



## OKIB RECOVERY TEAM

Here are the important February updates from the **OKIB Recovery Team**. The focus of the OKIB Recovery Team over the past couple of months has been wrapping up some of our short-term initiatives such as food security and fridge/freezer replacements while continuing on our long-term efforts for agriculture, environmental, and housing. We would like to also acknowledge those who have generously donated to the OKIB!

In this communication update, we will cover these important updates from the different areas of the recovery project:

- FOOD SECURITY
- AGRICULTURAL GRANT
- HOUSING UPDATE
- ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATES
- DONATIONS
- RECOVERY TEAM

### Food Security

The Food Replacement Program is now closed; we were able to assist 274 households in replacing food lost from the extended evacuations.

We now have delivered 25 fridges and 28 freezers replaced. In addition, we provided a number of reimbursements to band members who purchased their own appliances. We still have a record of the households who lost more than one appliance. We are hoping to have an agreement with Indigenous Services Canada ((SC) soon to determine the eligibility of replacing more than one appliance. Once that is complete, a member of the recovery team will reach out to determine if those band members are eligible.

Short-term recovery encompasses food and shelter needs, identifying issues such as renovations required, danger tree assessments and removal, and clean up of damaged vehicles and other materials. The goal of the short term is to work towards having basic needs met such as safety, housing, and food while planning for the long-term future of the people, the land, and the economy of the OKIB.

Long-term recovery is a larger initiative that includes rebuilding homes, re-establishing community and culture, environmental planning, and rehabilitation efforts for long-term sustainability. The planning for the long-term recovery efforts has already started. This phase is resource-intensive with many projects and initiatives. The recovery phases are different for each community as the effects of a wildfire have different impacts, the planning has to identify and address these impacts.

### Agricultural Grant

The 2021 Wildfire and Drought Agri-recovery program closed at the end of January, the recovery team contacted 26 band members to submit an application, and of those people, 15 applications were submitted. The band members who did not submit either completed the application on their own, or felt they did not qualify. If the applicants qualify for the program, there is a possibility their fencing

losses may be covered. The challenge with this funding is that the applicants have to be generating revenue through the sale of commodities.

Currently, we are seeking ways to procure more hay for the Band members who did not receive any hay since the wildfire occurred or were given a limited amount. We are developing a list of people who did not get hay if we are able to secure more bails. If you have not received hay, please contact Lane Brewer [recoverywellness2@okanagan.org](mailto:recoverywellness2@okanagan.org) to determine your eligibility.

### **Housing Update**

The site clean project is now complete. We are happy to announce two band members; Wayne Bonneau and Patricia Oppenheimer were able to return to their homes as announced in the recent press release included in this edition of the Senk'lip.



L to R: Quentin Pierro, Chief Byron Louis, Wayne Bonneau, Lane Brewer, Jenelle Brewer, Al Loke.

Quentin helped with the move, Chief helped unload boxes, Lane supported as a caseworker, Wayne received the new home, Jenelle the manager, Al secured the homes.

The mini-homes will be ready by the end of February for the band members who chose that option. Due to supply chain and labour shortages, getting the mini-homes and modular homes ready took longer than planned. Other families were able to find a rental to lease, we are working with everyone and doing our best to meet their needs. There are seven mini-homes; some properties will have two units as there were more than one household in the home.



One of the mini-homes purchased as short-term housing until the homes are complete.

The recovery team is in the planning process to rebuild the remaining homes that are uninsured. We have approval from ISC to provide an invitation-to-bid process rather than a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to begin the rebuild process as soon as possible. The invitations to bid will shorten the rebuild process by several months. All the sites are prepped and ready for construction which was part of the Site Clean Up project.

The recovery project has hired various band members, tree faller, labourers, carpenter, septic repair, septic service, plumber, and an electrician. There will be more hires for the rebuilds.

**Band Members Hired:**

- Labourers
- Carpenter
- Tree Faller
- Septic Services
- Septic Pumping
- Plumber
- Cleaning Services

**Environmental Update**

The work priority for the removal of the burnt tree's from on-reserve lands is as follows: CP lands, Nashwito, and the rest of the reserve. The prescription work for the remaining reserve lands will start soon, and more details will be provided in the upcoming community forums and the Senk'lip. The environment section chief is working with TSD and the OKIB Group of Companies for any stands off the reserve.

### ***Danger Tree Removal***

The Danger Tree Removal project is still underway. There are trees on CP lands that are marked for removal, but that cannot be done until we have consent from all the CP Holders to continue the work. Recovery Team members are in the process of contacting the band members with forms outstanding to keep the project moving. A funding and a cutting permit request will be submitted to ISC as soon as possible. A notice will be sent out to all affected members prior to the work being started.

### ***Nashwito South***

The prescription work, which is the planning to harvest trees impacted by the wildfire, is complete. This includes the Nashwito South area, beginning at the South of Nashwito Creek and above Mini Shadows Road. A cutting permit has been submitted for this area.

### ***Creek Assessment for Flood Risk***

Now that the Post-Fire Assessment has been released, we can identify risks for potential flooding, and the priority areas. Field review will occur during the fourth week of February 2022 to look at potential locations where creeks may overtop their banks, threaten the use of Westside Rd or potentially impact Band structures and infrastructure. **Crews will be hanging flagging tape along the creeks where needed for reference. Please do not remove any flagging tap along the creeks until after the freshet has finished.** The information in the report will be shared once it is complete.

### **Donations to Date**

The Go Fund Me has raised a total of \$10,655 after fees from the GoFundMe fundraiser up until January 17<sup>th</sup>. There are additional donations of approximately \$14,000 for other organizations and individuals. Some donations were specific to provide a Christmas basket to the evacuees who lost their homes, those funds were provided by Progrus Constructors, who have an agreement with the OKIB Group of Companies. Swan Lake Market & Garden provided the gift baskets at cost.



A throw blanket accompanied the Christmas baskets.

OKIB is now a registered donee, which means it can provide a tax receipt to organizations and individuals that donate to the organization. To donate to the OKIB Wildfire you can send a cheque to the Okanagan Indian Band, please write wildfire donation in the memo:

12420 Westside Road  
Vernon BC  
V1T 5G2

Alternatively, donations can be made to the GoFund Me page: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/okib-fire-recovery>.

To date, other significant donations have been donated by:

- TD Canada Trust \$5,000 – one of our first donations, TD bank reached out to us to donate these funds for the recovery project.
- Jennie Henderson \$1,000 – Jennie conducted a fundraiser and donated each OKIB homeowner a cash donation, and contributed \$1,000 to the OKIB wildfire recovery fund.
- Lawyers and Staff at JFK Law Corporation \$2,155
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- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) \$1,600 – gift cards were donated by FNHA to support all the 16 households who lost their homes during the wildfire.
- Progrus Constructors Inc. \$1,600
- Sovereign Nordic Centre \$1,355 – a Christmas Day fundraiser took place at Sovereign Lake, all revenues were contributed to support the OKIB wildfire recovery initiative.
- Trinity United Church \$1,000 – a parishioner from the Trinity United Church wanted to donate anonymously and asked the church to donate on her behalf.
- Meridian Landscaping \$1,000
- The Fig Bistro \$1,000
- Anonymous donations \$1,500
- Learning Community of Indigenous Studies, Rutland Secondary School \$500.00 - A cohort of 36 students in grades 10 to 12 sold bannock and fry bread at school to raise money for OKIB fire relief.



Learning Community of Indigenous Studies, Rutland Secondary School donating to OKIB Wildfire Recovery Fund.

- Country Manor Catering \$363
- Urban Systems \$100
- Bonnie Coble \$100 – a gift card was donated and a draw was conducted to identify the recipient. Congratulations to Henry Wilson

In-kind Donations:

- Samaritans Purse – this is a not-for-profit group that assisted the community.
- City Furniture West Kelowna – Ray Kolada has been providing discounts on furniture and appliances purchased for the wildfire recovery project the total exceeds \$15,000.