



Osoyoos Indian Band
Osoyoos Indian Development Corp
1155 Sen Pok Chin Blvd. Oliver BC V0H1T8



Osoyoos Indian Band “Historic Reserve Celebration”

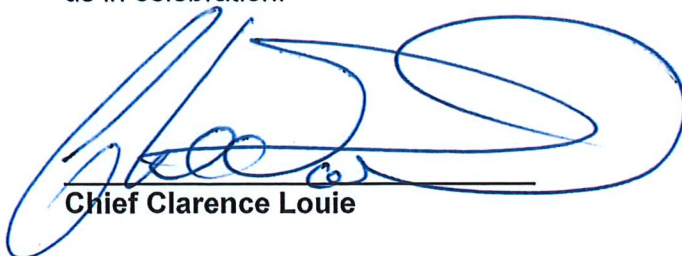
An invitation to join and witness a historic celebration by the Osoyoos Indian Band on its Original Indian reserve set aside in 1877 and taken away (stolen) by the Federal and Provincial governments in 1913.

A few months ago, a piece of land came up for sale on the open market which was once an important part of the Osoyoos Indian Reserve and the entire Okanagan (siylx) Nation. The Osoyoos Indian Band purchased approximately 1 acre of its old reserve back and now after 108 years of being denied access to this important cultural and salmon fishing site our people will now have unimpeded access to our ancestor's historic village (fishing) site.

We celebrate this historic purchase and welcome all Okanagan (Siylx) people to gather on this site (as our ancestors did for thousands of years) on April 14 at 11:30am. We will gather in ceremony, song, and a salmon meal as we “reconcile” the past – present and future. 5444 Hawthorn Place, Okanagan Falls.

The Indigenous history of this site is known by our language and traditional knowledge keepers as where Coyote places the dam there for our people to salmon fish as well as the rock outcroppings are important symbols - “beaver, musqaut, and fisher” to remind us of the connection between the top of the mountain and the water. Because of the cultural and historic significance of this site a woman's sweat will be held Wednesday night April 12, and men's Thursday night April 13 – starting 6:30 pm at 5444 Hawthorn Place, Okanagan Falls.

As most of the Osoyoos Indian reserve that was taken away is still occupied we are also inviting non-Native dignitaries to witness this historic celebration as part of ‘Truth & Reconciliation’. We would like representatives from the RDOS, Mayors and Councillors as well as the public to join us in celebration.



Chief Clarence Louie

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HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SLOWED BY INDIAN PICKETS

Indians hold land protest at OK Falls

By RON WATMOUGH
OKANAGAN FALLS — About 100 members of the Osoyoos and Penticton bands, braved a biting wind this morning in a picket-line protest at three points along one-half mile of Highway 97 here. The Osoyoos Indians arranged the protest to call attention to their claim that 71 acres of Indian reserve had been sold without their permission.

The protesters included men, women and children. They were crossing the highway slowly in front of approaching traffic and handing out a news release outlining their claim.

The 131-member Osoyoos band is asking for fair market value compensation for the 71 acres plus additional crown land to add to its existing reserve.

No amount has been specified. It is understood the claim will involve a great deal more than the \$14,000 for which the land was sold.



JIM STELKIA
... talks no help

No police cars were evident this morning but two department of highways trucks were at the scene. There were no confrontations.

The Indians, who on Sunday in a meeting with provincial government ministers had asked for a tri-level meeting by Feb. 11, said today they will stay and protest at Okanagan Falls until that date. A teepee has been set up and an open fire this morning helped to take the chill off the protesters.

Elsewhere in the province similar demonstrations were being held today at the north end of the Lions Gate bridge in Vancouver and at Spences Bridge and Lillooet to support the land cut-off claims by the Osoyoos band.

The tri-level meeting Feb. 11 would involve provincial and federal government officials and Osoyoos band leaders. Discussion would centre around

the McKenna-McBride Commission of 1912 to 1916. Highlights from the report, contained in the handout to motorists here this morning, outline the points which the band is using in its claim.

The handout states that an impasse occurred in 1911 between federal and provincial governments and the province challenged Ottawa's claim that it had the right to grant, convey or dispose of, in the interest of the province, the lands in any reserve.

The commission was set up and indicated that reserves could be reduced but the consent of the Indians should be obtained.

In 1919, the federal-provincial Indian Settlement Act authorized implementation of the McBride Commission report. This resulted in the loss of the 71 acres of the Osoyoos reserve.

The Osoyoos band officials say that band members through the years were led to believe the land was "sold" by their elders. The officials claim the priests told them this and the band members believed them because "priests could not tell lies".

The result of this history has been one of frustration for the Osoyoos band and attempts were made between 1981 and 1974 to reopen negotiations in the land dispute.

Band officials say the federal government is ready to go in the matter but the province (both Socred and NDP governments) have given no suitable reply to the band's attempts to reopen negotiations.

Jim Stelkia, band chief, said: "We want a meeting that will result in meaningful negotiations. We do not want this to become a political football but have already been referred by the province to the federal government."

Chief Stelkia said following a meeting Sunday with provincial ministers he was not satisfied and was compelled to ask for the tri-level meeting.

Chief Stelkia also cleared up a question arising over the claims today.

He said the section between Cedar St. and Main St. was cut off prior to 1900 and the band, at present, is claiming only up to Cedar St.

He said when this claim is settled, the band will look at the other section.

Chief Stelkia said he is urging residents, not only of the area concerned, but the entire village, to petition the government to act in the situation.



INDIANS WIN ROUND

Obviously pleased with the word from Victoria Monday that Premier Barrett and some of his ministers would meet with Osoyoos Indian Band leaders concerning their land dispute are these four highway picketers, representing three South Okanagan Indian bands. Left

to right are John Terbaske,

chief of the Lower Similkameen band; Adam Eneas, Penticton band chief; Jack Kruger of the Penticton band and Jim Stelka, chief of the Osoyoos band. The highway picketing was set up at three points at Okanagan Falls and continued for about three hours. It was called off

when word came from Mr. Barrett's office in Victoria. The Indians had planned to continue the pickets until Feb. 11, a date set by the Osoyoos band for a tri-level meeting on the land dispute — the meeting to include federal and provincial government officials with band leaders.

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