



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan Endorsed by Regional Partners ***Collaborative Framework to Protect Water, Cultural Values, and Climate Resilience***

The Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB), the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), and the District of Lake Country have formally endorsed the North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan. This shared framework sets out how the partners will work together to protect water, cultural values, and the landscape in the face of ongoing climate pressures, including drought and wildfire.

The North Aberdeen Plateau, located within the unceded territory of the syilx Okanagan people, is the primary source of drinking water for communities in Lake Country and Greater Vernon. Its upland watershed plays a vital role in maintaining water quality and reliability while supporting ecological and cultural values. The area holds deep cultural and historical significance, and the Guidance Plan reflects syilx values and responsibilities, guiding decisions that support the long-term health of the land and water.

The Guidance Plan, developed in partnership over the past year, establishes shared priorities and a joint structure for implementation, including:

- A Watershed Resilience Plan focused on long-term source water protection
- A Wildfire Resilience Plan to reduce risk to water and cultural values
- Annual action planning and reporting to track progress and support transparency

Quotes:

OKIB Chief Dan Wilson: "The syilx Okanagan people carry the responsibility to maintain and care for the land and water within our territory. This work reflects that responsibility. By moving forward together with our partners, we are protecting water, cultural values, and the Plateau for our people and our neighbours, now and for future generations."

Greater Vernon Advisory Committee, Mayor Victor Cumming: "Protecting the North Aberdeen Plateau has been years in the making. This Guidance Plan brings together local governments, the Okanagan Indian Band, and regional partners to build a shared vision for watershed health, wildfire resilience, and climate adaptation. I'm proud of the collaboration and the strong foundation guiding the safeguarding of our water and landscape for generations to come."

Lake Country Mayor Blair Ireland: “As not only the Mayor of Lake Country but also the Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, I am very excited to see this plan put into action. We need to protect our fragile watersheds now more than ever. Through the dedication, collaboration, and shared vision of our communities—OKIB, RDNO, and Lake Country—we are closer than ever to making that happen. Collaboration is the key to our success, and I am honoured to be part of this hard-working group. Together, we share a common goal: to protect and steward our water sources for future generations and to honour the cultural values of the land.”

Purpose of the Plan

The North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan establishes a shared direction for long-term drinking water protection, cultural and ecological stewardship, and climate resilience, ensuring decisions about the Plateau are made collaboratively and transparently. This direction reflects syilx responsibilities to care for the land and water and supports future generations through shared stewardship.

The OKIB, RDNO, and District of Lake Country will make decisions together through a joint leadership group and technical working team to coordinate planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Next steps

Initial work will focus on joint planning and monitoring to support watershed health, cultural stewardship, and wildfire-resilience. Future projects will be identified through annual work plans, providing a foundation for coordinated action and sustained protection of the Plateau’s vital water and landscape resources.

More information:

- [North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan](#)
- [Wildfire-prevention project will keep Okanagan communities safe, protect water supply](#)