



Okanagan Indian Band

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MEDIA RELEASE

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OKIB announces funding to build a new \$900,000 Cultural Arbor

An important gathering place for our community will be restored announce Chief and Council

For thirty years the Cultural Arbor was a gathering place for the Okanagan people and was used as a meeting place for powwows, ceremonies, youth and elders' gatherings, cultural events and workshops.

"Since its decommission two years ago, it has been greatly missed," noted Chief Byron Louis, "That is why I am so pleased to announce that thanks to a 75% funding grant from Canada and British Columbia, we are now in a position to build a new \$900,000 cultural arbor on the site of the former facility that was built in 1988."

The OKIB Cultural Arbor is located on an old Okanagan-Syilx pre-contact village and fishing site. The Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) members constructed an outside arbor back in 1988 for the community and visitors to use and enjoy. A traditional pit house was added to the park in 2009 to honour the history of the park.

"It was the community members of OKIB that were the driving force for the initial arbor structure at the Komasket location," noted Chief Louis. "When first constructed it was the largest and grandest facility at that time. It's a facility that made the community proud because the people put their communal efforts into building a focal meeting place. I am confident that the reconstructed arbor will also help enhance our community's attractiveness and pride."

75% of the \$900,000 project will be coming from the federal and provincial government's Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – British Columbia – Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure stream while 25% of the funding or \$225,000 will be coming from OKIB. OKIB is thankful for its corporate partners and their support in the project, including BC Hydro and The Firelight Group. Work will commence in the near future and the project is scheduled for completion in October, 2020.

"As we hopefully emerge from quarantine and social isolation later this year, this kind of community gathering place will be even more important," added Chief Louis. "The construction jobs this and other infrastructure projects bring will also play an important role in helping to revive the economy."