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Okanagan, British Columbia

Welcome to the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) Forestry Newsletter.

We are proud to share stories of the important forestry work and land management taking place across OIB territory through Nk'Mip Forestry, our OIB forestry division. From **wildfire risk reduction** and **forest restoration** to **seed collection** and **forestry education**, each project reflects our commitment to caring for the land today while protecting it for generations to come.

Explore this newsletter, **celebrate the progress of our forestry team**, and see how Indigenous leadership is shaping a thriving, sustainable future for the OIB community and residents of the Okanagan/Boundary.

FUN FACT!

It Starts with a Seed!



Nk'Mip Forestry collects seeds from native plants like mountain huckleberries, aspen, and birch across OIB traditional territory. These seeds are grown into seedlings and replanted to restore culturally important harvesting areas and strengthen forest resilience. [More inside...](#)



OIB Forestry Training & FireSmart Program on the Reserve

Showcasing Osoyoos Indian Band's leadership in sustainable, community-driven forest management



OIB Forestry crew at prescribed burn near Rock Creek

OIB | 2025
FORESTRY BY
THE NUMBERS

160
HECTARES
treated for wildfire
risk reduction

95
FOREST STANDS
have undergone a cultural heritage
or archaeology assessment

OVER
1 Million
TREES PLANTED
in OIB tenures and
management areas



PROJECT: Wildfire Risk Reduction and Restoration Projects

Proactive fuel treatments and forest
restoration to protect the OIB
community and surrounding lands.

Did You Know?

Nk'Mip Forestry works across the Reserve and adjacent land to reduce wildfire risk while restoring forest health through biodiversity-focused practices and long-term planning.

Focus Area: OIB Reserve, Baldy Road Corridor, Vaseux Area
Primary Activities: Fuel treatment, restoration planting, fuel breaks

We are carrying out targeted fuel treatments across the Reserve and surrounding lands to reduce wildfire risk. This includes the cleanup of approximately **50 hectares of fire-killed timber above the Reserve**, followed by replanting with a diverse mix of plants, shrubs, and tree seedlings to support long-term forest resilience. Additional work includes establishing a **fuel break along Baldy Road** within the OIB's First Nation Woodland Licence and partnering with Environment Canada in the Vaseux area to thin stands and remove hazardous fuels. Future **prescribed and cultural fire initiatives** are being planned and **will be shared with the OIB community for input**, supported by ongoing collaboration with the Penticton Indian Band.



“Forestry connects us to who we are. Each project strengthens our community, restores our territory, and carries forward the knowledge of our ancestors.

VERN LOUIE • Operations Manager, Nk'Mip Forestry

PROJECT: Planting Shrubs

Revitalizing the Land, Culture, and Community with more than just trees



Over 1000 Huckleberry Seedlings Planted

Did You Know?

We harvest and collect seeds from the traditional territory to grow into a tree and cultural shrub seedlings, which then are planted back on the land.

Guidance from
OIB Community
Members!

Project: Native Tree and Shrub Seed Collection and Planting

Species of Seeds Collected: Huckleberry, Aspen, Birch, Saskatoon Berry, Willow, and Blackcap Raspberry

The Osoyoos Indian Band is leading a community-driven native shrub planting initiative to restore traditional harvesting practices, strengthen wildfire resilience, and revitalize **culturally important forest ecosystems**. Led by Nk'Mip Forestry and Siya Forestry, the project reintroduces native shrubs and deciduous species across OIB-managed lands, with planting areas identified by OIB Band members. After two years of seed collection and propagation, Band members, youth, language keepers, and forestry staff come together to plant these species, **reconnecting land, language, and culture through a multi-generation vision** to forest stewardship and long-term ecological health.

PROJECT: OIB Office in the Grand Forks



Did You Know?

The Grand Forks office strengthens OIB's presence within the Territory by supporting local partnerships, projects, and community engagement.

We established an OIB office within the heart of the Territory.

Location: Grand Forks, within OIB Territory

Purpose: Local collaboration, project efficiency and economic development

The new Osoyoos Indian Band office in Grand Forks marks an important step in strengthening the Band's presence and partnerships within the heart of the Territory. Centrally located, the office supports local business meetings, project work, and the development of new partnerships and contracts, improving efficiency for work in the area. Supported by joint venture companies Siya Forestry and Skemxist Solutions, the space enhances collaboration and economic opportunities. It also provides a welcoming location where Boundary residents can learn about OIB projects, values, and stewardship priorities, and remains available for use by OIB Band members when needed.



"Working as a forester for the OIB is a source of inspiration. I care deeply about supporting the people and land I work with and am continually learning from OIB values—responsibility, balance, and long-term thinking that guide land management. It is a privilege to be taught by a community whose stewardship is rooted in knowledge, culture, and care for future generations."

DAN MACMASTER • Forestry Manager, Nk'Mip Forestry

PROJECT: Working With Licencees and Partners to Manage the Land Through the Nation's Values and Priorities



Did You Know?

OIB leads planning decisions across multiple forestry tenures.

Key Partners: Gorman, Interfor, BC Timber Sales, Tolko, Ministry of Forests

The Osoyoos Indian Band works closely with forestry licensees to ensure OIB values guide how land is managed across its Territory. Through the **TFL 59 partnership with Gorman**, the **OIB now leads all planning and decision-making**, including harvest locations, protection of water and wildlife, tree retention, and reforestation. OIB also collaborates with Interfor on TFL 8 and the Boundary TSA by designing permits based on OIB values and completing office and field reviews for proposed cutblocks. In the Penticton and Kelowna areas, OIB forestry teams work with the Penticton Indian Band to develop permits that reflect Syilx forestry principles. Additional partnerships include BC Timber Sales, Ntityix, and Tolko, where OIB and Siya Forestry support permit development, silviculture, road inspections, and other field activities, creating opportunities to share knowledge and apply a seven-generation approach to forest stewardship.

The OIB is leading forest management throughout their traditional territory.

PROJECT: Managing the OK Falls Log & Chipping Yard



Did You Know?

Low-value pulp logs are chipped on site and shipped to the Castlegar pulp mill.

Supporting local jobs and fibre utilization.

Location: Okanagan Falls

Partnership: Skemxist Solutions and Mercer-Celgar

Community Impact: Local jobs, firewood supply, economic development

The OK Falls Chipping Yard plays an important role in supporting both the local forestry economy and OIB employment through our **joint venture partnership with Skemxist Solutions and Mercer-Celgar**. Pulp logs and firewood logs purchased from forest companies are delivered to the yard, where the dry, low-value pulp logs are chipped on site and shipped to the Castlegar pulp mill. Firewood is separated out, purchased by the OIB, processed, and supplied to local campgrounds and OIB maintenance operations. The yard also creates **ongoing job opportunities for OIB members**, including machine operator and scaling positions, making it a valuable source of economic development and community benefits.

BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

OIB Owned Joint Ventures



Siya Forestry is a joint venture between **Nk'Mip Forestry LLP** and **Infinity Pacific Stewardship Group**, combining Infinity Pacific's technical expertise with the Osoyoos Indian Band's values, priorities, and traditional knowledge. The partnership strengthens OIB's voice across forestry tenures, generates revenue through contract work, and supports training and employment opportunities for Band members, advancing economic growth while supporting long-term land stewardship.



Osoyoos Forest Nursery is a majority OIB-owned tree seedling nursery located on the OIB Reserve, **developed in partnership with K&C Silviculture**. The nursery will grow fire-resistant conifer seedlings for the forest industry and is planned to expand to a capacity of up to 20 million trees per year. The joint venture supports employment and summer student opportunities, along with taxation, leasing, and business operation revenues.



Skemxist Solutions is a joint venture between the **Osoyoos Indian Band** and **The Sutherland Group**, creating meaningful employment and skill-building opportunities for OIB members. Grounded in OIB values such as responsible land management, cultural respect, and long-term sustainability, the partnership strengthens economic development for the OIB while supporting resilient rural communities across the Interior.



Through a joint venture with **Snowwater Ski Lodge**, the Osoyoos Indian Band holds a recreational tenure that supports summer student employment, trail building, hosts OIB youth groups, and provides recreational-based opportunities. The partnership provides OIB with decision-making authority in trail development while supporting safe, sustainable recreation within the Territory.



PROJECT: Working Towards a New OIB Tenure in the Boundary

Did You Know?

Community Forestry focuses on multiple objectives and through sustainable management, emphasizes the protection of specific values.

Focus Areas: Jobs, training, fibre supply, wildfire preparedness

Core Values: Protecting water, wildlife, culturally significant areas, biodiversity, and enhancing wildfire protection.

Progress is being made on a new OIB/RDKB Forest Tenure in the Grand Forks/Christina Lake area that will be designed to empower the Osoyoos Indian Band and Boundary communities to manage forests based on local priorities, shared values, and long-term vision. Through a shared governance model, the initiative strengthens relationships between Indigenous and local communities while respecting **Indigenous rights, cultural teachings, and decision-making roles**. It is grounded in transparent, inclusive, and financially sound governance, supporting diverse forest uses and a sustainable fibre supply that strengthens local business partnerships and economic resilience. The community tenure also advances job creation, training, ecological stewardship, climate resilience, and wildfire preparedness, while fostering a culture of safety, respect, innovation, and continuous learning.

Shared governance guides sustainable forest management.



LAND ACQUISITION



3,031
ACRES
purchased

The Osoyoos Indian Band purchased 3,031 acres of private property east of Osoyoos.

When a First Nation acquires land on the open market, it demonstrates economic strength, long-term vision, and the ability to act independently within existing legal frameworks while advancing inherent rights and responsibilities to the land.

- This acquisition by the OIB represents more than an increase in land base; it is a reconnection to a broader traditional territory and an opportunity to steward lands according to the OIB's community values.
- By bringing this land under OIB ownership, the Band can ensure that development, sustainable management, and land use decisions align with cultural teachings, community priorities, and intergenerational responsibilities rather than short-term external interests.
- Land is far more than an economic asset to the OIB—it sustains water sources, wildlife habitat, plant medicines, food systems, and sacred relationships.

- Responsible stewardship protects biodiversity, maintains ecological balance, and honours the reciprocal relationship between people and the land.
- This private land purchase of over 3,000 acres reflects how reclaiming land can support hunting grounds, host cultural events, protect significant ecological/cultural features, and encourage community development while reaffirming a deep responsibility to care for the land for future generations.
- It is a reminder that land is not merely an asset, but a living foundation for identity, governance, and long-term Nation-building.

OIB FOREST TENURES

OIB Woodlots	OIB First Nation Woodland Licence	West Boundary Community Forest	Numerous OIB Forest Licences
<p>The OIB owns three important woodlots that support sustainable forest stewardship across the territory. The Jewel Lake Woodlot includes 1,500 acres of forested land and an additional 160 acres of private land south of Jewel Lake. The Mica Woodlot has been fully replanted—with support from grant funding—after the Nk'Mip Wildfire. The OK Falls Woodlot, located east of OK Falls, was heavily affected by the Thomas Creek Wildfire and is being restored with a diverse mix of seedlings and shrubs to help return it to a healthy, thriving forest.</p>	<p>The OIB oversees management of a 34,000-hectare tenure surrounding Baldy Mountain under the First Nation Woodland Licence. Efforts in this area have focused on fuel mitigation and commercial thinning to reduce wildfire risk, protect the community of Baldy Mountain, and promote overall forest health and promote overall forest health.</p>	<p>The OIB manages the West Boundary Community Forest in the Midway and Greenwood region, helping guide local forestry activities in a way that reflects community values and Indigenous stewardship principles.</p>	<p>Across various additional OIB forest licences, the Band carries out a range of projects including selective harvesting, fuel reduction treatments, and addressing forest health concerns to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience of OIB-managed lands.</p>



“Our forestry team strives to give back to the land through our projects and initiatives such as wildlife habitat and ecosystem restoration, wildfire risk reduction, riparian area enhancement, reintroduction of native species, and broadcast burning. Outside OIB tenures and management areas, we work with others to plan and implement forest management strategies that align with OIB values.”

Peter Flett • Head of Operations, Nk'Mip Forestry

"It's an honour to work for the Osoyoos Indian Band community and to support land management that reflects community values, cultural responsibility, and a long-term vision for healthy forests."

DAN MACMASTER • Forestry Manager | Nk'Mip Forestry

OUR FORESTRY GOALS AND VISION

- Address multiple objectives in our land management decisions.
- Continue to build capacity for the OIB to manage the land as per Community values.
- Grow partnerships and establish a sustainable fibre supply through forest management.
- Advance relationships between OIB and communities, companies, and contractors.
- Contribute social, cultural, and economic benefits while fostering resilient forests.
- Advance stewardship in the territory by recognizing climate resilience.
- Continue to focus on innovative approaches to forest management.



Nk'Mip and Siya Forestry crews during fire suppression course training near Wolfcub Creek

BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

The OIB is always looking for new business partners. We work with companies and individuals who believe in sustainable forest management without sacrificing ecological values for future generations. We believe in hard work, steady employment, economic viability, and collaboration while maintaining the environmental integrity the land deserves. If you'd like to talk about building a relationship with the OIB, please contact us.

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CONTACT



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For more on OIB Forestry work and stories, we invite you to visit Nk'Mip Forestry's website or social channels!



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