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## Message from the Chair



With the holiday season upon us and as 2010 comes to a close, it is a good time to reflect on the past year and the on-going efforts of KDC and Kaska Dena leadership to protect Kaska rights and to build economic opportunities for our people.

This year we have made good progress in the negotiation of a treaty in British Columbia and in the negotiation of agreements to collaboratively work with the Government of British Columbia to manage our lands and resources. And we continued to assist our communities in negotiating agreements with those proposing development projects within our Traditional Territory.

But 2010 has not been without its challenges, and in the final weeks of the year we are faced with a provincial government that will be reluctant to make any significant commitments until it establishes its policy directions and priorities under the guidance of a new leader. This will, undoubtedly, slow down some of our negotiations for a few months.

As we move forward in the new year, it is important to remember that we are part of the larger Kaska Nation. We, the members of the Kaska Nation, must continue to work together to provide a strong

and united front so that we can more effectively work to improve the quality of our lives and the lives of our children. I look forward to working with other Kaska leaders in the new year to achieve this objective. I am also committed to looking for new and better ways to seek and share information with our members.

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe New Year. Let us remember what Christmas is all about. It is the birthday of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is the time of year when we enjoy the company of family and friends. It is that time of year, when we care and share with the less fortunate, when we can extend a helping hand, and bless others.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, and may you and your families have the best year ever in 2011.

Mussi-Cho

George Miller, Chair  
Kaska Dena Council



## TREATY UPDATE

– Malcolm Foy –

**N**egotiations between KDC and British Columbia and Canada regarding a treaty in British Columbia continued to take place in the late summer and fall of 2010.

These negotiations have taken place in a variety of settings: two meetings of the Chief Negotiators in September and November to discuss major issues; one Main Table negotiating session in September to review progress and provide direction to negotiators at the Side Table; and four Side Table negotiating sessions, at which most details of the treaty chapters are negotiated, between August 10 and October 20. In addition, a

meeting of the Social Side Table, formed to resolve some issues of immediate concern to Kaska communities, was held in Lower Post in September and a working group, formed to negotiate the details of a treaty chapter on Culture and Heritage, met in October.

Over this time period, discussions have occurred about several land and resource treaty chapters, including Roads and Crown Corridors, Expropriation, Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection, Migratory Birds, Wildfire Suppression (as part of a chapter on Forest Resources), Access, and

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Water. In addition, negotiations about the financial aspects of the treaty were initiated in October at a meeting in which BC and Canada tabled their interests in Taxation, Capital Transfer, and Fiscal Relations.

Of some thirty chapters thought to be required for an Agreement in Principle, twenty-seven are in some stage of negotiation. Some chapters, such as Approval and Ratification, Indian Act Transition, Implementation, Dispute Resolution, Eligibility and Enrolment, and Migratory

Birds are close to being completed to the point that they are ready for legal review. Several others, such as Culture and Heritage, Environmental Assessment, Forest Resources, and Wildlife and Fish are well advanced as well.

While negotiations will slow down in the last half of December while people take a Christmas break, the pace of negotiations will pick up again in January with six negotiating sessions scheduled between the beginning of January and the end of March.

## LAND PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

### A Step Forward for Kaska Dena in Dealing With Land Referrals

Responding to the vast number of land referrals that are received annually has remained a challenge for Kaska communities, in spite of the efforts that have been made over the years. The volume of referrals coupled with the lack of capacity or process for dealing with the referrals has continued to plague Kaska communities.

This year has brought a step forward to Kaska Dena in the handling of referrals through a combination of the BC Capacity Initiative Funding and a financial contribution for new referral tracking software from Denali, a company formed by ConocoPhillips and BP to construct the

Alaska Highway Pipeline.

In the late spring of 2010, through the BC Capacity Initiative, Daylu Dena Council and Dease River First Nation were each able to hire a Land and Resource Officer. Vanessa Law and Crystal Carlick were hired respectively to take on the task of managing referrals. Vanessa and Crystal have received training through a workshop and on-going mentoring from Norm MacLean and Bill Lux, assisted by Corrine Porter and Blandon Donnessey. Danny Case is the Chair of the Kwadacha Natural Resource Agency and is currently managing the Consultation and Accommodation process for Kwadacha First Nation.

KDC is pleased to say that the new referral tracking software has been purchased and installed, and we would like to extend our thanks to Denali for their financial contribution that has allowed Kaska Dena to advance in our ability to manage and process referrals. The acquisition of information management systems and increasing our human resource capacity through training are valued steps toward building enhanced regional governance of our land and resources.



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Silvercorp and Kaska Develop an MOU

– Michelle Miller –

The BC Kaska Dena and Silvercorp Inc. have entered a Memorandum of Understanding with respect to the Silvertip Project which is located in BC Kaska traditional territory. The MOU establishes an effective partnership between the Silvercorp and the Kaska communities which includes a joint objective of maximizing Kaska employment during the exploration, construction and operation of the Silvertip Project.

Silvercorp Inc, a Canadian owned company, is China's largest primary silver-producing mine, and currently has four permits in the Hunan province of China Kaska. In February 2010 Silvercorp acquired the Silvertip silver-lead-zinc project, located in northern British Columbia, Canada, just south of the Yukon/BC border.

The Kaska-Silvercorp MOU provides Kaska members, both on and off reserve, priority access to all project related positions subject to those members meeting the minimum qualifications for the available positions.

As a result of the agreement with Silvercorp, Kaska Dena Council has been developing a strategy to prepare the Kaska workforce to take advantage of the opportunities that this project presents. This strategy attaches the highest priority to providing training benefits, which will facilitate employment of our members at the Silvertip mine and employment on other local and regional projects.

Leadership of the Kaska Dena Council recognizes that working cooperatively on economic development to promote the collective economic interests of Kaska holds tremendous potential for Kaska members and communities.

Silvercorp invited Kaska delegates to travel to the province of Hunan in China as their guests, to see their silver mines in



L to R: Helen Loots, Sam Donnessey, Cat Lee, Liard McMillan and George Morgan Back Row

action. Kaska delegates, Helen Loots, Cat Lee, Sam Donnessey, Liard McMillan, George Morgan, Derek Loots, Walter Carlick, Elvis Fjellner, William Shepherd, Victor Kisoun and Blandon Donnessey traveled to China in two groups – one in August and the other in November, 2010.

As well as visiting Silvercorp's mines, Kaska delegates were taken to places of cultural significance including, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Tiananamen Square and experienced a train that travelled at 350 kms per hour. Walter Carlick said that the trip was "First class all the way. Someone from Silvercorp was with us all the time, taking caring of us, making sure everything was okay."



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[www.kaskadena.com](http://www.kaskadena.com)  
[www.kaskadencouncil.com](http://www.kaskadencouncil.com)

## The Kaska Nation at Boreal Awards

– Melody Morrison –

*The women of FNWARM expressed their thanks and honoured Corrine for her work in organizing, raising funds and assisting in every aspect of FNWARM's work*

In the fall of 2008 the BC First Nations Leadership Council, the Kaska Nation, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and the Taku River Tlingit Nation co-hosted an historic summit on mining issues for First Nation leaders in Prince George, BC.

A unique feature of the Prince George Summit, noticed and acknowledged by many as the work of the meeting progressed was the extraordinary contribution made by a number of strong, articulate and determined First Nation women leaders as they shared their stories of dealing with intransigent mining interests and protecting the interests of the communities they represent and as they offered up solutions to deal with these concerns.

Corrine Porter from the Kaska Nation took particular interest because of the role models which these women leaders presented and their concerted focus on the impacts and challenges for families and young people in their communities when dealing with resource development decisions.

In the weeks following the Summit, Corrine, the executive Director of Dena Kayeh Institute, held conversations with several of these women leaders to determine whether there was an interest in

coming together to develop a strategy in which their voices and their stories could strengthen and compliment other efforts being undertaken to change the way mining takes place in the future.

And come together they did. Over the next few months FNWARM (First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining) was begun. This group of First Nations women leaders has worked to support the provincial and national First Nations leaders to bring much needed change to mining legislation with particular reference to the free tenure system and to the environmental review processes. They have supported one another and are constantly exchanging information with regard to mining activity in their territories and with regard to land use planning.

Most recently, members of FNWARM were central in assisting the Tsilhqot'in Nation in their successful campaign to have the federal government do the right thing by rejecting the Prosperity Mine project and saving Fish Lake.

**As a result of their work to promote environmentally sound mining exploration and development processes that respect First Nations rights and full participation, FNWARM members were honoured by the Boreal Leadership Council with a Boreal Award at a gala evening in Ottawa on November 24, 2010. The Kaska Nation was well represented at this important event with Dave Porter as Chair of the Boreal Leadership Council presenting the Award to the women including Corrine. At their meeting the following day, the women of FNWARM expressed their thanks and honoured Corrine for her work in organizing, raising funds and assisting in every aspect of FNWARM's work by asking her to be the caretaker of the Award which is a beautiful sculpture of a Canada goose in flight. Ask Corrine to show it to you and for more information on this important organization check out the website- [www.fnwarm.ca](http://www.fnwarm.ca)**



L to R: Tamara Olding, Kathaleigh George, Joanna Prince, Grand Chief Ed John, Chief Marilyn Baptiste, Anne Marie Sam, Verna Power, Betty Patrick, Chief Dolly Abraham, Corrine Porter, Chief Bev Sellars

## TRIBUTE TO KASKA PEOPLE

### Walter McDonald – Tribute to a Kaska Elder

– Peter Stone –

Walter McDonald, whose Kaska name is Aubay, is a respected elder among the Kaska Dena. He is living example of a person who conducts himself by practice and custom in Dena culture. Mr. McDonald has vast knowledge of his heritage, land use, opening of the north country and changes we face today.

Born during the winter of 1918, near Clem Loots' mother's camping place at Long Mountain Lake, he recalls his roots very well. In the weeks following his birth, the family moved onto another traditional camp called Bi-Tah. Here, parents Charlie McDonald and first wife Ahmayla were blessed with the birth of a good son who always worked hard as part of the family. Being one of fourteen siblings Walter carried his share of responsibilities on land chores.

Kaska names for individuals were common in Walter's younger days such as brother Billy – Ooh Tah, brother Oscar – Uskah, sister Leegehl. His sister Maggie was born at the old camp village at the Toad/Liard river junction. Sister Rose was born at Koh-da-Lut.

By Kaska heritage Walter is member of the Muncho Kaska Dena who were registered as "Nelson Kaska Band" in the Department of Indian Affairs official records. Many times Walter would share stories of days gone by with his brother and sisters about the people related to the Nelson Kaska. Family names such as Akayoh, Aswoona, Bi (Pye), Boya, Charlie, Gomun Ee, Hooohoo, Guyuss, Iyon, Juhnna, Klaychossie, Loots, Magouk, Metahchee, Muskwa-ah, Nosetta, Old George, Porter, Steel, Stone and Tsaytol were spoken of.

Numerous people of his generation perished from small pox and flu epidemics before coming of the Alaska Highway.

They are among burial grounds in areas such as; Koh Wuh Cho (Nelson Forks), Chu La Tsun (Toad River Hotspring), Bi-Tah, Klay Chossie (Racing River), Dunay Tse Layth (McDonald River), Tay Tse (Tetsa River), Kaw Kloway (Dunneden River), Buk Cho (Muskwa Landing), Wudzee Kay (Summit Pass), Tlu-eh Cho (Fish Lake), Daylu (Lower Post), Cashee'ah (McDames Post) and Tuchodi (Lake/River). The mountain at head of Tuchodi is called "Dabeh le tinda ghus" which means sheep crossing based on an ancient story of how the mountain evolved.

Walter often reminds me during drives through Toad River highway maintenance camp that the mountain direct north is called Ahkayoh unlike the provincial map notation of Toad Mountain. I recall taking him along the Dease River by boat to a Kaska Assembly in 1987, traveling 80 miles and he recognize the route well having not walk there since late 1940s.

During his working days, Walter tow-lined Freight Scows on the Liard and Dease Rivers. He also trap for fur and took

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Left, Angus McDonald (moose hide coat), Right, Walter McDonald, 2008, Mile 442, Muncho

*He is a living example of a person who conducts himself by practice and custom in Dena culture.*

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L to R: Hoo-Hoo, Cayuse, Mrs. Loots, Yannima, Beeb and Agnes. Circa 1940 Daylu (Lower Post)

trophy hunts before B.C. Provincial trapline and game guide concessions were established and continued thereafter. Many Kaska traded at the Fort Liard trade post, prior to the building of the Alaska Highway. He also led horse pack trains for other jobs to service Survey, Prospecting, Ethno botanist, National Geographic and assisted the U.S. Army on the Alaska Highway. Walter also participated in the film documentary "Heavens Pass".

As part of his cultural lifestyle he built

many cabins to support his wellbeing. He carries the nickname "Guarantee" when it comes to game guiding Canadian trophy hunters. A story he relates is of locating and recovery by dogteam in cold weather of a U.S. pilot who downed an aircraft on a frozen lake north of Muskwa Landing. With a good laugh he said, "The army got real happy to see the pilot back safe so they give me all kind of can grub".

Although he never partook in formal English schooling Walter is very fluent in the Muncho Kaska dialect and understands both Beaver and Slavey language. I have climb a few mountains with him since the 1980's and Walter McDonald is an amazing natural teacher. With a trademark of patience he continuously mentors one to surrounding observations to demonstrate a keen sense of place. He can translate time with the sun, master elements of terrain and foretell weather behavior. This skill to monitor wind direction often means a successful hunt. After years of walking and traveling the traditional territory to trade posts, running dog team, trail horses with Canadian hunters and working freight scow Walter sure enjoy the use of motor boat, ATV and snowmobile. Today, in his 90s Walter looks out his cabin window in quiet thought of days gone by.

*Although he never partook in formal English schooling Walter is very fluent in the Muncho Kaska dialect and understands both Beaver and Slavey language.*



L.R.J. Pye, Dubline, J. Stone, F. Stone, N. McDonald, Clem Loots, B. Loots, Charlie McDonald. Kaska Dena Photo Circa 1922 at Nelson Forks

## KASKA DENA COMMUNITY NEWS!



### Jean Gleason Memorial Scholarship Fund

– Rosemary Gill –

Daylu Dena Council is pleased to announce that it has established a \$50,000 scholarship fund in memory of Jean Gleason.

In keeping with Jean's generosity of spirit and strong convictions regarding improving the quality of life for her people, the Jean Gleason Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established to assist Kaska individuals who are pursuing a post-secondary education.

With the fund established, the next step is for Daylu Dena Council to develop the terms of reference, the application criteria and the approval process. It is hoped that this work will be completed by spring, 2011 in time for students to apply to the Jean Gleason Memorial Scholarship Fund to assist with their fall studies.

The Jean Gleason Memorial Scholarship Fund will augment the funding initiatives provided by the New Relationship Trust (NRT) at <http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/initiatives/education>

For more information on the Jean Gleason Memorial Scholarship Fund please contact the Daylu Dena Council office, 250 779-7161 or by email at [dayludena@hotmail.com](mailto:dayludena@hotmail.com)

### New Saw Mill for Dease River First Nation

– Minnie Dennis & Crystal Carlick, DRFN Social Working Group –

Dease River First Nation recently invested in a saw mill as a means to providing local jobs and economic development opportunities for Dease River First Nation. As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the Ministry of Family and Children Development and representatives who signed onto the agreement, funds were committed to DRFN to enable the investment in a top of the line saw mill. The intention of the Memorandum of Understanding was to provide greater support and greater quality of life to families by creating local jobs for local people

With the purchase of the saw mill, DRFN community members were also given training in how to set up and operate the mill. DRFN's saw mill is now operating and with the trained community members work has commenced to fulfill a commitment from a local mine including production and delivery of building materials as well as construction of new core racks for the mine.



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## Kaska Dena News

### Kwadacha Elders Society

– Susan McCook –

The Kwadacha Elders Society began as an informal group in 2005 that focused on Elder activities, and generating historic information for curriculum use in Aatse Davie School. In 2010 the group morphed into a more formalized Elders Society with the purpose of re-creating or re-strengthening the position that Elders had in traditional society.

The activities of the group include overseeing a Community Gardens project consisting of three green houses and eight gardens which produced large crops of tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and herbs. Emil McCook took charge of the greenhouses and cared for the plants throughout the summer growing season. Chief and Council also consult with the Elders Society and have involved them in community justice issues.

In 2010 the Elders Society



Former Chief Emil McCook standing in one of the greenhouses.

received funding from BC Capacity Initiative to enable Elders to have in-put into the Kwadacha Band's Land Use Planning. Elders traveled through their traditional land including, Spinnell Lake, Sikanni Chief Lake, Kwadacha River and Stelkuz area. The Elders have in-put into the Land Use Plan by talking about the meaning of various areas and the traditional significance of areas that should be put aside.



Kwadacha Elders invited Takla and Tsay Keh Dene Elders for a mini evening gathering at Salmon Arm Elders Meeting.

An annual highlight for members of the Elders society is travelling to the annual Elders Meeting, which was held this year at Salmon Arm. Hosted by Adams Lake Shushwap Band, the Elders Meeting was a wonderful opportunity for approximately 30 Kwadacha community members to camp, and spend time connecting with other First Nations and re-connecting with relatives who live in the Kamloops area.

## PHOTO CONTEST!

Kaska Dena Council is launching its first photo contest! We are in search of high quality and original photographs depicting Kaska people, our culture and our land that we would feature in our publications and on our website.

This photos contest is open to all Kaska community members.

Photos submitted to the contest must fall into one of three categories:

1. Kaska people
2. Kaska culture and traditional activities
3. Kaska land: wildlife, scenery & the environment

There will be cash prizes for each category! 1st place \$150; 2nd place \$50

The deadline for submitting photos is February 28th, 2011 at 17:00 hr. The winning photos will be featured in the spring newsletter and on the KDC website.

The entry form and contest details can be found on the Kaska Dena Council website:

[www.kaskadenacouncil.com](http://www.kaskadenacouncil.com)

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