



Dena Kayeh Institute:
Dane nan yĕ dāh Network Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

Introduction

The Kaska Nation has reclaimed our role as stewards of the land and resources in their ancestral territory. Effective stewardship requires that areas of high ecological, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value are identified and protected, and ecological processes continue to generate biological diversity.

Toward this end, in 2014 the Dena Kayeh Institute in partnership with the Daylu Dena Council (DDC), Dease River First Nation (DRFN) and Kwadacha First Nation (KFN) developed the Dane nan yé dāh Network (“Network”). The Network is intended to provide long term ecological and cultural monitoring support to the three (3) Kaska communities in British Columbia.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide direction and guide the work of the Network over the next five (5) years. It will serve as a key management tool and roadmap for developing and measuring the success of annual work plans, and more generally for fulfilling the mandate of the Network and for the benefit of current and future generations of Kaska Nation citizens.



Background

The ancestral territory of the Kaska Nation is 24 million hectares (93,000 square miles), about the size of the entire state of Oregon. It spans three (3) provinces and territories (BC, Yukon and Northwest Territories) and constitutes 25% of the Yukon Territory, and 10% of the entire land area of BC. The majestic northern boreal forest regions of interior BC and the Yukon have some of the continent's most expansive and impressive wilderness areas, with a great diversity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Extensive mountain ranges and wild rivers frame pristine boreal forest watersheds. Large free ranging populations of woodland caribou, moose, Dall's sheep, Stone sheep, a full suite of large carnivores, and hundreds of thousands of migrating neo-tropical songbirds and waterfowl make their home in these diverse boreal landscapes. Only a few roads cross this region, one of the wildest landscapes on the North American continent. The Dena Kayeh Institute, the organization that supports the Network, was created in 2004 from direction from the Kaska National Assembly held in Fort Ware BC. The mission of the Institute is to protect the ecological integrity of Kaska lands and waters and enhance the cultural and socioeconomic well-being of our people.

The institute undertook initial work in natural resource-based initiatives in cooperation with environmental groups, government and industry. The overarching and long-term strategic goals of the natural resource-based initiatives are to:

- Collaborate in influencing policy and policy makers;
- Work in areas of mutual interest with respect to sustainable development, research, conservation, and public education;
- Develop decision support tools and capacity for land and resource joint decision making; and
- Collect, store and manage Kaska traditional knowledge.

DDC and DRFN have both been running guardians' programs since 2014; and KFN started their community program in 2018. Collectively, they comprise the Dane nan yé dāh Network. Dane nan yé dāh translates to “person looking after the land”.

Kaska Principles

These principles are the foundation of a Kaska land ethic:

1. Maintain ecological processes, which sustain biological diversity;
2. Respect for sacred laws – A'IE and Dene K'eh;
3. Respect for fish and wildlife;
4. Safeguarding Kaska intellectual property rights to traditional knowledge; and
5. Sharing benefits.



Vision

The vision of the Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network is to revitalize the stewardship responsibilities of the Kaska people, and to protect lands and waters which are central to the preservation of our unique identity and vibrant Kaska culture.

Goal 1: Expand the Networks' stewardship activities in the territory

1. Expand data collection and monitoring activities with respect to water (including ground water), morel mushrooms and wildlife health and harvest.
2. Develop harvesting policies and processes for key wildlife and fish species.
3. Expand field patrol crew size, area work and frequency.
4. Develop a management plan for invasive species.
5. Develop a fish monitoring and habitat assessment program
6. Design and implement a cultural features monitoring program to conserve, protect and support appropriate use of cultural areas.
7. Design and implement a human use monitoring program.
8. Continue to refine the Climate Change Risk Assessment and implement priority recommendations from the 2018 assessment.
9. Develop relationships with funders and advocate for core, stable, flexible funding to support long term monitoring programs, administrative capacity and effective resource management.

Goal 2: Build guardian expertise within the Network

Objectives:

1. Train and employ 2 full time guardians, 2 seasonal guardians, 1 Elder and 1 Youth in enviromental monitoring within each of the 3 communities.
2. Create a program orientation package and individualized training plans for all staff with a focus on develop future leaders within the Network.
3. Engage and educate community members about the Network’s successes and key land management trends/issues (eg. Hunting practices resepecting cow moose
4. Begin building a future guardian workforce by engaging youth and adults in schools and land-based initiatives, beginning with a focus on water monitoring.
5. Engage with Elders and knowledge holders to document traditional Dena land stewardship laws for key habitats and food sources, and the roles and responsiblities of being Dena on the land.
6. Establish communities-wide data “citizen scientist” initiative in which all community members can contribute to the collection of data and data reporting.



Goal 3: Support co-management and consent-based decision making.

Objectives:

1. Assist with the implementation of the monitoring initiatives and opportunities negotiated for the Nation.
2. Complete the development of the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (KIPCA) including an operational stewardship plan that that sets out how the guardian programs assists with the stewardship and links to the governance.

Goal 4: Work collaboratively with neighbouring Nations to advance regional stewardship priorities

Objectives:

1. Continue to play a leadership role with the 3Nations and neighbouring First Nation guardian programs to actively advance regional priorities.
2. Explore options to share data that informs collaborative decision-making across the region and helps to raise awareness within communities regarding key wildlife and habitat issues.
3. Begin discussions with the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council regarding the development of a Kaska Nation- regional guardian network.

Goal 5: Establish strategic partnerships to build the knowledge base and capacity in the communities

Objectives:

1. Identify new partners such as education institutions and non-governmental organizations to help incorporate language and land-based curriculum into the Network's programs.
2. Identify new partners to establish a land-based curriculum that engages community members in traditional and modern land/resource use and monitoring practices.
3. Identify partners to undertake research and education initiatives of mutual interest.



Goal 6: Address key infrastructure, coordination and communications needs of the Network

Objectives

1. Design a chain of command process protocols with communities which clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, processes and steps for reporting, responding and supporting data-informed decision-making.
2. Develop a dedicated program logo and brand for uniforms for Land Guardians so that they may be identified out on the land as well as within communities during gatherings or events.
3. Develop, implement and, maintain an annual “seasonal round” calendar to document the achievement of Land Guardian activities and commitments.
4. Develop a Human Resource Policy including a Code of Conduct that reflect Elders teachings about the roles and responsibilities of being Dene on the land
5. Establish a formalized Health and Safety Policy.
6. Engage with community leadership to explore options for new office space.
7. Conduct a cost-based equipment and infrastructure needs assessment of the Land Guardians and implement plans to fulfill gaps and understand capacity of uses.



Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the Strategic Plan requires the ongoing evaluation of progress. This duty falls to the Network’s leadership, who lead, monitor and measure the success of each of the goals and objectives in the plan, and making changes to those as required.

In addition to developing annual plans which link to the Strategic Plan, it is recommended that

1. Gather baseline data on an issue in order to demonstrate growth or change in a certain area.
2. Identify indicators and measures that will signify the completion of the objectives and achievement of a goal.
3. Create a plan for collecting the necessary data to measure success.

Dane nan yé dāh Network 2019-2020 Annual Plan

Project Description	Start Date	End Date	Link to Strategic Plan Goal	Link to Strategic Plan Objective
Water monitoring	2019-06-01	2022-03-31	1	1
Training- Swiftwater rescue	2019-05-27	2019-05-29	2	2
Training- Wildlife human conflict reduction	TBD	TBD	2	2
Training- Wilderness First Aid	2019-07-09	2019-07-10	2	2
Training- Cultural Awareness and land and resource management	TBD	TBD	2	2
Training- field monitor training	2019-06-01	2019-08-30	2	2
Training- Ecosystem based Monitoring	TBD	TBD	2	2
Joint BC/Kaska game checks	2019-08-01	2019-10-31	4	1
Wildlife Harvest Survey	2019-06-01	2022-03-01	1	1
Field Patrols	2019-06-01	2022-11-01	1	1
Wildlife Health Sampling	2019-06-01	2020-03-03	1	1
Liard Late Winter Moose Survey	2019-11-01	2019-12-01	1	1
Morel Mushroom Harvest Monitoring	2019-06-01	2019-07-31	1	1
Community Education and Engagement	2019-06-01	2022-02-31	2	3
Invasive Species management plan	2019-11-01	2020-03-31	1	4
Strategic Plan and Logo development	2019-06-01	2019-07-01	6	2
Develop Chain of Command protocol for Incident reporting	2019-06-01	2019-07-01	6	1
C.A.B.I.N/Stream project	2019-08-26	2019-08-29	1	1
Collect Traditional Ecological Knowledge	2019-06-01	2022-03-31	2	5



MANAGED BY
THE DENA KAYEH INSTITUTE