



# OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

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## Access to s̓x̓w̓ə̓x̓w̓nitk̓w̓ (OK Falls) fishery Update

The site of the s̓x̓w̓ə̓x̓w̓nitk̓w̓ (Okanagan Falls) salmon fishery is an important area in Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory. Prior to colonization it was the second largest inland fisheries on Syilx territory, and was a central part of our food, social and economic fisheries.

Access has been an issue that the CEC have brought forward for many years, due to the obstruction over the last few years of the a adjacent private property owners near the fishing location. It has been clearly proven that Nation members have used a 10-meter buffer of "Crown land" between the fishery and private property adjacent to the dam to access the fishery and exercise their Aboriginal fishing rights.

This year the private landowners have attempted to have the lands resurveyed to make the buffer part of their private lands. This has happened alongside personal intimidation tactics by the private landowners, which has included signage with racial slurs. In response, the CEC directed that negotiations be undertaken with the Province of BC to ensure that the buffer area does not become private lands and that safe, long-term access to the fishery is maintained.

In 2020, in response to the CEC's calls for immediate provincial action, BC removed a fence that had been installed by the private landowners, which allowed the Syilx Okanagan Nation fishery to proceed. This year the Province of BC has pledged to remove any barriers to ensure safe access for Syilx Okanagan fishers. In the meantime, as directed by the CEC, negotiations between the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the Province continue in order to find long-term solutions to the access issues at Okanagan Falls, to ensure that Syilx Okanagan Nation members can continue to exercise their Aboriginal rights at this important fishery site.

If you are a Syilx member who experiences harassment or physical intimidation while accessing our traditional fishing grounds, we encourage you to remain diligent and report it to your Chief or the RCMP with any reports.

For more info please contact:

ki law na (yilmixwm Clarence Louie), ONA Tribal Chair

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