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SYILX OKANAGAN NATION CALL FOR PROTECTION KI?LAWNA? (GRIZZLY BEAR) AFTER A MOTHER AND CUB ARE SPOTTED IN THE OKANAGAN

tkwəłniwt (Westbank), Syilx Territory: On May 11, 2021, a Kelowna resident filmed a rare sighting of a *ki?lawna?* (grizzly bear) mother and cub north of the city. Tragically, the bears were recorded eating garbage left on site.

For the *Syilx* people, *ki?lawna?* are a significant part of our laws and protocols. They are an important part of our creation stories that remind us of our responsibilities to our *tmuxlawx* (land). For generations, habitat fragmentation, ecosystem degradation and a number of other factors have contributed to the decline of *ki?lawna?*. Their declining population throughout Syilx Okanagan territory demonstrates that the health and security of the landscape is in dire need of protection.

"*ki?lawna?* are an integral and critical part of *Syilx* Okanagan Nation culture since the beginning of time. The Syilx Okanagan territory was once home to a thriving population of *ki?lawna?*, however today they are often said to be extirpated from the area. In 2014, Syilx Okanagan Nation's Chief Executive Council implemented a mandate to protect and recover *ki?lawna?* throughout our territory. We continue to implement this important work through a number of initiatives, including monitoring of an existing population of *ki?lawna?* in the Okanagan area. Monitoring efforts in the Okanagan region further assist in securing much needed funding and capacity to protect and manage their habitat," states *ki?lawna?* (Chief Clarence Louie).

ki?lawna? have previously been thought to be extirpated from this part of Syilx Okanagan territory. However, ONA is working to document a population in the area, in partnership with FLNRORD and Environment Canada and Climate Change. Additionally, ONA leads the recovery of grizzly bears in the North Cascades, one of two critically endangered populations. We are also actively restoring important grizzly bear habitat in the Kettle Granby area, bordering the Okanagan to the south-east. Through these monitoring, recovery and restoration initiatives, ONA is working to meet our mandate to recover and protect grizzly bears throughout the region.

For further information, or to report a grizzly bear sighting, please contact:

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