



Okanagan Nation Alliance

3255 C Shannon Lake Road, Westbank, B. C. V4T 1V4

Phone: (250) 707-0095 Fax: (250) 707-0166 www.syilx.org

MEDIA RELEASE

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Juvenile Fish Counter in Penticton Channel

Penticton – You may notice a giant metal cone in the Okanagan River near the old Kettle Railroad bridge when you are out for a walk or drive along the channel. It is a rotary screw trap which will be used now until mid May by the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) to conduct kokanee fry sampling on Okanagan River (Penticton Channel).

The rotary screw trap allows the biologists and technicians to catch, count and release live emerging kokanee fry with little handling. The fry counts will help biologists determine how many new kokanee will be in Skaha Lake this year.

The kokanee counts will be compared to the known number of sockeye fry are being released in Penticton Channel mid May. The ratios of fish numbers will be used with other information collected to study the interaction of kokanee and sockeye in Skaha Lake.

This is the first year of a planned 12-year initiative to reintroduce sockeye back into their historic habitat in Skaha Lake, which they have been unable to access for decades.

As stewards for the management and protection of their traditional lands and natural resources, the ONA has lead salmon restoration within the Okanagan Basin portion for many years. ONA has been involved in fostering and developing partnerships for fisheries stock and habitat restoration with Colville Confederated Tribes, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection (MWLAP), and local interest groups since its fisheries department was established in 1995.

This project is being funded by Grant County Public Utility District in Washington as part of their mitigation for salmon losses through their hydro-electric operations.

The reintroduction of sockeye salmon back into Skaha Lake is designed to meet three major goals of the Okanagan Nation: to stabilize and rebuild the declining wild Okanagan Sockeye population; to return sockeye to their former habitat and migration range in the Okanagan Basin; and to revitalize the salmon fishery for the Okanagan Nation .

Please be advised that there will be increased activity with staff from the Okanagan Nation Alliance, equipment, boats and trucks on and around the dyke and river. Please use caution in the area, designated staff will be happy to answer questions at the sampling site when possible.

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For more information contact:

Howie Wright, Senior Biologist
Karilyn Long, Field Biologist

(250) 707-0095
(250) 707-0095

Cell (250) 308-8641