



MEDIA RELEASE | May 1, 2018

## OKANGAN NATION COMMITTED TO RESTORE SC'WIN (SOCKEYE SALMON) TO THEIR NATURAL HABITAT –THE OKANAGAN WATERSHED

**tkwəniwt (Westbank), Syilx Territory:** Over the course of May, 2018, the Okanagan Nation Alliance's (ONA) *kl'cəlk' stim'* Hatchery will release 1.23 million *sc'win* (sockeye salmon) fry into the Okanagan watershed. This initiative includes a series of ceremonial releases that will take from May 2-15 at Shingle Creek, Trout Creek, 6 Mile Creek, and Mission Creek respectively. These fry releases are integral to the Syilx peoples' continued successful efforts to return *sc'win* back to the *Syilx* territory, and since 2016 specifically to Okanagan Lake. Such activities provide an opportunity for the *Syilx* people to affirm deep connections with *sc'win*, the land, the waters which are central to *Syilx* traditional food systems, while continuing to revitalize our language, songs and prayers, and thus the perpetuation of *Syilx* culture.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, ONA Chairman states that "As *Syilx* People we have an inherent responsibility to continue working to bring the salmon back to our Territory. Our ancestors had many different ceremonies to call the salmon back, and the Okanagan Nation continue to conduct ceremonial fry releases as a key means of affirming our cultural connections and responsibilities to our relative, *sc'win*".

Howie Wright, ONA's Fisheries Program Manager, points out that "Due to its size and depth, the continued reintroduction of sockeye fry back to Okanagan Lake ensures that revitalization of these stocks are resilient in face of the challenges posed by climate change. It has the significant potential to meet food, social, and ceremonial needs, providing food security for communities, while seeing a broad range of biological and economic benefits".

These ceremonies are critical given that sockeye salmon were nearly extirpated in the Okanagan Basin. In the 1960's the Columbia River Treaty and habitat impacts in the Okanagan basin led to the creation of industrial reservoirs, and the building hydro-electric developments on the Columbia River, making it impossible for fish passage, while deeply impacting *Syilx* cultural and food systems. Years of hard work and political advocacy, particularly in the last decade, have seen the ONA working with provincial, federal and US Tribes and agencies to rebuild this sockeye run from 3000 up to 500,000 salmon returning annually.

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*The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) was formed in 1981 as the inaugural First Nations government in the Okanagan, which represents the 8 member communities of the Okanagan Nation. The ONA's kl'cəlk' stim' Hatchery is central to our conservation efforts. The 25,000 square foot hatchery has the capacity to rear 8 million eggs, and is currently equipped to handle all fish culture aspects required for 5 million eggs from brood stock management until fry release.*

**For further information please contact:**

**Howie Wright, ONA Fisheries Manager**

**T: 1-250-718-5215**

**E: [HWright@syilx.org](mailto:HWright@syilx.org)**

**Okanagan Nation Alliance**

101-3500 Old Okanagan Hwy Westbank, BC V4T 3J6: (250) 707-0095 [www.syilx.org](http://www.syilx.org)

# 2018 Sockeye Fry Release Schedule

## Annual Sockeye Fry Release

**Date:** May 2, 2018

**Time:** 9:30 - 11:30 am

**Public Release:** Okanagan Nation Alliance

**Location:** Penticton Channel, off Hwy 97 & Green Mountain Road, Penticton BC

**Fry Released:** 4,600

**Details:** This event hosts over 600 students from local schools that have raised fry through the ONA's (ONA) Fish in Schools Program that will be released along with fry from the *kł cǰǰǰk' stím* Hatchery. A number of activities for participating students will also take place. Please drive slowly. Parking will be available along the left side of the Dyke and behind the Save on Gas station.

## Trout Creek Fry Release

**Date:** May 3, 2018

**Time:** n/a

**Private Release:** Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Penticton Indian Band

**Location:** Trout Creek, Summerland, BC

**Fry Released:** 3,333

**Details:** This is a private event for the Penticton Indian Band, and will not be open to the public.

## Mission Creek Fry Release

**Date:** May 14, 2018

**Time:** 1 – 2 pm

**Public Release:** Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Westbank First Nation

**Location:** Junction of Spiers Road and KLO Road, Kelowna, BC

**Fry Released:** 3,333

## 6 Mile Creek Fry Release

**Date:** May 15, 2018

**Time:** 1-2 pm

**Public Release:** Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Okanagan Indian Band

**Location:** Junction of Equis Creek and Westside Road, Okanagan Indian Reserve

**Fry Released:** 3,333

**For more information on any of these events please contact:**

**Tara Montgomery, ONA Communications Lead**

**T: (250) 707-0095 ext. 120**

**E: [tmontgomery@syilx.org](mailto:tmontgomery@syilx.org)**

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