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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

With the holiday season upon us and as we prepare to welcome in a New Year, it brings time to reflect on our accomplishments over the past year. What an eventful year this has been!

Great strides were made in land protection and management with the signing of a Strategic Engagement Agreement and a Strategic Land Use Plan with the Province, and the designation of Ne'ah as a protected area. As well, great progress has been made in the negotiation of an Incremental Treaty Agreement, which would provide economic opportunities for our communities, independent of and in advance of a Treaty.

This was a year in which the community of Daylu proved itself as a community of profoundly strong and resilient people. Not only did this community survive and support each other through a devastating flood, but went on only a few weeks later to host

Gathering Around the Fire, an historically significant gathering to honour Lower Post Residential School students. The gathering, attended by approximately 800 people, had a tremendously positive impact and, as well, has laid the foundation for future reconciliation between northern nations.

I hope that we all stand proud together in our accomplishments of 2012, and I look forward to working with Kaska leaders and community members in the New Year, as we continue to work together to build a strong future for our children.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, and may you and your families have the best year ever in 2013.

Souga Sin La

George Miller, Chair
Kaska Dena Council



Treaty Update

Treaty Negotiations have continued between KDC, Canada and BC in 2012 with nine Treaty Side Table meetings taking place between January and October, 2012, two Treaty Side Table conference calls, and two Treaty Main Table meetings. While a primary focus has been on negotiating an Incremental Treaty Agreement, progress has been made in completing four new chapters of the Agreement in Principle.

The Treaty Side Table is currently focusing on the lands and resources chapters of the AIP, which include: wildlife, forestry, migratory birds, environmental assessment

and protection, access, water, culture and heritage, parks and protected areas, and subsurface resources. The four recently completed Chapters are ready for legal review, and the others are still being negotiated.

The KDC negotiating team has made progress in negotiating the Incremental Treaty Agreement and has been communicating updates with the KDC Board of Directors as per the KDC Communications and Agreement Approval Policies. The negotiating team will continue to update the KDC Board of Directors as negotiations move forward.

LAND PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Strategic Engagement Agreement

On March 27, 2012 the Province of British Columbia signed a Strategic Engagement Agreement (SEA) with the Kaska Dena, followed by a signing ceremony on May 17th at the legislature in Victoria, BC.

Kaska drummers, Dean Bolton, Victor Kisoun, Brian Ladue and Russell Magun opened the signing ceremony with a Kaska prayer song and closed with a Kaska celebration song. Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Mary Polak, spoke to the significance of the SEA for BC and Kaska. Kaska Dena Chair, George Miller commended the province for entering into this agreement of shared decision making in order to advance shared interests in a Government to Government relationship in an open and respectful manner.

For years the Kaska communities have had to address resource application such as mineral exploration without any capacity or funding. It has been an uphill battle where the resource companies and

government seemed to always be the ones holding the cards. The courts and legal system were the main leverage point for Kaska. Through the SEA this will now change.

The Strategic Engagement Agreement will provide Kaska Dena with stable funding and capacity for three years to engage more efficiently on resource development applications. Through the Strategic Engagement Agreement, establishment of the Natural Resource Council will provide opportunities for Kaska Dena to have a voice at a common table with BC. As major projects or concerns arise by either party, the Natural Resource Council can be the body to bring forward these items for discussion. It will also provide the decision makers the opportunities to better understand the Kaska Dena cultural and societal linkages to our fish, wildlife, land and water.

The official implementation date of the SEA was June 22, 2012. Hiring and training of Kaska individuals took place in advance in order to be ready for this date.

Strategic Engagement Agreement

Responsible officials of the parties:

Bill Lux, Kaska Dena
Ed Hoffman, Province of BC

Co-Chairs of the parties:

Bill Lux, Kaska Dena
Maggie Marshland, Province of BC

Kaska Natural Resources Society

Steven Jakesta, Regional Coordinator
Crystal Carlick, Land and Resource Officer, Good Hope Lake
Shawna Case, Land and Resource Officer, Kwadacha
Vanessa Law, Land and Resource Officer, Lower Post

Photo Credits:

BC Government
Brian Ladue
Bill Lux
Michelle Miller
Pamela Moon
Jody Nishima
Rosemary Rowlands
Kali Spitzer



Front, L to R: George Miller, KDC Chair, Minister Mary Polak, MARR. Back: Kaska, BC Gov't & Mining Representatives.

SLUPA Signing Ceremony at Rapid River

An historic signing ceremony took place on August 22, 2012 at Rapid River. The Honourable Steve Thomson, *Minister* of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations came to Rapid River



Minister Thomson joins Kaska in celebratory Circle Dance.

to represent the Province of British Columbia in a signing ceremony with Kaska regarding the Strategic Land Use Plan Agreement that was announced by Premier Clark in February, 2012 and the designation of the Ne'ah (Horseranch Range) as a Protected Area.

During the signing ceremony words were expressed by both the province and Kaska in recognition of the significance of this accomplishment. Gifts were exchanged, the Kaska drummers performed a Kaska drum song and Minister Thomson and other members of the BC government joined Kaska in a celebratory circle dance. Helicopter rides were provided to fly Kaska and others over the Ne'ah as part of the celebration.

The designation of the Ne'ah is an accomplishment to be celebrated. Back in 2004, the Kaska Dena Council and British Columbia agreed to a final land use plan on forestry and wildlife management in the Dease Liard area in the Traditional Territory. At that time, Kaska had proposed the Ne'ah Horseranch Range as a

protected area. In 2008, Kaska Dena Council and British Columbia met again to discuss finishing the plan to set land use direction for mining, oil & gas, tourism, and energy in the Dease Liard Area.

A part of this work is the protection of the Ne'ah Horseranch range, where Kaska and British Columbia will be joint managers of a protected area from Boya Lake to the Muskwa Kechika Management Area. Within this area is a special management zone – Gu Cha Duga, meaning “For the Grandchildren”. The special management zone is established to manage Kaska values to avoid or reduce development activities around the Horseranch Range.

Our Elders have told us that the Horseranch Range is an area of regional importance and a breadbasket for the Kaska Dena. It is an area that people would go to when food was scarce. Our Elders have told us that it is where the animals go to get fat. It is an area the Elders have wanted protected for a very long time.

All of this now been achieved. The Horseranch Range has been approved as the Ne'ah Conservancy Area and will be collaboratively managed by the Kaska Dena and British Columbia.



Kaska Drummers: Victor Kisoun, Brian Ladue, Russell Magun & Dennis Shorty.

“The special management zone is established to manage Kaska values to avoid or reduce development activities around the Horseranch Range.”

GATHERING AROUND THE FIRE

From August 10-13th, the Kaska Dena, Tahltan and Taku River Tlingit Nations came together to stand strong in support of one another and create the healing space required to hold *Gathering Around the Fire*, one of the most significant healing gatherings of our time. Hosted by the community of Daylu, over 800 people joined together for four days to commemorate former students of the Lower Post Residential School.

The focus of the Gathering was on healing, culture, traditions, and cleansing of the land. It was a time for building relationships, healing broken relationships, reuniting with friends and relatives and most of all celebrating our strength as individuals, families, communities and Nations. It was also an opportunity to gain a measure of closure for former Lower Post Residential School students from across BC and the Yukon.



The community members of Daylu built an impressive Dena Drum Circle which surrounded the sacred fire that was kept burning for the full four days. Chiefs Jack Caesar, Eric Morris and Elders presided over healing and cleansing ceremonies for former students and for the land.

Each day Kaska, Tahltan and Taku River Tlingit joined together with drumming and dancing.

Dignitaries including National Chief Shawn Atleo, Grand Chief Stuart Phillip and Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, attended the gathering to share their support and honour former students.

“There is not one person at this gathering who did not change this weekend”.

- former Lower Post Residential School Student



Centre: Deputy Chief Peter Stone. Back: Chiefs Brian Ladue, Eric Morris, Jack Caesar & Kaska Drummers, Dennis Shorty & Victor Kisoun.



National Chief Shawn Atleo.

The days were filled with ceremony and the nights were filled with music and dancing, as each evening the Kaska, Tahltan or Tlingit Nation hosted the feast and showcased their own performers. The Dena Zagi Band were a popular hit on the Kaska night.

Kaska Dena News

Following the Gathering many spoke of new healing and their new freedom.

Dave Porter, Kaska Dena Council, had these wishes for the future.

“The cleansing of these grounds here in this community is going to help to make Daylu whole again. No longer should any survivor be afraid to visit this place.

Today, tomorrow and for the days to follow:

Let us begin the work to end our suffering

Let us end the hurt

Let us stop hurting each other

Let us refuse to be victims any longer

Let us hate no more

Let us forgive



*Let us love humanity once more
Let us reunite our families, rebuild our communities, and strengthen our Nations
We are survivors”*



“The cleansing of these grounds here in this community is going to help to make Daylu whole again.”

Natural Resource Council Update

A Natural Resource Council (NRC) meeting was held September 21, 2012 in Prince George as per a special request by the Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resources Operations, (MFLNRO). This was regarding the Mackenzie Timber Supply Review. Kwadacha's NRC member attended along with the Kaska Working Group representatives. The review process will be determined by NRC members through recommendations to the MFLNRO.

The first official NRC meeting was held November 5-8, 2012 in Prince George. On November 5th the Fish and Wildlife Working Group members met to discuss issues with Wildlife management and regulations and the Parks representatives met regarding current parks planning and future parks plans. The outcomes from the meetings are then reported to the NRC members.

A Meet and Greet meeting was held November 6 -7, 2012 as part of the NRC meeting week. It was very important to the representatives of both Parties to the SEA Agreement that they have a face to face meeting to present their values and commitment to the Government to Government process. There was a very

positive turn out, in total there was over 60 representatives attending the two days.



Matthew Scarr, MARR Team North and Steven Jakesta, Regional Coordinator, SEA.

“It was very important to the representatives of both Parties of the SEA Agreement that they have a face to face meeting to present their values and commitment to the Government to Government Process.”



SEA Co-Chairs: Bill Lux, Kaska Dena and Maggie Marshland, BC Gov't.

This was followed by the NRC meeting. The NRC is made up of three representatives from each Party and invited participants as agreed to by the Parties. Agenda items included: Review of the Cassiar Timber Supply Area, (TSR), Kaska proposals table at the NRC meeting for discussion and consideration- Cumulative Impacts, Land Use Planning, Mineral Exploration and Development Management. There was no new proposed Notice of Work from the Province at this time.

Natural Resource Council Members

- ▶ Roy Carlick, Dease River First Nation
- ▶ John R McCook, Kwadacha First Nation
- ▶ Derek Loots, Daylu Dena Council

Kaska Share Decision Working Group Members

- ▶ Norm Maclean, Technical Advisor
- ▶ Dave Crampton, Forestry Advisor

COMMUNITY NEWS!

Lower Post Recovering from the Liard River Flood

The small community of Lower Post is progressively moving along in the after math of the flood they suffered during June 2012.

The community, which is located directly alongside the Liard River, suffered the overwhelming effects of the river exceeding its historic high of 7 meters during 1972. The, river which reached 8 meters in June, flooded homes, washed out roads and left the community without power.



The result of massive rainfall, combined with fast snowmelt at higher elevations left the community in a state of disaster, requiring the evacuation of community members and seriously damaging 14 homes. The Alaska Highway was washed out north and south of the community cutting off much needed goods and services.

Daylu Dena Council Deputy Chief Peter Stone stated in a press release on June 10, 2012 that he “would really like to recognize and acknowledge the Daylu Dena Emergency Management Team, cooks, staff and community members who have gone beyond the call of duty.” This statement represents how well the

community responded to the flood.

The staff of Iyon Kechika has been tirelessly working 7 days a week as a result of the flood and doing a great job. Furthermore, to date the moving crew has successfully moved 6 homes from the flood site to the newly constructed subdivision.



The response and support from surrounding communities, businesses, and government was overwhelming and we acknowledge and send our thanks and gratitude to everyone that donated time, supplies, condolences and money.

In the words of Maya Angelou – “You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.”



“The response and support from surrounding communities, businesses, and government was overwhelming.”

**We're on the web!
Visit:
www.kaskadena-council.com**

Kaska Dena News

ELECTION RESULTS FOR ROSS RIVER DENA COUNCIL

Ross River Dena Council elections took place on Friday, November 30th, 2012.

Congratulations go out to the new Chief and Council:

Chief: Brian Ladue
Deputy Chief: Verna Nukon
Councillors: Jenny Caesar
James Dick, and
Yvonne Moon

Merry Christmas from Kaska Dena Council



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