage.

Extreme flooding and other environmental disasters are increasing in frequency and magnitude in Syilx Okanagan Territory, underscoring the need for a cohesive approach to emergency management that emphasizes risk mitigation while continuing to strengthen preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities. In the Okanagan basin for example, the population is largely in the valley bottom with the most expensive real estate adjacent to water. Based on current climate change research, the magnitude of extreme peak flows is projected to increase and conditions similar to those experienced in 2017 are expected to become the norm. Further there is limited understanding of how these hazards interact with exposed communities and other assets, nor is there a consistent basin-wide approach.

Syilx Okanagan knowledge will guide us in adapting and responding to climate change. Syilx Okanagan knowledge will ensure that we are able to sustain the diversity of terrestrial species and their habitats in perpetuity for the well-being of future generations. This is true because the land is at the center of how we are to behave; without land we are endangered as a life form and we in turn endanger other life forms.



We accept and uphold
our sacred duty laid
down for us by the
creator, *snk'lip* and the
obligations passed down
from untold generations.



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

snagsilx[™]





timix^w

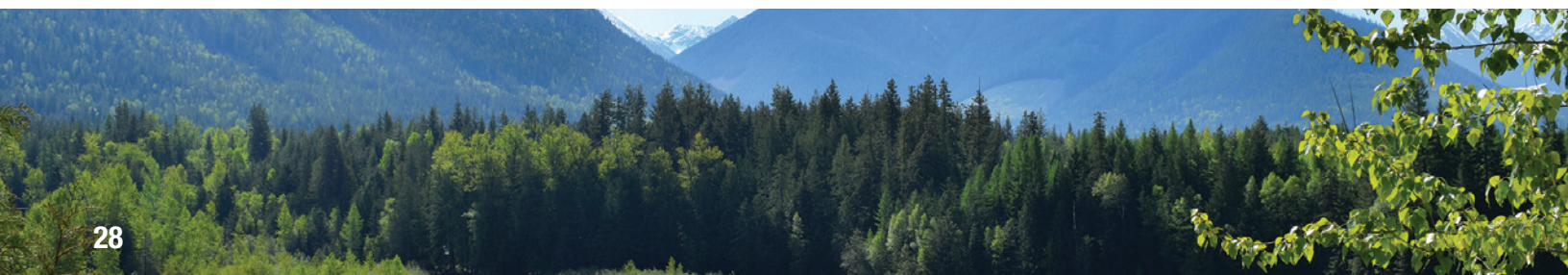
The CEC acknowledges the importance of cultural values, respecting traditional ecological knowledge, and collaborative efforts by the Syilx Okanagan Nation and member communities. With adaptation strategies rooted in Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), we can learn how to change with our environment in a way that respects the timix^w. This can be seen in how active fire suppression has led to extreme fuel loading and vegetation ingrowth throughout Syilx Okanagan Territory. Combined with climate change, fire suppression has led to longer, more intense, and more destructive wildfire seasons and a less resilient forest and grassland ecosystem. A less resilient ecosystem degrades cultural and social values, increases threats to communities and infrastructure and provides fewer natural resources. Traditionally, the open forest and grassland ecosystems found in the Okanagan-Similkameen areas were maintained by low intensity, controlled burns, lit and managed by the Syilx Okanagan people. cikilax^wm (prescribed fire) is a long standing Syilx method of traditional burning of the land that enhances wildlife habitat, forest and grassland health, and reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfire. In today's climate, we also burn for the safety and security of our communities and the people who live on this landscape.

This year, the ONA partnered with two of the Nation communities, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), BC Wildfire Service, Forest Enhancement Society of BC, and more organizations to conduct two prescribed fires. In spring 2018, Penticton Indian Band (PIB) lead the **Garnet Valley Prescribed Fire**, covering 113.7 hectares of land. This project is the product of hard-earned relationships between ONA, PIB, local industry (Gorman's), the BC Provincial Government and Forest Enhancement of BC (FESBC). It has successfully married timber harvesting with cultural-ecological restoration at a landscape level, and has provided a template to model and improve on as the forestry sector, Indigenous rights and reconciliation and ecosystem stewardship continue to innovate.

In March 2019, Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) lead a fire at **Crater Mountain Prescribed Fire** for over 192 hectares. This burn is phase one of a comprehensive, multi-year project aimed at improving bighorn sheep habitat, reducing wildfire threats to nearby communities, protecting cultural values, and providing an opportunity for collaboration to support the re-establishment of fire as part of the natural disturbance regime in the Okanagan. Alongside the same partners this successful burn is renewing the timix^w and mitigating the effects of climate change.

In January 2017, the CEC re-established the **NRC Forestry Working Group (FWG)** to meet regularly and support a process to gain the Syilx Okanagan consent on the Okanagan Timber Supply Review (TSR), Annual Allowable Cut (AAC), and other forestry initiatives throughout the Territory. Also, in winter of 2017, the Nation advised the Ministry that if it intended to proceed on the Okanagan TSR on a collective basis, it needed to engage the CEC directly on this matter, and that they should not be approaching individual Syilx Okanagan communities regarding this process. There was very little engagement between the Nation and the Province on the TSR or other forestry initiatives since the new government was elected.

On September 14, 2018, the FWG met with Ray Crampton, Regional Executive Director, Resource Management - Okanagan Shuswap, FLNRORD. From the FWG's perspective, while forestry practices have been addressed at the community-level for the last few years, substantial changes under TSRs and to AACs may have adverse impacts to our Title and Rights interests, and therefore, require meaningful engagement with the Nation's leadership on a collective basis and not simply at a technical level.





siwłk^w (water)

siwłk^w planning has been a long standing concept that Syilx Okanagan people continue to practice as fundamental guiding principles. Our approach has been utilized for many thousands of years to ensure that those with the most knowledge and understanding of siwłk^w within a specific region of the Territory are responsible for ensuring that proper measures of respect are carried forward.

The Okanagan Basin has significant flood and debris-flow hazards, but for the most part these are not mapped or recorded. Most recently, in 2017, the Syilx Okanagan Nation was heavily impacted by extreme flooding, both on and off reserve. The ONA has undertaken a **Okanagan and Similkameen Basin Flood Risk Assessment** with Ebbwater Consulting the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), and regional districts and municipalities for the Okanagan Basin, which is almost 200 km long and 8,000 km² in area. Two on-the-land watershed tours have been held with Syilx Okanagan members and non-Syilx Okanagan stakeholders of the Okanagan basin, one in Penticton along Shingle Creek and the second in the Similkameen travelling from Princeton to Cawston. In the next fiscal year, another watershed tour will be held in Vernon. Ebbwater Consulting also held two training events for community members regarding flood risk assessments. This project has been focused on partnerships and relationships from the very beginning, from monthly internal planning calls and a steering committee with both Syilx Okanagan and non-Syilx representation.

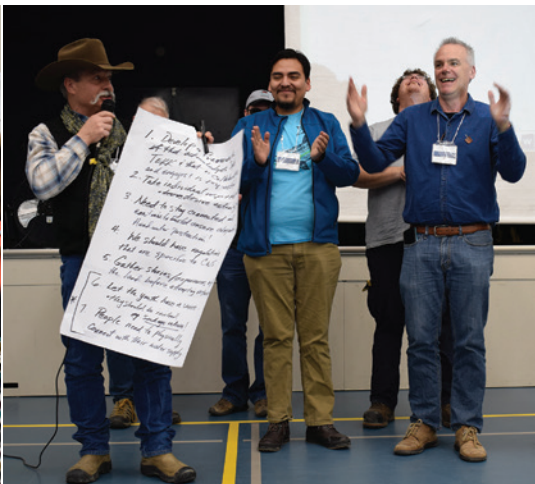
As a result, the Nation requires a better understanding of both the potential risk of future flooding occurring, as well as the potential impacts should the risk be realized. By developing an Okanagan-basin wide risk assessment process, the Nation is being proactive, and make risk-based decisions regarding their territory and communities, and determine what priority measures can be taken, if possible, to improve safety, reduce, or even negate, the effects of flood events.

A Collaborative Approach to Water Resiliency:

Protecting our Headwaters Water Forum held on World Water Day, March 22, 2019 was the 5th Annual Syilx Water Forum. The tour was hosted to demonstrate a Syilx Okanagan cultural assessment of scłaxans nhithitwł (Headwater Lakes/Peachland watershed) and hold dialogue on the impacts of forestry practices and other activities on water quality and drinking water and to try to develop collaborative actions to address the issues. The tour allowed people to share knowledge connected to place and see that place first hand. With the help of the facilitator there was also the opportunity to build relationships and explore the land a bit as they broke into groups for a rediscovery and reflections activity. The tour served as an important step for the ONA Natural Resource Watershed Responsibility planning in the Territory to ensure waters are managed in a holistic way and protected for future generations.

As part of marking this event, the ONA also partnered to have new signage unveiled at this event, highlighting the importance of protecting the Peachland watershed from harmful impacts as a message to all who use the area. The signage was very well received and further partnerships established as Westbank First Nation (WFN) offered to fund 3 future signage projects.

A Syilx siwłk^w (Water) Strategy is a longstanding Chief's Executive Council (CEC) and Council's directive designed improve and enhance Syilx Okanagan water governance. In 2008, the Chiefs and Councils in Assembly at the AGA passed a Resolution to develop an Okanagan Nation Water Governance document. Over the years, in order to develop this Strategy the Natural Resource team met



with Elders, knowledge keepers and Syilx Okanagan community members from all eight communities to hear their thoughts on water stewardship and the issues facing Syilx Okanagan communities associated with a growing population and the allocation and use of water. An initial 'living document' of the Syilx Water Strategy emerged from these consultations, and has continued to be developed by the Natural Resource team. Over 100 unique community members' perspectives are reflected in this strategy. On January 25, 2019, the NRC received the Syilx Water Strategy to take back to each of their Chief and Council's for review and recommended next steps for community input. This document will continue to evolve and develop in the coming year as well.

On October 17-18, 2018, the ONA, in partnership with OBWB hosted an **Environmental Flow Needs Conference**. The goal of the conference was to bring together scientists, policy-makers, planners, regulators, and others from diverse cultural backgrounds, training, and geographies to share knowledge and perspectives about environmental flows, considering issues from local through global scales.

Food Sovereignty

The health and vitality of Syilx Okanagan People is directly tied to the health of our Territory and the staple foods that we access on our land. We have an inherent right to be nourished by a wealth of biodiversity including fish, game, berries, roots, and medicines. Hunting and gathering these resources requires a localized knowledge that is dictated by the seasonal cycles of the land.

Challenges related to ecosystem health, access to first foods and water have become more prevalent in Syilx Okanagan Territory. There is concern surrounding the decision-making authorities related to Natural Resource management of our four food chiefs: skmxist (Black Bear), siya (Saskatoon Berry), spił'əm (Bitter Root), ntityix (King Salmon); and the land and water that supports them. There is a need for sustainable, responsible land, water and timix™ (all living things) governance.

Syilx Okanagan traditional harvesting and hunting methods need to be revitalized to ensure proper revitalization and health of those species. These practices are conducted in a manner that demonstrates

EFNs are "the volume and timing of stream flow required for proper functioning of the aquatic ecosystem". Previously recommended EFNs have often been considerably higher than what could be considered possible naturally, particularly in drier years. This project aims to determine EFNs that are attainable for water managers, and to study the relationship between flows and habitat function more closely. EFNs are currently being developed for 18 Okanagan streams using the Okanagan Tennant method and for 10 of those streams, were further refined using the Okanagan WUW method. Further, critical flows were developed for all streams based on a proportion of the LTMAD and/or fish habitat data, where available. During the process of applying the EFN setting methods recommended in the Phase I report (Associated 2016) to the 18 streams, it became evident that each stream has distinct biological, hydrological, and physical characteristics as well as history of human use and modifications, and EFNs had to be developed under careful consideration of each.

honour and respect for the timix™. Restoring, maintaining, protecting and practicing our Indigenous food systems is foundational and central to the well-being of Syilx Okanagan communities and way of life. ONA contributes to the wide range of traditional food initiatives that are carried out by communities, organizations and individuals throughout the Nation ensuring that our food systems continue despite ongoing challenges. Food Sovereignty has been embodied through our Syilx Okanagan food champions and grassroots peoples.

As with previous years we continue to sustain a food fishery that provides sc'win (Sockeye Salmon) to all member communities. This distribution illustrates the



continued commitment to creating food sovereignty throughout the Nation. This year we also remained focused on asserting a multi-species food fishery. This approach has included providing both xwmina? (rainbow trout) and bull trout as food fish for community as well.

At the same time we are constantly aiming to be strategic and progressive in how we assert our Nations Fishery. We have been conducting Upper Columbia salmon reintroduction and habitat modeling, which shows that the **Whatshan watershed** could be a leading candidate for chinook, steelhead, bulltrout, and possibly sockeye and/or kokanee fisheries for future needs. Over the last 18 months ONA has been gathering information and initiating mapping of the watershed to better understand the potential threats to the fisheries. Whatshan kokanee is a viable kokanee population within the Upper Columbia River Watershed. Peak spawning usually occurs from early to mid- September. Of all adult kokanee enumerated, on average roughly 90% of those adults are enumerated on the spawning grounds between 25 August and 20 September, within the lower 15 km of the Whatshan River, upstream of Whatshan Reservoir.

The ONA recognizes that not only do we need to assert our food sovereignty within the Territory, but are behooved to contribute our experience and perspective to broader food and social justice movements that are transforming how we understand food sovereignty on a global scale. From August 9-10, 2018, Kwantlen Polytechnic University gathered internationally-recognized indigenous practitioners, academics, and food activists for the **'Place-Based Food-Systems Conference'**, which included a presentation by ONA Executive Director, on 'Syilx Perspective on Our Original Foods: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'. This conference provide a strategic opportunity to highlight Syilx OK. food sovereignty, and advocate for both the initiatives and perspectives that our Nation continues to move forward.

Article 33.1 Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions.

Since colonization there has been a systemic effort to alienate and assimilate our People. These pervasive approaches have taken a wide range of forms, but one of the key ways has been an attempt by colonial institutions to determine how membership to and identification with our Nation members takes place. This can be seen with the 1951 'Cut Off' in the Indian Act, which excluded First Nations, including Syilx Okanagan, grandchildren born before 1951, whose grandmother lost her status due to marrying a non-Indian, from attaining Indian Registration, Band Membership and First Nations Citizenship, from being able to attain membership. Bill S-3, which removes the 1951 'Cut-Off' (Paragraph 6.1.a) from the Indian Act began to be put into action in 2018.

The Government of Canada has decreed that First Nations are now to be consulted on how best to perform these amendments to the Act, to identify what resources are required to ensure successful implementation and to ensure that any unintended consequences are lessened. Previous sessions have been held throughout the Syilx Okanagan Nation, including a Collaborative Process Forum and Think Tank, but we recognize that not all members were able to attend these events in person. We also distributed an online survey in an attempt to ensure full participation. This process has proven challenging, with many colonial biases and attitudes still pervasive, yet we are dedicated to ensuring that our voices are heard and that our Syilx Way is central to this restructuring. Based on these efforts the ONA has submitted a report to the Government of Canada, tabling a demand for strong Syilx OK. contribution to how wrong this systemic racism is, while also highlighting how tinkering with the Indian Act will never resolve the key challenges.



Upholding Our Inherent Responsibilities

As Syilx Okanagan People, we were born with inherent responsibilities for the *tmx^wulax^w*, *siwlhk^w*, our communities and families. These values are deeply rooted in our past, through connections to our ancestors since time immemorial, which define who we are as a Syilx Okanagan People and Nation. Much of the work taken on by the ONA is to uphold these responsibilities, and ensure that they carried for and passed on for generations to come.

Education for Reconnection

ONA's Fish in Schools (FinS) is a comprehensive fish education program for school students with a focus on *sc'win* (sockeye salmon), their lifecycle and the importance of their ecosystems. By creating greater awareness of fish species, the intent is for students to become educated and aware of both salmon, their habitat and surrounding ecosystem, and become the next advocates that carry responsibility towards these fish forward. Upon successfully raising the *sc'win* fry, they will be included in the Syilx Okanagan ceremonial releases throughout the Territory.

This year the ONA has upscaled these efforts, and collaborated with School Districts 8, 10, 20, and 51, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, and Regional District of Central Kootenay to deliver the FinS program to ten schools throughout the Columbia. FinS is a key step in the Nation's broader intent to bring salmon back to their original range of the Upper Columbia, having been blocked from returning by Hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River in the 1940s. In the Columbia, this program also creates awareness of the historic salmon run from the ocean, upstream to the Kettle River, Columbia, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenay Rivers, including major tributaries the Salmo River and Slocan River. Another key element of the program is to have a Syilx Okanagan Knowledge Keeper or Elder come to each school and present the Coyote Story the Columbia River salmon origin story; as well as stories on the past, present and future importance of the salmon to the Syilx Okanagan Peoples and to other creatures and environments in the Syilx Territory.

“We are so excited to have this opportunity in our school. In the first week we have had the most of our classes visit the ‘salmon classroom’ as it is now known. We’ve had students learning the salmon life cycle, creating art, learning more local geography and learning more about the indigenous history of our local areas.”

—Jamie Stewart, Hutton Grade 5/6 teacher





Protection for the timix^w

When it comes to our responsibility to the timix^w, we continue to respect and ensure our Syilx Okanagan traditional ecological knowledge systems inform our interactions on the land while balancing western scientific. Through the integration of these two systems ONA has been persistent in ensuring that we are restoring and rejuvenating habitats in the most dynamic way possible, engaging both traditional knowledge and cutting edge science to contribute to protecting and advancing a bio diverse environment.

According to Syilx Traditional Ecological Knowledge, the river channel in Penticton used to be rich in fish; Steelhead, Coho, Sockeye and Chinook Salmon. Salmon spawning habitat is currently extremely limited in the Penticton Channel, mainly due to river channelization, which created very flat channel grade, low water velocities, inadequate substrate material, and low egg-fry survival. As part of our sustained **Okanagan River Restoration Initiative (ORRI)** gravel augmentation in the Penticton Channel has been identified as one of the highest river habitat priorities, creating spawning areas (raised spawning beds) with optimized gravel size, bed slope and water flow for Sockeye, Kokanee and Chinook, while enhancing rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids and Burbot with boulder clusters. In 2018, as part of the continued work of ORRI we installed a fourth gravel bed in the Penticton Channel. This bed is approximately 500 meters long, and has been designed for both sockeye and kokanee spawning. At the same time we continue to monitor the effectiveness of previous bed installs and adapt them based on monitoring.

The Loughheed Floodplain Engagement was another part of the work of ORRI that saw the continued rehabilitation of key riparian areas on *qawsitk^w* (Okanagan River). In order to improve the function of the Loughheed floodplain at lower flows, the upper and lower notches will be lowered, according to their original elevations. We have also planted a number of species, including mulx (black cottonwood), siya (saskatoon), prickly rose, snowberry, and Oregon grape.

For the Syilx Okanagan people, *ki?lawna?* (Grizzly bear) is a significant part of our laws and protocols. *ki?lawna?* is important in our creation stories and reminds us of our responsibilities to our *tmx^wulax^w* (land). The ONA wildlife team was contracted to conduct a ***ki?lawna?* hazard assessment for E.C Manning Park and Cathedral Park** between June 2018 and January 2019. The assessment was an opportunity to link science and TEK in the context of human-bear relationships. Front country and back country facilities were evaluated, placing more emphasis on back country facilities and increased pressures from relatively new activities such as mountain biking. Potential conflicts and cumulative impacts within the former Cascades Recreation area and the motorized access to it were also included in the assessment.

The assessment concluded that management of E.C. Manning in its entirety must be to the *ki?lawna?* (Grizzly bear) standard, given the quality of habitat on the West side of the Park. The lower elevations of Cathedral Provincial Park, particularly on the West side, are high enough to expect some *ki?lawna?* use however, the core area of Cathedral Lakes Park with respect to *ki?lawna?* may be premature, simply because the overall habitat quality is low in the high alpine areas. Attractant management and total bear proofing is still recommended immediately.

Along with the habitat assessment, the Natural Resource team also began gathering TEK to inform the Grizzly Bear Status Assessment Review by the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Knowledge from Syilx Okanagan. TEK holders and other First Nations is only just starting to be gathered, such as information on populations, habitat, possibility of recovery, and threats for the Okanagan and North Cascade *ki?lawna?*.

At least three remnant trans-boundary *ki?lawna?* populations are found in Syilx Okanagan Territory – Okanagan, Kettle-Grandby and North Cascades. They need immediate action in order to prevent them from disappearing due to low numbers, loss of habitat, and



geographic isolation. From this project the Nation will be able to implement protection and conservation plans, raise awareness and encourage dialogue, build relationships and properly engage and include co-management practices involving trans-boundary ki?lawna? populations.

The Southern Interior British Columbia Mule Deer Project aims to gain important information on potential ways to restore mule deer populations in BC by studying how landscape change and the predator prey community are affecting our current populations. The wildlife team worked with several partners and captured approximately 58 adult mule deer via net-gunning from helicopters, ground darting, and ground-based clover traps. We hope to capture 60 fawns in the coming year.

The information gathered from the collared mule deer will help us learn what their habitat preferences are, particularly as the landscape is affected by changes such as wildfire, prescribed fire and industrial practices. This will help us understand what we can do to better restore and manage a healthy mule deer population in the Southern Interior. So far, we have been surprised by the significant distances travelled by some of the collared deer, and have learned a great deal about mortality causes since the beginning of the project in 2017.

Syilx Okanagan communities have a responsibility to care for wildlife in the Territory. In order to bridge the gap in authority and focus on aligned values, the ONA proposed the development of a collaborative technical working group with Syilx Okanagan member communities, the BC FLNRORD and Environment Canada and Climate Change in 2017. The objective is to bring the organizations together in a technical capacity to improve species and ecosystems management by collaborating on high priority projects, programs and core activities.

In 2018, the CEC endorsed the technical working group, as well as the establishment of the newly formed **Syilx Wildlife and Hunting Working Group (WHWG)**. Direction from the CEC is for the WHWG to draft a terms of reference, work plan and wildlife responsibilities framework, and to work as part

of the Collaborative Technical Working Group to establish overlapping values and priorities to improve conservation and management for species at risk and species of cultural concern. Thus far, the group has come together three times and held a two-day workshop with Syilx Okanagan community members.

Key priorities for the coming year include: wildlife management improvement, hunter/harvester protocols, identify areas of priority, wildlife corridors, food sovereignty, and continued collaboration and relationship building.

The ONA collaborated with UNB, OKIB, and WFN to conduct assessments on the South-Corridor public lands and the Common Corridor portion of the **West Kelowna Transmission Line (WKTL) project**. The purpose of the assessments was to document pre-project conditions for wildlife and wildlife habitats. Wildlife species studied included: migratory ducks and song birds, owls, snakes, deer, moose, frogs, badger, elk, lynx, marten, and their associated habitats. The assessment will assist BCH and the Nation in determining the final line-route which would avoid, minimize, and offset all of the risks to wildlife and wildlife habitat associated with construction and operation of the proposed transmission line within the study corridor.

ONA continues to also deliver several **Columbia River Water Use Planning** process monitoring (CLBMON) projects. These projects aim to mitigate damming impacts in the Kinbasket and Arrow Lakes Reservoirs. For the 2018-2019 year four CLBMON projects were completed that focused on wetlands and effects of habitat restoration on several species of animals and vegetation such as amphibians, reptiles, arthropods, and birds. The projects often had overlapping effects in the reservoirs. For example, one project assessed the effectiveness of previous physical works undertaken to protect and enhance wetland and wildlife habitat. By reducing the erosion, the physical works improved habitat for several species of wildlife as well as vegetation and riparian habitat function.

For Our Elders

Our Nation elders are integral to ensuring the continuity of Nationhood. They are, and have always, been essential for the transmission of knowledge and culture. They are the key link between our past and future.

Over the last year the ONA has had several opportunities to work with Syilx Okanagan elders and knowledge keepers. Most notably was the development of the **baseline inventories (harvest, cultural and heritage values) for the sʔalt'ikʷət (Arrow Lakes)**, using culturally appropriate Syilx Okanagan research methodologies. Land-based research is at the foundation of our culture and is inseparable from the responsibility of caring for the land and water. The land itself is often a key repository of knowledge, an interpretive tool, and a key locator of meaning and history. Collectively, Syilx Okanagan People have a substantial fund of orally transmitted genealogical information that connects them to the sʔalt'ikʷət. It is expressed through narratives of migration from the sʔalt'ikʷət to escape oppression, accounts of instruction from parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents concerning important localities in the area, and accounts of harvesting activities, including hunting or gathering berries, either as children to accompany older relatives, or as adults. The relationship of the Syilx Okanagan people with the sʔalt'ikʷət is very ancient.

Through this work, a group of 12 elders were brought to the sʔalt'ikʷət twice at qalisuʔ (Trout Lake) and nmiməltn (Whatshan Lake). Some of the highlights of these trips were water ceremonies, telling stories and captikʷł, ceremony, singing songs and drumming, traditional travel routes and markers, and sesɕawses (ancestors). A major focus of each trip was identifying the culturally significant plants, medicines, foods, and animals in the area. Elders were able to not only share amongst each other, but there were youth present during each trip and the elders were able to impart invaluable knowledge to them. Teaching and sharing with youth is incredibly important.



“This is what I used to dream about and speak to its happening. I am happy; this is the best part of your young lives. The land, the water, the people; it’s important.”





This project has been beneficial for gathering harvest, cultural and heritage values, for building information and governance capacity, to honour and acknowledge the sacred relationship of the Syilx Okanagan peoples to the land, connect and re-connect to the timix^w and research in ways that are conducive to Syilx Okanagan ways.

In summer 2018, ONA NR staff and two Syilx Okanagan elders went on a journey through the Territory and recorded 15 “voice maps”. These are videos in which the elders talk about significant cultural information at 15 different locations, such as place names, stories, practices and protocols. Some of the areas include: Revelstoke, Arrow Lakes, Christina Lake, Grand Forks, and New Denver.

With the extensive research this year and recorded videos and interviews comes the need for safe and secure databases to store the information so it can be accessed by the Nation for generations to come. The ONA currently uses the “Voices on the Land” web atlas to demonstrate Syilx Okanagan place names, cultural sites, and ONA projects. The Natural Resource team was tasked with updating the information on that site as well as adding to an updated web atlas database. Previously in 2010, a geographic information system (GIS) and Web Based ONA Decision Support System (ONADSS) containing spatial Land Use Plan (LUP) information was piloted and critiqued by Syilx Okanagan Band referrals staff for its use and feasibility. The ONADSS was never fully developed as the pilot model did not meet the standards or needs of the Syilx Okanagan Band referrals staff. Some of the challenges with the system included: inability to arrange referrals by location, no connection to traditional use studies (TUS) or other inventory information, no built in mapping, software tendency to crash, and no pop-up reminder for time lines of responses.



The ONA sought to hire and work with a database developer to modify and improve the existing database to create on-line, confidential, map-based inventories; and meet with community staff to understand requirements and test the efficiency and effectiveness of the database for use by the Nation. Kwusen Research & Media (Kwusen) was the successful consultant. They met with Syilx Okanagan Communities in December 2018 to conduct a needs assessment by asking a series of questions for each community regarding their internal referrals review processes and their data sharing processes with ONA.

The Community Knowledge Keeper (CKK) is an intuitive, user-friendly mapping, data management, and integrated consultation tracking and response system. The CKK manages the diverse and large number of records created through research and consultation processes, provides for instant desktop analysis of potential impacts of industrial development on traditional use, species habitat, archaeological sites, and any areas of importance to Indigenous communities. All of the information gathered from the research trips and voice maps will be stored safely in the CKK. We are currently working with all of the Syilx OK. member bands to develop a Knowledge Sharing Protocol in regards to the CKK.





Protecting Communities from an Epidemic

We carry an inherent responsibility to each other, our families and communities to ensure that no one is left behind, and that we are all on a healing path. The spreading tragedy of the opioid crisis gripping our Territory and British Columbia general was a catalyst for the **2018 Syilx Nation Drug Forum**. The Forum focused on drug misuse and the opioid crisis, and brought Nation members together to learn more about the crisis gripping our communities and to discuss the development of a Syilx Okanagan strategy for responding. Among those leaders and community members who attended, there was a clear message about the need to develop a responsive strategy that leads to strong actions on the level of the individual, the community, and the Nation.

The 2018 Forum built on work initiated by the ONA in 2004 through discussions at the General Membership Assembly following drug-related violence that devastated the Nation. In the intervening years, the Nation has spearheaded a wide range of activities aimed at supporting culture and language including the Syilx Unity Run, parenting workshops, Elder and youth gatherings, as well as land-based camps. The Nation has also developed a number of prevention programs including: Okanagan Nation Crisis Response Team (ONRT); R'Native Voice Youth Program; K'u ǰast; and BRIDGES. Participants at the 2018 Forum spoke about the need to develop a responsive strategy that leads to timely actions on the levels of the individual, the community, and the Nation. Following is an overview of the key themes that emerged.

The 2018 Nation Forum provided a strong foundation for moving forward. Acknowledging the critical nature of the crisis, drug response forums will now be held

annually. The 2019 Nation Forum will build off of the foundation laid out in a Drug Strategy report, to be completed later in 2019, which will guide us in moving to a tactical strategy that identifies steps at every level from individual to Nation, within a range of timeframes from immediate to long-term, while acknowledging overlaps and developing pathways to optimize coordinated efforts.

This is complex terrain. The Nation Drug Strategy is not a stand-alone piece. Wellbeing is holistic and all the aspects of it are integrated. Drug prevention and treatment are tied to our strategies for children and families, health, and mental wellness. Nation members have voiced repeatedly the importance of culture in responding to this crisis, acknowledging the strong ties between a drug strategy and initiatives like **the Syilx Okanagan Language Declaration** and **the siwłk'w Water Declaration**. An integrated response is important. The work of responding to the drug crisis ties in with other ONA and community wellness initiatives that are ongoing.

Forum participants spoke about the importance of language and getting on land, and self-care and building family. But when we take a hard look at our community structures, while we are doing a lot, we are still in a program silo model. In terms of a tactical strategy, the voices at the 2018 Forum called on leadership to start implementing culture and supports in the earliest years of our children's lives. Currently, our funding structures are not aligned with this directive. We need to act on this. There is a level of frustration in community and among those on the frontline because of this silo effect. They can pinpoint people at risk of dying, and yet it can be hard to mobilize resources. It can be hard to balance the political piece and the practitioner piece when immediate intervention is needed.

Highlights from our Technical Work



HATCHERY

Releases

1,232,712 sc'win (sockeye) fry released between 4 creeks (Shingle, Trout, Mission and 6 Mile Creek)

2000 x^wmina? (rainbow trout) released into Derrickson Lake for restock

Broodstock

Collected **4,520,064** sc'win (sockeye) eggs for broodstock
Pit tagged and Adiposed clipped

11,612 n'titxw (chinook salmon) smolts for release in coming year

Hatchery Tours

50 tours educating a total of **715** people on conservation hatchery

LAB

Collected biological samples for lab from over **10,000** fish (majority sockeye/kokanee) from **8** lakes including monitoring of harvest, brood stock, dead pitch, fry emergence, hatchery production, juveniles in lake and smolt surveys.

Developed and implemented environmental DNA assays for **7** fish species: Chinook, Sockeye, Kokanee, Rainbow trout, Steelhead, Northern Pike, and Great Basin spadefoot.

Provided **9** tests or samples to **8** outside organizations (including Water quality testing, Disease testing, Bio-Sampling, DNA testing, and Wire tag extraction and reading)

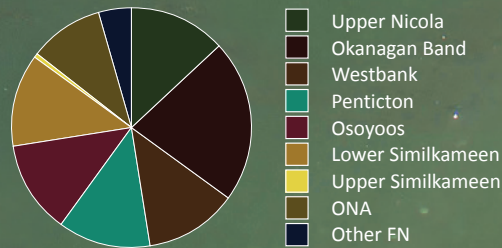
Conducted **16** Acoustic Trawl Surveys in **8** lakes used to estimate sockeye and kokanee densities and produce data.

FOOD FISH DISTRIBUTION

7980 sc'win distributed to community [see pie chart for distribution]

6000 x^wmina? from Pennask Lake distributed to community

150 bull trout from Kootenay Lake distributed to community



HABITAT

Supported OIB in planting **176** mulx (black cottonwood) to create cottonwood meadow for wetland restoration in Oliver, BC. 4 other species also planted (prickly rose, snowberry, Saskatoon Oregon grape, 60 total).

500 m of spawning bed restoration for **4** fish species (sockeye, steelhead, kokanee and rainbow trout) on Penticton Channel

Developed Environmental Flow Needs for **18** tributaries including: Coldstream Creek, Equisis Creek, Inkaneep Creek, McDougall Creek, McLean Creek, Mill Creek, Mission Creek, Naramata Creek, Naswhito Creek, Penticton Creek, Powers Creek, Shingle Creek, Shorts Creek, Shuttleworth Creek, Trepanier Creek, Trout Creek, Vaseux Creek, and Whiteman Creek.

COLUMBIA

24 Northern Pike captured for invasive suppression in the Upper Columbia

225 Juvenile Sturgeon by-caught and added to Sturgeon monitoring database in Upper Columbia

13 fish species documented for Mid-Columbia River Indexing (1150 fish indexed in total)

3 fish species documented for Lower Columbia River Indexing (3203 fish indexed in total)

RESEARCH

300 Plant species, **50** Aquatic species, and **275** Wildlife species entered into database.

210 Captikwl archived for community reference.

290 Place names digitally mapped.

3277 Archaeology sites documented and digitally mapped.

ELDERS ON THE LAND

11 On-the-land research trips and forums with elders and community members

19 Elders participating in on-the-land research trips

23 Elder interviews on language, culture, practices, and protocols

15 Voice maps created for significant sites throughout the territory

SEASONAL ROUNDS CALENDAR

A Syilx (Okanagan) seasonal calendar that identifies uses of food, social and ceremonial resources.

65 Plants named in nsylxcen and gathering times identified

17 Fish species named in nsylxcen and fishing times identified

20 Animals named in nsylxcen and hunting times identified

44 Elders were engaged with on calendar information

38 Plant ID Cards for culturally significant plans to the Arrow Lakes to be used as an educational tool

WILDLIFE

58 Mule deer collared to study deer movement mortalities

17.5% Mortality rate for adult mule deer.

2 Prescribed fires

305.7 Hectares burned under prescribed fire

12 plus Wildlife species studied



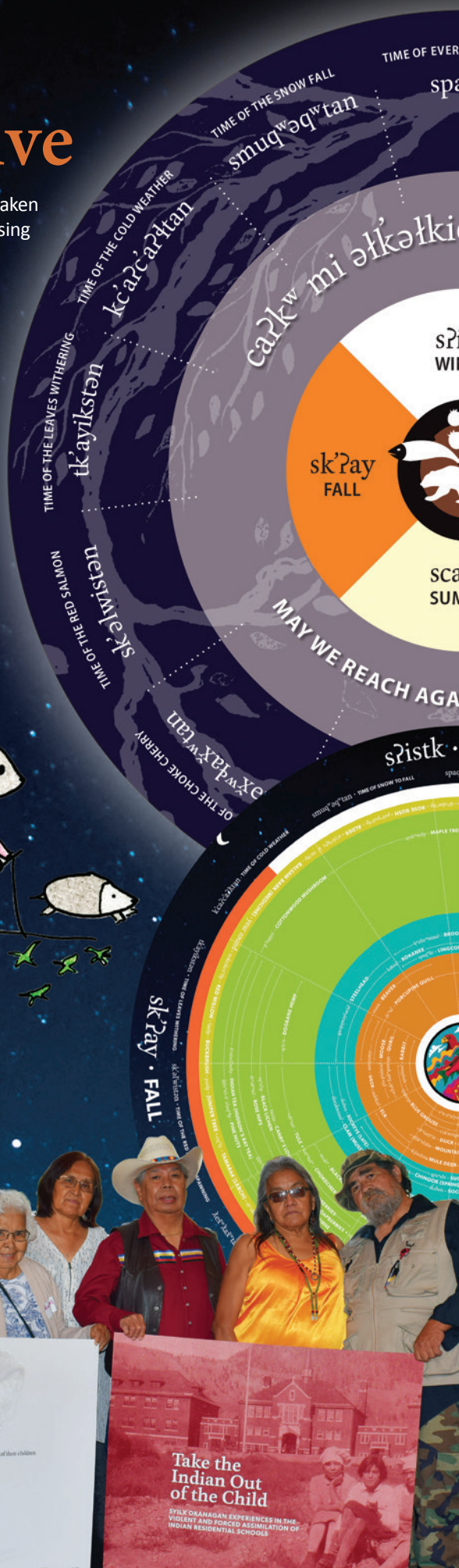
Supporting Our Communities to Thrive

Syilx Okanagan member communities are the focal point for all the work undertaken by the ONA. As we take a collective perspective and approach there is an increasing awareness of our collective responsibility to all Syilx members, families, and communities. As part of this shared work, the ONA is dedicated to developing the capacity of our members from the ground up, to ensure that they are empowered to take on the realities they face on their own terms, and thrive in the face of numerous challenges.

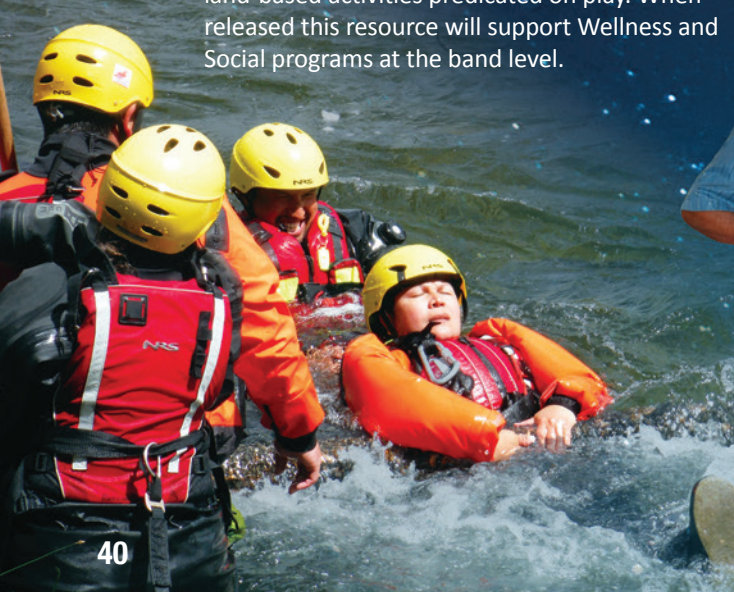
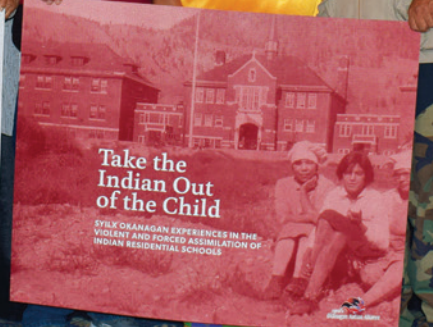
Capacity Building, Resource Development and Training

The impacts of colonialism continue reverberate and destabilize families and the lived experiences of individuals, and yet Syilx Okanagan communities and their members are tenacious and resilient. To further enrich the path forward to rejuvenating our connection to culture, land, and Nation the ONA has developed a number of resources that are distributed to community.

As an example, the ONA is currently in the process of developing a Syilx Traditional Games Toolkit. The development of this Toolkit has been comprehensive, and once complete will be distributed to all Nation communities. This Toolkit has engaged traditional knowledge keepers from throughout the territory in an attempt to make a comprehensive resource to promote our traditional athletics. We have also been engaging this resource at various events throughout the year, engaging youth, leaders and community members to ensure that the content is accessible and relevant for use. A balance representation was a goal that was ultimately achieved with Syilx-rooted teachings being the foundation. The tools and resources outlined in the Toolkit is designed to enhance current programs and services by including more land-based activities predicated on play. When released this resource will support Wellness and Social programs at the band level.



DEDICATION
 For our ancestors
 For the men who raised our presence
 For the "uncles" that was calling us home
 For the parents and grandparents who were robbed of their children
 For the children who were taken away
 For the families who have their pain
 For the generations of loss of language and culture
 For those who never had a chance to speak
 For those who choose not to speak
 For those who have spoken and continue to speak
 For all those affected by Indian residential school
 For all our grandchildren, for all time





Let's all use Love Language

#WElovelanguage

www.okanaganalliance.com

This campaign invites you to use more love language. We want to encourage others to spread love.



Developmental Stages from a Syilx Perspective
kn te pa'ax from birth to three years of age
 -when I first come to know myself, my identity

	0-2 months <i>senaw'itsem</i>	6 months	9 months <i>ty'ag'it'stem</i>	12-18 months <i>quw'iq'at'et'</i>	2-3 years <i>n'at'it'm</i>
Communication					
Gross Motor, Moving					
Fine Motor, Holding					
Vision, Seeing					
Problem Solving					
Personal, Social					

It Happened this Way
 A VIDEO RESOURCE DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE OKANAGAN NATION WELLNESS STRATEGY

THE YES PROJECT SUPPORTS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

utilizes...
 Welcome to...
 www.okanaganalliance.com

weredStrong
 OKANAGANATION.COM

ca'kw mi ak'k'ic'ic'tm i? na'q'spink

OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

MAY WE REACH AGAIN THE COMING YEAR

www.okanaganalliance.com

GAMES OF THE PEOPLE TOOLKIT

n'ickntns i? sqaylx

GAMES OF THE PEOPLE



way p cy'sap "sc'axans nhithitwəl"
 Welcome to the Peachland Watershed

WATER MUST BE TREATED WITH REVERENCE AND RESPECT

PROTECT THE WATER FOR ALL THAT LIVE HERE

BC Hydro



For the People

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- 30** Self Destructive Behaviours
- 38** Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- 53** Self-Esteem Workshop
- 12** Emotions Workshop
- 48** Anger Solutions Workshop
- 25** 7 Principles of Self-Leadership
- 19** 1 to 1 Youth Support
- 16** Grief and Loss



BRIDGES

101 Syilx Youth (15-30) from all 7 member communities registered to participate in Cohort II

Syilx Youth studying to take their Learners or N License. This youth driven initiative has motivated many young people to take the next steps and obtain their full licenses



40+

5 Strengthening Our Youth workshops were held across the Okanagan. These sessions were designed to provide parents, elders, advocates and youth workers with the tools to support youth to identify their own goals and dreams.

37

of AECD workers trained and received certificates at Syilx Early Years Gathering

396

of Syilx Early Years Engagements made

97

of AECD mainstream ECD service providers trained during the TRC education and awareness session



78

of Family Decision Making Circles Held

105

of children planned for with families

29

Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers were engaged to develop content for the toolkit

4

Types of games equipment was purchase for all 7 member communities so they can play the games in community

100+

Youth have already tried the games at various events



Syilx Games Tool Kit
A resource for
Community



SYILX INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Distributed 1400 Take the Indian Out of the Child Books to community.



Distributed 300 shirts in recognition and to bring awareness to Orange Shirt Day

** These statistics and #'s are not comprehensive, rather highlights some of the ONA Wellness programs/services and the work being done

SUICIDE PREVENTION & EDUCATION

38

The # of people trained in **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)**. This two-day practice-oriented training builds skills and confidence in suicide intervention.

45

The # of people trained in **safeTALK**. A half-day training that provides tools to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to resources.

341

The # of Syilx youth that received education and support in relation to **de-stigmatizing mental health, healthy living and problem solving**

27

The # of community members that received training in **Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Skills**.

CRISIS RESPONSES

39 The # of times ONRT responded to crisis ranging from death by suicide, incidences of rape, violence car accidents, suicide ideation and suicide attempts

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

65 # of who received community education from ONRT (Grief and Loss, suicide awareness, and Lateral Violence awareness)



17

The # of members who serve on the **Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) Səx kənxit əlx "Those Who Help"**. This team of community members who have received extensive training in the areas of suicide education, community mobilization, and critical incident response.

ADDICTIONS

28 The # of times reports were made to the Addictions Specialist to consult on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum, Autism, Depression, Anxiety, Grief, Alcohol and Illegal Substances, Poverty, lack of Life Skills, and Behavioral Disorder

4 The # of reported Deaths by Fentanyl

ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELLBEING



19

The # of Syilx women engaged about roles in wellness, non-violence and empowerment at the Syilx Men's Wellness Gathering

24

The # of Syilx women engaged about trauma, violence mental health and empowerment at the Syilx Women's Wellness Gathering

100

The # people who gathered to support the Sisters in Spirit Gathering #MMIWG



Photo: Men's Wellness Gathering




DE-NORMALIZE VIOLENCE

YES

#WEIlovelanguage

250

Shirts  distributed to community to promote change and anti-bullying

800

Heart Candy Packages promoting the use of positive language

30

Posters distributed to community creating awareness about the words we use



Syilx Family Violence Network

Provided 61 direct support sessions to families.

DID YOU KNOW?

The You Empowered Strong (YES) Program accepts referrals for individuals, families and communities that are dealing with the impacts of family violence.

1 to 1 emotional support and mentoring Outreach to access services Provide assistance to access funding and cultural supports



Community-Based Support

ONA continues to conduct a wide range of community-based programs and initiatives that tackle some of the most complex issues our communities face. These programs involve a multitude of partnerships and often compliment and enhance work already being taken on by member Bands.

Mental health is a field of both challenge and opportunity for our communities to heal. The Mental Health team has been currently supporting youth and adults who are confronting mental health illness or issues and need support accessing professional support services. Our focus continues to be on skill development through various methods of teaching so our Nation members are supported for them to achieve and maintain positive mental health so in the future when faced with challenges, they have the resiliency to rise and thrive. The Mental Health team also focused on teaching mental health literacy to destigmatize the myths around mental health.



The Mental Health Team has been extremely busy over this last fiscal year responding to the overdose crisis and developing supports through education and one to one individual and family support. Our focus has been on youth prevention. The work of the Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) is central to providing these supports and services at some of the most difficult times. ONRT continued to build capacity with the 17 crisis team members from the Nation through mentorship, training and Nation responses. The team responded to 39 crisis over the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The crises ranged from death by suicide, rape, violence, car accidents, suicide ideation and suicide attempts.

Issues surrounding addictions on our communities are pervasive, constantly evolving and unsettling. In support of the Syilx Drug Strategy [see pg. 37], a Mental Health and Addictions Specialist has been added to our team to support work throughout the Nation. This position is a resource for community and in their initiatory phase and will become more defined as community and Nation needs are articulated.





Youth Wellness

ONA continues to facilitate a number of programs that support our children and youth's developmental and mental wellbeing. The **Syilx Early Years (SEY) program** has been in development since early 2011 and is funded by BC MFCD. Over the last year this program continued to be committed to providing outreach and education to Aboriginal Early Childhood Development educators, through trainings, resource developments ongoing communication and contact throughout the respective Centres. Our Aboriginal Children & Youth Mental Health continued to focus on promoting mental health awareness among ages 5 to 18 through many avenues of education. The amount of youth that received education and support in relation to destigmatizing mental health, healthy living and problem solving was 341 Nation members.

The **RNative Voice program** teaches youth about their culture and connects them to their communities. Program participants include the seven Syilx Okanagan Nation member communities as well as the Ooknakene Friendship Centre and the First Nation Friendship Centre in Vernon. Curriculum topics support youth to help make healthy choices and cope with social pressures.

This has been coupled with **K^wu ǰast**, a prevention program that creates space for children to explore and express their creativity through a variety of art forms and settings including on the land. This year youth participated in role-playing games and a variety of fun activities to further develop their social interaction skill as well as working on creative projects individually and in groups. This year K^wu ǰast developed and began to implement a planning menu tool. Each community is able to build a focused program by choosing the topics and multimedia facet that group will work on. This planning tool was designed to assist in meeting the needs of the community, also allowing the coordinator to track what the topics have been covered for each community going forward. Rolling this out in the communities has been successful. Each community is getting a program that they have designed based on the interest of the kids.



Holding Up Our Youth

The **BRIDGES** pilot project has provided culturally based mentorship and employment readiness services to over 200 Syilx Okanagan youth from each of the seven communities. This past year, building on the knowledge and experience gained from the first two years, BRIDGES adapted its approach to focus on supporting Youth to overcome employment and/or educational barriers. The Skills Mentors provided the second cohort group with individualized services: one-to-one mentorship, each youth developed an individualized action plan that aims to support *tmx^wulax^w* and their employment, training and educational goals. Skills Mentors have worked closely with youth to identify activities, trainings and resources that support youth on their personal pathway.

Through cultural mentorship and a collaborative approach, our Skills Mentors have been working to build a strong foundation for our youth. This foundation is based in a connection to their own identity, to their family, to the community, and to our land. This has been achieved by connecting Youth with Elders and community members to learn and volunteer their time, teaching them about a Syilx Okanagan cultural value, giving back to the community. Youth are gaining knowledge and experience through tanning hides, beading, horsemanship, basket making, being on the land. The combination of mentorship and teachings from family and community support the understanding and importance of *captikwł* and *nsyilxcən*.

Transportation and thus mobility was a common barrier that youth identified. Consequently, over 40 youth have been actively studying and taking lessons to obtain either their L or N license. This youth driven initiative has motivated many young people to take the next steps and obtain their full licenses.

Partnerships with Industry has been another component of the program:

- In January, BRIDGES partnered with Community Futures (South Okanagan) to host an Entrepreneurship Kick-off workshop in Penticton to provide interested youth with the skills and understandings about what it takes to start a business.

- Then in April and May BRIDGES teamed up with BC Hydro and Okanagan College to deliver two Career Readiness workshops in PIB and WFN which focused around communication, networking, job searching and building resumes.
- During May and June Work BC and Community Futures (North Okanagan) coordinated with BRIDGES, PES and OTDC in OKIB to provide a Job Readiness workshop that centered around resume building, interview skills and workplace etiquette.
- Additionally, Skills Mentors continue to work with youth one-on-one to set career goals, develop resumes and cover letters and explore new employment and volunteer opportunities.

Throughout February to April, BRIDGES partnered with IndigenEYEZ to coordinate five Strengthening Our Youth workshops across the Okanagan. These sessions were designed to provide parents, elders, advocates and youth workers with the tools to support youth to identify their own goals and dreams. These workshops focused on how to strengthen youths' resiliency and to help youth to begin to think and plan for their career pathway. Another outcome identified by the participants, was that the workshops helped to strengthen the support networks within our communities by discussing ways that we can "breath life" snaqsilxw into Syilx Okanagan values.

Here is a snapshot of BRIDGES programming highlights: there are BRIDGES participants that are currently upgrading their high-school credits, working towards

their post-secondary education, completing their work placements and finishing training programs. There are still other participants who are working on film projects, completing a Foundations in Innovation and Technology course, applying for an Electrician Apprenticeship, completing a Welding program, learning the trade skills of Culinary Arts and finishing Wildfire training. Moreover, many of these participants have already registered for summer and fall courses to continue to follow their goals and career paths.

The success of BRIDGES is due in part to the continued partnership with organizations like UBCO who continue to conduct the research component of this project. BRIDGES partnered to enhance events in community and other events that were taking place through collaborations with En'owkin Centre, IndigenEYEZ, Community Futures, Okanagan College, BC Hydro, Work BC, Fortis BC, ASETS, the Okanagan Training and Development Centre, Pre-Employment Services Program, as well as other community organizations. Our BRIDGES team is thankful for our continued collaborations with community partners, mentors, elders and chaperones who offer community based training and services to the Okanagan youth. BRIDGES is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. We thank you all for your continued support and investment into our youth.





10 Years of Syilx Youth Unity Run

From May 10-13, 2018, the 10th Annual Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run took place, going from Blanket Creek Provincial Park, heading south to Nakusp and Fauquier, on to Cherryville and finishing at Polson Park in Vernon on May 13. In total, the Run went through 309 km of the Syilx Okanagan Territory. This event engaged a multitude of participants including youth, elders, leaders, community members and a range of other participants that wish to contribute to the event.

Over the last ten years, the Unity Run has evolved to provide a dynamic means of addressing issues of suicide and violence, while enabling an opportunity for greater awareness of cultural identity and healing to take place. A growing body of research shines a light on how such connections to community and land cannot only prevent but to also restore physical, mental and spiritual well-being of our youth. These best practices of gathering and engaging on the Territory are resonate to our People as they have always been an intrinsic part of Syilx life. Any participant that has contributed to the Run over the last ten years can attest to these lasting experiences. The Run exceeds these initial goals and continues to be a proven prevention platform to de-normalize violence, while creating a healing space for our youth.

“This Run creates new experiences that instill wellness and pride in our culture and nsylxcen language for generations to come. Our Youth are out on the land with our elders, cultural knowledge keepers, meeting other youth from across the Territory and building and fostering strength in each other and our Nation.”

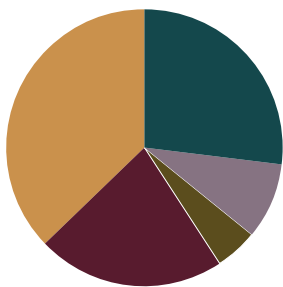
— Grand Chief Stewart Phillip





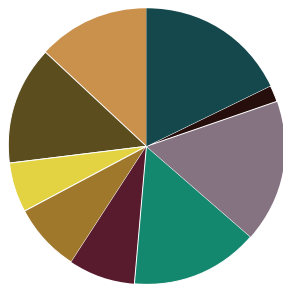
Operations

2018 - 2019 Revenue Analysis



REVENUE BY DEPARTMENT

Administration/Governance	27%
Natural Resources	9%
Negotiations/Policy/Legal	5%
Wellness	22%
Fisheries	37%



ACTUAL REVENUE

USA PUD	18%
USA CCT	2%
Other Income	17%
Department of Indigenous Services	15%
FNHA	8%
DFO	8%
Other Gov of Canada	6%
Prov of BC	14%
BC Hydro	13%

Photo: Skyler Folk, ONA Biologist receives recognition for 10 years of service at the ONA Salmon Feast.

Honoring Dr. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

On November 28, 2018, at the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Chan Center, ʔaʔsi wł (Grand Chief Dr. Stewart Phillip) was awarded an honorary degree. On behalf of the Syilx Okanagan people, we want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to ʔaʔsi wł for his years of hard work. It is our tradition to celebrate the achievements of our people, but today we also pause to honour him for his perseverance and commitment. He has fought many battles, and today we are in a new era, where our Title and Rights are finally being recognized. There is a genuine desire for reconciliation on all sides, and we, the Syilx Okanagan Nation, are the beneficiaries of these tireless efforts to improve the lives of all indigenous people within our Nation, our province, in this country and internationally. Today, we acknowledge and honor ʔaʔsi wł for this extraordinary achievement and recognition of his life's work.

As the ONA continues to evolve with rapid growth in an increasingly complex political and social environment we require strategic visioning, data management and infrastructure development to ensure the success of the Nation.

In the past year, as part of our administrative evolution, the ONA solidified an active Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, whom met monthly. Every department has representation on the Committee and workplace specific inspections are conducted to ensure that ONA the highest standards for health and safety standards are met in the different workplaces within the ONA. Another important function of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is to make recommendations to create and continuously improve and build a Healthy and Safe workplace to the benefit of both the Employer and Employees.

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee arranged and provided various courses in January and May 2018. Courses included: Committee Effectiveness, OHS Committee Part 1 and 2 and Supervisory Training.

Syilx Values for an Economic Fishery

The ONA continues to support the sustainable development of a regional economic fishery. We recognize the need to diversify and be competitive, so that our goals of incorporating Indigenous and sustainable principles are aligned with our Syilx Okanagan responsibilities through the Okanagan Nation Aquatic Enterprises (OAE) we remain steadfast in our responsible trade principles and criteria are based on historical sustainable use and trade practices. We honour and respect our relations and the natural resources that surround us.

As part of the economic fishery and Inter-Nation fish trade the OAE partnered with T'aaq-wiihak fisheries. T'aaq-wiihak is comprised of 5 First Nation groups. In 2009 the BC supreme court recognized the aboriginal rights of Nuu-chah-nulth Nation to catch and sell species traditionally harvested within their territories. In 2018 which enabled us to supply the Okanagan valley with high quality, wild, sustainably harvested, BC fish. Last summer we purchased mainly Chinook and Sockeye salmon from the T'aaq-wiihak. Some was distributed to fish processors on the west coast and a lot was processed into fillets and portions that were sold to Okanagan restaurants and grocers.

In the summer of 2019 the T'aaq-wiihak fishery is supplying the OAE with Halibut, Ling Cod and later in the summer OAE will purchase Chinook salmon.

OAE is helping to keep BC's great, local products local; while being an active participant of responsible, fair and equitable trade with other First Nation groups.

Through the efforts of the OAE the ONA is able to continue the community fish harvest program. OAE purchased new totes to hold fish for both community and commercial harvest. As well, has built a new storage unit to be able to house on-site all the fisheries equipment. This will increase its capacity to store and transport salmon.





Looking Forward to a Year Ahead

As always, the Syilx Okanagan Nation is a manifestation of our shared visions and efforts. With the momentum of all our work continuing to take hold and evolve, we look forward to another year, to take on the challenges head on, while also seizing on all possible opportunities to enrich the lives of all Nation members and support communities as they continue to thrive – Syilx Rising!

Alongside the continuation and upscaling of our governance and operations some of the key highlights for the coming year will include:

Significantly, a commitment to **Gaming Revenue Sharing** was announced on February 19 2019. This announcement marks a significant BC and First Nation Agreement that will shift and shape not just our Nation but all First Nations in BC. The agreement anticipates approximately \$3 billion over 25 years to be shared with eligible B.C. First Nations. First Nations communities will determine their own priorities for the funding within six general categories of investment, which can be used for a wide range of benefits, including: health and wellness, housing, infrastructure, training, environmental protection, economic development, governance capacity and other uses. Due to our sustained involvement in this process the ONA will be the initial host for new Gaming Distribution entity office. To learn more go to www.bcfngamingrevenue.ca

On the development front we will also be seeing a rapid upscaling of **BCH Procurement opportunities** throughout the Nation. Through refining communication and support channels with new tools these opportunities will further be realized in our communities.

As the initial stage of the **BRIDGES** program winds down we will be analyzing the data. In partnership with UBCO, we will be attaining the first clear sets of information that will indicate the success of the program in supporting our youth. Based on the analysis of these findings a new path forward that will continue this work will be forged.

The **Flood Mapping Initiative** will involve mapping, mitigation planning, and structural and non-structural mitigation for flooding on the Territory. As keepers of their Territory, the Syilx people have the Right and responsibility to look after their land and assert the right to determine appropriate watershed management, including but not limited to emergency response and flood control that can take place in their traditional Territory.

Finally, we are hoping that all Syilx Okanagan Nation members decide to join the conversation and actively contribute their voice and thoughts to the **Syilx Nation Rising!** initiative. The road ahead to develop a **Syilx Nation Constitution** requires that all voices, thoughts and perspectives are present to ensure that we may carry the work of our ancestors forward, for the good of all for all time.



syilx
Okanagan Nation Alliance

