
To: Mayor and Council
From: Paul Gipps, CAO
Meeting Date: October 7, 2025
Meeting Type: Regular Council Meeting

Prepared by: Matt Vader, Director Parks, Recreation and Culture
Department: Parks, Recreation and Culture

Title: North Aberdeen Plateau
Description: North Aberdeen Plateau – Guidance Plan

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan dated August 2025 (attached to the Report to Council dated October 7, 2025) be adopted;
AND THAT Mayor Blair Ireland be appointed as the District of Lake Country representative, and (insert Councillor Name as determined by Council) be appointed as the alternate to the North Aberdeen Plateau Guidance Plan Leadership Team.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2009, the biggest threat to watershed resilience has been identified as catastrophic wildfire. Recognizing the need for a landscape level approach, the wildfire advocacy work expanded in 2023 to form a partnership between Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), the District of Lake Country (DLC) and Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) for enhanced wildfire protection in the North Aberdeen Plateau (NAP) that prioritizes water and cultural heritage values. Like the RDNO, DLC relies on the NAP for an important water supply and the NAP is within the traditional territory of the OKIB and has significant cultural heritage values.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

On May 6, 2024, the extensive work culminated in a \$15 million funding announcement from the province that was targeted at protecting water supply:

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), District of Lake County (DLC) and the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) forged a strong partnership to develop a North Aberdeen Plateau Watershed Resilience Plan to address and mitigate all risks with an objective of long-term stability for generations to come. [Province of BC announcement May, 2024]

The first step was in developing a direction regarding how the funds were to be used in the NAP which started with meetings with the Ministry of Forests (MOF) and BC Wildfire (BCWF). MOF and BCWF initially wanted to focus on fuel reduction and targeted prescriptions while the partnership was focused on the wider vision of a long-term Watershed Resilience Plan.

To advance the project, all parties agreed to direct funding toward a Wildfire Resilience Plan (WRP) that expanded the original "fuel reduction and targeted prescription" approach. The WRP incorporates water and cultural heritage values within a wildfire mitigation framework, while also creating opportunities for restoration activities-such as road rehabilitation, wildfire resilience research, and integrating watershed hydrology into treatment prioritization across the entire NAP area for long-term stability.

As indicated above, the partnership is focused on long-term watershed resilience with a priority of water

and cultural heritage values. To develop the vision, three facilitated workshops were completed in the fall and winter of 2024/2025 to develop the draft NAP Guidance Plan. There was a wide range of participants (staff and elected officials) from each of the partnership organizations, MOF, BCWF and other interested parties with expertise in the area and looking for partnering and knowledge expanding opportunities.

The draft Guidance Plan was presented to the leadership representatives from the partner organizations at a workshop on July 11, 2025. The input from meeting was incorporated into the final NAP Guidance Plan, August 2025 provided in Appendix "A".

The goal of the Guidance Plan is to provide the collective vision and goal of the partners highlighting water and cultural heritage values as a priority for the long-term benefit of the communities and the Syilx people. The plan will guide staff during project implementation, support leadership advocacy in partnerships and provincial discussions, and strengthen funding applications.

Partnership staff representatives will continue to work at the operation level with MOF and BCWF to ensure the work being completed conforms to the goals and visions of the NAP Guidance Plan and to provide input and review for WRP. Operationally the partnership staff will continue to inform other Ministries such as the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) on the Guidance Plan and all watershed activities.

Respectfully Submitted.

Matt Vader, Director Parks, Recreation and Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	North Aberdeen Plateau.docx
Attachments:	- 25082_GP_NAP_FNL_App.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Oct 1, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services - Sep 23, 2025 - 11:17 AM

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer - Oct 1, 2025 - 11:29 AM

Makayla Ablitt, Manager of Corporate Administration - Oct 1, 2025 - 12:08 PM