

MEDIA RELEASE | October 28, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Sylx Okanagan Nation Declares Protection Order For styítcaʔ, Caribou

stqaʔtkwłniwł (Westbank, BC), Sylx Okanagan Nation Territory: On September 23, 2025, the Sylx Okanagan Nation Chiefs Executive Council (CEC) officially enacted *Tribal Council Resolution 2025 No. 552 – Natural Resources*, declaring the styítcaʔ Protection Order. This protection framework upholds the inherent responsibilities of the Sylx Okanagan Nation to safeguard styítcaʔ, a sacred relative and an integral being within the Sylx worldview.

For many years, the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Okanagan Indian Band, together with neighboring First Nations and the Province of British Columbia, have worked to advance measures to protect critical caribou habitat. Since 2023, there has been little progress toward implementing the habitat protection options recommended by this collaborative group. Given the Province's current economic priorities and renewed focus on resource extraction, the Sylx Okanagan Nation is deeply concerned about the lack of dedicated and coordinated efforts, and resources, available to address the ongoing loss of caribou and caribou habitat.

Recent and best-available scientific evidence demonstrates that habitat loss is accelerating within the home ranges of endangered styítcaʔ across Sylx Territory. This ongoing habitat disturbance is a key driver of the ongoing decline of styítcaʔ. The Protection Order establishes a legal and cultural foundation to prevent further harm to styítcaʔ and their habitat and mandates Indigenous-led recovery initiatives that require our Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all activities that may impact styítcaʔ and their habitat within Sylx traditional territory.

This order stands as both a legal and spiritual commitment to protect life, uphold Indigenous sovereignty, and ensure that styítcaʔ continue to thrive across Sylx Territory. The Protection Order contains key articles which are essential to establish the rights of our relative styítcaʔ to persist and thrive across their natural range. These articles include the:

Right to Habitat Protection: Ensuring styítcaʔ have the right to intact, undisturbed habitats necessary for their survival and well-being.

Right to Safe Migration: Protecting traditional migration routes from fragmentation.

Right to Population Recovery: Supporting styítcaʔ resurgence through Sylx-led, science-informed programs.

Right to Protection from Climate Change: Implementing adaptation strategies and habitat resilience to shield styítcaʔ from climate-related threats.

Right to Community Involvement: Sylx communities must lead caribou recovery and be central to all conservation decisions.

Okanagan Nation Alliance

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Right to Legal Enforcement: Protecting *styítcaʔ* rights through enforceable legal mechanisms, Indigenous law, and government accountability.

We continue the work of our ancestors by caring for the land and the living things that inhabit it. We believe in the sacred connection and care of our *tmix^w* (all living beings) for the health and well-being of *tmx^wulax^w* (land) and those living within our territory.

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The Okanagan Nation Alliance is committed to conserve, manage, co-manage the wildlife, lands and waters of the Nation's territory. The Syilx Okanagan Nation affirms that its laws and responsibilities originate from time immemorial, and that these continue to guide the Nation's stewardship and decision-making today, and for future generations to come.

For More Information, Contact:

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