



siw̓kʷ Water and Climate Forum

March 23-24, 2026

Delta Grand Resort, Kelowna B.C.



FORUM GOALS:

1. Spotlight Breakthrough Models of Climate-Resilient Water Governance

Bring global, provincial, Sylx and local government innovations to the forefront to show what's possible — and what's urgently needed — as the Okanagan–Similkameen faces desertification, chronic drought, and escalating wildfire and flood risks. Sponsors help position the region as a leader in climate adaptation.

2. Strengthen and Scale the Collaborative Leadership Table (CLT) – A New Model for Shared Governance in BC

Showcase the purpose, progress, and leadership of the Okanagan–Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table (CLT), highlighting why collaboration between Sylx leadership and local governments is essential for watershed governance. Explore critical climate challenges—drought, wildfire, floods, and long-term water security—while building momentum for the CLT's next phase of work.

3. Launch a 250-Year Vision for Water Responsibility That Anchors Long-Term Investment

Introduce the Okanagan–Similkameen Watershed Responsibility Plan and build a shared understanding of its long-term vision. Highlight how a multi-century, ecosystem-based approach can guide today's decisions for restoring watersheds, protecting headwaters, securing groundwater and springsheds, advancing climate resilience, and supporting community well-being.

4. Mobilize Collective Action Through Shared Priorities, siw̓kʷ ceremony, and Co-Designed Solutions

Engage leaders, knowledge holders, practitioners and participants in hands-on sessions to define clear priorities, responsibilities, and mechanisms for action. Sponsor investment helps move this region from fragmented crisis response to coordinated, long-term watershed resilience.

FORUM AUDIENCE:

This conference brings together a diverse group of participants who are committed to building healthy watersheds and climate resilience. While primarily focused on local priorities, it also serves as a pilot for broader watershed governance learning across British Columbia. Participants will include Syilx and local government leaders and staff, knowledge holders, youth and elders, CLT representatives, water practitioners, and provincial partners engaged in water and climate. The forum also welcomes NGO's, researchers, technical experts, funders and water users.

AGENDA OUTLINE:

March 23, 2026 – Day 1

Time	Content
8:00-9:00	Check-in & Welcome Coffee
9:00-9:05	Opening Prayer
9:05-9:20	Welcome and Forum Purpose Chief Robert Louie, Westbank First Nation and Councillor Tricia Brett, Lake Country – Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table Co-Chairs
9:20-9:25	MC Introduction Aaron Derickson, UBCO educator and facilitator
9:25-10:05	Keynote: siwłk^w as Life – Past, Present and Future Dr. Jeannette Armstrong, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies, UBCO and Canada Research Chair Okanagan Indigenous Knowledge and Philosophy
10:05-10:30	Break & Networking
10:30-11:45	Riverside Chat: Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table Leaders <i>Journey of collaboration, from shared vision to 250-year pathway</i>
11:45-1:00	Lunch & Networking
1:00 – 2:00	Panel: Climate Risks; What We Have Learned and Actioning change <i>Panelists to include drought, wildfire, floods, groundwater, agriculture, forests & regional economy</i>

2:00 – 2:40	Keynote: Walking Together for the Next 250 Years; Learning from longstanding government-to-government agreements Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, Vanier scholar and Principle of White Raven Law, citizen of, and General Counsel, to the Haida Nation.
2:40 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 3:10	Summary & Key insights MC Aaron Derickson
3:10 – 3:45	Collaborative Dialogue <i>Table discussions: ideas, perspectives, and shared priorities</i>
3:45-4:00	Closing Reflections & Day 1 Wrap-Up

March 24, 2026 – Day 2

Time	Content
8:30	siwłk^w Ceremony at kłúsxńítk^w - Okanagan Lake
9:30 – 9:45	Setting the Intention <i>Reflections from Day 1, drought realities, and global governance learning</i>
9:45 – 10:45	Keynote: Learning to live with less water: Spain’s Journey toward climate-resilient water governance in the context of the EU WFD Dr. Nuria Hernández-Mora, Senior Policy Officer, Senior Researcher, I-CISK project, Water Policy Expert for the EU Commission. Madrid, Spain.
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:45	Keynote: Ethical Space and Watershed Governance Gwen Bridge, CEO and President of Gwen Bridge Consulting
11:45 – 1:00	Lunch & Networking
1:00 – 2:30	Action Lab – Drought and Investment Planning Facilitated by Oliver Brandes, Co-Director, POLIS Project on Ecological Governance and Deborah Curran, Professor, Executive Director of the Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria
2:30 – 3:45	Closing Panel: Moving from Vision to Action <i>Pathway to shared watershed governance and implementation</i>
3:45 – 4:00	Closing Remarks by CLT Co-Chairs

*This is a working agenda and is subject to change.