



MEDIA RELEASE

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Okanagan Nation's 'Fish in Schools' Program Educates Participants on Importance of Salmon in the Okanagan

tkwəłniwt (Westbank), Syilx Territory: Over the last week the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), as part of the Fish in Schools (FinS) program, delivered the final round of *sc'win* (sockeye salmon) eggs or fry to participating schools on *Syilx* territory.

In 2021 six schools from school district 53 (Oliver/Osoyoos/Cawston) will participate in the program. Each of the schools received 100 "eyed" *sc'win* sockeye eggs for their in-class incubators. Participating schools include: Osoyoos Elementary, Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary, Osoyoos Secondary, Southern Okanagan Secondary, Cawston Primary, and Oliver Elementary.

The Okanagan Correctional Centre also received FinS eggs for the second consecutive year. This year the staff and inmates involved with the FinS program purchased two more additional "in-class" incubators, bringing the number of aquarium incubators in the prison to — two for Sockeye, and one for Chinook.

ONA's FinS program illustrates the ONA's commitment and leadership in salmon restoration throughout the territory. It is a comprehensive fish education program for school students, with a focus on *sc'win* (sockeye salmon), their lifecycle and the importance of their ecosystems. By creating greater awareness of fish species, the intent is for students to become educated and aware of both salmon, their habitat and surrounding ecosystem.

The eggs are raised by participants until they are fry in the early spring. Upon successfully raising the *sc'win* fry they will be included in the *Syilx* Okanagan ceremonial releases throughout the *Syilx* Territory.

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The Fish in Schools program has been running successfully since 2003 in the Okanagan region, and contributes to the kł c̓p̓alk̓ st̓im̓ Hatchery's fry release efforts. The kł c̓p̓alk̓ st̓im̓ Hatchery is a testament to the perseverance of the Syilx people to realize their dream of restoring the n'titx^w (Salmon) – one of our Four Food Chiefs – to their original habitat and rightful place in our territory. Opened in 2014, the 25,000 square foot hatchery has the capacity to rear 8 million eggs. It is currently equipped to handle all fish culture aspects required for 5 million eggs from brood stock management until fry release.

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