# puti kʷu ͡ alá?

## WE ARE STILL HERE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THIS LAND

## way̓ x̌ast sx̌ləx̌ʕalt iʔ p‿isnəqsílxʷ

Since inauguration in 1981, the ONA has worked towards creating both governance structures and operations that uphold the Okanagan Nation Declaration. At the center of this work is our mandate to work collectively to advance and assert Syilx Okanagan Nation Title and Rights across the entirety of the Territory. The ONA Chiefs Executive Council (CEC) is dedicated to upholding our inherent rights and responsibilities.

We are pleased to present to you the Okanagan Nation Alliance Annual Report for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, which reports on initiatives, activities and progress as we work to uphold the Okanagan Nation Declaration.

"For the good of all for all time."

Watch the video of Dave Parker reading the declaration in 1987 at Komasket Park, Vernon, BC

SCAN ME

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**Front Cover Photo:** Drummers singing as part of the ceremony at the Kamloops Indian Residential School June 26, 2021

xaʔtus

# TRIBAL CHAIR MESSAGE

YILMIXM KI LAW NA | CHIEF CLARENCE LOUIE

Way'

The ONA continues to move the work of advancing our inherent rights as Indian people forward—safeguarding them for our future generations. Since my appointment as interim xaʔtus, the CEC has worked with ONA Operations to keep building on the good work in Wellness, Fisheries, and Natural Resources. Our member communities, our work with Colville Confederated Tribes, and other Nations is foundational if we are to uphold the rights we have to steward and govern our lands, resources, and people.

Our governance work on the organizational review of ONA and the Syilx constitutional development proceeds with the reminder that a formal election is required to move from the interim status of this Tribal Chair position. A legacy document in support of a strong governance framework—the updated CEC Orientation Manual—was completed this year.

Going forward, the work continues with the determination required to uphold the Okanagan Nation Declaration of 1987: "For the good of all for all time…" The ONA is demonstrating this success every day. Looking back on this year, key business items that the CEC is leading include the Columbia River Treaty, the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative, and the ONA Solar Project. Of course we have challenges—but when have we not? We renew our efforts, knowing that our work extends further than our community, with the need to support our language and culture and uphold the principles embedded in our Declaration and all the agreements we have made to do this work together. Our work to keep our families and lands safe continues to need coordination to advance Syilx title and rights as we see federal and provincial governments try to accommodate with UNDRIP legislation.

**Inadequate Collaboration:** Now that BC passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIPA), the CEC have been working in good faith to develop collaborative processes, but actions by the Province continue to undermine these efforts. The Syilx Nation is deeply concerned by recent government actions and the process of consultation being taken by BC is inadequate. In order to meet their mandate to implement DRIPA, BC must enter into meaningful process that begins with true collaboration throughout the development process.

**Not Extinct:** In April 2021, ONA joined our relatives from the Colville Confederated Tribes in celebrating the landmark Desautel decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, recognizing Sinixt Aboriginal hunting rights in BC. Many members of our Syilx Nation communities are descendants of Sinixt. We did not need the Supreme Court to confirm what we have always known: that the Sinixt are not extinct, and that displacement of our people through colonization and the Canada-US border could not take away our Aboriginal rights. Our families have been divided by the border but we continue to be united through our common language, culture, history, traditions, and ancestral bloodlines. When we have differences, we need to work those out as Nation members and family. If we don't work in unity, the governments of Canada and BC benefit through divide and conquer strategies. Without collaboration, we will fail to achieve our goals in the Arrow Lakes. We need to undo the damage to our communities from the border that divided and displaced our families. We look forward to working with the CCT on how we can move forward, as nsyilxcen-speaking peoples, to protect and manage our lands, waters, and resources.

**Unfounded Claims:** Threats to our rights come from many sides. The baseless and disrespectful assertions by the Metis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) of rights in Syilx Okanagan Territory have been protested with the Province of BC and with Interior Health. We have urged an end to including the Metis in the new Interior Health acknowledgement signature. The Metis have unsuccessfully tried these claims in court with legal outcomes confirming they are not Indigenous to southern BC. Some Metis people may have settled in BC over the years, but they have no more rights here than other Indigenous people who have come to BC. Further, these new advocacy groups are receiving some of the limited funding the Crown sets aside for Indigenous program in health, education, and housing. These dollars must go to First Nations that have been on these lands since time immemorial. Our Nation is committed to working collaboratively with Aboriginal people residing in our territory—but this must be based on the truth of our different histories.

**Photo:** Chief Louie and Chief Casmir ride as part of the Syilx Nation caravan to Kamloops Indian Residential School

**Demand for Justice:** The terrible findings of the 215+ unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School were announced in May 2021. The truth is that these missing children have been known about all along—our Syilx Indian residential school survivors have been calling this out for years. Many of our families attended Kamloops and the pain was intense. In response, people from across the Nation gathered on the grounds in the days after the announcement. In June, a Syilx caravan journeyed from Penticton to Kamloops and united our Nation in a direct call for justice for all the children who never returned home.

The inhumane and criminal treatment of First Nation's children at the hands of colonial governments and organized religion is deeply disturbing, but more than one year later, the government has failed to take meaningful action. Forced apologies and empty words will never heal the pain, nor bring justice—criminal charges against the perpetrators must be made. The church and Canada need to be criminally investigated and charged for killing First Nations children. A proper investigation needs to be carried out and those responsible—or complicit—need to be held accountable. ONA continues to demand justice.

The Indian residential school system had devastating impacts on the Syilx Okanagan Nation that continue to be felt. The ongoing recovery of unmarked graves is traumatizing for many. As these truths continue to be unearthed, we encourage all Nation members to unite and continue supporting one another.

**A Syilx Future:** Colonial institutions attempted to destroy our tribal culture, Indigenous language, and stewardship of our lands and waters—our very identity—yet we have carried on and are succeeding more each day as our ancestors also did. When we look to the future, our youth need to be inspired with dreams of serving our Nation—they must see that we are all from the Syilx Okanagan Nation, and not let colonial thinking keep us divided. These are not our ways. We must work hard to keep open dialogue so that we move forward together as stated in our Unity Declaration. Our people are reuniting with our tribal past and becoming stronger. We will continue to take our rightful place as environmentally responsible and economically sovereign leaders and protectors of our lands, waters and peoples with the full pride of our 10,000 years of heritage and culture—since time immemorial.

> "We have a lot at stake in our work to keep advancing our inherent rights as Indian people—safeguarding and asserting those rights for our future generations. There continue to be politics that we must confront, manage, and overcome. Our youth need to be inspired with dreams of serving our Nation. They must see that we are all from here and not let colonial thinking keep us divided. These are not our ways. Colonialism and historic injustices keep us apart. We must work hard to keep open dialogue so that we move forward together as stated in our Unity Declaration of 2009."
>
> - Chief Louie, July 27, 2021 Press Release

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

SUIKIʔST | PAULINE TERBASKET

**Photo:** Pauline in snɬuxʷqnm overlooking the nx̌ʷntkʷitkʷ

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As I look on this past fiscal year, I marvel at how much ONA achieved during the COVID pandemic. Every staff member did their best, even in this disrupted work environment, working within the mandates as set by the CEC over the years. We had no lay-offs, no leaves, and minimal disruptions despite everything. Our administration team developed COVID policies and ensured health and safety compliance while supporting communities to deal with these new complexities. Fisheries and Natural Resources revised work plans to fit the circumstances. With innovation and energy, the Wellness and Communications Teams gave us creative ways to keep programs operating and communities engaged. Being a Nation-based organization, community engagement is paramount. Likewise, our Nation-based Committees and many external partners learned new ways of working. As valuable as this online space was, we know too well the mental health impacts from how COVID kept us apart and we each have stories to tell.

**Intergenerational:** Starting with the headlines from Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and then more findings across the country, we heard resounding calls to hold the federal government and the church responsible for such criminal atrocities. Once again, our Syilx Indian Residential School Committee and those at home in our communities carried the burden, continuing to share their stories as everyone looked to them for direction. ONA responded to the needs, providing supports to the Nation in whatever way possible, despite limited funds and busy staff.

We know too well how the failed Indian Residential School system carried over into the chronically underfunded child welfare policies that continue to oppress our families today. Over the years, ONA has led advocacy to bring attention to these issues, including supporting the national human rights case taken up by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, with Cindy Blackstock at the helm, and celebrating their ruling in favor of Indigenous children after decades in the courtroom. Starting with the advocacy of our mothers and grandmothers more than 30 years ago, the ONA has been developing Syilx-centred systems and our Child and Family Team continues hard at work planning and building responsive programs. This same Syilx approach characterizes the healthcare work that ensures Syilx issues are heard by partners even as we manage a huge file without enough resources while responding to the real-time crises of our members in an over-burdened system. Again, the priorities of members drive the work that ranges from early childhood to traditional wellness to emergency management.

**Innovation:** Our nsyilxcən language and Syilx principles and protocols have served our peoples since time immemorial. To be sqilxʷ is to be good stewards over the lands and waters including our ntytyix; with governing relations intact with neighbors. This past year we have seen the heat dome, wildfires, and flooding. Climate change is upon us and we need to attend to the principles of reciprocity and co-existence with all things in order to give hope to our young and seven generations hence. There is promise in moving forward as one people, with stewardship responsibilities for clean water and to protect our original foods; these covenants that were made with our ancestors for the people-to-be. There are numerous resource development activities in the territory where we can express ourselves and balance the environment with the economic landscape. The ONA continues to strike discussions with entities like BC Hydro, Fortis, and Columbia Power Corporation in which we can all join together in our work with member communities. Sharing resources and practices that support all our efforts is a means to new developments and models that transfer cultural knowledge and build of local resources and capacity.

**Interdependence:** Our tribes have always managed an economy to feed our families and trade with neighbours and others. Today, the CEC has pressed on, knowing a thriving, balanced economy means thriving, balanced communities. Over the years, the ONA has taken various approaches to economic development leading to what we have today with the historic Enduring Relationship with BC Hydro, which has expanded business and major project opportunities throughout the Nation. Direct outcomes include the procurement strategy, our communities having opportunities to invest in the UNB and ONA solar project and parallel agreements like the Business Development Liaison that is an effective

conduit for communities to identify their own local economic landscape. This includes ONA Fisheries with the Fish HUB and Hatchery in a Box initiatives that were born of the need to sustain operations, while managing resources and practicing inter-tribal trade relations, just like River Select and our membership with Inland Salmon Producer Association Co-op which is about Indigenous Food sovereignty.

**Inspiration:** Syilx Okanagan Nation governance has long been established by Chiefs throughout the territory as underscored by the signing of the Okanagan Nation Declaration in 1987, and the Sir Wilfred Laurier Memorial in 1910. We see today the long-term benefits, as envisioned by the CEC, of our collective defense of Syilx title and rights. The best legal and political strategic advice is put forward to the CEC to consider. A tribal centered focus persists, even as political perspectives come and go, and fierce conversations are held. Leadership remains at the table or, as the late George Saddleman would say, "It is time to gather round the fire." Two current initiatives—the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) and the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiatives(CRSRI) remind us that we are stronger together, with opportunities to explore strategies that can truly benefit our peoples, lands, and waterways. This includes how provincial and federal legislation adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP) and can improve all our tribal endeavours going forward.

**Moving Forward:** Within the current context of the Indian Act, our peoples must be diligent to drive the work and keep relationships intact. We are all fostering ways of decolonizing and opening inclusive space for sharing ideas and respecting perspectives. The need to connect and learn to be good partners always includes risk. This is enriched through awareness of the needs of organization leadership and building tool kits that support change in a good way. The ONA embodies collective work that predates us all—cumulative over the years in our work with numerous community partners and stitching funding together; and yet we still prevail. The Syilx siwɬkʷ Water Strategy exemplifies this—honoured as a finalist for the Land Awards of the Real Estate Foundation of BC. In similar fashion, our salmon and hatchery work is sought out by news media for its innovation, impact, and the beacon of hope it shines for the world. All of this cumulative work in Fisheries, Natural Resources, and Wellness has been achieved under direction of our leadership and with staff, contractors, and advisors putting their best paddles in the water to move the Nation forward.

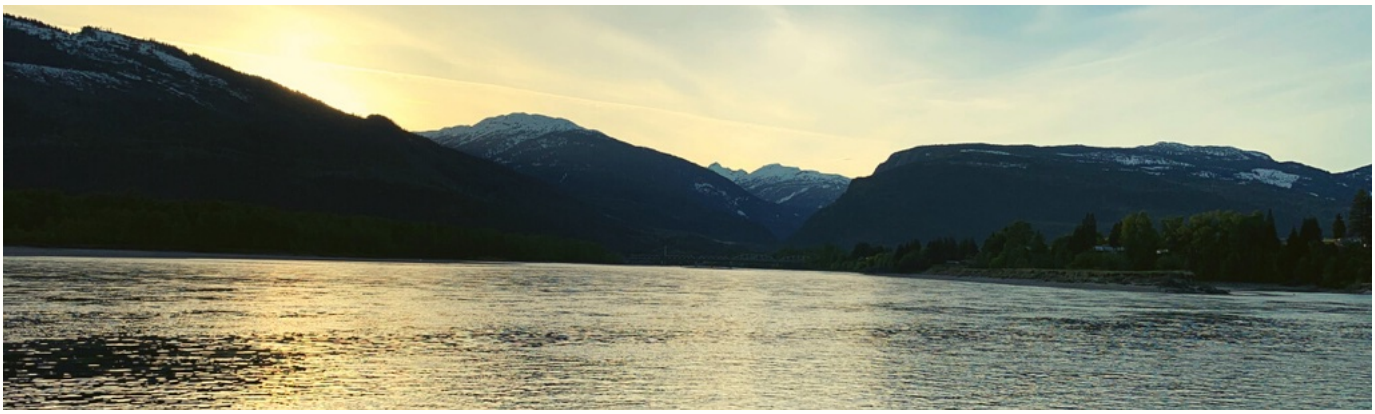
**Action:** I must end with the possibilities ahead. There is incredible talent in our Nation. I am mindful of our youth and their achievements while also recognizing the challenges of today. There is no fooling anyone. It is an arduous journey we are on to reconcile the damages done whether it by the CRT, the child welfare system, or racism in health care. Regardless of it is to reconcile relationships, restore forever-altered ecosystems, or heal from the truth telling about Indian residential schools—we know the constant stress that seems ours to bear, but also ours to overcome. We are too familiar with heartbreak and wish to change this to more inclusion, embracing diversity, and creating safe space for all of us. It gets back to relationship and connection and not perpetuating division while embracing our cultural heritage and language. The Syilx Nation will persist to restore salmon to the Upper Columbia, and we will persist with governments to uphold the principles of UNDRIP, and our youth will thrive and change the world.

As one of our elders says quietly at opportune moments when the tensions rise in the room: "This work is bigger than all of us."

I know we can do this together.

We have the pen.

This is our story.



# YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

2021-2022

In the face of a multitude of challenges that we took on as people, communities, and a Nation over the last year, the ONA remained committed to ensuring that our presence and voice was asserted, that our communities were supported as they moved towards greater self-determination, and that the tmixʷ and tmxʷulaxʷ were protected so that they can thrive for generations to come. Here are some of the major achievements our Nation completed together this past year:

### INCREASED EFFORTS TO RETURN SALMON TO THE UPPER COLUMBIA THROUGH OUR LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON REINTRODUCTION INITIATIVE.

- Raised awareness through the participation in the Bringing the Salmon Home Festival, which drew thousands of participants from across the Nation, and internationally, to discuss the importance of returning salmon to the Upper Columbia.

### MOVED THE UNB SOLAR PROJECT FORWARD TO FRUITION, INCLUDING SUPPORTING THE COMPLETION OF THE ELECTRICITY PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH BC HYDRO.

- Once operational this solar farm will produce  electricity for 5000 homes and will be connected to BC Hydro's distribution system.

### HIRED AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POSITION IN RESPONSE TO THE INCREASED THREATS CREATED BY CLIMATE CHANGE EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

- The coordinator will ensure that Syilx Nation communities are better able to respond to disasters, including wildfire responses.

### DISTRIBUTED WELLNESS FUND ALLOCATIONS EQUITABLY THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

- The distribution of funds to member communities included increased mental health supports in response to the findings at Kamloops, Covid-19, wildfires, floods, and addictions and cultural .

### SUPPORTED SYILX INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN RESPONSE TO THE 215 CHILDREN'S REMAINS FOUND AT KAMLOOPS INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, AND OTHER SUBSEQUENT UNEARTHINGS

- From the Seeds of Hope gathering at the Ashnola Arbour, and the Unity Run, to providing on-site cultural and mental wellness supports, a number of initiatives were undertaken to ensure IRS survivors and their families were supported. On June 26, a "For the Children Caravan" was also coordinated, with a convoy from across the Nation journey from sn'pinktn to the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

### UPSCALED OUR HATCHERY IN A BOX PROGRAM AS PART OF OUR COMMITMENT TO SHARE INNOVATION AND REJUVENATE FISHERIES THROUGHOUT TURTLE ISLAND.

- Fabricated and sold six Hatchery in a Box units for distribution on the territory and to other Nations.

### ADVANCED AN ORGANIZATIONAL MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK, WITH SUPPORT FROM INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA.

- This framework will assist the ONA in our ability to support the proper distribution of organizational deliverables, enhance organizational sustainability, and further promote best practices.

# skcʼəx̌ʷəx̌wiplaʔ uɬ steɬtaɬt GOVERNANCE

To advance, assert, support and preserve Syilx Okanagan Nation sovereignty.

“iʔ kʷu syilx nukʼʷcwilxʷ iʔ kʷu xaʔxaʔtus iʔ kʷu ylilmixʷəm , nyʕayp ətc kʼulʼəmstm iʔ scunənʼmaʔtət ks ətc unxcinmntm, uɬ ks səc kɬqayxʷstm iʔ sqəlxʷɬcawt, ansyilxcn, iʔ tmxʷulaxʷ, iʔ tmixʷ, iʔ siwɬkʷ u ks ətc unxcinmntm, uɬ ks səc kɬqayxʷstm iʔ sqəlxʷɬcawt, ansyilxcn, iʔ tmxʷulaxʷ, iʔ tmixʷ, iʔ siwɬkʷ uɬiʔ stəɬtaɬtət iʔ kʷu syilx tə sqilxʷ

**Photo:** Praying together

# ADVANCEMENTS THROUGH UNITY

TITLE, RIGHTS AND DECISION MAKING

The Chiefs Executive Council's (CEC) hard work in protecting, defending and advancing the Syilx Nation's Aboriginal Title and Rights has continued over the last year, upholding their suxʷtxtem (caretaker) responsibilities while advancing the economic interests of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

Over the past year, the Policy and Legal Team, as directed by the CEC, has worked on a number of key files to advance the Nation's Title and Rights strategy, which includes representing the Nation in the CRT renegotiation process; undertaking work on the re-introduction of salmon in the Canadian portion of the Columbia River; advocating to secure long-term, save access to the Syilx Okanagan fishing site at Okanagan Falls; and providing policy and legal support on a number of files at the direction of the Chiefs Executive Council.

**Columbia River Treaty**

Canada entered into the CRT with the United States in 1964. It is an international treaty to coordinate flood control and optimize hydroelectric energy production on both sides of the Canada- US border, yet was entered into without any consultation with the Syilx Okanagan Nation or the other First Nations impacted by the CRT and its related dams in the Columbia River Basin, and without the First Nations' consent. The CRT resulted in the construction of three major dams in Canada that flooded the Slocan Valley (Arrow Lakes) and converted the Upper Columbia watershed into a massive reservoir system.

Canada and the United States started renegotiating the CRT in the spring of 2018, as the flood control provisions otherwise terminate in 2024. As one of the most significant and on-going infringements of Syilx Title and Rights, the CRT negotiations between Canada and the United States continues to be a key file in the context of advancing and protecting the Syilx Okanagan Nation's Aboriginal Title and Rights. Through the hard work and dedication of Syilx leadership and staff, Global Affairs Canada granted observer status to the Syilx Okanagan Nation (along with the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc Nations) in 2019, which allows the CEC's representatives to participate in these international negotiations - an international precedent and a testament to the strength of a unified approach.

Key objectives for the Syilx Okanagan Nation in the CRT process are to ensure:

- ecosystem values and cultural values are reflected in CRT dam operational decisions (and not just power generation and flood control, which is currently the case)
- the Syilx Okanagan Nation has a meaningful role in governance under the CRT moving forward and
- the Syilx Okanagan Nation receives benefits under the CRT including redress for past impacts.

One of the key ecosystem and cultural values that the Nation has been focused on throughout the negotiations is salmon. The hope is that salmon can be reintroduced in the Upper Columbia River by addressing salmon flow and passage needs. This work builds on decades of success and experience that the Syilx Nation have already had with bringing salmon back to the Okanagan subbasin and will upscale these efforts in the eastern territory. The US Tribes share this goal, and are making some headway on salmon passage in the US. Given the Syilx Okanagan Nation's success in reintroducing Okanagan salmon, it is a strong and credible advocate for salmon in the negotiations.

## Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative

Bringing the Salmon Home: The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative (CRSRI) was launched with the signing of a three-year renewable Letter of Agreement (LOA) at Castlegar, BC in July 2019. Through this agreement, the Syilx Okanagan Nation, Secwépemc Nation, Ktunaxa Nation, Canada, and British Columbia are committed to working together to explore ways to reintroduce salmon into the upper Columbia River.

For more than 80 years, dams have blocked salmon from returning to the upper Columbia region in Canada. This river was once the source of the greatest salmon runs in the world. CRSRI works to address the long-term effects to a complex transboundary salmon system that is impacted by hydro-electric dams, human development, habitat disruption and climate change.

The Bringing the Salmon Home Indigenous-led governance structure is guided by collaborative, consensus-based processes. The Indigenous Knowledge Counsel (IKC) succeeded the Interim Indigenous Knowledge Guidance Committee in 2021, and is focused on ensuring that Indigenous Knowledge is integrated in every aspect of this work. The Executive Working Group, Implementation Team, Technical Working Group, and Communications Working Advisory Group, include representatives from all five partners. The Indigenous-led governance processes are central to the work of designing and carrying out technical studies, and diverse communications and engagement activities. In the fall of 2021, the initiative established a team of three Nation-based Outreach and Engagement Organizers to deepen community involvement in this vital work to bring the salmon home.

A key highlight of the engagement work is the successful Bringing the Salmon Home Festival. In May 2021, the inaugural online festival drew thousands of participants from all over the world, and a similar turnout is expected for the 2022 festival.

The initial three-year agreement expires at the end of July 2022. In March 2022, all five signatories to the LOA committed to extending their support for this important initiative for another three years through an Addendum to the LOA - with the added commitment to deliver increased funding and to continue to develop the vision to ensure this is a sustained long-term program beyond the life cycle of a salmon. This is generational work.

**Read the 2021-2022 Annual Report**

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**Watch the 2021 Bringing the Salmon Home Festival**

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**Photo:** Columbia Salmon Ceremony

## sx̌ʷəx̌ʷnitkʷ Okanagan Falls Fishing Access

As the site of the sx̌ʷəx̌ʷnitkʷ salmon fishery and a former Osoyoos Indian Band Reserve, Okanagan Falls is an important area in Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory. For many years, Nation members have used a 10-meter buffer of "Crown land" between the fishery and private property adjacent to the dam to access the fishery and exercise their Aboriginal fishing rights.

Over the last several years, the private land owners have made attempts to have the lands resurveyed to make the buffer part of their lands, including through applications to the Surveyor General to change the boundary of their lands. In response, the CEC directed that negotiations be undertaken with the Province of BC to ensure that the buffer area does not become private lands and that safe, long-term access to the fishery is maintained.

In response to the CEC's calls for immediate provincial action, BC removed a fence that had been installed by the private land owners, which allows the Syilx Okanagan Nation fishery to proceed. The Province also conducted a survey and other investigations in 2021 to confirm that the buffer area is not part of the private lands. The Province and the Syilx Okanagan Nation both made submissions to the Surveyor General, to demand that no changes be made to the boundary of the private lands so as to ensure the buffer area is retained for use by Syilx Okanagan Nation members.

Ongoing negotiations continue to find long-term solutions to the access issues at Okanagan Falls and to ensure that Syilx Okanagan Nation members can continue to exercise their Aboriginal rights at this important fishery site.

**Photo:** Spirit of Syilx Unity Run to Kamloops Indian Residential School

# nkʷəɬtwistmntəm

AN ENDURING RELATIONSHIP

In 2011, ONA and Upper Nicola Band (UNB) signed a Final Enduring Relationship Agreement with BC Hydro in respect of the construction of the Interior to Lower Mainland (ILM) Transmission Line. The agreement commits both parties to develop an Enduring Relationship, to define a mutual and collaboratively developed engagement process for the management of issues relating to BC Hydro operations and assets across the territory.

As part of the Enduring Relationship, BC Hydro has committed to supporting the Syilx Okanagan Nation by offering training, education, scholarships and bursaries to Nation members. Over the last year these opportunities included:

- Nearly $10,000 in education grants and scholarships distributed
- 8 Syilx youth participated in the IndigenousTech.ai Summer Intern program, receiving education in technology, finance and customer service, hearing from industry leaders, and working on real industry projects
- 1 Syilx member was hired into BC Hydro's Indigenous Professionals in Development (IPID) cohort. The IIPID program is a 12 month professional program for Indigenous post-secondary graduates interested in exploring a career with BC Hydro. The program offers two or more rotations across key business groups within BC Hydro offices
- 12 Syilx community members participated in the Career Basics program for their Learners Licence Exam Preparation
- 2 Syilx community members were funded to take Resources Information Standards Committee Archaeology training
- $118,500 provided to ONA for cultural events, support for language revitalization, and also youth and Elder programs and initiatives

**The Enduring Relationship Procurement Sub-Agreement** between ONA and BC Hydro recognizes that procurement represents a significant near and longer-term opportunity for advancing the Enduring Relationship. The agreement confirms a directed procurement commitment, supports capacity building and business development, and established a dedicated position at the ONA to support implementation. It is a 5-year agreement, effective April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2023, and sets a minimum targeted value of $10M in directed procurement.

Approximately $4.6M in contracts were awarded by BC Hydro in fiscal 2021/22, with well over $17M in directed procurement contracts awarded to designated Okanagan Nation contractors since 2018. This includes contracts for environmental monitoring and scientific work, janitorial services, first aid, fencing, road work, civil, electrical, and other. Contracts have been awarded ranging in value from approximately $50k to $7.5M.

In July 2021, member communities were invited to collaborate with the ONA to advance procurement opportunities. Once contracts with the communities are established, dedicated community liaisons will work to support community-owned, member-owned, and Band designated businesses to capture direct procurement awards and set local targets and procurement strategies. We encourage all Syilx member communities to take advantage of this contracting opportunity. For more information contact ONA Community and Business Liaison: yned@syilx.org

With recent hire of Syilx Nation member as the Community and Business Liaison at the ONA, dedicated capacity is once again in place at the ONA to work closely with BC Hydro and member communities to identify and advance long-term, territory-wide, and equitably distributed procurement benefits.

**Upper Nicola Band and ONA Solar Project**

The UNB ONA Solar Project is a 15 MWac utility-scale solar project located on the UNB Reserve near the BC Hydro Nicola substation. It is being developed by UNB, the ONA, and FortisBC Alternative Energy Systems. This solar project will be interconnected to the BC Hydro distribution system, and will have a BC Hydro Electricity Purchase Agreement (EPA).

This project is a direct outcome of a long history of litigation, consultations and negotiations with BC Hydro dating back to 2005 when BC Hydro announced plans to build a third transmission line along the Interior to Lower Mainland (ILM) transmission line. UNB, ONA and the Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council (NNTC) united in 2007 to defend and protect Title and Rights and began litigation and negotiations with BC Hydro on the ILM project.

BC Hydro announced on August 26, 2011 that through a process of relationship building, UNB, ONA, NNTC and BC Hydro entered into a landmark agreement related to the construction of BC Hydro's ILM project. This agreement has a specific provision for a 15 MW energy project to be developed by UNB and ONA. Pursuant to this commitment, in October 2016 BC Hydro accepted the proposed 15 MW solar project as "under development" and so fulfilling one of the conditions in the ILM Agreement. Detailed planning for the UNB ONA Solar Project commenced in 2016 and in 2019 BC Hydro entered into negotiation with UNB and ONA to conclude an Electricity Purchase Agreement.

Beyond the solar project, the parties to the ILM Agreement created a new approach to working together in the traditional territories of the NNTC and ONA member communities. BC Hydro and each Nation agreed to work together to develop an integrated, multi-year plan regarding future energy projects and to work collaboratively to identify opportunities for positive outcomes for both BC Hydro operations and Indigenous communities. The NNTC, ONA and UNB also agreed to halt litigation in relation to the ILM project.

Over the course of the 2021-2022, the project was advanced in the following ways:

- Completed negotiations with BC Hydro on the terms of the Electricity Purchase Agreement
- Drafted LP Agreements for ONA Solar Energy LP, the vehicle for participation in the project by the ONA member bands
- Drafted LP Agreement for UNB ONA Investments LP, which will majority-own the UNB ONA Solar Project
- Obtained a $500,000 grant from the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund and obtained a $975,000 grant from the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI). Together with the $150,000 grant from BC Hydro and the $500,000 grant from BCICEI obtained last year, the $2.1 million in grants raised will supply most of the equity required for the ONA bands that wish to participate in the Solar Project.

Once operational, the solar farm will produce enough electricity to power almost 5,000 homes and will be interconnected with the BC Hydro distribution system. Any excess electricity the project creates will be sold back into the provincial power grid.

When constructed, the project will occupy approximately 40 hectares of designated lands on Upper Nicola Band's Nicola Lake Indian Reserve No. 1

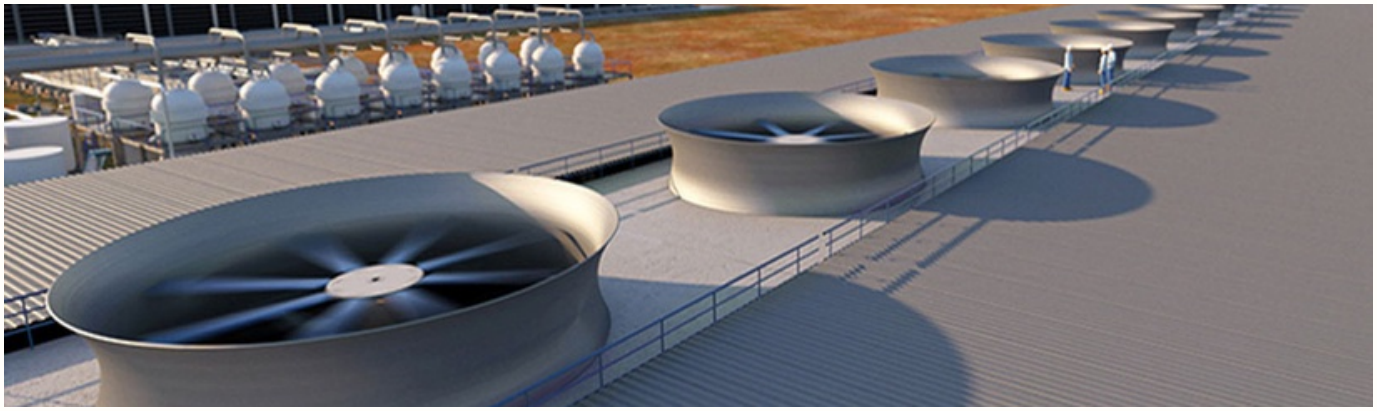


**Photo:** A rendering provided by Carbon Engineering, one of three firms working on the UNB solar project.

# TAKING BACK CONTROL OF OUR DATA SOVEREIGNTY

ADVOCATING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

The need for building up capacity to manage and control data governance in every aspect of the Syilx Okanagan Nationhood has been on the Chiefs' agenda for years—especially for children and families, and health services. For too long, the paternalistic approach of outside agencies, and reliance on their data, has been used to justify underfunded, antiquated policies that have interfered with Syilx jurisdiction. This history has plagued First Nations with a constant conundrum of which data is right, as well as which data is used for final decision-making.

ONA has consistently lobbied and advocated for a role in data governance which we understand to be all information and knowledge, historic and contemporary, about Syilx people including data about tmixw and wellness, whether demographic, socio-economic, health, housing, infrastructure, language, or cultural knowledge. Thus, Syilx data sovereignty is at the core of our rights to own and make decisions about the gathering, use, and protection of data pertaining to Nation members and communities. To break the cycle of paternal colonial control, Indigenous Nations around the world have organized to restore rights to data sovereignty. They are sending a strong message that research must be done with and for communities, in a good way that benefits the well-being of Nation members, so this will remain a central mandate to pursue.

The Syilx Data Governance Plan has been led and coordinated through the Wellness Department, with insights and contribution shared by Nation members over the past two and a half years. This has provided the foundation for the Plan. Engagements have been diverse and include ongoing one-on-one discussions with cultural knowledge holders and language speakers from all communities about what data is, from our shared perspective. As well, in October 2021, a literature review was completed on Indigenous experiences in data governance including Tui'kn, Nisga, and Inuit models. It is noteworthy that the concerns and hopes raised by Nation members are connected to sovereignty, self-determination, responsibility, doing things the good way, all our relations, and our interrelatedness. The plan outlines actions that guide the Nation in a path of mindful data stewardship that is founded on community jurisdiction. The draft plan is currently going through the review process with Nation representatives and communities. Completion of the final plan and accompanying business case will be in December 2022.

With the establishment of regional entities like the FNHA, our ONA Data Team has also been keeping apprised of FNHA strategic plans concerning data governance and advising FNHA on initiatives like the Regional Health Survey 4 that is planned for the summer of 2022. It is critically important to be aware of the number of initiatives that our own FNHA regional health teams have underway when they involve Syilx data and information. So keeping connected with FNHA and Interior Health (IH) on Syilx data sovereignty better enables planning and the eventual transfer of any Syilx data by outside external agencies in a timely manner.

It is important to note that ONA is not gathering wellness data for communities. The Data Team has focused on engaging with communities to better understand their data needs and, on request, to help them access wellness data held by outside agencies. Data is powerful as it can be used to advocate for self-determination to develop strategies, goals, policies and programs, and to demonstrate accountability. This direction and capacity will support and sustain a better future.

# ASSERTING OUR VOICE

FOR NATION ADVOCACY

Partnerships are key to ensuring that our Nation is heard and engaged on matters that impact territory and member communities. The ONA uses multiple channels and tables to work with federal and provincial governments, as well as a range of other partners, ensuring that we not only have a voice at the table, but that we are influencing decision makers to secure the best outcomes for member communities. This is also backed up with deeper planning processes throughout the Nation to guarantee that we are able to move forward in a strategic and efficient manner.

For example, the Nation's Wellness Planners have worked hard to build stronger relationships with partners, especially Interior Health, First Nations Health Authority, and Ministry of Child and Family Development. As a result, the Planning and Policy Team has been able to escalate issues identified by member bands, influence decision-makers at the regional level, advocate for specific community needs, and enhance service quality. This means that partners are more responsive and better informed about Syilx communities. It also creates a channel to ensure community staff are kept updated about new resources, funding, and trainings. This past year, the trend continued of improved communication and better integration with partners.

**Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Interior Health (IH)**

In conjunction with the renewal of the LOU with IH, a new joint position that was developed through conversations with the ONA Wellness Committee is being implemented. Responding to the In Plain Sight report into Indigenous-specific racism in BC health care, the Syilx Collaborative Health Coordinator position is moving forward and will work on direction from both ONA and IH staff. The focus will be on working with IH on systemic change, anti-racism, and improving service for First Nations clients in health care including mental health and substance use treatment. This historic LOU is a living document and constantly requires attention to move our relationships and partnerships with IH forward.

**Primary Care Networks**

BC is undergoing a substantial change in the model of health care delivery, with the Ministry of Health (MOH) developing Primary Care Networks (PCNs) as community spaces where team-based health care brings doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, and others together to do patient-centred care. PCNs are being phased in across the province with 39 underway and more coming. First Nations have been part of the PCN planning process. Upon requests from communities, the ONA helps community health staff with the complex planning demands.

ONA is also collaborating with other Interior Nations on advocating for BC to address the immense volume of planning meetings and information inundating First Nations health staff who have not been given resources commensurate with other healthcare partners at the planning table. A collective Nation focus is ensuring our input is provided and a key focus for the upcoming year is raising concerns about lack of alignment between the provincial model and Syilx ways and needs.

In the Kootenay Boundary region the Health Team is involved in Primary Care Network planning to ensure presence and participation in all parts of Syilx territory. The Kootenay Boundary, which IH has identified as also covering Ktunaxa Nation interests, has provided opportunity for further partnership and collaboration with the Ktunaxa Nation. Currently the two Nations are working with the Data Team to advocate with the MOH to revisit the data sharing agreement to ensure appropriate input from Indigenous communities in support of data sovereignty and addressing social determinants of health.

### Mental Health and Addictions

In the midst of an overdose crisis, and with suicide continuing to be an ongoing issue for our communities, it is important that Syilx voices are heard in healthcare planning so that services can better reflect and respond to the needs and realities of our people. The Mental Wellbeing Planner attends a number of regional tables to ensure the ONA is an active participant in discussions and sharing our views on numerous initiatives—where there are so many gaps—ranging from addressing the toxic drug crisis to increasing access to services and improving the cultural safety of healthcare.

### Children and Families

The ongoing work of the Wellness Planning Team with the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) has ONA advocating more directly for what is needed from MCFD. Our historic grievances with MCFD contracts is a key issue that is a priority on which we will not relent. In this respect, ONA has been working with MCFD to change the contract procurement process for child and youth mental health services in the South Okanagan. Our position remains that First Nation dollars and any new funding should go to respective Indigenous organizations that demonstrate capacity to deliver culturally safe programs and services. Another focus has been demanding that MCFD share more data on children in care, as well as special needs, mental health, and early childhood. As mentioned in the earlier section on data governance, timely access to data is key to data sovereignty which makes it possible to identify gaps and trends and to better respond to achieve service outcomes. This remains one of ONA's key strategic directions.

### Advocating for Our Old Growth Forests

Over the last year the Forestry Working Group (FWG), chaired by Councilor Dennis McDonald, continued focus on advocating for and promoting the protection of forests across the territory. This included the continued development and implementation of Syilx Forestry Principles. The Group has been heavily engaged with Nation members in how to enact these principles.

This Group also met monthly with the Technical Forestry Working Groups, which included members from the Province of BC. The Tier 2 Joint group engaged the Province in a collaborative effort to inform decision-making on the Annual Allowable Cut determination and apportionment decisions, as well as the Timber Supply Review (TSR) process. Tier 3 engaged licensees and is currently focused on developing and implementing the Syilx Forestry Principles. Significantly, the FWG informed the Okanagan TSR process, resulting in a 20% reduction in the Okanagan annual allowable cut. They are now engaged on the apportionment decision and are fighting for further allocation to Syilx communities.

**A few words to learn in nsyilxcən**

to protect: ćkɬyal
forest: ćĺćal
tree sap: tree sap
to stand up: tiɬx
fir needles: qʷilcn
pine needles: ḱámaʔ

The value of Nation-level advocacy shows up in many ways. Nation representatives are able to build relationships with partner organizations that give our people a stronger voice in the region, the Province and Canada.

**SYILX ADVOCACY WITH INTERIOR HEALTH**

Over the past 10 years, Syilx Health Governance Representative Allan Louis has seen relationships with healthcare leadership change from being tough and unresponsive to today, where partners are listening and asking for input about how to make change together. Through our advocacy, we have seen the following game changers with IH that reflect growing attention to First Nation issues at the leadership level.

- The Chair of the IH Board is prioritizing awareness of First Nations issues with regular reporting that pays attention to how IH is improving services and outcomes for First Nations. One area of concern is that many First Nations who don't have a doctor results in tragic outcomes when cancer and other serious illnesses are left undetected for too long.
- The In Plain Sight Report about racism in healthcare in BC stated what Nations have been saying for years: The patient complaints process isn't working because First Nations don't trust it. Going forward, First Nations reviewers will be included in the patient quality office and every First Nations complaint will have First Nations eyes on it.
- IH is actively recruiting to meet its target of having 10% of the workforce be Indigenous by 2025. Currently at 7%, IH is implementing processes to ensure that hiring reaches the management level.

# FOR OUR CHILDREN

## ASSERTING OUR INHERENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ONA continues to remain very active in leading the advocacy required for social change when it comes to the dignified rights of every family to raise their own children in their own homes and in their own community and Nation. Our work is to ensure our children and families receive the highest standard of care and this continues on many levels.

The need to address systemic, institutionalized injustices over the care and treatment of Indigenous children and youth caught in the spiral of "stranger care" is entrenched in the history of First Nations and the Canadian state child welfare legislation. Laws and policies have severely impacted First Nations and the legacy of injustice remains. The recent Saunders case is a blatant reminder of how corrupt these systems are and how much more work remains if we are to create the change needed to ensure Indigenous children are kept safe and at home in their own communities and with their own families and tribes.

Government systems do not work in favour of supporting parents and caretakers to keep a child within their extended families. This is still our work ongoing of putting children at the centre.

### Jordan's Principle

There has been some important gains made in the past year to ensure First Nations children have access to the specialized services they need—when they need them. The Syilx Nation was among the first in BC to have our own federally funded Service Coordinator positions for Jordan's Principle and this is already resulting in timely supports for families to access needed resources and services.

This new policy supported by BC First Nations has provided capacity support to our members. Over the past year, awareness of Jordan's Principle among Syilx families and communities has increased through active outreach by the Coordinators who help families find the services they need. If services aren't available, then an application is submitted to Jordan's Principle for funding. As well, Coordinators track local issues and gaps identified through requests—something that ISC failed to provide in the past despite repeated requests. In the past year, requests have been made in the areas of health, education, allied health, mental wellbeing, and requests for additional staff in certain classroom situations. Families have shared heartfelt feedback expressing their gratitude to Coordinators for the support in accessing services.

In 2021-2022: 94 files opened

**Photo:** Chief Gabriel, Syilx Child and Families Governance Rep and Chief Derickson supporting runners of the Syilx Unity Run

### Family Decision Making (FDM)

The FDM program is a uniquely Syilx decision-making process that supports families to fulfill their responsibilities towards their children. FDM supports families to come together to identify and exercise their strengths and choices with the focus on making decisions that keep children safe. Often, FDM coordinators are working with family members with pre-existing traumas and complex family dynamics. By connecting with each person individually at the start of the process, FDM measures success by ensuring people's voices are being recognized as valuable and important. Over time, this results in increased willingness to engage in the process of coming together. As participants are freely listened to and supported by a group, a powerful sense of community emerges. Families become accountable for creating their own wellness paths and, in the process, learn about their own internal skills. In this way, many of the circles transform from simply exchanging information into sources of powerful connection with the safety and wellbeing of the children held at the centre.

Currently the demand for FDM program outstrips the capacity of the coordinators.

- 56 FDM circles completed
- 69 children including siblings were supported through FDM
- 137 circle participants were included
- 36 children remained out of care
- 120 emergency kits delivered

Community Specialized Trainings

- Oct 2021: enowkinwixw training for LSIB members and ONA staff from FDM, Jordan's Principle, and Mental Wellbeing.
- Feb 2022: Family Group Conferencing with True Dialogue—10 participants including FDM staff and partners from youth justice, school districts, and others.

Support Highlights

- Supported a healing circle at UNB after the 215+ findings.
- Supported OKIB evacuees due to the wildfires.

## MAKING HEADWAYS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

**Photo:** President Angus Grahme, Selkirk College and Chief Louie, ONA Tribal Chair signing the MOU at the ONA AGA

Over the last year we continued to encourage educational institutions across the territory to ensure the support of our students and understanding of our presence and territory.

The ONA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Selkirk College during ONA's 2021Annual General Assembly. This MOU recognizes Selkirk College's responsibility and commitment to support Indigenous students while promoting Syilx culture, history and language.

In 2019, UBCO and ONA resigned their MOU that pledged to support Indigenous students, culture and scholarship through a public declaration of five commitments in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. On March 1, 2022, an online event shared UBCO's second annual progress report on these commitments. The report included the launch of UBC's new Indigenous Strategic Plan, ensuring the continued commitment to deliver an Indigenous culture orientation program, hiring new indigenous faculty and the development of various cultural initiatives across campus. Read there full declaration of truth and reconciliation commitments by scanning here:

SCAN ME

**Photo:** UBCO Campus planning worked with the En'owkin centre and ONA on an initiative to update existing street signs with the English translations of their nsyilxcn names

# CHIEFS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**April 2021**

1 CEC Meeting

**May 2021**

11 Alderhill: Conversations about Constitution
18 Alderhill: Conversations about Constitution Cont'd
26 Syilx Health Assembly, Westbank
27 Special CEC: Syilx Title and Rights

**June 2021**

1 Special CEC Meeting
15-16 Seeds of Hope: IRS Healing Gathering, Keremeos
17 CEC Meeting
26 For The Children Caravan to KIRS, Kamloops

**July 2021**

16 Special CEC Meeting
27-28 ONA AGA

**September 2021**

23 CEC Meeting
27-29 UBCIC Chiefs Council AGA

**October 2021**

26 CEC Meeting
27-29 Interior Region Health Caucus

**December 2021**

2 Special CEC Meeting: Syilx Mental Health
13 CEC Meeting
7-9 BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly

**January 2022**

19 Special CEC Meeting
21 Special CEC Meeting: Syilx Indian Residential School Committee, Penticton

**March 2022**

3 CEC Meeting
9-10 BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly

*All meetings and gatherings were held virtually unless otherwise noted.

# kʷu əcʼulluʔs
# SYILX CONNECTION

Gathering together is a time honoured tradition.

At the center of Syilx well-being is our time-honored instinct to connect and support each other, out on the land and waters of our territory, as families, communities, and a Nation. Gathering is a tradition for our people, and the ONA has continued to promote this custom through events that help instill cultural teachings, education, and awareness for the Nation and citizens at large. Over the last year this was deeply limited by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and yet we used the lessons learned from the pandemic to innovate and find the opportunities to connect in a safe and good way. Over the last year ONA hosted both digital, as well as in-person events, designed to support healing and increase the long-term wellbeing and happiness of our families today and for generations to come.

**Photo Courtesy of UBCO:** UBCO general science student Fiona Lizotte and ONA Wellness Manager Jennifer Lewis, hold up the Orange Shirt Day Banners that were hung up across the campus.

# əts há stim i? scəcmala?

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

The Syilx Okanagan Nation were shocked and profoundly saddened by the confirmation of 215 children's remains found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS) on Thursday, May 27, 2021. Children from across the Syilx Nation attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School and this revelation reverberated throughout Indian country. This horrifying discovery confirmed what our survivors and families have known and feared all along, that the violence and abuse far exceeded what was previously reported. Since then, multiple other findings across Turtle Island have been made —including at St.Joesph's at Williams Lake and St. Eugene's Mission School at Cranbrook, both of which had Syilx children forced to attend. To date no one has been criminally charged for any of these heinous crimes and atrocities.

The ONA has since hosted a number of gatherings and initiatives to ensure that Syilx Indian residential school survivors and their families are supported. This included:

- June 2-5 Nation members from across the territory ran out on the land as part of the Spirit of Syilx Unity Run; Saturday, June 5, 2021, a special component of the Unity run included an in-person event that went from nkm̓apəlqs (Head of the Lake) to the Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS) on Tk'emlups te Secwepemc territory, in just one day, and was a recognition for all the children that never returned from the KIRS.
- Additionally, on June 26, a "For the Children Caravan" was coordinated, which saw a convoy of Syilx leaders, Indian residential school survivors, their families (intergenerational), elders, members, and youth from across the Nation journey from sn'pinktn (Penticton) to the Kamloops Indian Residential School. This caravan was a direct response to the lack of justice in the face of the confirmation of the burial sites at KIRS. It gathered our people together in unity. It also brought awareness to all those who were finding their relatives, alongside showing our support for and alliance with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. A ceremony at the Kamloops Indian Residential School took place after the caravan. These gathering events also gave ONA social service professionals—through ONRT and YES programs—the opportunity to provide individual emotional support services to all our members.
- In September, UBCO, demonstrated their commitment to the 94 Calls to Action and in support of this travesty, installed orange banners across the campus in recognition of Orange Shirt Day and the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The banners were designed in collaboration with ONA, with imagery from Syilx artist Billie Kruger, from the Okanagan Indian Band.

It is important to highlight that this work was enabled by all of the previous efforts of the Syilx Indian Residential School Committee's work, who have tirelessly worked to bring awareness to the issue and support to the survivors of these tragic events. The SIRS Committee is invaluable in providing direction to the Nation on numerous projects regarding the Indian residential schools.

SCAN ME

For more information on the Syilx Indian Residential School experience visit: www.syilx.org/wellness/indian-residential-school/

# axá iʔ sccuntət iʔ tl x̌aʔxítət x̌l iʔ nəqsílt̓ət

SYILX NATION FAMILY DECLARATION

Syilx Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members have all shared that there is no rigid set of written rules that outlines the rights of Syilx children – it was understood as contained in our languages, knowledge and captikʷɬ. At the same time, it has also been shared that Nation members know what their children's rights are. These unwritten laws are part of our sqilxʷcaʷt—the traditional ways of being that are passed down orally since time immemorial. According to sqilxʷcaʷt, children's rights are intertwined with their responsibilities, and are situated within their families and community. For thousands of years, those rights, and their associated responsibilities, have been passed down from one generation to the next.

Although no written document can ever fully encompass the breadth and depth of our sqilxʷcaʷt, the idea of creating the Family Declaration was proposed at the 2016 Children First Forum and this recommendation was adopted by the CEC. A first draft was penned in 2017, and then moved into an intensive and through community engagement process. As Syilx people we have always had an inclusive process that engaged all communities, and thus this knowing reflected the guidance received from community in the development of this Declaration.  It is important to highlight that throughout this process it was fluent Language Speakers and Elders who supported the work through to the end.

In January 2020, over 1,000 copies of the second draft were shared door-to-door throughout all communities of the Nation. The third draft, incorporating feedback from each member band, was then reviewed and approved by the Wellness Committee, Nation Grandmothers, and the SIRS Committee.

This Declaration was then taken back to Language Speakers from across the Nation, whose dedication ensured that the translation resonated in nsyilxcən. We engaged 17 language speakers from all of the member communities in numerous sessions to ensure that this Declaration was deeply grounded in our Syilx worldview and perspective, and in particular sqilxʷcaʷt. This was completed in November 2021. Following presentations in each Nation community, the Declaration will be presented for formal signing at the Annual General Assembly in July 2022.

axá iʔ sccuntət iʔ tl x̌aʔxítət x̌l iʔ nəqsílt̓ət follows the four previous Syilx Nation declarations:

- 1987 Okanagan Nation Declaration
- 2010 Unity Declaration
- 2014 siwɬkʷ Water Declaration
- 2018 lʔ Syilx iʔ sukʷnaqinx scqʷəlqʷiltət | Syilx Okanagan Language Declaration

The Family Declaration lays out the principles and values that our people live by, and that we expect all guests and visitors to our territory to abide by when working with our families and our children. It can be used as the base for protocol agreements with partners, as a guide for community wellness policies, and as the foundation for a written expression of Syilx Okanagan family laws should the Nation seek to have jurisdiction in this area recognized by the federal government, so that Nation laws are held as equal or greater than federal law.

# axá iʔ sccuntət iʔ tl x̌aʔxítət x̌l iʔ nəqsi̓ltət

# FAMILY[1] DECLARATION

iʔ k̓ʷi̓ncutn naʔł snk̓lip[2] mniṁłcəi̓x iʔ t̓k̓ʷntisəlx
iʔ sc̓x̌ʷəx̌ʷíplaʔ k̓l kłcaẇtsəlx iʔ sqilxʷ.
kcx̌aʔx̌aʔstím iʔ sc_c̓ax̌ʷsəlx iʔ kł_n̓xʷi̓xʷi̓tans,
k̓l kł_nx̌stans iʔ sqilxʷ, k̓l t̓ə sxʷuys.

iʔ tṁxʷúlaʔxʷ[3], iʔ tmixʷ[4] naʔł mniṁłtət t̓iʔ kʷu snaqsx.

ti̓ scwaýs iʔ tṁxʷúlaʔxʷ kiʔ kʷu sʔaláʔx axá iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ
/ syilx / sʔukʷnaqínx, ixíʔ iʔ st̓k̓ʷuk̓ʷxíxtət iʔ ti̓ k̓ʷi̓ncutn.
ks_səcqixʷstm iʔ xmintət iʔ ti̓ aʔ nxʷlxʷltantət uł
kckłqixʷstm uł kctxəi̓stim iʔ tṁxʷúlaʔxʷtət uł aʔ nqilxʷcn.
pintk əck̓ʷuḷmstm aʔ nqʷlqʷiltntət uł aʔ nk̓ʷúḷmntət ...
nák̓ʷuḷamntət[5]. lut pənkin t̓ xʷic̓xmntm, t̓ tẇmistmntm, iʔ
kʷu t̓uk̓ʷłtim ti̓ kʷi̓ncutn naʔł snk̓lip ... k̓l t̓ sxʷuys.

iʔ kʷu nəqsi̓lt, iʔ kʷu qʷsqʷsʔam,
iʔ kʷu stmáliʔs, yʕat iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ.

ti̓ t̓ sxʷuys ... waẏ iʔ k̓ʷuḷ ... nixʷ iʔ lutí iʔ k̓ʷuḷ
... x̌aʔx̌aʔəlx ... əcpútaʔstm ... kʷu yʕayʕát ctxəi̓stim
iʔ scəcmaláʔtət naʔł iʔ snəqsilxʷtət.

t̓iʔ mniṁłtət, mi kʷu əccut stim iʔ kł_k̓c̓x̌ʷəx̌ʷíplaʔs
iʔ scəcmaláʔtət, iʔ kł_nx̌stans iʔ kł_x̌ast scxʷi̓xʷaḷts,
uł iʔ k̓l kł_x̌spʔiẇts iʔ scəcmaláʔtət naʔł iʔ
nk̓ʷcwilxʷtət uł iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət.

Creator and Coyote laid down our laws/responsibility for us, sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx, to carry for all time. We hold in high regard their decree and teachings of accepting the responsibility to be keepers of our waters, territory, lands, foods, and resources.

The Land, all creation, and us, as sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx People, are one.

From time immemorial, We, the sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔukʷnaqínx, (Okanagan Peoples) have inhabited our territory – we defend and look after our lands and resources. We speak our language, live our customs, traditions and our way of life. We have not and will never cede, release, or surrender our lands or resources ... for all time.

We define family, as our immediate family, our extended family, and all those that we accept as family.

From time immemorial, our children now, those yet to be born, are sacred. We revere our children. We all care for our children and our families.

It is our inherent right, that we are the only ones to say what governs us, for what are the best interests, the good health, and well-being of our children and people, and our sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔukʷnaqínx ways.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 1

mniṁłtət niŚáýp əckilmxʷíp̓laʔstm iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət. iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ / syilx / sʔuknaqínx ctxəi̓stim yʕat x̌l iʔ kł_nx̌stans, iʔ k̓l yʕat iʔ nk̓ʷcwilxʷ. iʔ sʕax̌ʷípsəlx iʔ sq̓c̓əc̓mnwixʷs.

We are the decision-makers of our sqilxʷ, syilx, sʔukʷnaqínx ways. Our ways are central to the health and well-being of all sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx Peoples, including our children and families. We ensure this is intertwined with who they are and their roots.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 2

kʷu səctxəi̓xəi̓nwixʷəxʷ iʔ k̓l k̓ł_nx̌stantət ... k̓l t̓ə sxʷuys.

Since time immemorial, we look after one another, our best interests for all time, for our resilience and continued prosperity.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 3

iʔ ti̓ sk̓łt̓aitət6 ti̓ t̓ sxʷuys iʔ sc̓x̌ʷiłtm kckilmxʷíplaʔstm ... iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət ... ixíʔ iʔ st̓k̓ʷuk̓ʷxíxtət.

From generation to generation, we make decisions to teach and instill discipline[7] to our sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx children and families. This is our inherent right.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 4

iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ / syilx / sʔuknaqínx iʔ caẇtət uł iʔ k̓ł_caẇtət, x̌əl iʔ nəqsiltət, kctxəi̓stiṁ iʔ sqʷsqʷaʔsíaʔtət, iwáʔ łə_kaʔkín, uł kcxʷstustm ta_ck̓l snxáʔcnustət iʔ nqilxʷcn / nsyilxcən uł iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət

The sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx inherent right to self-determination and jurisdiction includes:
The protection of our familial connections; caring for our children; regardless of residency (where they are) and our inherent right to share and teach our language, traditions and way of life.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 5

iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ / syilx / sʔuknaqínx cx̌aʔx̌aʔstím iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət k̓l t̓ sxʷuys. iʔ samáʔ k̓ʷinsəlx kʷu ks_k̓ʷiłtm uł kʷu ks_p̓lstułtm iʔ sqlxʷłcaẇtət, nax̌ṁł lut t̓ qłnusəlx

We, the sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx, have the responsibility and the right to heal through our own ways, for all time. The governments tried to take and beat from us, our ways, but were not able to.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 6

iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ / syilx / sʔuknaqínx kʷu əctxəi̓xəi̓nwixʷ uł kʷu nqʷnqʷnils lut swit t̓a_cnłipəpt, əcknknxtwixʷmstm iʔ st̓k̓ʷuk̓ʷxixtət uł iʔ k̓l kłnx̌stans iʔ kʷu sqilxʷ / syilx / sʔuknaqínx iʔ kʷu nək̓ʷcwilxʷ ... ks_səcknknxtwixʷmstm ixíʔ.

We, the sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx Peoples are responsible for providing for one another; no one is left in need. We share what we have unconditionally, and we all share in the rights and responsibilities which ensure the collective well-being of our sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx Nation.

### iʔ_kscn̓xʷstustət (Article) 7

iʔ k̓ʷi̓ncutn naʔł snk̓lip mniṁłcəi̓x iʔ t̓k̓ʷntisəlx iʔ k̓l_kłcaẇtsəlx iʔ sqilxʷ. kcx̌aʔx̌aʔstím iʔ sc_sc̓ax̌ʷsəlx k̓l kł_nx̌stans uł iʔ kł_n̓xʷi̓xʷi̓tans iʔ sqilxʷ k̓l t̓ə sxʷuys niŚáýp əck̓ʷuḷmstm iʔ sc̓x̌ʷax̌ʷtət.

From the Creator and Coyote, they laid down our laws/responsibility for us to carry for all time, through our captík̓ʷł. Creator has given us, the sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx Peoples, the responsibility to be keepers of our waters, territory, lands, foods, and resources, and we continue to do so.

We live by what is stated here.

SCAN ME

**Watch Video of Chief Greg Gabriel , Syilx Nation Child and Family Governance Representative.**

# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

RECOGNIZING SYILX STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS

The ability of Syilx students to access post-secondary education or further their Trades and Skill Training is central to our Nation moving forward into a better future. Since 2009 the ONA and Fortis BC provide two awards of $1200.00 to financially support eligible Syilx Okanagan Nation members enrolled or accepted into a recognized university or college on a full-time basis in a minimum 2 year program. As of 2020 we also received contributions from Hi-Trax, Lance McLean (PIB) and Progressive Fence, thus we are able to offer two additional $1200.00 bursaries. This year the ONA is pleased to announce four bursaries as part of this year's Building a Better Future Bursary Program. The 2021 recipients are:

"My idea of Indigenous health would involve a holistic framework targeting the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of health. Focusing on just one of these areas would be insufficient as these areas are inextricably intertwined."

**Tyara Marchand** is a member of the Okanagan Indian Band. Tyara is a graduate from the University of Calgary, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Anthropology. Tyara is currently enrolled in the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary, where she is working towards fulfilling her dream of becoming an OBGYN. Tyara plans to advocate for policy change and make birth a sacred ceremony for all Indigenous people again. Tyara wants to ensure that all people have access tohigh quality and culturally safe health care, without the worries of systemic racism or discrimination.

"I would like to be a part of revitalizing the Nsyilxcen language so that my kids and future generations will still be speaking the language for generations to come."

**Kimberlyn Kosik** is a member of the Westbank First Nation, and is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Nsyilxcen Language Fluency Degree Program at the En'owkin Centre (in partnership with NVIT & UBCO). Language revitalization is extremely important to Kimberlyn. She sits as President of the Syilx Language House Board of Directors, as well as working full time as the Early Years Coordinator for the Westbank First Nation. By instilling pride in her culture and language, Kimberlyn believes that we will see an increase in community health, well-being and connectedness as a community, and a decrease in addictions and vulnerable households.

"In my dream, the children are loved and they know who they are. That is the most important thing. We cannot get to language fluency without love and respect for ourselves, each other, and the land."

**Sofia Terbasket-Funmaker** grew up in the smelqmix. Throughout her language journey, Sofia has realized how important relationships are. Sofia wished to get to know all of the language learners in the nation, and subsequently started an intermediate nsyilxcen conversation club. Sofia is enrolled in the UBC Bachelor of Education program, with a specific interest in Outdoor Learning. Sofia has a dream of creating a land-based school where both the students and teachers spend most of their time outside. The curriculum would be rooted in Syilx ways of knowing and Syilx ways of being.

FORTIS BC
Energy at work

"I plan on working closely with Indigenous communities in order to make a difference. A sustainable future, to me, includes proper wildlife conservation measures and projects, as well as a collective rehabilitation of our damaged land, and lost species."

**Kaitlyn Souch** is a member of the Upper Similkameen Indian Band. She is currently enrolled in Mount Allison University's Environmental Science Program. Kaitlyn believes it is critical to advocate for our environment, as well as honour and respect it. She plans on volunteering at a Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre while completing her degree in order to learn, inspire others, and do her part in fostering a better relationship between communities.

Photo: Elder Ʃán  Anna Mae Tanner, video interview along the Okanagan River

# MAKING OUR MARK

## INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

We are dedicated to celebrating the multitude of Syilx voices and perspectives through strategically sharing messages through appropriate channels. Partnerships, innovations and capacity building are key to promoting our work, but are only successful if they reflect our unique Syilx worldview, language, and sense of responsibility.

**Collaboration to Ensure a Sense of Responsibility**

From November 17-18, 2022, the ONA, in collaboration with UBCO and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy, co-hosted the 8th annual One River Ethics Matter conference. This event gathered over 500 people from around the world to discuss the review process now underway to modernize the 57-year old Columbia River Treaty, as well as advocate for Indigenous connections to the watershed. Participants include traditional ecological knowledge keepers, environmental experts, along with academic and religious scholars from both sides of the 49th parallel.

This year there was a special focus on the the Syilx Nation's work with kł cp̓əlk̓ stiḿ: restoring ntytyix (salmon) to the Okanagan and Upper Columbia rivers, alongside other Indigenous-led actions.

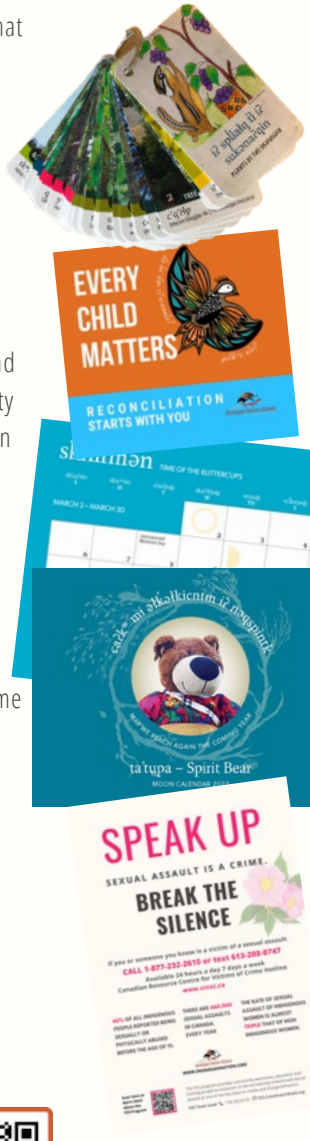
**Advancing Language, Culture and Understanding**

As part of our overarching mandate, ONA is dedicated to the preservation and practice of Syilx language and culture in addition to creating understanding on topics of concern to the Nation. This currently comes through the development and distribution of collateral like books, plant ID cards, calendars, maps, videos, and online content, alongside the inclusion of language wherever possible in ONA communications outputs.

These efforts are supported by Elders and Language Speakers throughout Syilx member communities, that ensure these efforts are steeped in our worldview.

Here are a look at some of the resources that were developed over the last year:

- 1000 Plant ID cards printed and distributed across the Nation
- 13 bilingual "Every Child Matters" street banners were developed in partnership with UBCO, to line the streets at the university campus
- 7 Large "Every Child Matters" banners and 30 lawn signs were developed, and distributed to each member community
- Syilx Parenting Curriculum, 2nd edition was reformatted and bound for community distribution
- Over 600 copies of 9 ONA book publications sold
- Numerous language and cultural information and promotional posts to our social media outlets as well as some short videos
- Tupa Calendar developed to increase cultural awareness – 1700 distributed
- 10 shirt designs for events etc., with original designs produced. Part of the reason we do the shirts is to promote Syilx artists.
- Development of two CRT videos, including over 14 interviews with Syilx Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Leaders, and ONA technical staff.




Watch one of these videos:
Ʃán – Our Inherent Connection

SCAN ME

# COMMUNITY, EVENTS, AND ENGAGEMENTS

GETTING TO KNOW THE LAND AND EACH OTHER

### SALMON CEREMONIES

ONA upheld our commitment to honouring our ancestors and praying for the salmon by supporting a number of salmon ceremonies throughout the territory. This included a series of Salmon Ceremonies in the eastern territory, which brough leaders, traditional knowledge keepers, elders and community members out on the land. These ceremonies provide the opportunity to reaffirm our connection to the land and water, while also calling the salmon back to all parts of our territory.

### SPIRIT OF SYILX YOUTH UNITY RUN

ONA hosted the 13th annual Spirit of Syilx Unity Run to promote awareness of suicide and violence in First Nation communities. The 2021 run was originally planned to take place virtually again, but the news of the 215 unmarked graves at KIRS sparked a need for our people to run to Kamloops as a means to honour the children who never made it home. Due to COVID, we had a limited number of people from each community that ran over 125 kilometers from Head of the Lake to KIRS in one day.

### PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

The Purple Ribbon Campaign is an annual campaign that leads up to International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st each year. The key messages of this campaigns are reducing overdose, promoting harm reduction, and cultivating safe spaces to talk about mental health & addiction. We concluded the campaign by promoting and supporting each communities with their own Overdose Awareness Day events.

**Art by Csetkwe Fortier*

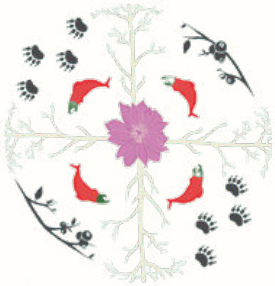
### FOR THE CHILDREN CARAVAN TO KIRS

Dozens of people from all ages and backgrounds gathered in various locations throughout the Okanagan on June 26 for the Caravan that eventually made its way to the site of the former Kamloops Residential School later that day. The caravan included a convoy of Syilx leaders, Residential school survivors and their families, Elders, members and youth from across the Nation. This was a way to gather the people in unity and to provide support to the survivors and each

The caravan brought awareness to all those who are yet to be discovered and to stand in solidarity with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.

### SALMON FEAST

The Salmon Feast honours the sacredness of the riverat sx̌ʷəx̌ʷnitkʷ (Okanagan Falls), which is a culturally significant site for the Syilx Okanagan People, and an important traditional fishing camp, gathering place and trading site.This year's Salmon Feast was cancelled to the public due to the increased spreading of COVID. However, a small group still gathered to carryout the long-standing tradition of snx̌aʔiwləm (to honour the sacredness of the river).



**Art by Franchesca Raven Bell*

*All events were virtual unless otherwise specified

**APR**
- Syilx Well-being: Nation Drug Forum
- Syilx Women's Leadership Gathering
- COVID-19 Update Information Update

**MAY**
- Sockeye Fry Release Ceremony, Shingle Creek, Penticton
- Sockeye Fry Release Ceremony, Castlegar, Slocan, and Revelstoke

**JUN**
- Spirit of Syilx Unity Run, Virtual
- Spirit of Syilx Unity Run, OKIB to KIRS
- Seeds of Hope: IRS Healing Gathering, Keremeos
- Salmon Ceremonies, Castlegar, Revelstoke, McIntyre
- Water Strategy Webinar, Virtual
- For The Children Caravan, Penticton to KIRS
- Naloxone Training: LSIB, PIB, OKIB, OIB, UNB

**JUL**
- When Love Hurts: Responding to Sexual Violence
- Naloxone Training, LSIB, PIB, OKIB, OIB, UNB
- Annual General Assembly, Hosted by OIB, Castlegar

**AUG**
- Naloxone Training, LSIB, PIB, OKIB, OIB, UNB
- Legal Aid BC Information Session

**SEPT**
- World Suicide Prevention Day Workshop,
- Salmon Feast, sx̌ʷəx̌ʷnitkʷ Provincial Park,
- Syilx Hunters Meeting Session 1

### 2SMMIWG NATION GATHERING: A RIGHT TO SAFE COMMUNITY

The 3rd annual Nation gathering took place from October 4-5, 2022, was held online and drew 70 participants. YES welcomed two youth emcees, recognizing the importance of including youth as our future leaders. Powerful keynote speakers from the Nation and beyond shared their journeys and insights about being safe and cultivating strength across diversity. Given the challenges of sharing such sensitive stories online, ONRT was available for mental and emotional health support services.

### SYILX YOUTH GATHERING

The Syilx Youth Gathering was a 3-day event that took place at Silver Lake Camp in Peachland. The gathering featured on-the-land activities, games, and a variety of workshops hosted by Syilx members including beading, painting, and medicine walks. This gathering provided the opportunity for Syilx youth from each member community to connect.

### FOUR FOOD CHIEFS GATHERING

The Four Food Chiefs Gathering is an annual gathering of Syilx Nation members. The event consists of workshops, discussions, presentations, keynotes and activities that focus on connecting to the land and water, connecting to each other, our well-being and learning useful tools to thrive! The purpose of the gathering was to encourage collaboration between all the ONA departments in a way that promotes the Four Food Chiefs/enowkinwixw model. It created a space for the different departments and teams to showcase their work and engage Nation members in the work of the ONA.

### #WELOVELANGUAGE CAMPAIGN

Consent was the theme for the #WeLoveLanguage campaign this year with three new nsyilxcen phrases shared over social media: tqʷəlqʷiltmnt / Talk about it. xixiʔstixʷ / Asking for consent. nputlsmn / I'm okay with that. There was a different theme each week, reinforcing the message of being mindful about how we speak to our loved ones. Along with social media and weekly contests, YES gave out 200 T-shirts, 70 posters, and created a culturally-based First Responder to Sexual Violence Handbook.

### CELEBRATING WORLD WATER DAY WITH THE 8TH ANNUAL SIWŁKʷ FORUM

The Forum explored how the Syilx Nation holds up siwɬkʷ as a living relative, and how we continue to collaborate to protect siwɬkʷ. The online portion of the event included presentations on different water initiatives taking place on the territory. Keynote presentation was from Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui representatives on I am the River, and the River is me: Legal personhood and emerging rights of nature whose efforts set an international precedent to get the Whanganui River, in Aotearoa NZ recognized as a living entity. A series of water ceremonies also took place along the shores of kɬúsx̌nítkʷ to offer prayers and gratitude

### LIVING THROUGH STORY: LOOKING DEEPER INTO CAPTIKʷL AND SMIMÁY"

This event was held in partnership with UBCO. Discussions examined how lessons from the captikʷl connects with our modern way of living in relation to wellness for Syilx peoples and how to integrate Syilx values and principles within captikʷl for research specific purposes. Participants mentioned how important they felt this event was and how coming together as a community and teaching one another and then applying that to our individual selves is healing and is wellness.

**OCT**
- 2SMMIWG Gathering: A Right to a Safe Community
- River Restoration Workshop, Penticton
- Syilx Youth Gathering, Peachland
- Elders Thanksgiving

**NOV**
- Four Food Chief's Gathering, Penticton and Virtual
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Workshop

**DEC**
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ Meeting, Westbank and Virtual
- First Responder to Sexual Violence Training
- Interactive Storytelling: Celebrating captikwl Through Improv, Penticton
- Stories Forum 1: captikʷl as our teacher
- Honouring kiʔláwna? Ceremony

**JAN**
- Children First Forum
- Stories Forum 2: captikʷl as our teacher
- Chinook Smolt Release, sx̌ʷəx̌ʷnítkʷ Provincial Park, Okanagan Falls
- Healthy Relationships Workshop (ran bi-weekly until April 5)

**FEB**
- Stories Forum 3: captikʷl as our teacher
- Stories Forum 4: captikʷl as our teacher, Kelowna and Virtual

**MARCH**
- Early Years Gathering, Virtual
- Honouring styłkʔa? Ceremony, Nakusp
- Syilx Water Forum, Virtual and Okanagan Lake Prayer Locations
- Syilx Men's Wellness Gathering: iʔ‿kʷúlʔəm x̌ast, Penticton
- Syilx Women's Wellness Gathering: snaqsilxʷ, Penticton

## suxʷtxtem

# ASSERTING RESPONSIBILITIES

To care for the land is to care for the people.

Passed down through the ongoing connection to our ancestors since time immemorial, Syilx people have an inherent responsibility to the tmixw, tmxʷulaxʷ and siwɬkʷ. These responsibilities form the foundation of much of the work that we take on at ONA, yet the challenges to secure environmental stability are increasingly more complex and difficult. Ecosystems are being fragmented and collapsing, climate change is disrupting weather and water flows through the territory, and industrial, commercial and real estate development are pushing out our relatives. In the face of these challenges, we stand united. We are coordinating on the ground to reinforce our collective responsibilities so that we can be more resilient and thrive in the face of some of the most disheartening challenges.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES

With each passing year the increasing effects of climate change are felt across the territory. In 2021, we faced an unprecedented "heat dome" that devastated large swaths of the Province, preventing salmon from returning to their home waters and leading to wildfires that threatened communities throughout the territory.

These devastations have profound impacts on our communities and people, alongside all the tmixʷ relatives who we share our territory with. ONA continues to work on the ground to mitigate these issues and look for ways to uphold our Syilx values and perspectives as a means to remain resilient in the face of such drastic and often destructive events.

**cikilaxʷm (prescribed burn)**

Traditionally, the grassland and open forest ecosystems on our territory were maintained by low intensity, controlled burns. cikilaxʷm (prescribed burn) is a long-standing Syilx method of traditional burning of the land that enhances wildlife habitat, forest and grassland health, and reduces 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.

The ONA has been collaborating to continue contributing TEK and traditional practice of cikilaxʷm in the Nation's territory. This past year, we partnered with three of the Nation's communities, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC Wildfire Service, and various other organizations to conduct a number of prescribed fires.

This included the təʔkʼʷəlkʼmarəlʔtikn (Overpass Creek prescription), led by the Penticton Indian Band, which saw 176.1 hectares of land traditionally burnt, and established a mosaic of untreated, open range, and open forest areas across the land. We also supported the Osoyoos Indian Band and Penticton Indian Band, who led the sx̌ayqnulaxʷ (Rexin prescription) — tending to 237 hectares, with the goal of enhancing wildlife habitat and supporting water quality, while also reducing fuel density and severe wildfire risk in a Douglas fir-dominated ecosystem.

**Emergency Management**

Climate change is an amplified threat to both our natural ecosystems and communities. As a result of this pervasive issue ONA has been involved in emergency response and planning activities — while always being aware of the need to supplement, support and coordinate the work already occurring in member communities. During the wildfires of 2021, we responded to the needs of impacted communities. There were no contracts in place for these supports, rather it was a matter of seeing the needs and being there for the people. We helped impacted Emergency Operations (EOC) and Emergency Support Services (ESS) Staff to continue to deliver services and provided a range of mental health supports for members and leaders in evacuation situations.

The ONA hired an Emergency Program Coordinator earlier this year, who has extensive experience to support the goals and objectives set out in this program. They can be reached at drussell@syilx.org.

In terms of emergency planning, ONA has been working on the creation of a Nation Emergency Planning Steering Committee. This collaborative approach to actively planning with communities, other Interior Nations, BC, and the federal government, includes the collaboration in the Modernization of the Emergency Program Act at the provincial level to be more inclusive of Title, Rights and Jurisdiction during emergency events.

The Fraser Basin Council was integral in the work on mapping of capacity in the communities within the Nation and assisting in the Year One Work Plan for the Nation's Emergency Program. This work plan will help the Nation develop capacity as well as the development of the Emergency Support Services coordination to support communities impacted by evacuations, ensuring cultural safety and reduced instances of compounded trauma originating from the event.

# ALL OUR RELATIONS

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

We continue to promote the recovery and resiliency of our tmixʷ relatives. From the restoration of key habitats to the monitoring of endemic species we are working to ensure that all beings have the capacity to thrive for generations to come.

**Calling Back kiʔlawnaʔ**

For Syilx people, kiʔlawnaʔ (grizzly bear) is a significant part of our laws and protocols. kiʔlawnaʔ is important in our creation stories and reminds us of our responsibilities to our tmxwulaxw (land). Over the last year, the ONA has continued efforts to aid in the recovery of threatened kiʔlawnaʔ populations across the territory.

In the North Cascades, we continued to assess the quality and availability of bear habitat as part of the recovery actions to bring kiʔlawnaʔ back to the ecosystem. The studies utilizes traditional ecological knowledge and science in the assessment of human-bear relationships and improving habitat conditions and connectivity. We continue to work with partnering Nations (Upper Similkameen Indian Band, S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance, Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council, St'át'imc Nation and Simpcw), the Province (particularly MFLNRO) and Coast to Cascades as part of the Southwest BC Grizzly Bear Recovery Steering Committee and Indigenous Working Group. The ONA also leads a North Cascades Tactical Subcommittee to identify and address specific issues affecting population viability of kiʔlawnaʔ within the North Cascades. In 2021, the ONA drafted an amended recovery plan and began developing a stewardship strategy for the North Cascades kiʔlawnaʔ population. These provide objectives and guidance for actions needed to ensure long term population viability and connectivity within the North Cascades. The recommendations and proposed mitigations outlined in these documents are informed by Syilx knowledge, Indigenous perspectives, GIS habitat models and field survey data the ONA has gathered since 2018.

Due to unprecedented wildfire activity within the project area in 2021, the field season was limited to two early spring and fall sessions. Even though there were hurdles, the crew still conducted 19 field surveys to gather information on habitat quality, human-bear conflict hazards and bear mortality risks posed by the current human footprint on the landscape. The field crews also utilized a drone to capture images of kiʔlawnaʔ habitat and areas recently impacted by wildfires.

**Building Our Knowledge on How Recreation Effects Wildlife**

To uphold stewardship of kiʔlawnaʔ and the land that support them, the ONA strives work collaboratively with government agencies, stakeholder groups and communities to implement effective conservation measures. It is in this spirit of shared responsibility that the ONA became involved with a research study led by wildlife researcher Dr. McLellan, examining how non-motorized recreation (hiking, biking) impacts wildlife species — such as kiʔlawnaʔ in the Lower Columbia region. As the volume of recreational use and visitors increase on trail systems in this region, there is a need for responsible and proactive approaches towards managing recreational impacts to wildlife and reducing risks for human-bear conflict. The ONA became involved in the project in late 2021, through supporting work on the processing and tagging of digital images collected from 70 cameras, consisting of over 100,000 photos of humans, dogs, and a wide variety of wildlife species. Data is now being analyzed and will be summarized with management recommendations.

With the findings from this project, we will be able to facilitate an informed approach towards recreational use of lands in Syilx eastern territory in the Columbia, by providing guidance and strategies for groups engaged in trail development and maintenance. By collaborating with local non-profit recreation groups and government biologists, this work will decrease the impacts of recreation locally and regionally by providing guidance and strategies for trail maintenance and development.

**Supporting Habitat for Williamson's Sapsuckers**

Williamson's Sapsucker Habitat Enhancement Project, Merritt area (Year 1 of 5). Funding for this project comes from an agreement between BC Hydro and UNB/ONA that provided for mitigation for Williamson's Sapsucker (Endangered; EC 2016) lost breeding habitat due to clearing for the Interior Lower Mainland BC Hydro transmission line (ILM). The overall project objective is to enhance Williamson's Sapsucker habitat by increasing the density of potential nest trees. The project team identified potential locations with foraging habitat and created 90 wildlife nest trees using fungal inoculation and mechanical scarring. Over the last year this project has planted 100 nesting trees. The project was done in collaboration with UNB, Strategic Resource Solutions, and Okanagan Wildlife Consulting.

## Transboundary wápupxn (Lynx) Project

In collaboration with the Colville Confederated Tribes Fish and Wildlife Department, a 5-year project began this winter to assist with enhancing lynx populations within southern Syilx territory. Canada lynx are designated as "Threatened" according to the Colville Confederated Tribes Fish and Wildlife Department and by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Records indicate that the Kettle Lynx Management Zone once supported Washington state's most robust Canada lynx population until the 1980's, when the population was drastically reduced due to over trapping. The wápupxn population north of the 49th parallel is currently thriving, which means that moving several animals south will have minimal impacts on the population to the North, while significantly increasing the chances of viability in the Kettle population south of the border.

The project live-captured and translocated Canadian lynx to restore a productive population to their Native lands in North Central Washington. Increasing the distribution and range of Canada lynx in the Kettle Mountain Range south of the US border will help build resilience and connectivity for populations within the Okanagan and Boundary regions of Syilx Territory. Nine wápupxn were caught (5 female, 4 male) during the 2021 - 2022 trapping season. They were fitted with GPS collars and released to their new home in the southern Kettle River Mountain Range, and their movements and habitat use will be monitored for the next two years.

**Watch a video of one of the lynx calling**

SCAN ME

## Queen Victoria Mine Bat Project

In the autumn of 2021 ONA and FLNRORD team members became involved with a matter concerning clear cut logging of critical known roosting trees for the endangered Silver-haired bats at a forested site known for providing significant bat habitat values. Silver-haired bats are a tree-roosting species, utilizing tree crevices and spaces under loose bark (as found in standing snags) to roost. As such, they are especially dependent on snags and large trees, as can be found within mature dry-fire maintained forests.

The ONA partnered with bat researchers affiliated with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Canada who are conducting studies on several species of tree roosting bats (including silver-haired bats) throughout the Columbia Basin. The ONA and FLNRORD biologists intervened in the imminent logging plans for forests adjacent to the Queen Victoria Mine (a significant and well documented bat roost site) and worked with BCTS and WCS to retain clusters of trees within the cutblocks adjacent to the mine. The ONA and WCS bat researchers (including a graduate student) employed techniques to enhance roosting opportunities within the retention patches. In summer 2021, the team implemented a combination of BrandenbarkTM installations (old growth tree mimics – poles) and created wildlife tree features to ensure maternity roosts are immediately available, within retention tree clusters amidst the newly clear-cut stands. In the fall and winter, ongoing monitoring surveys were conducted of both radio tagged bats and microsite roost site data, to detect microclimate conditions and use among the various tree roost treatments. The objective of this project is to examine the microclimate and use of artificial bark structures (BrandenbarkTM) and determine their effectiveness as bat habitat compensation in the event of loss of tree roosts as a result of timber harvesting.

**Photo top to bottom:** ONA Wildlife Tech checking the vitals on a lynx, Radio tagged bat, Radio telemetry to find roost trees

### Enhancing Environments to Protect Those Most at Risk

Lower Columbia Rare Species and Ecosystems Enhancement Project (Year 1 of 5)

This five year program is targeting restoration and enhancement work for a minimum of 12 locations supporting rare and threatened ecosystems and wildlife species on the Species at Risk Act (SARA). The project is led by ONA's Columbia team, working in close partnership with the Trail Wildlife Association and FLNRORD. FLNRORD is supporting the project through data management, mapping, species inventories contract administration, and providing project oversight. The rare ecosystems identified within the Lower Columbia are riparian areas (containing cottonwood stands), dry fire-maintained forests, and brushland. Eight SARA listed species associated with these rare ecosystems were identified as focal species (but not as exclusive focus) for habitat enhancement:

- Western screech-owl
- Lewis's woodpecker
- Yellow-breasted chat
- Common nighthawk
- Great blue heron
- North American racer
- Northern rubber boa
- Western skink

This project is funded through the Columbia Basin Trusts' Environmental Enhancement Program. In the project's first year, field investigations were made into several candidate restoration locations (as per FLNRORD mapping), and restoration was initiated at an upland brushland location and riparian cottonwood community. Field crews were supported by volunteers over two days – students from Selkirk College provided assistance at the Dove Hill and Kinnaird project sites. A report was also drafted, on the historic use and numbers of wildlife species within the Lower Columbia and Pend O'reille valleys; members from the Trail Wildlife Association were interviewed and their records were also collated and digitized into maps.

### How Can We Stop the Spread of American Bullfrogs?

- Do not possess, breed, ship or release American Bullfrogs in B.C.
- Do not collect and/or transfer tadpoles of any kind
- Do not stock ponds with purchased aquarium frog species
- Raise awareness to avoid spread into B.C
- If you find one trap it if possible, and have it exterminated once clear identification is made by a professional.

**PROTECTING WILDLIFE IN THE COLUMBIA**

- 350 cottonwood and red osier dogwood live stake cuttings processed and planted at Kinnard Bridge area to improve habitat for species like Western Screech Owl
- 16 points of Dove Hill trail remediated along approximately 800m of switchback & 12 garbage bags of invasive plants removed
- 2 treatment units ( total approximately 25 ha) identified and mapped, with archaeological desktop assessment to identify sites of significance in Fort Shepard Conservancy protection efforts
- 138 invasive American Bullfrogs captured and euthanized

**Photo top to bottom:** ONA Wildlife Tech banding a yellow breasted chat for monitoring, ONA biologist speaking to youth on a field tour, bullfrog capture

# siwɬkʷ

## AS A LIVING RELATIVE

A growing number of concerns and impacts face the health and vitality of siwɬkʷ (water) on Syilx territory. Everything from climate change to industrial development and rising populations have intensified the use, while also degrading the quality of this precious resource. The ONA continue to move a number of projects, initiatives and partnerships forward to ensure that it is protected and respected.

To respond to these challenges the ONA continues to enact the" ks‿kəɬqayxʷntimiʔ siwɬkʷ: We Will Protect the Water", also known as the Syilx siwɬkʷ (Water) Strategy. The Syilx siwɬkʷ Strategy was developed over the past decade by the ONA and is grounded in extensive work with Syilx citizens from all of our communities. In keeping with the Syilx nʕawqnwixʷ process, the engagement with Nation members was designed to ensure that all voices were able to contribute to the discussions and to the Action Plan. An online introduction to the Strategy was completed in the spring of 2021.

For more information on the Strategy scan here:

SCAN ME

As stated in the Water Strategy, partnership are key to ensuring the protection of siwɬkʷ throughout the territory. The tkɬúsx̌nítkw (Okanagan Lake) Responsibility Planning Initiative (OKLRPI) is guided by a Syilx-led planning process, and its main goal is to develop and implement a siwɬkʷ (Water) Responsibility Action Plan for the Okanagan Lake watershed. This Syilx process brings together a large working group to share the voices of elders, knowledge holders, Chiefs and Councils, local government, and provincial agencies to identify shared values, build trust among the partners and establish working relationships for envisioning new ways to protect and restore the water and the land. To date, the ONA Chiefs Executive Council, seven municipalities and three regional districts have provided formal resolutions of support for the initiative and the province has assigned staff to the initiative. There are 50 individuals representing 27 organizations that include all levels of government involved in a planning process where Syilx and other partners are working to co-create the siwɬkʷ Responsibility Plan. The OKLRPI coordinating team includes ONA, the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the Province of British Columbia (Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship), and the UBCO. Over the last year this work has included several workshops and surveys to ensure that the work moves forward in an informed and constructive manner.

Alongside these initiatives, in March 2022 the three regional district boards of the Okanagan voted to change the Okanagan Basin Water Board's governance structure, giving the Syilx Nation representative equal voting powers as the representatives appointed by the regional districts. This amends a provision in place since the ONA's seat on the water board was established in 2006 that limited their ability to vote on financial matters. This shift will provide another platform for which to assert our inherent rights and responsibilities on the territory. For more info visit: www.syilx.org/okanagan-nation-alliance-to-have-full-voting-rights-on-okanagan-basin-water-board/

> "The Okanagan Nation has accepted the unique responsibility bestowed upon us by the Creator to serve for all time as protectors of the lands and waters in our territories, so that all living things return to us regenerated. "
>
> - Syilx Water Declaration

**Photo:** ONA and PIB staff electrofishing for fish safety during the Shingle Creek fish habitat restoration construction.

# RESTORATION

FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Central to the protection of all our relations is ensuring that the ecosystems that support life on our territory are restored after years of degradation, industrial development, and the threats of global warming. ONA continues to build on decades of experience in the field to ensure that our territory is rejuvenated for all beings.
By engaging both cutting-edge technology and our Syilx knowledge, we are creating dynamic responses to these effects, to ensure the public safety of all our communities and to be responsible for the sustainability of ecosystems. .

**akɬ xʷumina? (Shingle Creek) Chinook Pools Restoration**

The lower reach of akɬ xʷumina?(Shingle Creek) was heavily channelized, resulting in degraded fish habitat. Traditional Knowledge Keepers at the Penticton Indian Band identified the need to restore deep pool habitat approximately two kilometers from the mouth with the Okanagan River, in particular for migrating and rearing ntytyix (chinook) salmon. Previous works to restore fish passage occurred at this site in 2015 with the removal of the Shingle Creek Irrigation Dam, which was constructed in 1952. Construction works completed in summer 2021 included three riffles to create backwater pools and improve stability of the channel bed. With the successful completion of construction, the re-configured creek now has:

- Improved channel bed stability
- Increased water depths during low flows to make the site passable for salmon/rainbow trout to access upstream areas
- Deep pools during summer low flows, addition of 260m2 of pool area
- Re-vegetated areas affected by construction with planting native trees, shrubs and grasses; this will help establish a healthy riparian area and stabilize banks, 330 indigenous plants planted by PIB
- Natural shade to benefit a host of native fish species

**k'əmcnitkʷ Floodplain Re-engagement**

q̓awsitkʷ (Okanagan River) channelization isolated the river from its floodplains and resulted in the loss of 50 % of the historic river length, and 93 % of the historic extent of riparian habitat. Led by PIB and En'owkin Centre, with collaboration and support from ONA, about 8800 m2 of historic floodplain in Penticton was re-connected to the river over the last year. This section of the river is extremely degraded, and has very limited riparian and floodplain habitat, including black cottonwood forests. Over 75% of the Okanagan's species rely on riparian areas for some part of their life, especially during hot, dry summers. By reconnecting the river to floodplains, this project gives all these creatures a safe home, but especially chinook salmon juveniles who need floodplains for protection and food in the spring and high water. The site is incorporated into ECOmmunity Place, allowing people to also be able to learn and benefit from the site.

**Wilsey Dam Decommissioning**

For the last 81 years Wilsey Dam has prevented salmon from using at least 20 km of former spawning and rearing habitats above Shuswap Falls. The ONA has been releasing fry into the Shuswap River above the dam in the past, alongside being a part of a fish passage steering committee, and has been conducting studies on increasing knowledge on survival of juvenile salmon through Wilsey Dam. Assessments concluded that there are no serious impediments to re-establishing fish passage above the Dam and it was recommended that planning for fish passage proceed. BC Hydro will now move forward planning for the decommission and prepare an application to the BC Utilities Commission to obtain approval to cease operations at the facility. These actions are expected to be complete within the next 6 to 12 months. The Okanagan Project Review Committee continues to work with BC Hydro to shape and advance the Wilsey Dam Fish Passage project.

**Figure:** Map of Salmon Passage

## Overcoming Obstacles to Bring Our Salmon Home

For decades a multitude of dams in the Columbia watershed created nearly impenetrable obstacles for salmon to return. Our persistent restoration, monitoring, relationship building and outreach efforts look to reverse these devastations and restore salmon to their rightful place. The above map informs people on Syilx connections to territory, as well as the current challenges we face to bringing salmon home to the Upper Columbia and all parts of the territory.

**Photo:** Conducting acoustic telemetry trials at the outlet of Skaha Lake for a Juvenile Chinook survival study.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FLOW NEEDS IN ACTION

ONA continued to operate approximately 25 hydrometric stations in collaboration with ONA communities, local municipalities, and local governments. This data allows us to monitor streamflows and initiate action when flows drop below Environmental or Critical Flow Needs. We participated in the provincial regional drought response group through the 2021 extreme drought season by providing timely streamflow and fish migration data to the group. Our data supported implementation of several regulatory actions aimed at protecting local fish stocks from critically low flows last year. In addition, we completed a collaborative project with the province on flow management options in Bessette Creek and their impact on water temperatures in the creek.

kʔulluʔsməntm

# REBUILDING OUR WAYS

Working together to support the well-being of all Syilx people.

We are moving forward as a self-determining people to build and re-establish our ways of caring and healing. The objective of Nation-based planning is the sustainability of quality services that support the well-being of all Syilx people. Nation-based services are founded on the rights of Indigenous families to care for our own children at home in thriving safe communities. These collaborative efforts have been ongoing between the ONA and Syilx bands and peoples. They are built on ancestral knowledge, together with past and present to continue the work of those who came before us which attests to the importance of sharing resources and supporting all peoples to live together in a good way.

# Children, Youth and Families

CREATING PLANS FOR SYILX WELL-BEING

Within a context of growing recognition of Indigenous rights, the ONA has been working closely with communities to develop Nation-level plans in the interlinking areas of wellness. For Syilx Okanagan people, wellness is holistic and interconnected. Together, these plans build a collaborative approach to supporting communities to provide sustainable wellness services for Syilx people. They are the culmination of decades of previous work by so many people, coupled with the teachings and traditions that have been passed down within Syilx Okanagan culture for millennia.

This past fiscal year, planning went ahead with communities despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the busy schedules of band staff, Nation staff and leaders. Under the mandate of the CEC and the guidance of the ONA Wellness Committee, the work continued toward implementing the CEC priorities to improve the health, well-being, safety, and quality of life of Nation members and to preserve Syilx Okanagan laws, culture, language, and education. Currently, the Nation Plans for families and mental wellness have been completed and are being reviewed with member bands.

**sqilxʷ Syilx Okanagan Wellness Framework**

Syilx wisdom breathes life into wellness planning. The sqilxʷ Syilx Okanagan Wellness Framework was created to guide families, communities, and the Nation to develop plans that support wellness today and for the People-to-Be. The Framework is defined by the insights and priorities of Nation members based on extensive engagement. It was developed as the foundation for infusing Syilx perspectives into interconnected wellness plans. The Framework is the culmination and evolution of decades of work by many people, coupled with the teachings and traditions that have been passed down for millennia. Together with the plans, the Framework shares a culturally grounded approach to guide collective work in wellness services.

Planning activities have been grounded in the insights of ancestors and the many Syilx Okanagan Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and cultural practitioners of today who generously shared their knowledge, their teachings, and their perspectives. Acknowledging that the work of revitalizing our teachings is ongoing, this living Framework describes that the people are the Nation and the Nation is the people. Informed by Syilx culture, the nsyilxcən language, and the enowkinwixw process, the Framework puts families at the center with prevention as the focus in the work of breathing life into our teachings.

**nəqsiḿtət Family Plan**

The nəqsiḿtət Family Plan was approved by the CEC in January 2022 and the team moved onto reviewing the Plan with each community. Completing these community presentations is a priority going forward into this new year. The Nation-level plan for families is the most recent evolution of the Nation's collective efforts to revitalize aspects of our people's sqilxʷcaʷt (ways of being) related to family wellness. The Plan lays out various aspects of services that support families to be strong and supported through holistic services grounded in sqilxʷcaʷt.

We wish to acknowledge the Syilx Okanagan communities including Elders, parents, aunts, uncles, youth and children, who shared their concerns as well as their hopes and dreams.

**Syilx Mental Wellbeing Plan**

The Mental Wellbeing Plan was reviewed with CEC in December 2021 and presented to Chiefs and Councils from PIB, OIB, OKIB, WFN, LSIB, and UNB from January to March 2022 to ensure that community needs, priorities, and financial requests are accurate and approved. Each Council signed a BCR supporting implementation of the Plan which includes ongoing discussions and negotiations with FNHA.

The Syilx Mental Wellbeing Plan is built upon the Syilx ways of knowing that are transmitted through the captikwɬ and the teaching of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, aligning with the need for services that move away from the colonial paradigm and are focused instead on supporting communities to create safe, healthy, thriving communities. The Plan has been informed by the voices of Nation members from every community who participated in ONA engagement conversations via documents, meetings and events dating back to 2006. In 2021-22, these included meetings with Chiefs and Councils, the Wellness Committee, community health leads, and the captikʷɬ Forums.

# ON THE GROUND

BUILDING CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

The history of the shared services approach demonstrates that through collective partnership, ONA and member Bands are able to share strengths. We can advocate more effectively and leverage resources in a way that is only possible through collective capacity and strength as a people. ONA continues to provide transparency about the structure of funding, programs, and services. The work demonstrates the value of acting collectively, recognizing economies of scale, and respecting the principle that we achieve greater good when we work together.

The diversity of programs and initiatives provided are consistent with longstanding community messages that the answers to the wellness of our families lies in continuing to revitalize the practices that support our collective wellbeing: language, land, captikʷɬ, and community. ONA staff engage with communities to develop and offer responsive programs, coordinate capacity building trainings, and work with outside partners to enhance coordination of culturally appropriate services.

**Allocation of Wellness Funds to Communities**

The years of work by our Nation to advocate for equitable funding is ongoing. Led and guided by the Wellness Committee, this resulted in coordinated efforts this past year for on-the-ground services in communities with impacts that included increased mental health supports in response to the findings at Kamloops, Covid, wildfires and floods, and addictions. Traditional wellness funds were obtained through FNHA to support community activities including family camps, on-the-land healing, and food sovereignty initiatives.

Highlights of community supported services and coordinated efforts:

- UNB facilitated pithouse circles to help families understand intergenerational trauma, speak openly about sexual assault, and work together to prevent more harm with a mental health lens. Supported members during the summer heatwave and fall flooding.
- OKIB responded to the compounding tragedies of 215, community deaths, and wildfire evacuations and losses with mental health and food security supports including a drive-thru traditional feast with over 450 plates served.
- OIB employed a First Nations counsellor who is a great asset for the community.
- WFN funded virtual services including body-talk and a traditional spiritual helper.
- PIB facilitated a virtual parenting program, shared health kits, back-to-school back packs, and increased mental health supports in response to findings at Kamloops.
- LSIB combined virtual traditional food classes with language lessons as well as a community garden and food preservation skills.
- USIB supported clients ages 13 to 90 with healthy and traditional foods as well as mental health.

**Healthcare Advocates**

ONA supports Nation members to help ensure they have access to quality health and wellness services. Upon the request of Nation members, the Health Advocate steps in to help coordinate health care and benefits.

The Mental Health and Addictions Specialist provides counselling services and also works collaboratively with band staff to support members to navigate resources. The Specialist provides advocacy around gaps for Nation members including the lack of capacity to work to prevent and address mental health and substance use in a proactive way—as well as the lack of post-treatment recovery supports.

**ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH CARE**

The ONA Health Advocate completed 117 outreach-based services supporting community members 295 consultations with health professionals and organizations.

### Addictions Crisis and Harm Reduction

ONA holds two annual events to support individuals and families in responding to the ongoing addictions crisis that is ravaging community. The Nation Drug Forum in April 2021 brought Nation members together to share experiences, promote understanding, and reduce stigma. The second, event, the Purple Ribbon Campaign to promote harm reduction, went online during Covid-19 and has now turned into an ongoing social media presence with regular in-person Naloxone trainings being held with bands together with involvement of FNHA and IH to support overdose awareness and response.

In order to prioritize our youth and address the widening gap in culturally relevant treatment services, the Nation Wellness Committee continues discussions on any opportunity to advocate for the needs of a youth residential substance treatment centre or specialized programs. There is a vision to establish programs that are driven by the needs of young people in the Syilx and surrounding Nations. The vision to partner with others and be responsive to the needs of community continues to be the driving force for changes in delivery of services in the Territory. This past year, CEC supported the Wellness Committee recommendation in supporting opportunities that present themselves. The ONA is submitting a proposal for a full-scale planning process for programming, policies, and staffing for a Syilx treatment facility.

### stamiyaʔ 2SLGBTQQIA+

Syilx people have always held a deep understanding and capacity to embrace the diversity of genders and sexualities that exist within our communities. The process of colonization has attempted to undermine these inclusive worldviews as another means to divide our people.

In the face of these issues, ONA has begun the journey to learn and be supportive of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community so that our practices and all gatherings foster safe and inclusive spaces. This includes building on work taking place at multiple other organizations, including the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and papers such as "Canada: Equality and Non-Discrimination with a Focus on Indigenous Women and Girls and Intersecting Forms of Discrimination."

We are dedicated to celebrate diversity in all forms throughout the Nation, while also ensuring that we are supporting and standing with those that not only face systemic racism, but homo- and/or transphobia as well. Overall, we acknowledge that we have much to continue to learn and grow together in bridging relationships with the diversity that flourishes in all parts of our Nation.

SCAN ME

**Read the report from UBCIC scan here**

**Photo:** Spirit of Syilx Unity Runners arrive at the KIRS

### Responding to Crisis

Covid-19 increased the demands on crisis response in our Nation and this continued in 2021-22 with additional crisis response required due to floods and wildfires as well as the ongoing overdose epidemic.

Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) carried out the essential frontline work of supporting community-based teams to help Syilx individuals and communities respond with timely and culturally relevant resources. Crisis requests included suicide attempts, suicide and tragic death follow up, mental health supports, psychosis, funeral support, family circle, and cultural supports. In summer 2021, this included mobilizing to support bands impacted by the wildfires in the Nation.

ONRT also continued to build crisis prevention and response capacity within Syilx Okanagan bands by hosting the Spirit of Syilx Unity Run to create awareness of Suicide and Violence, trainings and group sessions on tough topics like abuse and suicide.

- ONRT intake of 32 files
- Mobilized 66 times
- Provided 21 group sessions on suicide, SafeTalk, lateral violence, mindfulness
- Case management including 237 follow ups

You Empowered Strong (YES) brought Syilx knowledge and strength-based practices to address the impacts of family violence and sexual assault. The program set up 34 sessions with traditional practitioners for Nation members and also facilitated circles for youth dealing with racism, bullying, and violence. YES facilitators used these occasions to help cultivate empathy for different perspectives as well as teaching skills for de-escalating violence rather than engaging with it. The circles provided places where youth were able to speak openly about the realities they are encountering in school and at home, with community staff sharing back how valuable it was to have space for the youth to connect around these issues.

YES also hosted the #WeLoveLanguage campaign, the Women's and Men's Wellness Gatherings, and the 2SMMIWG Gathering.

## Supporting Our sk̓ʷək̓ʷiməɬt

The ONA provides programs that support the wellbeing of our children, youth and families both through direct service delivery and through supports for bands and their staff.

The Syilx Early Years program brings Nation-level expertise and resources to build the capacity of community daycares and early years programs to continue to strengthen this significant social determinant of health.

Each year we host the Syilx Early Years Gathering and structure it so that participation goes towards the hours that workers require for their licensing. The new Syilx AECD Network, created in October 2021, brought together 49 early years staff and managers from 6 bands, providing a means of sharing best practices and furthering collaboration between Syilx early years programs. One priority is supporting the inclusion of traditional wellness activities and reconnecting to the land.

In addition, we continue to promote the use of our Syilx Parenting Curriculum. We plan to host more training sessions in the upcoming year to ensure that this resource is utilized in programs and by parents, grandparents and caregivers across the nation. One of the main objectives of this resource is to empower and support parents/caregivers in their sacred and important role.

Another priority is ensuring that communities are in the loop on funding and other provincial changes. While funding for First Nations will not change for the time being, Early Years is helping communities advocate for a more streamlined funding application and reporting processes to reduce the burden on already overworked staff. Another area of advocacy is helping communities deal with staffing issues and wait lists by exploring staffing solutions including increasing access to education by supporting post-secondary partners to run early years training programs for the Nation.

The Youth Wellness Program promotes wellness through cultural and land-based activities as well as doing mental health and addictions outreach. Activities include tmixw medicines, singing, traditional games, bush skills, hiking, naloxone training. In summer 2021, staff supported youth evacuated from OKIB with activities including traditional games, biking, and hiking.

Overall, Youth Wellness activities in 2021-22 included:

- 24 group sessions
- Served 340 youth and 138 children
- Completed 145 hours of community consultation
- Distributed 452 youth resources

**Photo:** Coralee Interactive Storytelling: celebrating captikʷl through improv

## Incorporating Syilx Ways of Being and Knowing

Our captikʷɬ are still used in this fast paced modern world. Syilx knowledge and cultural values from the captikʷɬ are being passed on to help us understand who we are and where we come from.

Each year the captikʷɬ Forums focus on different topics, depending on the issues that we are wanting to look at. It is through these captikʷɬ that we find the answers and resources that we need to build up capacity as an organization and to ensure that we continue to bring our culture forward with us.

This year we held three story sessions online, and one in-person. The theme of the first three sessions was "What is Wellness?" With such a broad concept, conversations throughout the series approached the theme from multiple angles, utilizing different captikʷɬ. Participants asked questions like: "What are our own ways of taking care of ourselves?" and "how do we know we are doing well?" Each session used a different captikʷɬ and enabled participants to gain further understanding of how our knowledge has been passed on generation to generation, and how these can be used to engage in the world. Partnering with the En'owkin Centre, we were able to access numerous stories and resources. captikʷɬ included: The Arrow Trail Story, The War With the Frogs – Martin Louie's version, and Northwind Monster. The sessions enabled knowledge keepers to pass on their knowledge through oral tradition, while fostering further discussion with participants, who went into more detail on what those stories mean.

The in-person session "Living Through Story: Looking deeper into captikʷl and smimáy" was held in partnership with UBCO. See pg. 23 for more information.

ʔ I pəlstim’

# SYILX FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Restoring, protecting, and promoting our First Foods

Syilx food systems are deeply rooted in our territory and way of life. However, colonization and modern, industrial developments have attempted to undermine these systems and alienate Syilx people from our land and relations. In the face of these challenges, ONA remains committed to restoring, protecting, and promoting our First Foods that are foundational and central to the well-being of our people. ONA is a leader in the restoration and protection of our traditional foods and collaborate on a wide range of initiatives that are carried out by member communities, organizations and individuals throughout the Nation ensuring that our food systems continue. We uphold all Nation members who persist at being out on the land, gathering and sustaining themselves and their families.

**Photo:** Fish Techs moving the net to the next broodstock collection location

# RESILIENCE

OF A MULTISPECIES FISHERY

The restoration of diverse food fisheries throughout our territory are crucial to ensuring food security for the Nation. This complex work includes a range of actions, from supporting members performing ceremonies [Salmon Ceremonies pg #22], staff working in rivers for broodstock take to raising the eggs into fry in the hatchery runways, monitoring and analysis at the lab, and teaching in classrooms across the territory. It extends out from here to rebuilding habitat throughout the territory and monitoring to ensure that fish populations can rejuvenate and thrive. All together a multitude of initiatives contribute to the resilience of the Nation's fisheries for generations to come.

### kł cṕ əlḱ stiṁ | Cause to Come Back

The kł cṕ əlḱ stiṁ Hatchery and our broodstock program are central to the Syilx people's conservation efforts in restoring salmon back to their rightful place throughout all parts of the territory. This cutting-edge facility has continued to evolve to ensure that we are taking the lead in conservation — securing and extending the range of salmon throughout the territory.

Due to a highly abundant broodstock season in the previous year, we were able to release 2.8 million sc'win fry in the Okanagan sub-basin, and an additional 30,000 fry in the Columbia from March to June, 2021. The releases in the Columbia were also integrated into the CEC's mandate to move salmon reintroduction forward in the Upper Columbia.

During the last fiscal year, the ONA continued on our Okanagan Chinook monitoring and rebuilding effort. In April 2021, we released approximately 22,000 yearling Chinook smolts at Okanagan Falls and Oliver. These fish were received from the Colville Confederated Tribes as eggs and reared at ONA's hatchery in Penticton. Many of the fish were PIT-tagged, which allows biologists to gain a better understanding of their behavior and survival after release. The first adult fish from this release are anticipated to return in 2023.

sc'win (sockeye salmon) returns to the territory were very low in 2021 due to low river flows and a "heat dome" that affected the region last summer. While the initial run forecast predicted a low run, these environmental conditions likely stressed salmon and reduced survival. As such, our broodstock collection was lower than average, with only 226 females collected. At the beginning of 2022, we also released over 76,580 sockeye fry and 25,500 chinook smolt, with more fry releases to be taking place in coming fiscal year.

The effects of climate change and industrial development have created a range of challenges to all our relatives. In response to a constantly shifting environment the ONA laboratory facility, located at the kł cṕəlḱ stiṁ Hatchery, provides dedicated space for carrying out the ongoing scientific investigations into the health and sustainability of fish populations on the territory. These laboratory services increase capacity for the ONA by providing data that equips decision makers to integrate ONA generated scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge, all of which advance and assert Syilx Title and Rights.

Our laboratory collected biological samples from over 7000 fish from Osoyoos, Skaha, Okanagan, Nicola, Adams and Kootenay Lakes. This testing provides data for monitoring of broodstock, dead pitch, and hatchery production, juveniles in lake and smolt surveys. The lab continues to analyze mysid stomach contents as part of our work to monitor impacts of our sockeye restoration work on the lake food web.

The ageing and thermal mark recovery work continues to represent the largest investment of time for the laboratory. The lab has provided otolith thermal mark analysis from all age classes to discriminate hatchery from wild origin populations. Estimating the age and origin of fish allows us to also determine size at age, age at spawning, reproductive life span, maximum age, growth rates, mortality rates, and identify strong year classes and compare these data between wild and hatchery origin fish.

Alongside this, our genetics laboratory provides environmental DNA testing services and disease testing capabilities including our new genomics testing facility in collaboration with the Broughton First Nations Group. The genomics testing is an important tool to test for diseases in Atlantic salmon that may affect local populations.

**A Multispecies Fishery for Food Sovereignty**

Due to extremely low returns of salmon back to the territory, the ONA closed the recreational and demo sc'win fishery. As such no sc'win fishing was done by ONA, and thus there was no communal distribution for this fishery out to member communities. This stated, it was open for Nation members, where a total of 5560 salmon were harvested by individuals

We did conduct a smaller xʷəxʷmínaʔ (rainbow trout) fishery on Pennask Lake, with 5000 fish caught and distributed out to community. We also supported fishers to on Lardeau River to catch trout, where we also monitored and documented the catches as well.

In collaboration with WFN, we completed year four of five of studies and a smaller food fishery on Derickson Lake. Plans in year 5 is to fallow the lake, continue a fisheries survey and assess other lakes for stock provisioning for cultural fisheries in collaboration with WFN.

**Protecting Diversity and Extending the Range**

ONA continues to build on decades of success in restoring sockeye to the Okanagan sub basin, and are upscaling these capacities by diversifying the fish that we work with, and extending their ranges back to their own traditional territory into a variety of water ways. The success of this work is now also being upscaled and brought forward to our work in the Upper Columbia.

In terms of monitoring, Okanagan Chinook escapement in 2021 was 73 spawners, which is the second highest relative to 79 spawners recorded in 2020. Most spawners were observed near Oliver, though some were observed in the Penticton Channel and below Okanagan Falls.

In addition, we completed feasibility testing of acoustic telemetry equipment in preparation of a Chinook survival study planned for 2022. The study will track the survival and behavior of juvenile Chinook through the Okanagan lakes and river. Results from the study will provide a deeper understanding of potential survival bottlenecks and guide future stock rebuilding and habitat restoration projects. Results of the feasibility testing were promising and the survival study will proceed in 2022.

**Photo:** Okanagan sockeye salmon eggs taken from broodstock collection

ONA staff continue to be involved in multiple collaborative processes aimed at monitoring and recovering Okanagan Chinook, including the Okanagan Work Group of the Pacific Salmon Commission, the Species at Risk Act listing review process, and stock rebuilding planning.

The second year of the Okanagan Lake Salmon Passage initiative was completed. The fish ladder at Okanagan Dam was reactivated Sept 14 – Oct 17 and any adult Sockeye caught in the fishway were tagged and implanted with acoustic transmitters. In total, 46 adult Sockeye were implanted and relocated upstream into Okanagan Lake. About 41% were detected in Okanagan Lake; mostly near potential spawning tributaries (Mission Creek, Trepanier Creek, Trout Creek were creeks with the highest detections). This project will continue this coming fall, then ONA, DFO, and Ministry of Forests will make a decision whether to provide full fish passage into Okanagan Lake.

ONA completed the spring sockeye smolt monitoring. Smolts were captured from Osoyoos and Skaha lakes with a purse seine, and from Okanagan Lake with a Rotary Screw Trap. Once captured, smolts were implanted with electronic Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags. Tagged Sockeye can then be detected with PIT antennae as they migrate downstream to the Pacific. These detections allow us to estimate travel time and survival out to the ocean. Smolts from this year's cohort were partially composed of the 4 million hatchery fry (2 million released in Skaha, 2 million in Okanagan) that were released in 2021.

### Eagle Creek Kokanee Restoration

ONA recognizes that the important component of promoting successful fisheries the health and sustainability of lands and water — for fish to thrive. Some of the great work to restore kokanee habitat, one examples. Eagle Creek is a major tributary to th salt'ikwt (Lower Arrow Lakes) section of the nxw ntkw itkw (Columbia River) and contains important species such as kə́kniʔ (Kokanee), x w minaʔ (Rainbow Trout), and ʕayckst (Bull Trout). Due to the effects of dams and increased spring flows, drawdown zones have been created that can cause streams to spread out over the sand, making it hard for kə́kniʔ to swim upstream to spawning habitats. The fish that do access these streams, they are easy to spot by predators. In response, ONA has continued to work on developing wood and rock structures were created in the Eagle Creek to increase channel water depth and provide hiding places for kə́kniʔ as they swim upstream to spawn. Based on these efforts kə́kniʔ have even been tracked spawning underneath these structures, ensuring that the populations are sustainable.

### Hatchery in a Box

The ONA not only ensures that Syilx people have access to our first foods, but looks to share our innovations, best practices and technical insights for the restoration of fisheries both within our watershed and throughout Turtle Island. The Hatchery in a Box (HIB) initiative perfectly illustrates this commitment, where we look to create resources, increase funding opportunities and partnerships within community and across Nations.

The HIB program began with Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative Business Development Source funding with the plan to develop mobile, modular fish hatcheries that could be built at our Hatchery and then moved to their final location as "plug and play" operating salmon hatcheries. Over the last year we exceeded projections, and were able to upscale, develop and distribute 7 HIB's:

- 2 for Nak'azdli First Nation (water treatment, rearing only)
- 1 at Boston Barr First Nation
- 1 at Spuzzum First Nation
- 2 for Tsilhqot'in National Government
- 1 for Osoyoos Indian Band

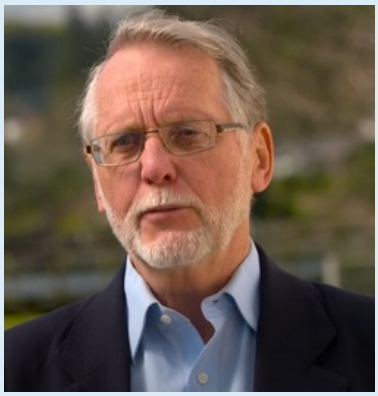
This program has allowed us to build capacity and ensure that we have knowledgeable staff to provide the mobile hatcheries. Based on the investment into research and development of the HIB program from the previous year, we have also been able to ensure that these units are customizable based on the needs and contexts of the those accessing the HIB.

### Raising Fry for Salmon Tomorrow

ONA's Fish in Schools program is a comprehensive fish education program for youth with a focus on sc'win (sockeye salmon), their lifecycle and the importance of their ecosystems. This year we delivered fish tanks and equipment to 30 schools throughout Syilx territory, including 13 returning schools and groups in the Columbia. These deliveries took place as provincial COVID-19 regulations halted the distribution to some institutions. Upon successfully raising the fry, students will include their fry in ceremonial releases taking place throughout the Syilx territory in 2022.

By creating greater awareness of fish species with youth and students of different ages, the intent is for them to become future leaders, land protectors, water managers, scientists and the multitude of environmental and social justice professions that are available for them.

**LIM LIMPT DR. KIM HYATT**



The ONA wishes to honor the contributions of Dr. Kim Hyatt, who passed away this year. Dr. Hyatt was a Department of Fisheries and Ocean's scientist that dedicated his professional life to salmon — especially sockeye.

He was a strong advocate of the work that the Syilx Okanagan Nation envisioned and strived to rejuvenate salmon stocks in our territory, despite the initial resistance of other organizations. He supported the ONA in building relationships, locally and internationally, with other governments involved in fisheries management, as well as businesses and industry impacting salmon, such as the Public Utility Districts.

In part through his commitment of over 25-years, we have accomplished the amazing task of restoring Okanagan sockeye, alongside restoration work now taking place in the Columbia. Kim quickly became friend, mentor, and family member to many ONA staff.

His legacy will live on in our continued salmon restoration efforts.

**Photo from Community for the Wilds:** ONA Wildlife biologist Addison Fosberry looking for neonate mule deer

# Safeguarding Syilx Food Systems

SUPPORTING OUR WAY OF LIFE

Syilx people have always been nourished by a wealth of biodiversity of the territory, including wild game, berries, roots, and medicines. At the same time mounting, multiple crises, from the impacts of climate change to the destruction of ecosystems, threaten the capacity for this biodiversity to flourish. The ONA continue to support restoration and monitoring efforts of Syilx lands and resources, alongside the food sovereignty that they provide.

### Blue-tongue Disease in Sheep Response

Over the last year the California Big Horn Sheep herd near nk'mcinm (Grand Forks) was decimated by bluetongue disease epidemic. Bluetongue disease is uncommon in British Columbia, though it has affected herds south of the border. It is spread by the Culicoides biting fly, which is thought to of arrived due to changes in environmental conditions and wind. This disease has created a widespread die off in most of the herd in a short period of time.

In response ONA leadership have actively petitioned the Province to suspend hunting of the sheep, and has petitioned hunters to abstain regardless of the tags that they hold. To date the Province has not banned the hunting of these Big Horn Sheep.

### Southern Interior Mule Deer Project

The Syilx Okanagan Nation has title and rights throughout its territory, which includes the right to be secure in the pursuit of their means of harvesting practices. One of the important wildlife game species for food sovereignty of the Nation is mule deer. The Southern Interior British Columbia Mule Deer Project is a large-scale collaborative conservation project in partnership between ONA, UBCO, FLNRORD, and the University of Idaho. The 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 ONA team continued to work with partners to capture and collar adult female mule deer. The team also has been continuing to investigate mortalities of collared mule deer in attempt to determine what may be causing declines in the population. 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, and causes of death. This will help us understand what we can do to better restore and manage a healthy mule deer population in the Southern Interior.

**Scan to watch Community for the Wilds that highlights one of the projects that the ONA is involved in to restore mule deer in the Okanagan.**

SCAN ME

**Photo:** ONA biologists GPS mule deer

**stʼxałq Enhancement**

The Syilx Okanagan Nation CEC upholds our commitment to ensuring that hunting, fishing, harvesting, and gathering of food and medicine is done in a way that honours and respects the tmiwx. One of these key foods includes the protection and celebration of stʼxałq (black huckleberry) gathering, which Syilx women in particular understand and practice. The communal activity of harvesting stʼxałq provides the opportunity for Syilx women from across the territory to be on the land, share stories, experiences and songs, language, all the while ensuring long standing traditions, cultural practices and harvesting for foods will continue for their families to have access to nutrient dense and culturally appropriate foods.

First Foods are not just for us but are also protected and promoted to ensure that our other relations can sustain themselves. Alongside being one of the key berries we harvest, stʼxałq (black huckleberries) are an important food source for kiʔlawnaʔ, yet is threatened by unregulated, industrial scale harvests, and ecosystem destruction. The Kettle Granby stʼxałq (Huckleberry) Enhancement supports recovery of ki?lawna? subpopulations through enhancing availability of high-quality bear foods, namely stʼxałq, while also striving to increase secure habitat and habitat connectivity within the Kettle-Granby population unit. By applying Syilx knowledge, innovative forestry practices and prescribed fire treatments, we are looking to enhance productivity of stʼxałq and high-quality forage, and to also increase the availability of core secure habitat for kiʔlawnaʔ within the Lower Arrow subregion. We are developing habitat enhancement prescriptions and monitoring programs for a minimum 400 Ha within priority mid to high-elevation forested ecosystems. We continue to collaborate with researchers at UBCO and independent grizzly bear researchers to develop habitat maps that build on the understanding of how population density and distribution are affected by current habitat conditions and road densities in the Kettle-Granby.

Due to unprecedented forest fire hazards and wildfire activity experienced in 2021, progress on field activities and planning were mostly deferred to the 2022 field season. A short field session was held in early October, to conduct preliminary surveys on fire severity at two candidate restoration sites impacted by the Michaud Creek fire.During 2022, we will progress our work on gathering field data and Syilx knowledge and ways of understanding how stʼxałq and other bear plant foods can be enhanced through burning, thinning and planting treatments.

First Foods are not just for us but are also protected and promoted to ensure that our other relations can sustain themselves.

**Learn how to say stʼxałq - huckleberry**

SCAN ME

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# OPERATIONS AT A GLANCE

Serving the Bigger Picture

ONA operations continued to overcome challenges to build a strong organizational foundation with a stable, well-informed workforce, strong infrastructure and ensuring the use of best practices.

# CORE SERVICES

## ENHANCING THE COLLECTIVE WORK

Over the last year ONA continued to deliver and support core services in the areas of staffing, internal and external communications, employee relations, and workplace health and safety, while also retaining fiscal best practices.

The emphasis this past year was on the active creation, monitoring and maintenance of safe workplace requirements during the height and the unpredictable high stress of the many waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of our proactive approach, we completed a full review of the ONA Health and Safety Plan to ensure compliance with the latest legislation. We also conducted daily management, monitoring and real time management of the high priority and time-consuming impact of the pandemic on the ONA workplace, in concert with ONA Workplace Health and Safety Committee.

We strove to support our major Nation initiatives despite challenges associated with limited core funding. In the face of these challenges we continue to look to innovate and develop strong partnerships to ensure that the work moves forward.

The ONA is also continually driving program development and service delivery within the Nation in partnerships with members and communities. We have seen contribution increases and program expansion year over year resulting from our focused program initiatives. The operations team also supports economic development and are involved in review of business plans and administration of new business initiatives.

A few highlights that serve the bigger picture include:

- Developed ONA monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework to support deliverables, enhance sustainability, and build up best practices in all aspects of organizational growth, this was supported by Indigenous Services Canada.
- Updated and expanded the CEC Orientation Manual as a good governance legacy document.
- Moved forward with the MOU with UBCO, including the Syilx Wellness and Story Project, which invited Nation members to come together around captikwł and explore how to best promote sqilxʷ caʷtət (our ways) in planning and programs.
- Currently in partnership with UBCO on a project that includes an ONA Research Assistant for Nation-based work.
- Worked with the First Peoples Cultural Council to imprint our culture and nsyilxcən upon the land.
- Made the Occupational Health and Safety Program for a safe workplace and culture actionable.
- An independent wage and salary grid review is currently being conducted, building on the ONA job evaluation framework.
- Expanded the ONA Columbia Office to include Wellness, alongside Fisheries and Natural Resources.

The ONA remains focused on enhancing our financial systems, policies and personnel and professional development plans that can efficiently support current operations and provide for growth and diversity in our Nation

# Financial Review

SUMMARY OF REVENUES FOR FISCAL 2021/22

The Okanagan Nation Alliance is primarily a project and proposal driven organization with a small amount of core funding to support the operations. We continue to leverage our systems, staff and assets to be able to deliver consistent results.

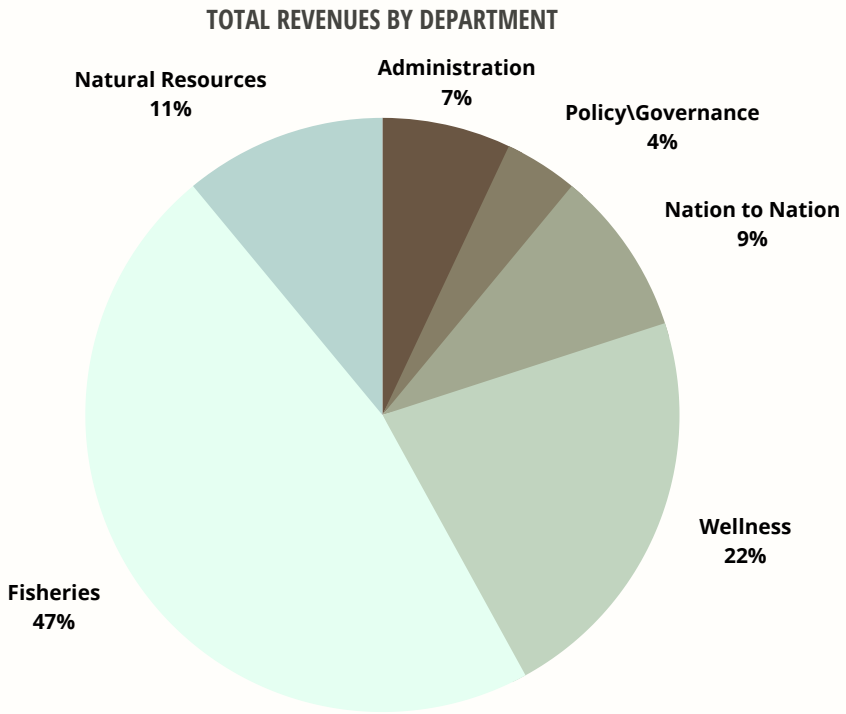
The ONA Administration continues to ensure fiscal accountability to support program, initiative and projects in achieving their contract deliverables and to support future endeavors. Our financial administrators continue to be flexible and forward thinking in order to ensure staff have the tools they need to continue to research, deliver, write proposals and innovate on behalf of the Nation. The finance team monitors the overall financial health of the ONA, ensures compliance with accounting standards, and has a proven track record of clean audits.

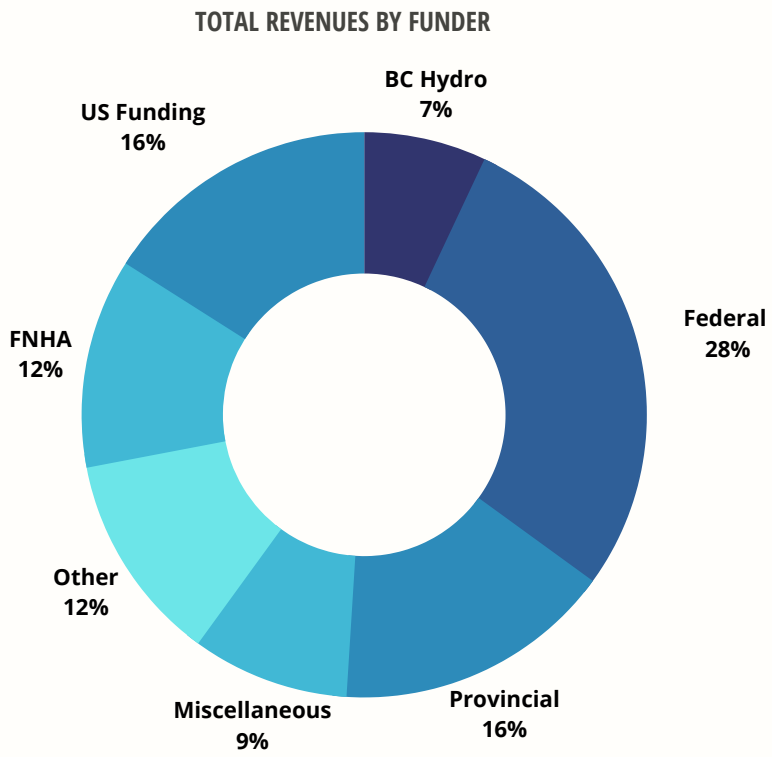
Growth in our operations continues with an overall increase in program revenues this fiscal of 7.7% or $1.2M. The ONA continues to expand due to favorable progress made with partners and timing of our active proposal developments. Development is ongoing throughout our territory, and growth can be seen in many areas including in the Columbia and the Okanagan.

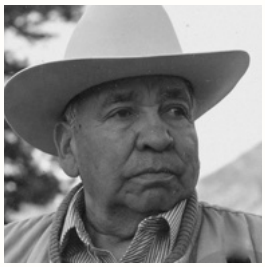
Fisheries funding has increased this year due in part to late amendments that committed capital from Federal funders (Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk) and proceeds from an in house developed program to build Hatcheries in a box. Wellness contributions are down slightly from last fiscal due mainly to program funding fluctuations but with no significant new or abandoned programs. The Natural Resource group saw some exciting growth in revenue due to the expansion of the Wildlife working group and increased funding towards water strategies. Contributions for our Nation events including the Spirit of Syilx Unity Run was very strong this year from a variety of community and corporate sponsors.

Miscellaneous revenue is revenue earned through rent, fishing revenues, book and clothing sales and donations. Other revenue is primarily project related funding from Bands, Local Government, Community and Corporate sources.

** See the ONA audited financial statements under separate cover





Remembering those who came before us and their time-honoured vision to connect and support:

**FOR THE GOOD OF ALL FOR ALL TIME**

**TO LEARN MORE:**
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