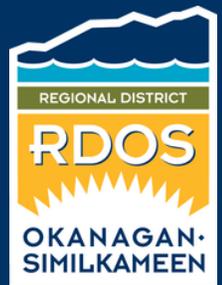


Regional Connections Newsletter

News and information from the Regional District

March 2026



Okanagan Falls incorporation

This will be the first time in 15 years that a community of British Columbia establishes itself as a municipality, complete with an elected government to represent the views of its residents. The next steps in this process include issuing the letters patent, which serve as the founding documents of an incorporated municipality. The letters patent will address aspects such as the boundary of the municipality, size of council, official municipal name, and incorporation date.

The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs anticipates the letters patent to be finalized by spring 2026, with the first election for the new mayor and council occurring in October 2026, coinciding with all general local elections taking place throughout the province.

Recognizing the community has many questions and comments about the process, the Province has published a dedicated page on its engagement website:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/OkanaganFalls>

Visit the page to stay up-to-date on progress and learn how to participate in the incorporation process.



Okanagan Falls (Electoral Area "D")

Source: [Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs](#)

Assent voting for Sage Mesa Water System - Saturday, April 11, 2026

Advance voting Wednesday, April 1, 2026: RDOS office in Penticton, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

Assent voting for the proposed acquisition of the Sage Mesa Water Utility and approval of a loan authorization bylaw in the amount of \$33,034,000 for capital upgrades will take place on April 11, 2026, at West Bench Elementary, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. For electors who wish to vote by mail, mail ballot applications are available online on the Assent Voting project page on Regional Connections at rdosregionalconnections.ca, and in person at the RDOS office at 101 Martin Street in Penticton during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Heritage Hills - Vintage Views Wastewater and Lakeshore Waterworks

Both utilities have now been successfully converted to the RDOS. For information and updates, please visit the project page at rdosregionalconnections.ca.



You can click the follow button on the project page to receive newsletters or sign up for Voyent Alert! notifications and select Water System or Wastewater System Advisories.

rdosregionalconnections.ca

MANAGING WASTE



RDOS wants to hear from you!



The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen is updating its **Solid Waste Management Plan**.

More than 40 strategies are being considered to reduce garbage, increase recycling, and improve waste services across the region.

Have your say.

Visit rdosregionalconnections.ca to read the draft Plan or attend a public engagement event happening near you in March 2026.



Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Draft Solid Waste Management Plan

Engagement events

The Regional District is seeking community input on the draft Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The SWMP establishes the region's long-term approach to waste reduction, recycling, and organics management for the next decade. RDOS residents, First Nations communities, member municipality residents, businesses, and community organizations are invited to attend.

Public engagement events will take place at locations across the RDOS throughout March 2026. To view the draft SWMP, engagement calendar, and complete the comment form, please visit the SWMP project page at rdosregionalconnections.ca.

Project background

On January 22, 2026, the RDOS Board of Directors unanimously approved a motion to seek input from the public and interested or affected parties on the draft SWMP. Once approved by the Ministry of Environment and Parks, the new plan will replace the previous 2012 SWMP.

RDOS Spring Recreation Guide

Visit rec.rdos.bc.ca to view the guide starting Thursday, March 12, 2026.

- Program and facility bookings
- Local sports
- Special events



SPRING Recreation Guide

APRIL - JUNE 2026

REGISTRATION OPENS
MARCH 19, 2026



rec@rdos.bc.ca [@rdosrecreation](https://www.instagram.com/rdosrecreation) rec.rdos.bc.ca

RDOS FireSmart Educational Program

The FireSmart Educational Program was developed to increase wildfire awareness and safety knowledge among elementary school students living in our Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities. With wildfire risk consistently top-of-mind for residents, it is essential that young learners understand the science of fire and the practical steps they can take to keep themselves, their families, and their homes safe.

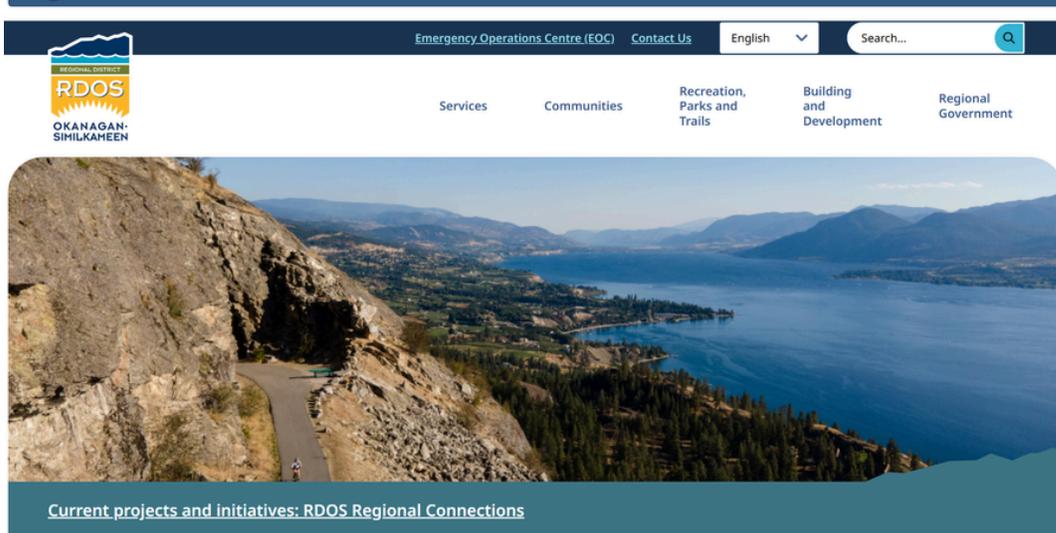
The program focuses on students in kindergarten to grade three. In 2025, the program was presented at 32 schools within the Regional District, including snpink'tn Indian Band (PIB), Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB), and local municipalities.



In 2026, the RDOS FireSmart Educational program will focus on students in grades four to seven. First Nations' Emergency Services Society and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary have expressed interest in adopting the program.



Visit rdos.bc.ca to learn more about FireSmart events in your community.



RDOS website redesign

The new RDOS website is scheduled to launch in spring 2026. The redesigned website includes a modernized layout, accessibility improvements, enhanced search options, and streamlined access to essential services.

An updated e-commerce platform will provide seamless payment options, while the Emergency Services section features easy access to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery resources and links.

rdos.bc.ca

I Want To...

Search →
Apply
Pay

[Regional Board Meetings](#)

[Protective Services](#)

[Curbside Collection](#)

[Maps and GIS](#)

[Regional Bylaws](#)

[Parks and Trails](#)

[RDOS Recreation](#)

[Water and Wastewater Systems](#)

Table Talks: courageous conversations about reconciliation

The RDOS is honoured to be participating in a peer-to-peer learning space called Table Talks. Over five sessions, members of RDOS Communications and Engagement and Protective Services will be taking part in conversations about colonization and reconciliation in their workplace and community. Content and learning methodologies are rooted in Indigenous values of relationship and connection.

“When we deepen our understanding of colonial history and the impacts on Indigenous peoples, and allow our hearts to be impacted by this truth, we learn how to stand with Indigenous peoples, support their rights, and create systems that are just and equal.” - Table Talks



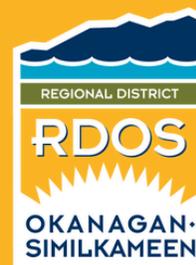
The Table Talks approach to reconciliation work aims to reduce the emotional labour required of Indigenous people and create the conditions for safer, inclusive spaces for trust and authenticity. The RDOS sessions are being led by Eva Antonijevic, siwłk™ | Water Program Coordinator, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA). Table Talks is a partnership between [kinSHIFT](#), a social enterprise of [IndigenEYEZ](#), and the [Community Foundation of the South Okanagan \(CFSOS\)](#).

(l to r) Kate Holowaty, Communications Coordinator; Gilbert Chan, Emergency Program Coordinator; Eva Antonijevic, siwłk™ | Water Program Coordinator, ONA; Joanne Malar, Communications Coordinator; Deborah Jones-Middleton, Senior Manager of Protective Services; Sean Vaisler, Manger of Emergency Services; Erick Thompson, Senior Manager of Communications and Engagement

Pink Shirt Day

The RDOS is committed to fostering a respectful workplace where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported. In recognition of Pink Shirt Day on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, the RDOS affirms our dedication to psychological safety through ongoing workplace initiatives and training that promote kindness, inclusion, and respect.

Learn more about the story of Pink Shirt Day here: www.pinkshirtday.ca



The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen promotes a **Respectful Workplace** in all RDOS offices and facilities.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

One Region Working Together

rdos.bc.ca 250-492-0237

2026 Events

Visit the Regional District at the

30th Annual Penticton Home & Reno Show

Saturday, March 7 - Sunday, March 8
[Penticton Trade and Convention Centre](#)

Emergency Preparedness and FireSmart
Emergency Support Services (ESS) volunteer opportunities
ALERT (Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team)
RDOS Cart Collection program and WildSafeBC

[Enter to win a 72HRS Emergency Kit](#)

June 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day

September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

RDOS pop-up offices:

Missequela Lake
Canada Day in Okanagan Falls
Erris Fire Hall | Tulameen Days
Eastgate Fire Protection Society Community Day
Similkameen Sizzle



[Visit the RDOS event calendar for details](#)

rdos.bc.ca

RDOS year in review 2025

Service improvements

Automated Curbside Collection implemented region-wide; new carts and expanded yard waste pickups.
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations installed for public and RDOS fleet use.

Resilience and preparedness

Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) in partnership with syilx Okanagan and sm̓əlq̓m̓ix communities and municipalities. \$2.05 million provincial grant for universal water metering pilot in three RDOS communities (Faulder, Willowbrook, Olalla). FireSmart education and resources for wildfire risk reduction.

Community connections

Pop-up offices held in Keremeos, Osoyoos, Oliver, Princeton, and Eastgate, bringing RDOS staff directly to residents.

Recreation, heritage, and facilities

Adra Tunnel within the RDOS reopened for public use. The 111-year-old historical landmark is located on the Kettle Valley Rail (KVR) Trail above Naramata in Electoral Area "E". At 487 metres in length, it is the longest tunnel on the trail and turns in a horseshoe shape, nearly 180 degrees in the mountain.

Similkameen Recreation Centre upgrades: 'Chief Woman Dancing' mural installed; landscaping; court resurfacing; painting; transit access; and accessibility improvements. Prescribed Recreation pilot program concluded. "Prescribed recreation is a proactive and inclusive approach that delivers real economic and social value," said Andy Foster, RDOS manager of recreation and facilities. "By improving community health, we can ease pressure on our health care system and build stronger, more resilient communities." More than 20 prescriptions were used during the trial, with participants reporting improved well-being and increased awareness of local recreation services. RDOS recreation staff presented the full-year trial proposal to the RDOS Board of Directors as a strategic priority for 2026, and an exploration of fee assistance programs.

RDOS 60th anniversary

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) was incorporated on March 4, 1966. Regional districts provide rural residents with an effective form of local government, while also representing municipal residents on regional issues. Regional districts enable municipalities and electoral areas to work together and combine their efforts to provide those services desired by the people of the area, regardless of municipal and/or electoral area boundaries.

The RDOS is governed by a board consisting of two types of directors:

- Electoral Area Directors: elected directly by rural area voters and serve four-year terms.
- Municipal Directors: first elected to a municipal council, and are then appointed by their council to the regional district board for a one-year term.

Watch for more on the RDOS 60th anniversary during Local Government Awareness Week, May 10-16, 2026.

Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA)

The RDOS is partnering with five municipalities, four local syilx Similkameen/Okanagan communities, and all Electoral Areas to complete a Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) for each community. The HRVAs will inform local and regional emergency response plans, land-use policies, and climate adaptation initiatives across the RDOS. The project is grant-funded through the Province of B.C. and will take place over two years, from January 2025 to December 2026.



For further information, please visit
the HRVA project page:

rdosregionalconnections.ca

Watch the HRVA video on the
RDOS YouTube channel:

youtube.com/@OkanaganSimilkameen

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies are an "all-of-society" issue, driven by the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters like wildfires, floods, and extreme heat.

Take away the stress by preparing now for wildfires, floods, and other emergencies.

Follow these three steps to prepare for emergencies at home or at work.

Know the risks: Knowing which hazards you need to plan for is the first step in getting prepared.

Make a plan: An emergency plan says how you and the people you live with will respond to a disaster.

Build a kit: Follow the basic supply list to build your kits.



Learn more: preparedbc.ca

FireSmart

Whether you're completing regular yard maintenance or making large-scale changes during renovations or landscaping, you can make choices to help protect your home from wildfire.

Visit firesmartbc.ca to download [guides and manuals](#).





Receive RDOS notifications via email, text, or phone.

Log in to your account to update your topics, locations, and notification preferences.

Register or log in: register.voyent-alert.com
Scan the QR code to learn more:



Notifications can be sent to telephone landlines.



Call RDOS Communications for assistance with your account.

250-490-4148

Voyent Alert! video tutorial

BE INFORMED RECEIVE EMERGENCY ALERTS ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

REGISTRATION IS **FREE**, SIMPLE AND ANONYMOUS.

Watch the video tutorial on the RDOS YouTube channel

youtube.com/@OkanaganSimilkameen

- Registering for RDOS notifications
- Updating location and notification preferences
- Staying connected to your community

Electoral Area Directors

You can find contacts and resource links on the [Electoral Area News](https://rdos.bc.ca/electoral-area-news) page at rdos.bc.ca.

Electoral Area "A" - Rural Osoyoos

Director Mark Pendergraft, RDOS chair
250-485-2289

Electoral Area "B" - Cawston, Lower Similkameen

Director George Bush
250-499-0376

Electoral Area "C" - Rural Oliver

Director Irwin Chahal
250-460-1319

Electoral Area "D" - Skaha East, Okanagan Falls

Director Matt Taylor
778-931-6080

Electoral Area "E" - Naramata

Director Adrienne Fedrigo
250-460-0282

Electoral Area "F" - Greater West Bench, Rural Summerland, Okanagan Lake West

Director Riley Gettens
250-488-0246

Electoral Area "G" - Rural Keremeos, Hedley, Olalla

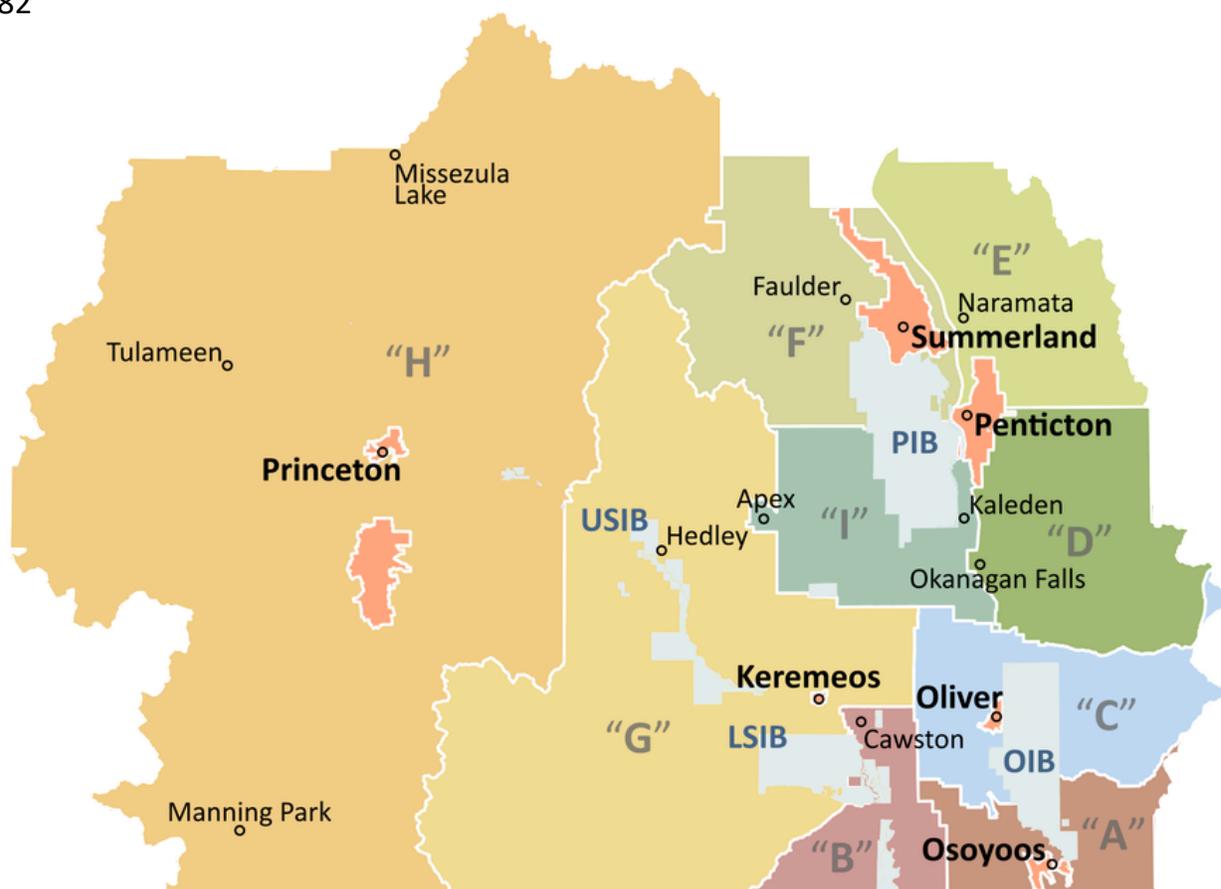
Director Tim Roberts, OSRHD vice-chair
250-499-0900

Electoral Area "H" - Rural Princeton, Tulameen, Coalmont, Eastgate

Director Bob Coyne
250-582-9090

Electoral Area "I" - Skaha West, Kaleden, Apex

Director Subrina Monteith
250-460-0723



Watch RDOS Regional Matters on YouTube

Interviews and video segments highlighting projects, services, and issues in the South Okanagan and Similkameen.



Visit the [RDOS YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) to watch the latest videos.

