Message from the Chairman

Once again, the past year has been one of escalating challenges for First Nations as we confront a federal government that is clearly intent upon resurrecting the paternalistic, colonial practices of the past, and pursuing economic energy policies that will devastate our environment. Closer to home, the provincial government has made senseless budget cuts that have once again put our children at grievous risk.

Fortunately, the annual General Assembly is a reassuring reminder of our Nation’s strength. It is a time to take stock of the past year’s events – to applaud the many positive accomplishments within the Nation – and an ideal opportunity to renew our resolve for the many battles that surely lie ahead.

To begin, I would like to thank all of you who have worked so diligently on behalf of the Nation. One of our crowning achievements is the successful return of the salmon to our lakes after years of habitat restoration.

I would also like to say how proud I am of our Youth, particularly those who took part in the Spirit of Syilx Youth Unrest. There were over 150 runners this year, and their journey took them across the border into Washington to show the extent of our traditional territories, and to demonstrate solidarity with the Cushke Confederated Tribes.

The Chief’s Executive Council has been active, as always. The Syilx Unrest Protocol and the drafting of a new constitution for the Nation remain on the agenda, as well as the MOU on the Columbia River Treaty, which has been problematic; due to deceitful and disrespectful actions initiated by the Ktunaxa that may require legal action to resolve.

In the short term, it is crucial that any outstanding issues within the Syilx Unrest Protocol, such as the revenue-sharing formula, be settled as quickly as possible. It is absolutely imperative that the Nation be united in order to speak with one voice and move forward.

The federal government is determined to push through its pipelines, and green light a host of environmentally destructive projects. The provincial government is mesmerized by the possibilities of Inherited Natural Gas (ING), most of which is found on First Nations lands and traditional territories. Both governments practise a “divide and conquer” strategy with First Nations, so the year will be a real test for the OSA and UBIC to deliver a strong, united and effective response, as we did when we forced the Province to rescind Order in Council # 185 that would have removed requirements for environmental assessments for natural gas developments, ski resorts and year-round resorts.

In December 2013, the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development unilaterally stopped funding the successful, community-based projects known as Indigenous Approaches, effectively gutting the Syilx Child and Family Service Plan. In response, our Chiefs, Elders, Youth and community leaders rallied outside the Premier’s office and the Ministry offices in Victoria. We know the MOFD system is fundamentally flawed and its Child Protection process has had devastating outcomes for our children. We issued the following statement: “The issue is simple: Aboriginal children and families are being offered ineffective, capricious service and we will not be silent until we are allowed to be full partners in planning, strategizing and implementing services that work for the unique needs of our communities.” This battle is ongoing.

On the national scene, the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act is a classic example of the federal government’s paternalistic approach and preference for “double speak.” In fact, the act compromises First Nation rights and gives the federal government too much control over the education of our children. Unfortunately, National Chief of the AFN, Shawn Atleo, was a casualty of the “divide and conquer” strategy. The government was well aware of the “control” objections but gambled that the desperate need for education funding and reform would carry the flawed bill forward. With National Chief Atleo’s resignation, the government can now stall the reforms, withhold needed funding and blame First Nations for the debacle.

I was also shocked and saddened by the RCMP’s National Operational Review on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. The report came just days after First Nations women and supporters had gathered on Parliament Hill for a 24-hour ceremony honouring victims of violence, and shortly after the release of the UN Special Rapporteur, James Anaya’s report, supporting a National Inquiry into the issue.

The report is a self-serving defence of the RCMP’s efficiency and cluelessness in solving violent crimes against Aboriginal women which, it concludes, are the result of poverty, substance abuse and lifestyle. This is not news. We live with this reality daily. And while the RCMP says it does not blame the victims, the clear implication is that these women would likely not be dead if they lived in different circumstances.

The report identifies 1,017 murdered and 164 missing Aboriginal women since 1980. Although Aboriginal women account for only 4.3% of Canada’s female population, they represent 10% of homicides and 11.3% of missing women. Why does the federal government ignore this crime against our women, and refuse to strike a National Inquiry into this national disgrace and international scandal?

Last year, I invoked the spirit of Elijah Harper, who was firm and steadfast in the face of adversity and showed that “one person can make a difference.”

This year, I would like to call upon the enduring wisdom of our Elders, passed down through countless generations, and upon the boundless energy and optimistic spirit of our Youth, for they are our future.

Let each and every one of us resolve to make a difference this year.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, ONA Chairman

The opening of the new 18-spawning salmon hatchery in Penticton in September will send a clear message to all that we are serious in our commitment to the land, our mother, and worthy stewards of the environment for the benefit of generations to come.

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Message from the Executive Director

This past year, the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Chief’s Executive Council (CEC) has been preoccupied with developing strategies to address the Harper government’s continued assertion of a Pan-Indian paradigm. The federal government has abandoned the social contract and places natural resource extraction and corporate concerns above all other matters, especially issues that are important to First Nations. These policies force First Nations to comply (enforced assimilation) and participate in funding streams that are prescriptive and inflexible or to find themselves without resources and outside the process. We are experiencing funding reductions through AANDC and other federal funding envelopes. Once again, we have had to find innovative ways to address these funding shortfalls. We are living in a time of irony and contradictions. Most of this past year, we have been tabling with Parliament, Bill C-35 – a case in point – titled by the federal government “First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act.” This bill evoked outrage by many First Nations across the country as controversial and divisive within Indian Country. This Bill will effectively reduce access to First Nations education funding and ultimately reduce community decision making. We are aware it remains tabled and we have yet to see or hear how the government will proceed. What this Bill C-35 represents is yet another attempt to prevent First Nations from establishing community-based priorities for those funding allocations, as they will essentially be administrators of a government program. Harper refuses to engage in a dialogue or shared decision-making processes. While he apologized on behalf of the Canadian people for the Residential School catastrophe, he continues to assert the same paternalistic approach to governance that ultimately has left more Aboriginal children in care than at the height of residential schools.

This past year, we have honoured the memory of our Elders who experienced the deportation of residential schools through community memorials, a media recollection and commemorative book but until we can bring all our children home this struggle is NOT over!

Another disappointment this past year, after more than ten years of planning and working in partnership with MCFD and AANDC, the Indigenous Approaches to Child Welfare was abandoned, leaving our Nation’s Enabling Agreement unfulfilled and putting our Child Welfare plan in jeopardy. In protest our people rallied outside Premier Christy Clark’s and MCFD offices and we have lobbied the Representative for Children and Youth. Despite this, the Wellness staff continue to advance our Nation’s Family Group Decision Making processes and to date, this program has seen more than 120 children returned to live with their extended families in their communities! The Syilx Child and Family Framework will continue to guide this work.

ONA also continues to work with the Wellness Committee on the Nation’s Health agenda. We have completed a Letter of Understanding with Interior Health, the continues to assert the same paternalistic approach to governance that ultimately has left more Aboriginal children in care than at the height of residential schools.

Our future is dependent on our Nation’s resiliency and ability to take hold of and leverage opportunities, collectively. We look forward to continuing our work on behalf of the Nation and serving the people.

Low Trump
Pauline Terbasket, Executive Director

The federal government’s exclusionary approach to First Nations issues has shaped the political context of the past year and created operational challenges not only for the ONA but for all First Nations organizations.

The Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run continues to remind of us that our future is here. 150 youth came out and ran for the Nation.

Other highlights: The Youth Elder Field Tour, the Spirit of Syilx Youth Unity Run, the Reconciliation Hatchery Ground-Breaking, the Okanagan Secwépemc to the Ark of Taste, the publication of That Which Gives Us Life – A Vision of Syilxom and the InDrift Award 2014 (formerly Aboriginal Achievement Awards) presented to our most deserving Grand Chief, Stewart Phillip.

It has been a long-standing priority of the Chief’s Executive Council to advance the Nation’s Title and Rights mandate in a financially accountable manner (before the imposition of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act), and this year was no exception. Fiscal sustainability within the political context of ever-shrinking federal and provincial allocation has required ONA to make some difficult financial decisions. Please be patient with us through this transition, our goal is to ensure that we remain accessible and sustainable. We have also consolidated our offices eliminating our field offices both in Westbank and Penticton.

It is our responsibility as staff members to uphold the trust and confidence of the community and follow through on the directives that have come out of our community engagement processes and Chief’s Executive Council mandate. The Syilx Unity Principle continues to drive this organization.
Okanagan Youth Alliance

An on-going initiative, helping to build capacity and take on new initiatives at a Nation level.

With a desire to create a path best suited for the youth of our Nation, Okanagan Youth Alliance (OYA) participated in their second two-day strategic planning session at the YMCA Silver Lake Camp, May 24-25.

OYA took steps towards further developing their purpose, with short and long term goals. They came up with a new four-part structure:

- Public Service: Giving Back
- Leadership/Life Training
- Self-Sufficiency: Fund raising/Funding
- Youth Advocacy: Our Voice

Title & Rights

We, the Syilx People, feel a deep connection with our land, our relatives, the animals and the trees, rocks and all living things that share the environment. Our native Syilxcən language grew out of our relationship with the land and the natural resources that surround us. Our traditional stories reflect this deep connection and help to pass down cultural, spiritual and historical knowledge through generations.

Building a Better Future Bursary

FortisBC has established a Financial Award for Okanagan Nation Alliance members who are committed to building a better future for themselves and their community through post-secondary educational studies.

The award provides financial support to eligible Okanagan Nation members enrolled or accepted into a recognized university or college on a full-time basis in a minimum 2 year program.

The 2013/2014 recipients were Sarah AISIN and Terri Lynn Bell.

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There were several important matters and files that impacted Okanagan Nation Title and Rights and the collective interests. These governance, policy and negotiation issues were jointly confronted by the Chief’s Executive Council (CEC).

These issues ranged from large long-standing infringements on the territory like the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) and discussions about its renewal, to challenges posed by other deals with neighboring First Nations. The CRT file alone required the focused dedication of the CEC who fought for more respectful and committed engagement processes with the BC government, BC Hydro and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

To protect and advance the collective Title and Rights of the Nation, the CEC directed and deployed the ONA’s technical, policy, negotiation and legal teams this past year with more force. They continued to reject top-down government consultations and challenged key threats to the interests of the Syilx Peoples. These teams successfully negotiated new processes, based upon Okanagan priorities guided by Okanagan principles, laws and practices that were designed by the Nation.

A strong united front by the leadership confronted new territorial challenges posed by actions of other First Nations on the territory. The ONA under CEC direction moved toward gaining recognition, seeking restitution measures, and benefits for our lands, resources and peoples.

Strategically dealing with these new and complex issues, the CEC have remained united in their collective strength. Maintaining, this nation-based collaboration is critical as governments and companies increasingly acknowledge the collective nature of Title, thus the growing need for joint nation-community based solutions on the land.

Working more closely together at all levels as a Nation is becoming crucial to reaching positive outcomes on infringements.

To increase deeper community involvement the Chiefs have identified separate CEC political leads on the various files. This has evolved over the recent years as more major files are managed collectively at the Nation level. Each appointed Chief also works with communities, the all-band Natural Resource Council (NRC) and identified technical teams in a dedicated way. Each CEC lead reports back regularly to the CEC on progress and decisions.

Under the CEC, the Okanagan Nation is on the forefront of provincial leadership and innovation.

We have used the ground-breaking agreement Interior Lower Mainland (ILM) Agreement (based on a single large transmission line project with BC Hydro) to build a dedicated and new relationship based on recognition, transparency and respect with the crown corporation in order to address our mutual issues on the territory.

Last year under the CRT the Chiefs rejected the stale consultation processes of the Crown and built a new critical path process driven by Okanagan Nation interests and needs.

Last year, emerging from this CRT work the team negotiated a high level, ‘off-the-record’ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with senior levels of government. The MOU serves as a negotiations venue with the highest levels of government aimed at identifying big issues, concerns and conflicts to seek negotiated solutions. This non-treaty table uniquely operates at the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister levels.

While much work remains to be done to ensure success of the complex issues before us important work has begun to pave the way for results.

The CEC is working hard to ensure that the communities are more involved and aware of the issues and participants in the territory-based opportunities than ever before.

There are great challenges and opportunities ahead of the Nation in the near future. The nation is united in its efforts and through the CEC is working hard to ensure that the communities are more involved and aware of the issues and participants in the territory-based opportunities than ever before. There remains significant work to be done both internally on enhancing policy and Okanagan based project engagement standards. Increasing communications, collective problem solving, trust and creative action needs to continue. The process are often complex and successes are incremental but accumulative.

United, the Okanagan Nation is one of the most powerful and active Nations in the province of BC. There is much to be proud of and much work still to be done. Together with continued unity and perseverance the Nations collective efforts will prevail.

The CEC fought for more respectful and committed engagement processes with the BC government, BC Hydro and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

“We will continue to protect our mother for the good of all for all time.”

– excerpt from The Okanagan Nation Declaration, 1987
The Okanagan Nation witnesses returning Okanagan salmon stocks and recognizes the critical and distinctly Okanagan relationship emerging between water operations and salmon survival.

Columbia River Treaty (CRT)

The Columbia River Treaty is a 50-year renewable multi-million dollar water storage agreement between Canada and the USA in the upper Columbia River Basin, designed to hold back water run-off for maximizing power generation and flood control. It led to the construction of four major Canadian dams that began in the late 1960s that flooded much of the Slocan (Arrow Lakes) valley and converted the Upper Columbia watersheds into a massive reservoir system for the storage and management of millions of acre-feet (15.5 million acre-feet) of new water. This action created one of the most significant and ongoing infringements to our collective Title and Rights.

The Okanagan Nation witnesses returning Okanagan salmon stocks and recognizes the critical and distinctly Okanagan relationship emerging between water operations and salmon survival. Due to the critical nature of our fishing rights, the Okanagan has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government. The OKN has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government. The ONA has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government. The ONA has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government. The ONA has a unique opportunity to engage in future discussions with both levels of government.

The CRT Team has been diligently working on the following initiatives:

Technical Collaboration with CCT: The Colville Confederated Tribes, as a formal and active member of the CEC with unique capacities and insights, has been active in ensuring the Okanagan Nation technical teams (primarily Fisheries) are well-informed and are involved in the USA-based Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) organization. CCT, through its participation on the CEC, and with their own technical and legal experts, remain deeply involved in on-going developments on CRT issues.

Okanagan Nation track with BC Hydro:

Before this, there has never been any consultation or involvement of the Okanagan Nation, or any other First Nations on the design, negotiations or implementation of the Treaty.

We have identified an emerging connection between hydroelectric and water flow operations to impacts on salmon and thus the Nation’s constitutionally-protected fishing rights.

Before this, there has never been any consultation or involvement of the Okanagan Nation, or any other First Nations on the design, negotiations or implementation of the Treaty.
This shift dismisses the once-booming green energy sector, and turns away from the more eco-friendly energy policies of recent years.

During the course of the last year some broader shifts have occurred impacting the work of your leadership on your territory. The Okanagan Nation and the First Nations of the southern interior have seen the industrial spotlight shift away from our territory to the north, while new opportunities and challenges have emerged. We began the year with the surprising re-election of the provincial Liberal government. This signaled a massive expansion of the resource development agenda by big industry on First Nation territories, particularly in the north. Provincially, the economic focus has shifted attention away from renewable (green) energy projects and companies toward the government’s economic focus having shifted away from the more eco-friendly energy policies of recent years.

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Provincial Energy Policy
The largest industrial proponent on the Okanagan Nation Territory — with one of the largest footprints — continues to be BC Hydro. This crown corporation is controlled exclusively by the government. Over 50% of all energy produced by BC Hydro comes from 12 dams operating on the Okanagan Nation Territory, primarily in the Upper Columbia. Over the last decade the government policy was to reduce the reliance on BC Hydro by encouraging the expansion of the private green sector. They were offering new Energy Purchase Agreements (EPAs). BC Hydro controls these long-term energy purchase contracts and had offered them up for bid to companies under a ‘clean energy call’, creating a new green energy sector.

The re-elected provincial government put an end to this by altering the previous energy policy that had required BC to produce all of its own electrical energy inside BC, seeking to make BC energy self-sufficient and greener. Instead, BC will now be buying more imported electricity (often coal fired energy) in the off-hours from other BC and other markets to support production shortfalls. This shift dismisses the once-booming green energy sector, and turns away from the more eco-friendly energy policies of recent years.

Without the energy self-sufficiency requirements in place BC has the beginnings of a temporary energy glut, thus slowing the recent pace of other related industrial developments. Nonetheless, the projects of the largest energy players remain active pressure on the territory. In this environment, the CEC has focused its attention on these infringements, seeking more influence and positive changes in our relationships that will pave the way for a better future.
Events

2013

- Hatchery Ground-Breaking
- Sockeye Fry Release
- Unity Run
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting, Osoyoos
- Columbia River Salmon Ceremony
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- July 4 Paddle
- CEC : Special Meeting
- ONA Annual General Assembly
- Management/Youth Leadership
- CEC : Wellness
- Hunting Camp
- Special CEC : Children & Family
- Annual Okanagan Salmon Feast
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- Elders Youth Tour
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- Wellness Forum
- CEC : Health Surveillance Meeting
- CEC : CEC1 special Meeting, Omak
- CEC : Trinity Meeting
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- CEC : Retreat, Osoyoos
- Deliberations of a Delicate Sea Launch

2014

- Band School Conference
- 2014 Vision – Winter Gathering
- CEC : Quarterly Meeting
- FSFO Conference
- CEC : Quarterly, Whiteclay Hall

Events

Hatchery Ground-Breaking
May 16 | 2013
The Okanagan Nation and its partners celebrated the Kaq’elk’stim’ Hatchery ground-breaking ceremony. Over 500 community members came out to witness this historic event including Elders, Youth and the general public. Everyone was asked to take part in helping dig the ground. The hatchery is set to open in the fall of 2014.

Sockeye Fry Release
May 21 | 2013
The 9th annual Sockeye Fry Release took place where Shingle Creek joins the Okanagan River. The Okanagan Nation and community were joined by the schools who participated in the Sea-to-Stream program. The ceremonial release of sockeye salmon fry into Skaha Lake is part of the ONA’s Sockeye Reintroduction Program.

Unity Run
May 31- June 2 | 2013
The 5th annual Spirit of the Syilx Youth Unity Run took place from Revelstoke to Westbank, BC. This run promotes awareness of the high rate of suicide and violence in First Nation communities. 158 runners began the 260 km relay run from the BC Hydro Revelstoke Dam, where the 2012 run had ended. During the run, community members and the public joined in cheering for the runners by gathering on the side of the road as runners passed by, or by cheering as they drove by.

Along the run this year we were joined by Chief Jonathan Kruger, Chief Dan Manuel, Chief Byron Louis, Chief Wayne Christian, Councilor Chris Derickson, Councilor Wallace Michael, Elder/Traditional Support Hazel Squakin, Hilda Belanger, Lesa Louis, and Richard Armstrong.

Annual General Assembly and Youth Leadership Conference
July 24-25 | 2013
The Assembly and Conference were co-hosted by the Lower Similkameen Indian Band at Ashnola Campground. The Youth Leadership Conference included breaks-out workshops to discuss leadership, water, health, story-telling, hunting, and fishing.

The AGA opened with Theresa Anne Terbasket reading the Okanagan Nation Declaration. Presentations were made on Aboriginal Title and Rights, Columbia River Treaty, Ktunaxa Nation Council Increment Treaty Update, and BC Hydro Initiatives. The FortisBC Bursary Awards were presented to Teri Bell and Sarah Alexis.

Activities included a stick game tournament, horse races and the These Moccasins were made to... Run.

An honouring ceremony for Sarah Peterson and Arnie Baptiste recognized their hard work and contributions to our language and culture.

Parents Under Pressure

Parents under pressure in the Okanagan Nation have been seeking help and support for their children. The OKS (Okanagan Nation Schools) has been working closely with the ONA to address these concerns. The OKS is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

The OKS has implemented a number of initiatives to address the needs of students and families. These include:

- Increased staffing in the schools
- Enhanced mental health services
- Expanded counseling and support programs

Parents have expressed gratitude for the increased support and resources available to their children.

The OKS continues to work closely with the ONA and stakeholders to address the ongoing challenges faced by families in the region.
Salmon Feast and Celebration
September 20-22 | 2013

The celebration to “Honour the Sacredness of the River” was attended by over 350 people throughout the three day event. The event included a Stick Game Tournament, canoeing from Skaha Lake to Okanagan Falls, entertainment and children’s activities. The purpose of this event is to preserve the traditions and culture of the Syilx people, while raising awareness about the environmental issues that are impacting fish stocks in the Okanagan watershed. The 2014 Salmon Feast and Celebration which will be held the third weekend of September.

Elders Youth Tour
October 18-20 | 2013

ONA departments collaborated to host the 2013 Syilx Elders and Youth Tour. There were 35 Elders and Youth on a tour through the Eastern territory. Representatives from all seven member communities were guided in a bus from Westbank to Revelstoke, Nakusp and back through Needles Ferry. There were site visits, stories for Youth and Elders to interact, camp fires, water ceremonies, and painting on culturally-modified trees and drums. This event was supported by the ONA CEC, and all ONA departments collaborated on this special event to ensure its success. The purpose was to give Elders and Youth the opportunity to get to know each other more and share information relating to culture and the land. Key topics for the tour focused on four themes: tmiw, tmiwulaxw, sqilxw and siw kw. Warren Hooley (PIB Youth) facilitated the group and made it an enjoyable learning experience for everybody. Dr. Bill Cohen and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip attended as guest speakers. A very special thank you goes to all the community members who participated on the tour. Thank you for sharing your energy, knowledge, laughter, stories, language and songs!

Wellness Forum
November 5-6 | 2013

Eighty-five participants from communities throughout the territory partook in the Okanagan Nation Alliance Annual Wellness Forum at Spirit Ridge Resort and Spa in Osoyoos. The participants heard updates from ONA Wellness programs, as well as participated in planning for programs and training workshops such as mindfulness, diffusing crisis, lateral violence, governance, creative facilitation and early childhood developments. The Wellness Forum has five main goals:
1. for ONA programs to share with member communities services offered and information regarding service (stats, trends, new research) and provide space for engagement;
2. for ONA to provide member communities opportunities for training and skill development;
3. to provide member communities opportunities to network with other communities;
4. to engage other nation service providers opportunities to network and engage with member communities;
5. to provide a forum that includes self-care and shows holistic and integrated well-being.

Future of Our Salmon Conference
March 18-20 | 2014

The Future of Our Salmon Workshop and Conference hosted in Spokane, Washington focused on restoring salmon, lamprey, sturgeon, and bull trout passage to historical locations throughout the Columbia River Basin. There were a number of presentations from the FOS participants focusing on their current salmon restoration initiatives on the Columbia. The ONA presented the story of the Okanagan River Sockeye Restoration, emphasizing the cultural rejuvenation of the syilx salmon culture, and the future direction of syilx leadership in stewarding this sacred resource.
Natural Resources

“The Syilx People have always governed our land according to principles that are entrenched in traditional knowledge, stories, teachings, ceremonies, medicines, dances, and the arts. These principles carry with them a sacred, inherent responsibility to care for the tmx"ulaxw.”

As part of this responsibility to care for the tmx"ulaxw, the ONA has been deeply engaged in supporting the Chief's Executive Council mandate and working with ONA members and communities to build capacity and continue to support numerous platforms throughout the territory.

Our wildlife program has expanded and grown to include a core staff complement that continually engages on a variety of hunting, trapping, research and extraction of resources within Syilx territory. The ONA also works collaboratively to develop Nation-wide policies (e.g. land-use planning, parks and protected areas, hunting, fishing and wildlife) and build on the work that each of the communities and Syilx organizations have already completed. By working together and sharing ideas the ONA is able to make strong and meaningful recommendations to the CEC for the Chiefs' consideration, implementation and action.

ONA NR also supports a variety of other Nation-wide committee's including the: Referral Response Committee, GIS committee, Research Working Group and Cultural Heritage Committee, and any ad-hoc working groups as required.

Syllabification: tmx"ulaxw

ONA Natural Resource Council

The ONA coordinates and provides technical and policy support for the ONA Natural Resource Council (NRC). The NRC is comprised of two representatives (a political representative and a technical representative) from the ONA and each of the eight ONA communities. There are also two cultural representatives appointed for a total of 20 members. The NRC is the technical advisory body that supports the ONA CEC. The NRC meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues associated with land development and the use and extraction of resources within Syilx territory. The NRC also works collaboratively to develop Nation-wide policies (e.g. land-use planning, parks and protected areas, hunting, fishing and wildlife) and build on the work that each of the communities and Syilx organizations have already completed. By working together and sharing ideas the NRC is able to make strong and meaningful recommendations to the CEC for the Chiefs' consideration, implementation and action.

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Syllabification: tmx"ulaxw

Syllabification: tmixw

Stewardship and Collaborative Lands Management

The main objective of this work is to collaboratively develop Nation-based policies and standards that can be used by the Syilx communities and the Nation to strengthen and enhance land-use decision making and resource management in the Territory. The development of Syilx-specific standards is necessary to inform land-use planning and stewardship and ensure accountability both internally between and among ONA communities and externally with all levels of government, other organizations and NGOs. The need to develop these policies has been a long standing mandate of the CEC. The signing of the Syilx Cooperative Protocol launched the discussion and strategies to expedite this work so that the Nation could begin to codify their own Nation-based policies to support effective and meaningful land-use planning and responsible stewardship. With the guidance and direction of the CEC, member Bands identified specific standards to develop, including but not limited to:

1. Cumulative impact of activities and developments
2. Protection of Syilx title and rights
3. Land-use planning
4. Environment and ecological issues
5. Syilx land ethics procedures
6. Syilx territory inventories
7. Archaeological and cultural heritage resources
8. Implementation of tmx"ulaxw policy
9. Water and air
10. Parks or protected areas
11. Wildlife and fish

It is recognized that this will be an ongoing initiative that will require resources, planning and capacity development. The intent here is to develop ‘living documents’ that can be refined over time as processes and mechanisms change. Ultimately this work provides an opportunity to articulate the Syilx vision on land management, land stewardship, land protection and the Syilx ways of protecting and respecting all tmixw. The Creator gave the Syilx people their mother, the tmx"ulaxw, to manage and protect. We will survive and continue to govern our mother and her resources for the good of all for all time.

Water

This year marked the second of a 4-year project entitled ‘Our Syilx Water’. The goal of this important work is to develop a Syilx water strategy that will protect and respect water through the articulation of the Syilx principles and practices associated with water stewardship. A diverse community outreach strategy has been created to ensure that as many voices as possible (our Elders, youth, men and women, knowledge holders, leaders and hunters, fishers and harvesters) will be captured and reflected to create the best and most comprehensive water strategy possible.

The Ona has hosted numerous workshops and on July 30, 2013 a Women’s Water Workshop – The Heart Voice – was hosted in Penticton at the En'owkin Centre. Seventeen women attended the full day workshop and shared their perspectives and their teachings on the importance of clean waters now and into the future. This workshop provided an opportunity for Syilx women to meet and discuss the importance of ceremony, dialogue, and creativity in their roles in the protection and care for our natural life source – water. The importance of creating a space for Syilx women’s views to be heard is critical to the success of the Syilx water strategy project.

“The Syilx People have always governed our land according to principles that are entrenched in traditional knowledge, stories, teachings, ceremonies, medicines, dances, and the arts. These principles carry with them a sacred, inherent responsibility to care for the tmx"ulaxw.”
Natural Resources, continued

Wildlife
In 2013, the Natural Resource Department added a full-time wildlife technician and a full-time biologist to its program staff and also employed several technicians from our member communities to conduct seasonal wildlife field work. New and ongoing projects included:

- Projects in the Arrow and Kinbasket reservoirs
- Wildlife enforcement, and acknowledgement of Syilx risk, wildlife population management, habitat explore and further build upon a necessary relationship between reservoir operations and
- Of the Columbia River Basin to assess the communities to conduct seasonal wildlife field
- Employed several technicians from our member monitoring and tracking of herons, soup, birds, snakes and other reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, ungulates, insects, and other species including plants.
- Developing working relationships with provincial government biologists to help explore and further build upon a necessary shared decision-making process for wildlife management in Syilx territory.

- Finding ways to more fully engage Syilx Youth, Elders, hunters, and trappers in community wildlife management and conservation issues, and so help to more fully integrate traditional ecological knowledge and practices into wildlife management decisions for now and into the future.

Cultural Research
Cultural research is vital to providing highly valued and critically important information that supports the broad goals of strengthening Syilx Title and Rights. The ONA CEC have mandated the ONA to work with community researchers to develop research strategies and methodologies that reflect the Indigenous perspective and respect cultural protocols concerning the handling and sharing of such information. The Syilx have their own worldview rooted in Syilx stories and teachings, and how we relate to each other within ‘tmixwelax’ These underlying perspectives influence the processes that the ONA has developed to conduct contemporary research that respects the Syilx worldview. Rather than trying to conform to dominant or western system research methods, the ONA and member communities are developing an Indigenous research paradigm that adheres to the principles of community-based research and Indigenous Research approaches that respect Syilx views, ethics and morals as Indigenous peoples.

- Loo and Occupancy Mapping (LUM) is one of many methods that have been used in cultural research. LUM is an interview process that maps harvesting sites and cultural sites. The data from a LUM project provides information about the relationship between people and the land. This information is useful for supporting informed decision-making, land-use planning, and the protection of Syilx Title and Rights.

- The ONA and collaborating Bands have now completed six LUM projects. This year we worked on LUM projects with the Osoyoos Indian Band and the Penticton Indian Band and added 5,500 more use and occupancy sites mapped in the Syilx Territory. Collectively, we have conducted use and occupancy mapping research on approximately 14,000 square kilometers within Syilx Territory.

Placenames research is one of the most prominent research methods and provides critical evidence of long-time occupancy of Indigenous peoples on the land. Placenames data supports the Okanagan Nation to advocate and preserve the Syilx culture, language, land titles and natural resources. This year, the ONA and OIB worked together to map and record placenames in the OIB area, adding 67 new placenames to the database and bringing the total number of placenames recorded and mapped at ONA to 327 (see syilxtrailingbeadland.org for PIB placenames which have been made public).

Canada Research Chair
This past year the ONA was actively involved in working with Dr. Jeanette Armstrong in her role as Canada Research Chair (CRC). The ONA was engaged in the Chair’s Research Plan and process and have provided direction on research priorities throughout the Nation. ONA has helped to facilitate this engagement process through the provision of NR staff and drafting of input and direction provided by the CEC and NBC. Dr. Armstrong will act as the CRC for five years and work to complete important research on CEC directed priorities and objectives. The ONA will provide support to this process as required.

Information Technologies
The ONA Natural Resource Department continues to develop a series of tools intended to assist and support land and resource management strategies for the Territory and to increase land use decision making and management capacity for the ONA and member communities. The ONA Decision Support System (DNS) helps increase efficiency and effectiveness when responding to referrals and the Voices on the Land Web Atlas (syilxtrailingbeadland.org) is a tool that can be used by all communities to compile and share land use information. The DNS and the Web Atlas can be accessed through the ONA website.

Spotted Lake
For decades, the Okanagan Nation has also collectively stood together and defended Spotted Lake, one of our most sacred and culturally significant sites. KULS‘N is a sacred medicine lake of the Syilx Nation and has been honoured by our people since time immemorial. As development seeks to further encroach upon this sacred site, the Chief's Executive Council (CEC) will continue to stand together to protect it and to address the importance of continued use and access to all spiritually and culturally significant sites in the territory.

Syilx spiritual practices are rooted in the land and waters of our territory. The tmixwelax and KULS‘N are the connecting threads between our ancestors and each new generation of Syilx people.

Archaeology
Over the years there has been dialogue regarding a policy for archaeology and the protection of cultural heritage resources in the territory. The discovery of sekw‘n wqululaxw km (ancestor bones) and fumun (ancestor's artifacts) at kmhup (Syringa Provincial Park) and more recently at kmhup (Slegan Pool/Purdy’s Point) highlight the importance of having policies and processes in place to manage cultural heritage resources and more importantly to guide repatriation and rebury of our ancestors in a manner that is respectful to Syilx protocols and ceremonial practices. The ONA, Natural Resource Council, and technical and spiritual leaders from communities, are collaboratively addressing these important issues to ensure that cultural heritage resources are protected and sekw‘n wqululaxw km are treated respectfully.

Upper Columbia
NR worked closely with the CEC, NBC and ONA legal and policy staff to support a variety of important projects within the Upper Columbia basin as mandated by the CEC. The ONA NR department provides technical support and professional expertise on issues associated with power projects (e.g. BC Hydro generating stations and reservoirs, trans-boundary projects (e.g. the Columbia River Treaty, UTC/ONA joint initiatives), cultural heritage projects (e.g. ancestral remains, archaeology), climate change, cultural research, and the protection of fish and wildlife (e.g. Fish and Wildlife Compensation Board, WLR projects)
The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Fisheries Department have been working diligently on fisheries management issues, including the Transboundary sockeye harvest sharing and restoration in the Okanagan, Fraser Basin issues that impact fish stocks, and the renewal of the Columbia River Treaty that ultimately impacts salmon. We have also implemented numerous ongoing technical monitoring and restoration projects as well as staying current on the governments’ policy issues that affect ONA Title and Rights as it pertains to fisheries.

One of our large monitoring plans remains the Sockeye Reintroduction project where fisheries program staff monitors sockeye salmon from adult through fry to smolts when they leave the lakes to head back to the ocean. ONA monitors the fish themselves (health, growth, numbers) as well as the water (quality and quantity) that they live in. Other monitoring programs include like the Okanagan Basin Monitoring and Evaluation Program (OBMEP), the Middle Vernon Creek Action Plan, Fish Water Management Tools (FWMT) and lakes within the Okanagan Territory where acoustic and Trawl surveys (ATS) are conducted: Okanagan, Skaha, Osoyoos, Christina, Mabel and Nicola lakes. In addition, we supported the Ihaldila Fenzun’ community with an ATS survey in Beaver Lake.

There was a relatively good harvest in the summer/fall of 2013 for Sockeye in the Okanagan and Chinook in Middle Shuswap River. 3,026 Sockeye were caught by members and ONA for Food Social Ceremonial (FSC) within the South Okanagan. There were also numerous Chinook caught from the Middle Shuswap River. Lastly, we hit an important milestone in salmon recovery with the ground-breaking ceremony of the cp’elk’stim’ Hatchery and we will be in full operation next year in October 2014. This will be the first time in ONA history that we will be taking broodstock in the fall of 2014 and raising them for release in the spring of 2015 in our own facilities, as opposed to the Federal fisheries Shuswap Falls facility.

In partnership with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, ONA Fisheries assisted in the design and construction for soft bio-engineered riverbank stabilization on the Similkameen River where LSIB lands are subject to severe soil erosion and habitat loss.

The goal of this project is to help mitigate land and habitat loss along the river through strategic habitat planting and restoration work. With guidance from local TEK members, LSIB community input, and with labor from an all LSIB crew, a ~100 m section of LSIB land that was sloughing off into the Similkameen River was stabilized through a brush layering and fill design. ONA Fisheries staff assisted the Band with designing the brush layering to stabilize the bank as well as restore much needed cottonwood riparian habitat that supports at-risk species such as the Yellow-Breasted Chat and Western Screech Owl. This project was funded by Environment Canada. With the support and expertise of ONA Fisheries staff, this project moved forward from an LSIB vision through the successful completion of construction last fall, to seeing the results sprout from the riverbank this spring.

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Partnerships in Action

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LSIB Environment Department looks forward to continuing the next phase of this project with the skills and experience that ONA Fisheries brings to our community.
Economic Fisheries

For the past 5 years, the ONA has been piloting an economic fishery for Okanagan Sockeye salmon with a focus on local sales and community benefits. We continue to focus our efforts on telling the story of the return of the Okanagan Sockeye.

A major milestone this year was the addition of Okanagan Sockeye to Slow Food’s Ark of Taste. The Ark of Taste is a collection of small-scale quality productions that belong to the cultures, history and traditions of a people. The Ark was created by Slow Food to point out the existence of these products, draw attention to the risk of their extinction within a few generations and help to support these products.

Okanagan Sockeye is the only salmon recognized internationally by Slow Food, and one of only five foods on the Ark in Canada. The ONA has been invited to showcase Okanagan Sockeye as a Ark product at the 2014 International event in Turin, Italy. This is a major opportunity to showcase Indigenous food sovereignty and the importance of Sockeye as a food source to the Okanagan Nation.

A small-scale economic harvest continued in 2013, with a focus on local troll-caught sockeye. Our partners adapted to the reduced availability by focusing on restaurants where they would feature sockeye on their dinner menu or as an appetizer.

A couple of challenges in the market we face are the myth that salmon caught inland are of poor quality. It is ongoing work to educate the public to dispel this myth. Another area we are working towards is changing the image of First Nation caught fish from “illegally-caught Indian salmon” to that of a high quality artisanal product that supports our local fisherman. It is our goal that when the public buys an Okanagan Sockeye they are not just buying the fish but the story of the success and recovery of Okanagan Sockeye, hence raising the awareness of the importance of salmon as a major food source for the Syilx people.

In addition, we find that the demand to purchase local salmon is high but a continuous supply for local buyers is difficult with just one fishery. The limited quantities that we catch for economic harvest are important in order to ensure we practice sustainable fishing. To meet the demands of buyers the ONA has joined the Inland Salmon Producers Association (ISPA) which includes the Upper Fraser Conservation Alliance, Harrison Salmon Producers and Okanagan Aquatic Enterprises.

This group is comprised of a total of 28 communities with affiliation to six different tribal Nations from six different river fisheries. Each group had their own unique fisheries with a similar issue of providing a continuous supply of salmon. The group operates under a Vision and Charter for Responsible Trade endorsed and signed by the ONA CEO in 2012. ISPA purchases and sells Okanagan Sockeye, along with the other group’s salmon, under a collective brand, “River Select.”

Feasibility studies for this group were completed evaluating organization structure for ownership and copyright of the River Select brand (non-profit) and also of the business arm of the group (cooperative). We hope to have the non-profit ISPA and the River Select cooperative formalized in the 2014 year, in addition to piloting the concept of working under a common brand. For more information see www.riverselect.ca

Future of Our Salmon (FOOS) – Columbia River Salmon

The FOOS Conference – March 18-20 involved an umbrella group of representatives throughout the USA including the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) and numerous Federal, State and Canadian entities including Canadian First Nations being involved in Salmon Restoration in the Columbia Basin.

The purpose was to bring together interested parties to discuss technical, institutional and cultural issues associated with restoring juvenile and adult fish passage to historic locations. These gatherings will be held to restore recent advances in fish passage technology, identify obstacles, and develop viable solutions.

A primary focus was on juvenile and adult passage through high-head dams (100-500'). Tribal Leaders spoke to the values and importance of the cultural and spiritual significance due the direct impacts that the loss of fisheries such as salmon had upon the Indigenous Peoples and Tribes of the Columbia River Basin. Both the Workshop and Conference were very well attended by Elders, community members, biologists, engineers, politicians, academics, and interested public.

The information presented included current science and technology and success case studies in safely allowing juvenile (try and smell) downstream movement, and adult upstream migration through high-head dams. Currently, salmon returning from the ocean can safely pass nine dams on the lower Columbia to the base of Chief Joseph Dam in Washington.

Screening of a 60-minute documentary film was a highlight at the conference, ”Tales from the Columbia River Salmon Stronghold.” These films were made to provide dramatic stories that could be used as tools to educate the public about salmon restoration. The film documents the success and recovery of Okanagan Sockeye, along with the other group’s salmon, under a collective brand, “River Select.”

Feasibility studies for this group were completed evaluating organization structure for ownership and copyright of the River Select brand (non-profit) and also of the business arm of the group (cooperative). We hope to have the non-profit ISPA and the River Select cooperative formalized in the 2014 year, in addition to piloting the concept of working under a common brand. For more information see www.riverselect.ca

The outcome from the FOOS Conference was a sense of renewed energy and optimism for pursuing fish passage above Chief Joseph Dam, and the next dam Grand Coulee. Once these two challenges are overcome, salmon will once again swim into Canada in the Upper Columbia – an event not witnessed for over 70 years.

A bi-national Joint Fish Passage Paper has been drafted to summarize the losses of salmon in the Columbia River from a legacy settlement, Hydros Electric Dams – an arduous journey and approach to restoring salmon to their historical range. To do this, ONA will play an important part, using the success of our Okanagan Nation Okanagan River Sockeye Program to guide us. Our next steps are to continue to develop a strategy of specific steps for salmon restoration into the Canadian part of the Columbia River.
Restoration of Okanagan Habitat

Habitat restoration remains a key priority for the Okanagan Nation Alliance. One of the main initiatives is the Penticton Channel restoration. This work has required partnerships with the City of Penticton, the Penticton Indian Band and UBC Okanagan.

The Cultural Knowledge Keepers engaged in this research note the following salmon usage locally specific to Penticton prior to hydroelectric dams and river channelization. Whitefish (mim’lit) were noted coming up after the kikinee salmon in the river. They ran in schools right up until the snow fell, when they would spawn. There was a smaller stock of kikinee that was very good for eating and for drying. This smaller kikinee is still in Quelshena Creek. Skiliwwist late-run fall Chinook were noted in the area along with n’tytyi spring-run Chinook. There were two runs of sockeye – early run sc’win (silver sockeye) and a late run (gimy). Ellis Creek had xwmina. Steelhead and rainbow trout were caught up near the canyon. Shingle Creek had large salmon (sockeye and steelhead) that made it up past the Shatford/Shingle confluence.

Following the re-engineering of nʕaylintən (McIntyre Dam; 2009), salmon have been observed in good numbers at snpintktn (Penticton). Results from visual surveys, biological sampling, and genetics, have shown that since 2010 the number of spawners in the fall have averaged 40,000.

Table 1 summarizes salmon observations from 2010 to 2013. The majority of spawners are of hatchery origin and have imprinted on Shingle Creek where they were released. Early information suggested some hybridization (<7%) between sockeye and kokanee stocks, with monitoring to continue to assess impacts to both stocks. Other major findings will continue to guide the recovery process.

Major initiatives are underway to kick start ecosystem recovery.

Lake modelling now is suggesting current capacity for potential sockeye production

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Potential Capacity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Okanagan Lake</td>
<td>35 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skaha Lake</td>
<td>10 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanagan Lake</td>
<td>5 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future monitoring will “truth” these estimates along with genetic impacts to sockeye and kokanee interactions, the ONA is also working with UBC Okanagan assessing whether or not the Hatchery will have domestication effects on our salmon.

It is known through the research that what is referred to as the Penticton River Channel used to be “rich in fish; Steelhead, Coho, Sockeye and King (Chinook) Salmon” (Ernst 2000). The migration to Penticton was cut off as early as 1914 with the mostly impassable weir at the base of McIntyre Bluff. Since 2009 it has been passable for salmon.
On May 16, 2013, a successful and highly anticipated ground-breaking ceremony was hosted by Okanagan Aquatics Enterprise Ltd (OAE Ltd) and the Penticton Indian Band, in conjunction with the Annual Sockeye Fry Release and Ceremony, to mark the start of the construction phase of this project. That same month, a formal bid call was issued to pre-qualified companies to quote on construction of the k'cp’elk’stim’ Hatchery project.

In June 2013, Canada approved all site, building, and environmental plans and signed off on the project. In the same month, OAE Ltd. negotiated a final contract amendment with project partners and financiers, the Grant and Chelan County Public Utility Districts (PUDs) in Washington State. This enabled OAE Ltd. to enter into a final 49-year Lease Agreement with PIB and Canada which was signed on July 16, 2013.

That same month, Greyback Construction Ltd., based in Penticton, was engaged as the successful contractor for the project based on their competitive bid. Without delay, construction began in late July with site clearing and site prep. Work was also undertaken in and around Shingle Creek to take advantage of the short fisheries window in which creek/riparian work could be undertaken.

By September 2013, full mobilization on site was underway, with site grading, underground utilities being placed, and building foundation forming. Working steadily through the fall and winter, by March 2014, both the Hatchery and Lab buildings were erected, fully clad, enclosed, and with major interior works well progressed.

Thanks to a tight team consisting of ONA staff and consultants, our construction manager Wally James (Buccaneer Contracting Ltd) working closely with Norman Goddard Architecture, our counterpart team at the two PUDs, and Greyback Construction Ltd., the project has stayed on track and on budget.

Looking ahead we anticipate equipment start up by the end of June 2014, full commissioning of the facility in July and August, and to be ready for hatchery operations and fish rearing by September.

A ribbon cutting ceremony (coinciding with the Salmon Feast & Celebration weekend) is planned for Saturday, September 20th at the k’cp’elk’stim’ Hatchery site.
Wellness

Under the Mandate of the CEC and ONA Wellness Committee we continue to work towards and support the safety, health and well-being for our children, families and communities.

The ONA Wellness Department has three clusters: Health, Youth Mental Health and Child and Family. There are seven Wellness programs that receive contract funds from Ministry for Children and Family Development, Interior Health Authority and First Nations Health Authority for Nationwide Wellness activities.

The Wellness department continues to be guided by the CEC mandated ONA Wellness Committee which is made up of the Health and Social Development directors of the seven member communities. This committee meets at least bi-monthly on health and family topics as well as provides guidance and direction to the wellness programs.

The Wellness team works to provide quality services in a holistic integrated manner to the member communities including direct service, capacity building, training opportunities and resource development and sharing.

Reclaiming and Restoring Syilx ways of being and knowing (worldview) through development of wholistic Wellness programs and services grounded in a Syilx-centred framework.

In 2015-2014 ONA programs engaged with almost 1000 Nation members in various formats of service, training and events. Through the Family Decision Making program 56 children were supported to remain in the family home and/or come out of Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) care.

The Okanagan Nation Response Team (ONRT) remains a recognized best practice in Indigenous community crisis response and youth suicide prevention and intervention. As well, the Spirit of the Syilx Unity Run continues to achieve widespread acknowledgment for being a youth-driven violence and suicide awareness campaign connected to land, ceremony and culture.

We are leading and remaining adamant in our collective effort to transform the current relationships between our Nation and provincial and federal partners through developed processes such as the Letter of Understanding (LoU) with Interior Health Authority (IHA), challenging the control of IHA over services meant to provide support to community members. This also involves our working relationships and partnerships with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) which officially became a BC First Nations Health Authority on October 1, 2013. This transformation principle is to be embedded in the implementation and roll out of this new FN entity and is also brought forward in discussions with MCFD in outlining where services have not been effective or appropriate for community and determining how they can be changed.

As a result of years of hard work and dialogue by our Nation’s leadership and members, the Syilx Child and Family plan was finalized this year and the proposal for delegation was submitted to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) and MCFD in November 2013 “our way”. AANDC funding formula for delegation requires 801 status children residing on reserve. The ONA received five Band Council Resolutions (USIB, LSIB, OIB, PIB, and OKIB) requesting delegation funds from AANDC. With five bands, there are 585 children. With all seven bands there are 869 status children on reserve.

After ONA inquiry and GIC push, AANDC stated they are not willing to support ONA delegation with the current child count. MCFD is not supporting off-reserve delegation discussions and is no longer willing to support planning activities in any way if AANDC is not funding.

Then, as of January 31, 2014 the MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled, along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province. This severely impacts the ONA ability to support and develop culturally and community-based Child and Family programs. The hard work and vision of the communities, staff, the children, elder and community member voices that participated and shared their visions and hearts for a better future for struggling children and families was shattered at the announcement that participated and shared their visions and hard work and vision of the communities staff, the children, elder and community member voices that participated and shared their visions and hearts for a better future for struggling children and families was shattered at the announcement.

The ONA Wellness committee has remained focussed on the Nation health priorities and the Okanagan Nation Health (ONA) Mandate “to advocate for Syilx control and management of their health, programs and services.”

Our Youth mental health programs have also resulted in identifying disturbing trends in community with high amounts of youth suicide ideation, self-harm and addiction. Drugs such as heroin, crystal meth and crack cocaine have been reported in higher usage among our Nation youth. We continue to see youth active in addictions, violence and not attending school or gaining employment.

In our family support programs we see expecting mothers at risk of losing custody of their children to the MCFD, families struggling with family violence and addictions leaving children at risk in our communities. Our children and youth and their families are still expected to find scarce resources in much needed assessments, supports, healing programs, dropout on band staff and community resources which have to work extra hard to support their community members.

What remains, and what is needed is a change in the government systems that purport that their mandate is health and well-being for all people. Building upon the success of the mobile community-delivered program of R’Native Voice the ONA has started this year a pilot year of a new innovative mental health pilot program Kw’ast Kw’ast is a 12 session empowerment mobile program that supports children 7-12 years of age to express themselves through creative arts and Syilx culture education. Kw’ast curriculum is based in Syilx values and incorporates Syilx teachings, traditions and world views.

As of January 31, 2014 the Okanagan Nation MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province.

Amongst these demands and pressures we have successfully delivered on other key activities that provide resources and capacity to the communities:

ONA has developed and distributed 2 children’s books: Chipmunk and Owl Woman and The Boy Who Lived with Bears as Syilx-specific cultural resources, identified as a resource gap by early childhood educators.

Syilx Menoome for the Mēta Health Campaign led to 5 video clips being developed with Syilx men talking on the importance of men’s health and prostate testing.

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The program grew this year by 1FTE with the hiring of the FDM team lead.

### Family Decision-Making (FDM) Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDM WORKED WITH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 families, with</td>
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<tr>
<td>91 children impacted, resulting in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 family meetings being held</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 This saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 children going into MCFD care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 children remaining in care</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 children coming out of MCFD care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 children remaining out of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 children returned to parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 children returned to extended family</td>
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### Okanagan Nation Crisis Response Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 team members throughout the nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 ONRT RESPONDED TO:</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 critical incidents this year involving tragic death, suicide attempt, suicide ideation, and suicide completions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 of these were under 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 were between ages of 18-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 36-50 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING: Youth throughout Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 SUICIDE AWARENESS WORKSHOP: parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 day intensive grief training delivered to OIB and UNB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 SUPPORT GROUP LEADER TRAINING: Nation members to host and lead support groups in community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Aboriginal Child & Youth Mental Health Wellness Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WROKED WITH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 children/youth from the South Okanagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 community organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 worker interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 ASSISTED IN AND/OR DELIVERED WORKSHOPS/ TRAINING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Aboriginal Early Childhood Development

| 14 site visits completed, supporting early years programs and staff |
| 65 participants trained in various workshops, Positive Behaviour: Ages & Stages, Creative Feel Board story |
| 7 committee meetings conducted |
| 19 community events, participated and assisted in |

### R'Native Voice Program: R'Native Voice Program Curriculum revisions utilizing capilano and nuxalk in all components

#### WEEK CURRICULUM REVISIONS

1. Orientation
2. “Write it On Your Heart: Cánw̓a n sḵwx̱wú7cwaxw (news)
3. Our Roots: Our Beliefs Part 1: C̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
4. Our Roots: Our Beliefs Part 2: C̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
5. Depression: sḵw̓aʔən
6. Grief: g̱uxʷk̓uíl (respect)
7. Losing Yourself: ṭəkw̓axl Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
8. Physical Health: hən̓əʔxʷ sḵwx̱wú7cwaxw (news)
9. Drugs & Alcohol: sḵwx̱wú7cwaxw (news)
10. Sexual Health: C̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
11. Community Project: C̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
12. Sell Extremes: č̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
13. Building: č̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
14. Social Justice & Current Issues: č̓ən Pinx̣ | Ḵ̱ w̓ ʔaxxtun (our health or our life)
15. Wrap Up: p̓al p̓al cx̣e (end of a story)

RNV program delivered in all 7 communities with 98 youth participants overall.

### What is needed is a change in the government systems that purport that their mandate is health and well-being for all people.

### Cultural Safety remains a priority on the Syilx Nation health plan as well as the recently approved FNHIA Interior Regional Health and Wellness plan.

### Enhancing Health Services

#### Health as Partnership II

This year’s project builds upon last year’s Health as Partnership project in the keys activities of developing Syilx cultural safety resources and developing and maintaining partnerships with BCC Okanagan and Interior Health Authority.

This year we have added a couple of new clips to the current modules and have compiled all cultural safety resources to be placed into a one-stop Syilx cultural safety website. This will allow all health care professionals easy access to all cultural safety material. This also provides a resource for each community to review with their partners to develop partnerships.

ONA staff has maintained active engagement with UBCO CRIB project leads and reference group as well as UBCO nursing program cultural safety modules volunteers. The focus has been on coordinating the resources into usable, shareable material.

### Syilx Child and Family Planning

ONA Child & Family proposal for delegation was submitted November 25, 2013. This was not supported by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development or MCFD due to the on-reserve child population count not meeting their minimum requirements. ONA also worked with the Local MCFD on developing a Letter of Understanding to better be involved, informed and participate in decisions for program development and implementation under MCFD. Development and implementation of this will continue into next fiscal year.

As of January 31, 2014 the Okanagan Nation MCFD funded Indigenous Approach project was cancelled along with 18 other Nation-based Child and Family projects in the province. This was as a result of the Representative for Children and Youth report that MCFD is wasting money on ‘talking’ rather than services. This severely impacts the ONA ability to support and develop culturally and community based Child and Family programs.

The Wellness Department also developed a Quality Assurance model this year. This provides standards for service and evaluation methods for Wellness programs. This ensures programs are effective, responsive and developed as per community and family needs. Quality assurance shows commitment to building a culture of continual quality review and revisions.

### Serving the People
Training and Capacity Building

Ensuring Community Capacity Building and Training

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION**
- Chipmunk and Owl Woman and The Boy Who Lived with Bears – children’s books
- This is What They Have Said – children’s art book
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire – promotion poster
- Syilx Culture – resource and curriculum binder
- Men’s Health Campaign/Syilx Movember – video clips and promotion

- 4 training modules developed
- Family Decision-Making
- Advocacy
- Records Management
- CFCSA orientation
- Curriculum developed for Kwu Xast 7-12 year old program

**TRAINING COMPLETED IN COMMUNITY**
- Creative Facilitation I and II
  - 25 Nation participants
- Navigating Mainstream Health Care Champion training
  - Around the Kitchen Table training
- Indigenous Child Welfare Research Conference
  - 55 participants

**Cuystwi** was one of the first projects delivered to this young age group. It is a demographic that is rarely reached in relation to the history or Aboriginal people and culture.

**Provincial Health Services Agency Cuystwi Indigenous Wellness Project**

During the training, the Okanagan Nation Alliance sent three youth for training in Cuystwi Project in November of 2013. The training was based in team building and facilitation as well as curriculum overview. Each of the seven communities participated throughout the project. There were a total of 60 participants from the age of 10 to 13 years old.

The three youth that participated in the training and delivery were also involved in planning and implementation of the project. The group was very successful in meeting band and school employees, finding sites for delivery, working with ONA staff and of finding catering in each of the communities.

**NUMBER OF TRAINEES TASK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 staff in various communities</th>
<th>use of mapping:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONA DDS, ONA Voices on the Land Web Atlas and referral response mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 wildlife technicians</td>
<td>field training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 individuals</td>
<td>first aid training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 staff and technicians</td>
<td>swift water training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 community members</td>
<td>archaeology training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 community members</td>
<td>cultural research training; placenames and UOM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

"Respect and water – all works together. If you don’t have water, if you don’t have respect, you’re not going to get any place, anywhere."

Okanagan Nation Elder, Jane Stelkia

Syilx Water Strategy project

Interview with Jane Stelkia and Hazel Squakin

November 1, 2013
WE ARE BEAUTIFUL

BECAUSE WE ARE OKANAGAN

BECAUSE OUR LAND IS BEAUTIFUL