

Overview of Okanagan Nation Perspectives on Fish and Water



Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum September 16, 2007



N'syilxcen Traditional Territory

Okanagan Nation Alliance

7 member communities

- Upper Nicola
- Upper Similkameen
- Lower Similkameen
- Okanagan
- Westbank
- Penticton
- Osoyoos




Ks p'el'k'stim

Balancing indigenous and western science to manage, protect and restore fisheries resources and aquatic habitat



- Knowledge passed down through *chaptikwl*
- Stories are a record of Okanagan history
- People, beliefs and nature are intertwined
- Culture, values & TEK to guide Resource Management



Okanagan Nation Fisheries Program & Capacity Development

- Planning - defining goals and objectives
- Defensible Scientific Data and Information
- Access Funding and Develop Partnerships
- Accountability
- Building on Successes
- Communication, Education & Public Awareness

Objectives for Salmon Management

1. Coming together and a Nation: Rebuilding Salmon stocks
2. Promoting Okanagan Nation Rights and Title
3. Establish Jurisdiction and decision-making for fish management
4. Derive the benefits of the returning salmon
5. Working together: Strengthening Relationships

What are we doing?

- Cultural and public awareness
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Salmon Stock Restoration
 - Reintroduction of Sockeye into Skaha Lake
- Habitat Restoration
 - Fish Water Management Tools
 - Okanagan River Restoration Initiative

Partnerships

- Canadian Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group (1997)
- Okanagan Nation – Colville Tribes
- Ad-hoc Bilateral Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group (2001)
- Various partnerships with governments and NGOs

Canadian Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group

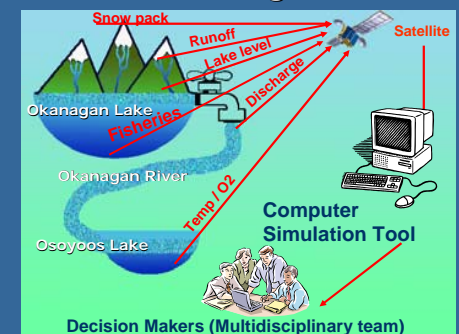
- Formed in 1997 - Okanagan Nation Alliance, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Environment
- Technical issues associated with management of salmon and resident fish stocks and their habitat in the Canadian portions of the Okanagan River basin.
- Applies ecosystem principles as the foundation for activities undertaken by the working group

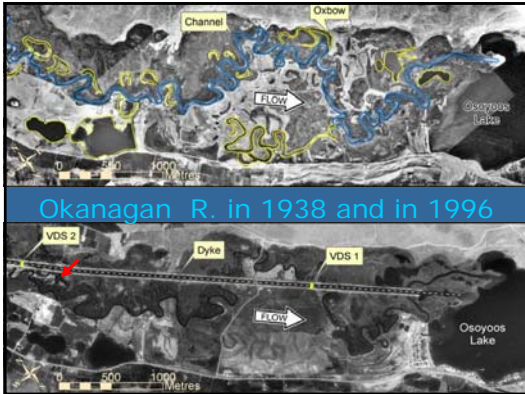
Reintroduction of Sockeye salmon into Skaha Lake

- Concept outlined in 1997 to reintroduce sockeye into Okanagan Lake
- Agreed to investigate feasibility of reintroduction into Skaha Lake
- 2000 - 2003 *Evaluation of an Experimental Reintroduction of Sockeye Salmon into Skaha Lake*
- 2004-2016 Twelve-year program that will potentially double sockeye production
- Okanagan Lake (17 times size of Skaha)



Fish Water Management Tool





Okanagan R. in 1938 and in 1996

RESTORATION VISION
From simple to complex habitat

Removal or Construction of Fish Passage Provisions at McIntyre Dam

Okanagan Basin Monitoring and Evaluation Program (OBMEP)

- 20-year Transboundary monitoring project
- Same parameters measured throughout the Okanagan Basin (US & Canada)
- Protocols set between ONA and Colville Confederated Tribes

Testing for contaminant levels in Okanagan Basin resident food fisheries

Why

First Nation health

Significant portion of traditional diet
Many still rely on Okanagan fish for a major portion of their diet
5000 Nation members

Water quality issues increasing

Little sampling done to date
expensive tests,
info not accessible

Osoyoos Lake bass were found in the late summer 2005 to have high levels of DDT



Who



Osoyoos Lake Land/Water Issues

- Trespassing on OIB reserve lands on Osoyoos Lake
- Boat Restrictions of inlet of Osoyoos Lake to VDS #1
- First Nations paying the cost of conservation
- Balancing water demands for fish and people
- Tributary access for Inkaneep Creek
- Sockeye need Osoyoos Lake

Climate Change Impacts

- Osoyoos Lake – high summer temperatures and low dissolved oxygen
- Okanagan River – migration timing delay
- Habitat – low stream flow during critical periods, competing water use demands

= little opportunity for Okanagan Nation food, social and ceremonial fisheries