



Media Advisory | May 7, 2023

Syilx Okanagan Nation Extend Range of Salmon Reintroduction Efforts on kłuxnitkw Tributaries, Including Lower Vernon Creek

What: The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) are honoured to announce that our efforts on reintroducing sc'win (Okanagan sockeye salmon) on Syilx territory will extend to multiple other tributaries that feed into kłuxnitkw (Okanagan Lake) over the 2023 season. This work is a continuation of the Syilx Nation commitment to our responsibilities of restoring and reintroducing back into the traditional water ways of sc'win. This will include the importance of the sc'win imprint 300,000 sc'win fry at Head-of-the-Lake, including Lower Vernon Creek. The ONA Fisheries Department works in collaboration with the Okanagan Nation member communities including Okanagan Indian Band and other organizations to reintroduction of sc'win to their once natural run. These are part of the nearly four million fry that will be released by ONA in the Okanagan sub-basin during the 2023 season.

Where: Marshall Field Dog Park, 6891 Okanagan Landing Road, Vernon, BC

When: 10:00 am, May 9, 2023

Why: Due to a large run in 2022 the ONA will be undertaking this year one of the largest sockeye fry releases. We are excited to release roughly 4.9 million sockeye fry in the territory with four million of the total into tributaries that feed into kłuxnitkw (Okanagan Lake). Out of those four million almost two million will be released in Mission Creek. This year we have reached a huge goal of our kł c'palk' stin' sockeye reintroduction initiative and will be releasing for the first time at Lower Vernon Creek. In addition to the releases in the Okanagan Basin, we will be releasing fry into the Columbia River.

These releases in the coming season are based on decades of sustained, successful effort by the Nation to re-establish sc'win populations on the territory, which contribute to both food security and cultural revitalization for Syilx people. For decades ONA has worked towards achieving salmon passage back to kłuxnitkw. Bringing salmon back to the far reaches of kłuxnitkw is a milestone of this work. The importance of returning sc'win to kłuxnitkw is heightened due to the cooler waters of the lake, that provide the species a haven in the face of climate change and warming waters, which can prevent salmon from returning and laying their eggs.

“Bringing sc'win back to creeks and streams on kłuxnitkw, like Lower Vernon Creek, are a direct result of Syilx advocacy, Self-determination, and assertion of our Syilx collective responsibilities to govern, manage and stewards our lands and resources. The success of this work is directly connected to our ability to collaborate with a variety of partners and can be seen in the historic returns of sc'win to the Columbia watershed this last year,” Chief Byron Louis (OKIB) stated.

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The kł c'palk' stin' Hatchery is a testament to the perseverance of the Syilx people to realize their dream of restoring the n'titxw (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.

For more information please contact:

Chief Clarence Louie, ONA Tribal Chair

T: 250-498-9132

Chad Fuller, ONA Fisheries Manager

T: 250-707-0095 ext. 104