



Regional Board Report

Information

Approved for Board Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

To: Regional Board

From: Todd Cashin, Director of Community Services

Date: April 14, 2022

Subject: Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative – Project Update

Voting Entitlement: All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s.208)

Purpose: To provide the Regional Board with an update on the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative.

Executive Summary:

The Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative emerged in response to the Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory and Mapping reports that identified large-scale loss of natural areas around the lake and has expanded to address cumulative impacts in the Okanagan watershed and syilx territory. The initiative is co-led by the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development, and the University of British Columbia.

Scott Boswell, of the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP), will provide an update on the project background and activities completed to date.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board receive the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative - Project Update report from the Director of Community Services, dated April 14, 2022, for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Cashin".

Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Prepared by: Brittany Nichols, Environmental Planner

Attachment(s):

- RDCO/OCCP Presentation April 14, 2022

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Priorities: Environment, Sustainable Communities

Values: Regional Perspective, Collaboration, Relationships, Resiliency

Background:

The kłúšxnítkw (Okanagan Lake) Responsibility Planning Initiative (OKLRPI) emerged in response to the Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory and Mapping (FIM) reports that identified large-scale loss of natural areas around the lake¹ and has expanded to address cumulative impacts of resource extraction activities in the Okanagan watershed and syilx territory. The initiative's planning process has incorporated a syilx water responsibility planning methodology that has created an ethical space where syilx and non-syilx partners can share values and perspectives for identifying solutions for social equality and greater environmental protection for water and land.

The initiative is being co-led by the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP), the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (MFNLROD), and the University of British Columbia (UBC). In 2022, the initiative will complete a series of workshops and interviews to gather syilx and non-syilx perspectives and identify key actions to inform the first siwtkʷ (Water) Responsibility Plan.

The project will address the impacts threatening the long-term viability of natural areas to provide clean drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, erosion and flood control, and climate change mitigation. Through the development of the siwtkʷ (Water) Responsibility Plan the partners will identify a clear set of actions for new or updated policies, regulations, and programming that support source water protection. The multi-jurisdictional and collaborative nature of the initiative also supports the long-term development of relationships for local government and syilx strategic land use documents, and financial partnerships to implement the actions of the plan.

Valley Wide Collaboration

The essential component of the OKLRPI is collaboration and, through its planning process, is creating strong working relationships with syilx and non-syilx partners. It is also breaking down silos by creating channels for shared decision-making processes. The development of the siwtkʷ (Water) Responsibility Plan with its focus on equitable and effective decision-making and co-management is inspiring for the partners. This initiative's work to uphold the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the advancement of the *Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples Act* is stimulating the identification of innovative ways in caring for the land and water. This process and its momentum can be carried to other projects.

¹ Schleppe, J. and R. Plewes. 2017. Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory and Mapping Update 2016. Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd.

There are over 50 individuals representing 27 organizations involved in the planning process. To date, the Okanagan Nation Chiefs Executive Council, seven municipalities and three regional districts have provided formal resolutions of support for the initiative and the Province has assigned dedicated staff to the initiative. The RDCO Regional Board provided support, in principle, for the development of this initiative on July 18, 2019.

Multi-phased Approach

The OKLRPI first meeting was held in the fall of 2018 and brought together representatives from First Nation, local, and regional governments, as well as conservation organizations to discuss collaborative ways for addressing the loss of natural areas surrounding the lake, and the need for a syilx led planning process to address the need for greater environmental protection. **Figure 1** below highlights the progression of the initiative.

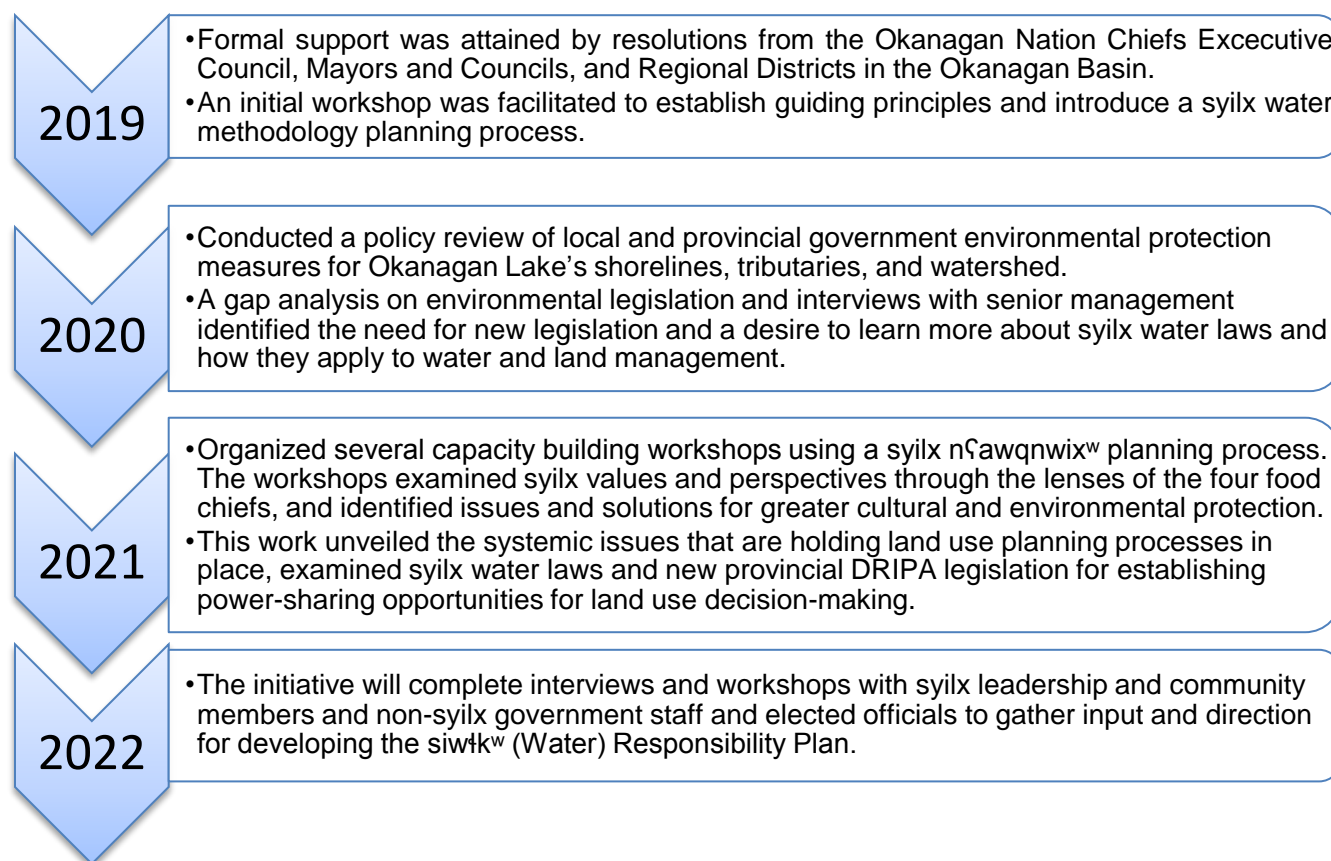


Figure 1 Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative – Summary of project progression 2019-2023

Regional Growth Strategy:

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. A RGS is a long-range planning tool that assists local governments to plan a coordinated future for their communities while dealing with regional issues and decisions that cross local political boundaries. The RGS is also a collective vision from the regional partners for the future to create a region that promotes growth that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy over a twenty (20) year time horizon.

The following policies of the RGS support the initiative:

Our Water

- Continue in partnership with the Okanagan Basin Water Board and regional partners to encourage valley wide cooperation and coordination regarding the conservation of water and protection of all water sources.
- Consider water resources in land use planning decisions.

Our Economy

- Support effectively managing and protecting the integrity of the Region's critical assets such as the lakes, natural environment, and agricultural lands that promote attraction of employment and investment.

Our Ecosystems

- Encourage collaboration to adopt consistent terminology, policies and actions that support the protection and conservation of environmental features and watersheds within the Region.
- Manage growth to minimize disturbance to habitat, watershed, and natural drainage areas and systems.
- Explore funding mechanisms to support regionally significant natural areas, open space and parkland acquisitions.
- Support cooperation with regional partners on environmental matters, particularly where there are developments/issues located adjacent to political boundaries.

Considerations:

Organizational/External: The Regional District is involved in the planning process though collaboration with project partners and other administrative functions.

Financial: As part of the 2022 budget deliberations, the Regional Board approved \$25,000.00 for the development of the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative. Further, in 2021 the RDCO was awarded a multi-year grant in the amount of \$300,000.00 from the Vancouver Foundation to support the project. Other funding partners include the Okanagan Basin Water Board, Healthy Watershed Initiative, University of British Columbia, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority
 - Alternative Recommendation
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