



MEDIA RELEASE | July 17, 2019

SYILX OKANAGAN NATION GATHER AND CELEBRATE AT ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

tkwə́niwt (Westbank), Syilx Okanagan Territory: The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) is proud to announce that our Annual General Assembly (AGA) will take place from July 17-18, 2019. This event provides Syilx Okanagan people with the opportunity to gather as a Nation, celebrate the many successes that have taken place for our people over the last year, and reflect on the persistent challenges that we collectively face together. This year the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) is hosting the event at the Prestige Vernon Lodge and Conference Centre, in Vernon, BC.

The keynote speaker for this year's AGA is Bernie Williams Poitras, a community leader and long-time advocate for Indigenous women, who recently contributed to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The issue of Murdered & Missing Women and Girls, alongside the generational impacts of the Indian Residential Schools, systemic racism and violence, continue to have profound effects on Syilx communities, and Ms. Williams Poitras will be speaking to some of key processes that have been highlighted for addressing these issues through the National Inquiry.

Grand Chief Dr. Stewart Phillip states that: "This is a trying time for Canada. The Prime Minister's lofty promises of transparency, integrity, gender equity, Indigenous reconciliation, and enhanced environmental protection have all been shown to have very shallow roots. Words are one thing, but deeds are quite another. At this year's AGA we continue to come together, as our ancestors have always done, to find the ways and means of taking on the challenges that colonialism has created, and finding solutions that resonate within our contemporary context."

Alongside a variety of pertinent presentations and dialogues, there will also be a host of cultural activities taking place, including Canoe Races, Traditional Games, and *nsyilxcən* Bingo hosted throughout the two days.

Aligned with AGA, the annual Youth Leadership and Elders Gathering will also take place. This event provides Syilx youth the opportunity to connect with other peers from across the territory, engage in on-the-land based activities, and cultivate leadership skills. This event further supports the Syilx Okanagan Nation's dedication to cultivate strong youth leaders today by their interaction with elders and other leaders throughout the Nation so that we may continue to thrive in the future.

For more info and a full agenda of the event visit: www.syilx.org/events/annual-general-assembly/

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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 mandate is to work collectively to advance and assert Syilx Okanagan Nation Title and Rights over the Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory.

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