

Coteay Creek stunx (Beaver) Dam Analogue Project

SEPTEMBER 2025



HISTORY

Prior to European settlement, stunx (beavers) were abundant in Syilx Territory and maintained healthy wetlands in the Okanagan Creek watershed. Today, these areas are drying out, leading to eroded streams and a decline in vegetation. Additionally, cattle worsen the damage by eroding banks and adding sediment, which degrades water quality. The lack of active beaver dam activity and functional wetlands has altered the hydrology of the region, leading to increased flood and landslide risk downstream in Inkaneep Creek.



Photo retrieved from BCWF, 2023

WHAT IS A BEAVER DAM ANALOGUE (BDA)?

BDAs are temporary, small-scale, hand-built structures that use natural materials, which are generally sourced on site, to mimic beaver dams. They serve many important purposes and are intended to achieve the following:

- Support efforts to slow streambank erosion and capture sediment.
- Raise the water table to restore floodplain function.
- Mitigate both droughts and floods.
- Enable the recruitment of riparian and wetland vegetation.
- Improve forage quality for livestock, and enhance biodiversity.

ONA's restoration initiatives encompass a holistic approach to restoration that include the land, water and the wildlife that inhabit both.

This project is a result of ONA's goals to empower Syilx voices in land and resource management, acknowledging their jurisdiction over territory. They focus on conserving and developing natural resources while respecting spiritual and environmental values, addressing economic and social needs, and affirming the Nation's Title and Rights.





This image illustrates an incised portion of Coteay Creek, which has eroded into its floodplain, resulting in the drying of adjacent wetlands. The BDA project aims to both prevent further damage and restore areas like this one.

THE PROJECT

In partnership with the Osoyoos Indian Band and the B.C. Wildlife Federation, the Okanagan Nation Alliance has a plan to restore the Wetlands and bring back the beavers.

In collaboration, up to 60 structures will be installed within the Coteay Creek Watershed over the next two years. Two types of structures will be built: beaver dam analogues (BDAs) and post-assisted log structures (PALS). PALS use a technique that has been employed for centuries: driving vertical posts through the log structure to temporarily hold the wood in place, preventing it from floating away immediately or during the first high-flow event.



This photo shows a completed beaver dam analogue (BDA)



PROJECT TIMELINE



The Syilx Okanagan Nation has the inherent jurisdiction to manage the land and resources within its territory. We consider the *tmx^wulax^w* as the foundation of our way of life and culture.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) honors the legacy of our ancestors by caring for the land and all the living beings that call it home.

For questions or concerns about the project contact:

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