

N'sisooloxw Watershed Corridor Improvement Project

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NWCI Success!

The N'sisooloxw Watershed Corridor Improvement Project (NWCI) and Sqilxw Apna Society are proud to present our first year of completion and restoration work in the N'sisooloxw Creek watershed! Our society has been working hard to create a pivot point for transformation on OKIB territory with our community collaboration project.

This past year, we received permissions (OKIB and RDNO), support (by businesses and residents), as well as, funding (OBWB), to participate in a water conservation and quality improvement project we call the NWCI Project. This project met nearly all its goals and gathered invaluable information about our watershed



readily available to be shared with the greater community!

As part of the project, we restored the meandering flow of a tributary off of the N'sisooloxw Creek (Bradley Creek), established a baseline record of the water quality, gathered the people with two workshops, tested

natural water filtration methods, and planted a native food forest for generations to come. The place and culturally based stories shared about the creek and the corridor were amazing to learn and embody.

Thank you, everyone, for your belief and support. Don't forget to come for a tour!

Native Food Forestry with Permaculture

Partnering with a few permaculture designers, we tried to appropriately situate ourselves in the people, place and space around native edibles and the creek.

Our plan involved

digging the pilot portion of the flow-way back into a natural shape, planting as many native plants as possible to fill the creek with foods, soil builders, water encatchments, and to reduce the flooding

capacity of the old setup. On all counts, we so far have succeeded! We are looking forward to the thimble berries, siya, black-caps, lillies, currants, roses, onions, and so much more!

“Through observation, story gathering, and analysis, we may be able to understand our water more holistically.”



Testing the Waters of N’sisooloxw

Promoting the health of our water should be at the forefront of our daily lives. As part of the project, we are establishing the baseline for future works happening in the region by doing in depth testing of the creek’s waters through the year from May, 2017, to June, 2018.

Water samples were taken seasonally and tested at the CARO Analytics Lab in

Kelowna and by using a field test kit. Now we have an idea of the quality of the water coming into our lake and out of our mountains.

Besides this analysis, we have made many observations about the creek habitat to analyze other levels of “health” besides conventional science. Our society feels the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers hold an

important archive of information about the creek over the years. We organized a “Story Gathering” workshop late in 2017. Bridging indigenous stories with what we can identify with science, perhaps we can understand the situation more holistically.

If you would like to share your story or see the results- contact us at sqilxwapna@gmail.com

Slowing the Water has a Big Impact

A permaculture mantra for water is “Slow it, spread it, sink it” and is referring to all of the potential ways water can be utilized before leaving our system or place. Ultimately, if we design our spaces to effectively do this, we will have more water available for our landscape over time and less issues with flooding.

So much of the time, a creek or seasonal

waterway ends up being a property boundary and landowners may have a tendency to straighten out the creek to simplify fencing or farming. When we do this, we end up speeding up the water flow, increasing erosion, reducing water quality, and losing out on the benefits.

This pilot project shows how to capture that water, as well as, how to safely and effectively

let it flow.

Swales were installed, utilizing the same method nature does, by dropping a rock, limb, or tree in its path. Large amounts of wood debris were installed as sponges (and soil builder) along the streambank. A pond, a hugelkultur bed, and a wetland are also being built to further sequester moisture and purify our water before it enters the lake.



Waking the Water Stewards

Through gathering stories related to the creek, some of the Elders shared details about past indigenous management methods for the land and water.

These stories were intentionally brought to the table side by side with the scientific data being collected. Responsible management may come

from managing our water corridor together with both of these knowledge systems.

Youth were encouraged to participate at many levels of the project with the hopes that the community can retain some of the shared knowledge and water stewardship methods through many generations. This was a

necessary component, as much of the seeds planted will take years to mature.

The health of our water will require many hands to assist us if we are to continue up the N'sisoolxw Corridor.

May this model and initial research awaken the water stewards we need.



Water Filtration, Biofilter/Ceramic/Natural

Water improvement was a focus of the project. We all know that many things can contaminate our water supply, from chemicals to biologicals, and a good sense of these things should be established first to then know how to move forward.

At the same time, we need to think of the health of the water for plants, animals, and, for that matter, the entire natural 'biome' that serves and lives within

the creek's riparian strip. Plant life cannot be stricken from the picture, nor can the animals or even us. This goes for what they/we can give back to improve the health of the system as well as the negatives they carry.

After conducting substantial research, we concluded that plants can filter a wide range of contaminants out of a 'biome' (or water) as part of its natural cyclical

relationship. We are going to explore this further as our 'biofilters' grow.

Moss and mushrooms have a potentially purifying role in our water system. Further exploration will happen with this as our inoculants mature.

Conclusively, however, we have discovered that charcoal and ceramic filters can remove a large spectrum of pollutants.



Recreating the Forest Floor

Much of the 'investment' was put in a different kind of bank- Our stream bank!

We put many trailer, dumptruck, and skidsteer loads of branches, cordwood, bark, moss, clay, and

whole timbers under a thick layer of compost from the Regional Compost Facility.

Now that all of the native plants are tucked in nicely, we are doing the final "dressing" of our streambanks with

up to six inches of straw!

Our plan is to rebuild the idyllic old growth forest floor in less than 5 years to properly support the restoration process.

"The creek has been used for many generations by the Syilx families or relatives right here. The waterways were regularly managed- along with the entire corridor and ecosystem."

- Erik Hrabovsky

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SQILXW APNA Society's philosophy is based upon the principles of empowering Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Our mission statement is to maintain RESPONSIBILITY to ourselves, our cultures, our ancestors, our teachings and our future generations. As well as, to RECOGNIZE and of the importance of Indigenous Peoples' real situations and to value and valorize Indigenous realities as meaningful.

Our Principles Thereby being: Relationships, Respect, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Reverence, Recognition, Reclaiming, Reconnecting.

SQILXW APNA Society's Mandate:

To strengthen Indigenous families capacity to engage deeper issues on sustainability from an Indigenous perspective. This would involve holism and holistic approaches to repairing, healing and strengthening the whole human being and involve efforts taken to reconnect the human being in the web of life from an approach that honors both the individual and the collective. Where each is encouraged and supported to develop their unique gifts and strengths in a supportive environment.

SQILXW APNA Society's NWCI Project was a collective work to reestablish our own relationships with our watershed corridor. Through our water work we hope to reconnect the people to the land and water by creating the model we most hope to see and to inspire the generations to come.

Sponsors and Support

We were blessed with the generosity of many in the community and want to acknowledge them all! Here's the short list:

Thank you to the Regional District Composting Facility for the 20 yards of compost!

Thank you to Louis and Shorty Fred for the equipment and outpouring everyday support!

Thank you Gord, Jana and Nola (Element Eco Design) for the permaculture advice

and native plant support!

Thank you, Mike and Lori, for the permaculture advice and native plant support!

Thank you Quality Seeds in Kamloops for stocking native plant seeds!

Thank you, OKIB Council, for supporting our project!

Thank you, RDNO, for supporting our project!

Thank you, Outdoor Aspects for dump truck support!

Thank you, local residents for your support everywhere!

And a really big thank you to the Okanagan Basin Water Board for funding and believing in this project, as well as the many other water actions throughout the Valley that you have a hand in! One valley, one water!

Thank you, Sqilxw Apna Society for bringing this into being in our region!

Many hands make easier work.

