
News Release Communiqué

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FOREST MANAGEMENT ACCORD CONCLUDED FOR SOUTHEAST YUKON

WATSON LAKE , YUKON (July 29, 2002) – Today, Kaska chiefs and representatives of the Government of Yukon and Government of Canada signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on forest management for the southeast Yukon.

Scott Kent, Minister of Energy, Mines, and Resources signed the memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Government of Yukon. Chief Daniel Morris of the Liard First Nation and Chief Jack Caesar of Ross River Dena Council signed on behalf of the Kaska. Larry Bagnell, Member of Parliament for Yukon — representing the Government of Canada — signed on behalf of the Honourable Robert D. Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

“Effective management of Yukon's forests requires strong partnership between governments,” said Minister Kent. “This memorandum of understanding is a critical step, one that will allow us to jointly develop balanced and responsible forest management practices in the southeast Yukon, both for today and for after devolution.”

“This memorandum of understanding is an important development in the management of the timber resource in the southeast Yukon,” said MP Bagnell. “The accord establishes the framework for cooperation among the three governments with a mutual interest in the development of a sustainable timber resource while balancing the diverse interests of Yukoners. A sustainable northern economy is an integral part of the Government of Canada’s mandate to improve the quality of life of Northerners.”

“The Kaska Dena Council Consultation Protocol sets out a process for the Government of Canada to consult the Kaska Dena on forestry matters related to the Kaska traditional territory in the Yukon. The protocol recognizes that the Government of Canada and the Kaska Dena Council will work co-operatively to ensure the Kaska Dena’s interests in the forest resource are addressed,” said Dave Porter, chair of the Kaska Dena Council.

“The Kaska Forest Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding establishes a comprehensive planning process that enables the Kaska to participate in forestry decisions in the Kaska traditional territory, a change the Kaska Nation has been advocating for years,” said Chief Daniel Morris of the Liard First Nation.

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“Kaska people have provided stewardship to the land for generations upon generations. This agreement allows for forest development to occur while respecting Kaska's historic relationship with the land,” said Chief Jack Caesar of the Ross River Dena Council.

The memorandum of understanding establishes a formal mechanism for the governments to participate in the management of the forest resource in the Kaska traditional territory. It also provides for the development of a regional forest resources management plan which will provide broad direction in the management of the forest resource in the southeast Yukon. While the regional forest resources management plan is being developed, the MOU will help create more certainty for industry.

The MOU also fulfils a recommendation from the Tough Report on Yukon forestry by paving the way for the Kaska Forest Resources Stewardship Council. The seven-member Council will direct forest resource management planning and recommend forest resources guidelines and policies through a cooperative and coordinated relationship between the Kaska and the governments of Canada and Yukon.

Dave Porter, chair of the Kaska Dena Council and officials of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development earlier signed a consultation protocol to establish communications protocols in support of the MOU.

A backgrounder is attached

This release and backgrounder is also available on the Internet at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>

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BACKGROUNDER

MOU ON FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR THE SOUTHEAST YUKON

On July 29, 2002, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on forest management for the southeast Yukon was signed by the Kaska Dena Council, Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. The MOU establishes a formal mechanism for the First Nations to participate in the management of the forest resource in Kaska traditional territory in the Yukon.

The MOU also provides for the development of a regional forest resources management plan which will provide broad direction on the management of the forest resource in the southeast Yukon.

A number of principles will guide the development of the forest management plan:

- the principles established by both the Canada Forest Accord and the National Forest Strategy (1998-2003);
- an integrated and balanced approach in planning, management, policy and land tenure development;
- remedial measures and monitoring;
- Timber Supply Analyses will be based on the management plans developed under the MOU;
- resource management in the Kaska traditional territory will integrate traditional knowledge and experience of the Kaska with that of the scientific community;
- the Kaska traditional land-use will be considered and best efforts must be made to protect heritage sites; and,
- the Kaska First Nation should receive economic benefits from forest resource development in the Kaska Traditional Territory.

In addition, the MOU on forest management paves the way for the establishment of the Kaska Forest Resources Stewardship Council. The purpose of the council will be to direct forest resource management planning and recommend forest resources guidelines and policies through a cooperative and coordinated relationship between the Kaska First Nation the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon.

The Council will be mainly responsible for:

- directing and coordinating the preparation of a Forest Resources Management plan that will be recommended to the respective authorities for consideration;
- providing interim harvest planning recommendations; and,
- developing recommendations regarding forest tenures.

The council will be comprised of seven members, three to be appointed by the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon, and three members appointed by the Kaska Dena Council. A neutral chairperson selected by the council partners. Members will be selected on the basis of their experience in forest resources management and their understanding of the Kaska Traditional Territory in the Yukon.

The council will also facilitate input from the public and stakeholders during the development of the forest resources management plans.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon have committed to funding the council's operating costs, based on a budget to be negotiated with the Kaska Nation.