



NATURE, RECREATION & SPORTS

BEAVER

from the legend story Coyote’s Winter Dance, courtesy of the En’Owkin Centre

Coyote was living with his wife Mole and their four sons. Each one of Coyote’s sons had tried to put on a winter dance and were killed one by one by Blue Jay who was sent down by the animals in the highest mountains to see who had given them the power to put on a winter dance. (Only real Indian doctors were given the special songs and power to hold winter dances.) After the death of all of his sons, Coyote decided that he had nothing to lose and would put on a winter dance himself. After Coyote had sweat-bathed and built a dance house, he summoned his special magical powers because he wanted to know everything that there was to know. His first power agreed to help Coyote but first Coyote was to turn the first power into his special animal power and do exactly as he was instructed. Coyote agreed to this. Coyote started to sing his special song and dance.

The Chief asked all the animals in the highest mountain who had given this person the power to sing, but no one knew who had done this. The Chief instructed Blue Jay to go down and kill Coyote because he was lying and disturbing their rest. But because of Coyote’s special animal power he knew that Blue Jay was being sent down to kill him, and when Blue Jay arrived Coyote poked Blue Jay in the chest with his cane and knocked him unconscious. When Blue Jay came to and returned to the mountains he scolded the other animals and said, “Someone must have given this singer some power. Look what he did to me. I was almost seriously hurt”. But none of the animals knew who had given Coyote this power. Blue Jay refused to go down again so Lynx was asked to go down and observe, but Lynx was afraid because he knew that Coyote knew he was being sent down. The Chief spoke to Beaver, telling him that he better go down and see what was going on, and that he didn’t have to do anything -- all he had to do was watch. Beaver agreed. At the winter dance Coyote told the people (who were actually his other special magical powers turned into animal people) that Beaver was the one who was coming down to watch and listen.

Beaver came down from the mountains, as far as the river below the dance house. As Beaver swam up the river under water, Coyote’s spiritual animal power warned him that Beaver was close and instructed Coyote to take the fuzz from the cat-tail plants and spread it on the surface of the water. Coyote did this and when Beaver surfaced his eyes were covered with fuzz. Beaver couldn’t see anything while Coyote danced around watching him. Coyote got his cane ready to poke Beaver in the chest, but Beaver’s eyes cleared just enough so that he was able to avoid being hit in the chest. Coyote’s cane only nicked Beaver’s little finger. **That is why today, Beaver has a curled claw.**

South Okanagan is a natural fit for people who love nature, sports and recreation. You can find activities all year round. In the summer there are many options for fishing (e.g. Yellow Lake) and water sports (e.g. Okanagan Lake). From spring to fall you can enjoy biking, hiking (e.g. Kettle Valley Railway trail) and rock climbing (e.g. Skaha Bluffs). For winter sports there are two great resorts – Apex and Baldy Mountain. There are a number of traditional sport clubs, such as soccer, rugby and rock climbing, as well as non-traditional – such as disk golf and pickleball. And, of course, each community has a community centre that has a swimming pool and dozens of sport and recreational activities.

- Penticton Recreation Guide: <https://www.penticton.ca/parks-recreation/programs-registration/recreation-guide>
- Okanagan Hockey Academy: <https://www.okanaganhockey.com>
- Penticton Community Centre, 325 Power Street, Penticton; <https://www.penticton.ca/parks-recreation>
- Kisu Swim Club, 325 Power St, Penticton; 250-493-1161; <https://www.teamunify.com/team/cankisu/page/home>
- Penticton Soccer Club, 550 West Eckhart Ave, Penticton; 250-492-5505
- Nickelplate Cross Country Club, Provincial Park for skiing; 250-292-8110
- Penticton Disk Golf Club, 1275 Riddle Rd, Penticton; https://www.discgolfscene.com/clubs/Penticton_Disc_Golf_Club
- Penticton Tennis Club, <https://www.pentictontennisclub.com>
- South Okanagan Naturalists' Club, <https://southokanagannature.com>
- Harlequins Rugby Club, <https://www.premiershiprugby.com/club/harlequins>
- Penticton Pickleball Club: <https://pentictonpickleball.ca>
- Apex Mountain Resort, <https://www.apexresort.com/>; 250-292-8222, 1-877-777-2739
- Baldy Mountain Resort, 2680 Mount Baldy Rd, Oliver; 250-498-4089
- Skaha Rock Climbing Adventures, <https://www.skaharockclimbing.com>
- Oliver Community Center (For information on the many annual activities); 250-498-4985
- Princeton Leisure Guide (sport clubs, camps and more); <https://www.princeton.ca/p/leisure-guide>

“The land never fails in its beauty and its essence to take my breath away and calm me like nothing else can. I forget the breakdown of our name for it but I know and feel that we as sqilxw, as Syilx people are connected to it. As relatives we are born from it. We have parts of the land within our blood, our bodies, the rocks as minerals, the water our life blood that flows through our veins, the air the oxygen, the wind our breath, you name it, it is there within us as a reminder. Our captikwt remind us of our responsibilities and roles we have as sqilxw among the land. I cherish it all and keep it close to my heart.” - Brandy Baptiste