

# Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table

Working together on matters of common concern to protect and restore siwłkʷ  
in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds, now and for future generations.

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

between the

SYILX NATION

Including

Lower Similkameen Indian Band

Okanagan Indian Band

Osoyoos Indian Band

Penticton Indian Band

Upper Similkameen Indian Band

Westbank First Nation

and

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Including

City of Kelowna

City of Penticton

City of Vernon

City of West Kelowna

District of Lake Country

District of Peachland

District of Summerland

District of Coldstream

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Regional District of North Okanagan

Regional District of  
Okanagan-Similkameen

Township of Spallumcheen

Town of Oliver

Town of Osoyoos

City of Armstrong

Town of Princeton

Village of Keremeos

of the

OKANAGAN AND SIMILKAMEEN RIVER WATERSHEDS

INCLUDING kłúsxñítkʷ, OKANAGAN LAKE AND

THE nməlqaytkʷ, SIMILKAMEEN RIVER

hereafter

“THE PARTIES”





## WHEREAS

- A. The Parties understand that, as governments, they each occupy unique jurisdictional space and have historically different relationships with other international, national, regional, and local governments:
- The Syilx<sup>1</sup> Nation's sovereign, unceded right to self-governance and self-determination are affirmed within Syilx laws and customs as directed through their captik<sup>w4</sup><sup>2</sup> and they hold and exercise title, rights, responsibilities and jurisdiction over lands and waters within Syilx territory<sup>3</sup>, including in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds.
  - The Local Governments operate in the interests of their residents and the public through their statutory authority under the Community Charter and the Local Government Act having jurisdiction in respect of matters delegated to them by the Province of British Columbia.
- B. The Parties live together in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds and share a responsibility to safeguarding the siw4k<sup>w</sup> that sustains their communities.
- C. For the Syilx Nation, their relationship with siw4k<sup>w</sup> means that they are responsible to ensure that siw4k<sup>w</sup> as our relation can continue to maintain the health and resiliency of our tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w4</sup>, land and tmix<sup>w5</sup>, all lifeforms. This relationship with siw4k<sup>w</sup> is the foundation for the Syilx Nation for these discussions.
- D. For the Local Governments, their authorities under the Community Charter and the Local Government Act, govern their powers and responsibilities regarding their residents, communities, water and ecosystems.
- E. The Parties seek to understand and apply these foundations as they build the government-to-government relationships and processes contemplated in this Memorandum of Agreement.
- F. The Parties seek to engage in mutually respectful dialogue and take action on shared priorities consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- G. The Parties recognize the value in collaborating on matters of common concern and seek to establish ongoing, positive, collaborative government-to-government relationships, and processes through this Memorandum of Agreement.



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1 Syilx are the original nsyilxcən speaking people who learned to live together on the land in peace; dreaming ones; bound together; of the land.

2 captik<sup>w4</sup> are stories and oral traditions; creation stories that hold the laws.

3 The Syilx Territory encompasses over 27 different watersheds, each with its own personality, needs, and ways of being.

4 tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup> is the land; the core spirit from which all creation arises and which unites everything.

5 tmix<sup>w</sup> is the nsyilxcən word that most closely translates as “ecology.” tmix<sup>w</sup> includes everything alive – the land, water, insects, people, animals, plants and medicines.



## PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT

The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement is to formalize a government-to-government Leadership Table to set strategic direction and address matters of common concern to protect and restore siwłk<sup>w</sup> in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds now and for future generations.

## OUR SHARED VISION

Our relation siwłk<sup>w</sup>, our most sacred medicine, must be kept healthy to restore and hold its relationship to tmix<sup>w</sup>, in order to ensure resiliency of all, for the good of all, for all time.

## PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING TOGETHER

The Parties agree that the following principles will guide the Leadership Table and the work related to siwłk<sup>w</sup> under this Memorandum of Agreement.

### GOVERNMENT-TO-

**GOVERNMENT:** Work together to achieve respectful, strong, enduring, and meaningful relationships among our governments to advance issues of common concern.

**SYILX-LED:** Respect Syilx values and processes, including recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

**RECONCILIATION:** Support the framework for reconciliation set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

**DIVERSITY:** Respect the diversity of cultures, histories, and traditions among the Parties and respect that each may have unique political and policy priorities.

**COMMON CONCERN ON SIWŁK<sup>w</sup>:** Work together to make progress and achieve outcomes on matters that they have agreed are shared priorities.

**EQUITY:** Ensure that there is equitable sharing of the benefits and the responsibilities associated with addressing issues of common concern.

### JURISDICTIONAL

**COLLABORATION:** Respect each other's autonomous jurisdictions, while agreeing that collaboration based on mutual respect creates deeper understanding and partnership opportunities to protect and restore siwłk<sup>w</sup>

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING:

Recognize and respect the different forms of knowledge, information, and data held by the Parties and, where appropriate, to share knowledge to advance issues of common concern.

**OTHER AGREEMENTS:** Recognize that bilateral arrangements and agreements may also be appropriate to facilitate further cooperation between the governments.





## PRINCIPLES GUIDING OUR WORK WITH SIWŁK<sup>w</sup>, WATER

The Parties are guided by existing principles developed by their respective systems regarding their relationships with the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds. The Parties agree that while these principles are unique, they can also be complementary. It is the Parties' intention that they be guided by all of these principles in their work under this Memorandum of Agreement.

### SYILX SIWŁK<sup>w</sup> STRATEGY

#### Okanagan Nation Alliance

- Recognize and treat siwłk<sup>w</sup> as a relative.
- Work to revitalize Syilx culture, language, and ceremonial practices in all of our work.
- Prioritize Syilx Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Lead with TEK and leadership.
- Maintain integrity of all Syilx research, content, and data.
- Utilize Western Science in conjunction with Syilx-based processes.
- Continue land-based gatherings and research to build relationships with each other and the tmix<sup>w</sup>.
- Improve partnerships and collaborations across all projects and initiatives.
- Be future looking by creating space to connect Youth to Elders and siwłk<sup>w</sup>.

### OKANAGAN SUSTAINABLE WATER STRATEGY

#### Okanagan Basin Water Board

- Respect water.
- Think and act as one watershed.
- Control pollution at its source.
- Restore aquatic and riparian ecosystems.
- Put water stewardship at the forefront of land-use planning decisions.
- Allocate water in a transparent and responsible manner.
- Ensure community water supply systems are resilient to climate change.
- Collect and share knowledge.
- Encourage active public engagement and learning.
- Practice adaptive management and think long-term.

## OUR MATTERS OF COMMON CONCERN

The Parties agree to work together on matters of common concern to protect siwłk<sup>w</sup> in the Okanagan and Similkameen Watersheds. These matters include, but are not limited to:

#### GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

(e.g., mechanisms for collaborative decision-making, and implementation processes)

#### PROTECTION

(e.g., headwaters, species [salmon] and riparian areas)

#### RESTORATION

(e.g., rivers, creeks, lakes and lakeshores, wetlands, aquifers or other ecosystem restoration)

#### MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

(e.g., support and enhance existing work)

#### WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

(e.g., base flows and flow regimes, water quality and quantity standards)

#### DATA AND INFORMATION PRIORITIES

(e.g., ensure foundation in Syilx Knowledge and Western Science, priorities for mapping, priority research areas)

#### ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC ISSUES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Additional matters of common concern may be addressed subject to agreement of the Parties.



# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES:

The elected leaders of the Parties will participate at the Leadership Table to provide direction for the implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement. Only elected leaders may make decisions at the Leadership Table. A Terms of Reference to guide governance and operational procedures will be developed, and will include such items as quorum, meeting procedures, amendment procedures, and participation of the Parties (including alternates).

## CONSENSUS-BUILDING

**DECISIONS:** The Parties agree to make decisions by utilizing the n̓awq̓nwix<sup>6</sup> and ə́ḥac̓ən<sup>7</sup>, a Syilx decision-making practice to gain consensus on issues of common concern. The n̓awq̓nwix<sup>6</sup>, ensures everyone at the table will be engaged in a dialogue. Everyone gets to share their personal perspective, and openly welcomes opposite perspectives that lead to resolving conflicts, making decisions, and developing plans for taking action. “Consensus” means all Parties agree or can find a way to support the decision with the group while agreeing to work to address any concerns over time.

**CHAIRING THE PROCESS:** The Leadership Table will be co-chaired by one representative from the Syilx Nation and one representative from the Local Governments. Co-chairs will rotate and be determined at the end of each meeting.

**TASK FORCES:** The elected leaders of the Parties may strike Task Forces on specific issues as needed. Each Task Force will be co-chaired by one representative from the Syilx Nation and one representative from the Local Governments. Task Forces can include elected leaders, staff from the Parties, external subject matter experts, and other representatives.

**MEETINGS:** The Leadership Table will meet quarterly or as determined by the Leadership Table. There will be seats at the table for Parties at every meeting, and each Party will make best efforts to attend every meeting. Meeting summaries will be produced and provided by the Coordinating Team.

**COORDINATING TEAM:** The Coordinating Team consists of staff from the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and any such individuals, organizations or personnel as appointed by the Leadership + Table. Their efforts include leading the Syilx Watershed Responsibility Planning Process<sup>8</sup>.

**AGENDA:** In advance of Leadership Table meetings, the Coordinating Team will work with the Co-Chairs to develop an agenda and will canvas the other Parties for agenda items. Where applicable, briefing materials, reports or other documents will be shared with the Parties prior to the meetings.

**Summary of Outcomes:** The Coordinating Team will ensure that a summary of outcomes is produced and distributed for approval of all Parties after each meeting.

**Communication and Information Sharing:** The Parties agree to share information with respect to matters of common concern in an open and timely manner. Protocols for communication among the Parties, including notification of upcoming activities, regional or local visits, and/or emergent issues of concern, will be developed as an immediate priority upon execution of the Memorandum of Agreement.

**RESOURCING:** The Parties may collectively pursue resourcing to implement projects and meetings addressing matters of common concern.

**LIVING DOCUMENT:** This Memorandum of Agreement will be reviewed two years following the signing to assess and update the document as required.



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6 n̓awq̓nwix<sup>6</sup> translates to knowledge filling participants’ heads like drops of water; decision making through consensus building.

7 ə́ḥac̓ən is a process Syilx follow to come to decisions about resources. One meaning is “look underneath” our actions and how they are connected to the future, to our grandchildren, to the continuation of all creation, and to the tracks that they make on the land. The process of tracking an animal and the need to look beyond the immediate to get underneath our own tracks to see where the footprints will lead.

8 The Syilx Watershed Responsibility Planning Process is a collaboration of Syilx and non-Syilx partners at the technical level to develop a watershed responsibility plan.



## GENERAL CLAUSES

Nothing in this Memorandum of Agreement creates legal or financial obligations on the Parties.

This is a political Memorandum of Agreement of signatories, is not a legally binding agreement.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Agreement infringes on the Title and Rights of the Syilx Nation rights holders, nor any related processes or negotiations.

The signatories support this Memorandum of Agreement and commit to advancing its implementation through their respective government's processes, policies, and governance structures.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Agreement shall constrain or bind the governments from exercising their powers and responsibilities, nor impose any financial obligation.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Agreement prevents the Parties from participating in other intergovernmental processes or agreements.





# Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table

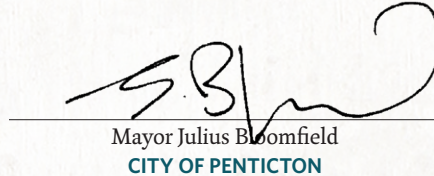
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## SIGNATORIES OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

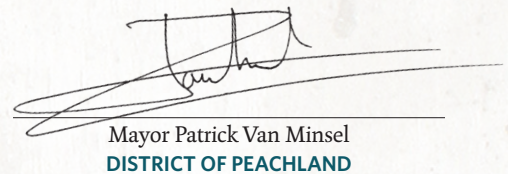
Signed at outma sqilxʷ cultural school, snpinkʷtn,  
this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.



ki?lawna? xa?tus, Chief Clarence Louie  
OSOYOOS INDIAN BAND



Mayor Julius Bloomfield  
CITY OF PENTICTON



Mayor Patrick Van Minsel  
DISTRICT OF PEACHLAND



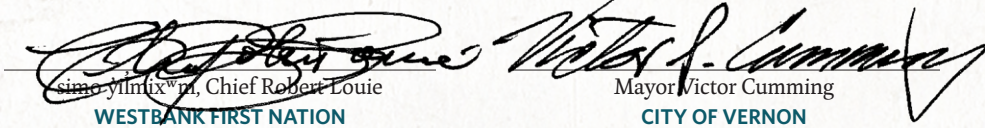
ɣilmixʷm, Chief Byron Louis  
OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND



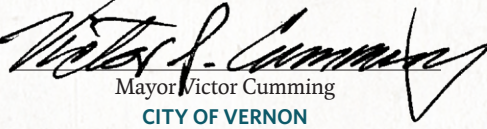
Mayor Christine Fraser  
TOWNSHIP OF SPALLUMCHEEN



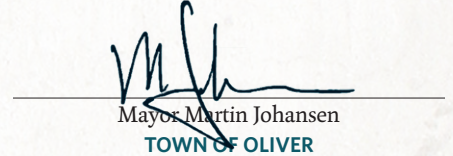
Mayor Doug Holmes  
DISTRICT OF SUMMERLAND



simo-ɣilmixʷm, Chief Robert Louie  
WESTBANK FIRST NATION



Mayor Victor Cumming  
CITY OF VERNON



Mayor Martin Johansen  
TOWN OF OLIVER



sil-teekin ɣilmixʷm, Chief Greg Gabriel  
PENTICTON INDIAN BAND



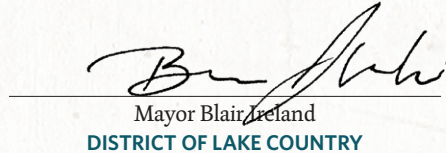
Mayor Ruth Hoyte  
DISTRICT OF COLDSTREAM



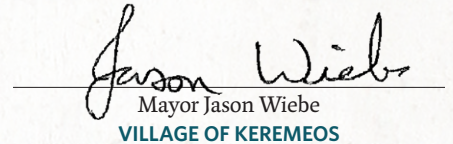
Mayor Sue McKortoff  
TOWN OF OSOYOOS



kaɬlupaq'n ɣilmixʷm, Chief Keith Crow  
LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND



Mayor Blair Ireland  
DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTRY



Mayor Jason Wiebe  
VILLAGE OF KEREMEOS



ɣilmixʷm, Chief Bonnie Jacobsen  
UPPER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND



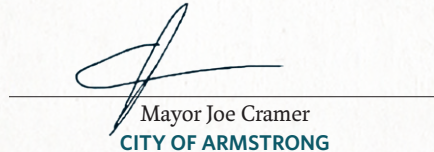
Mayor Spencer Coyne  
TOWN OF PRINCETON



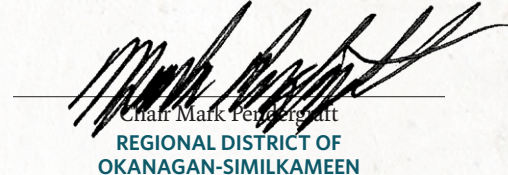
Mayor Tom Dyas  
CITY OF KELOWNA



Mayor Gord Milsom  
CITY OF WEST KELOWNA



Mayor Joe Cramer  
CITY OF ARMSTRONG



Chair Mark Penner  
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF  
OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

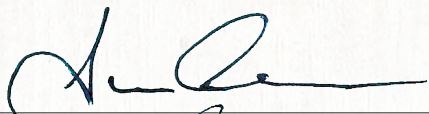


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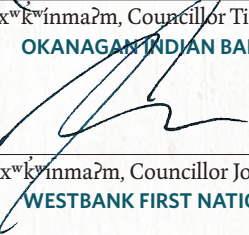
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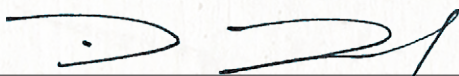
Signed at outma sqilx<sup>w</sup> cultural school, snpink'tn,  
this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.



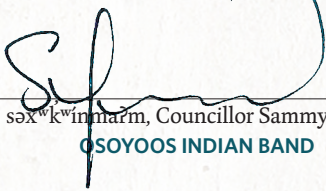
səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Tim Isaac  
**OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND**



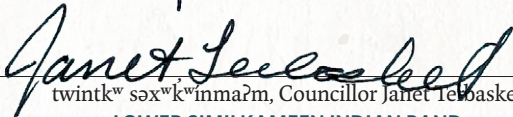
čris səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Jordan Coble  
**WESTBANK FIRST NATION**



silx<sup>w</sup>a əlq<sup>w</sup> səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Tim Lezard  
**PENTICTON INDIAN BAND**



səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Sammy Louie  
**OSOYOOS INDIAN BAND**




twintk<sup>w</sup> səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Janet Tekebasket  
**LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND**



pwálxkən səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Mike Allison  
**UPPER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND**



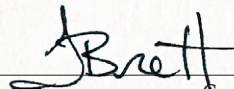
chuchuwayha səx<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>inmaʔm, Councillor Charles Allison  
**UPPER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND**



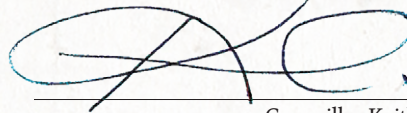
Councillor Shirley Fowler  
**CITY OF ARMSTRONG**



Councillor Brian Guy  
**CITY OF VERNON**

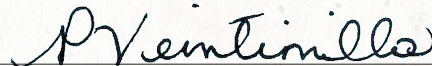


Councillor Tricia Brett  
**DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTRY**



Councillor Luke Stack  
**CITY OF KELOWNA**

Councillor Keith Thom  
**DISTRICT OF PEACHLAND**



Councillor Petra Veintimilla  
**TOWN OF OLIVER**



Electoral Director Amanda Shatzko  
**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, AREA C (BX/SILVERSTAR)**

Electoral Director Kevin Kraft  
**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, AREA EAST**