



Kaska Dena News

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Spring/Summer 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Spring has finally arrived, and I hope everyone is looking forward to a good summer with lots of time out on the land. In the meanwhile, I'd like to share some good news stories with you about some initiatives that have been taking place over the past year.

An important initiative undertaken this year, led by the Dena Kayeh Institute (DKI), is the proposed Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved area (KIPCA), which would result in the protection of almost 4 million hectares in the core Ancestral Territory of the Kaska Dena in British Columbia. This proposal has the full support of the Chiefs and Elders of the communities and the leadership of KDC. We are working hard together to have the proposal accepted for funding under the federal Dept of the Environment and Climate Change, Challenge Fund.

A significant element of the KIPCA is expansion of the Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network, under the leadership of Corrine Porter and Tanya Ball, to continue enhancing their capacity, knowledge and effectiveness as Guardians of our land. With Land Guardians in each of our three BC communities, our Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network is strengthening its capacity, and together with the 3Nations/BC Collaborative Stewardship Forum, is developing a co-management approach to responsible governance and land and wildlife management.

We hosted a very successful Elders Gathering in Watson Lake in March, bringing Elders together from Ross River, Watson Lake, Lower Post, Good Hope Lake, Fireside, Muncho and Kwadacha. The three-day gathering involved presentations on land management and protection, and featured guest speaker, Captain Gold of the Haida Nation, who spoke about his life-long experience as a Watchman for the Haida Nation.

We continue to work through our government to government table with our SEA and our land and resource officers in Daylu, Good Hope Lake and Kwadacha to support land management and governance.

I hope that reading these updates provides a sense of pride for what we can accomplish when we stand together, work side by side and reclaim our role as stewards of land and resources in our Ancestral Territory. It continues to be an honour and privilege to serve as the KDC Chair, getting out into the communities as often as I can, talking with people and working toward the vision of Kaska Unity.

Mussi Cho,

Danny Case, Chair
Kaska Dena Council



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KASKA INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA (KIPCA)

The Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area represents the spiritual and cultural core of the Ancestral Territory of the Kaska Dena in British Columbia.

The Dena Kayeh Institute has been working to establish a protected area within the Kaska ancestral territory for the past year. The proposed area is approximately 40,000 square km. (4,000,000 ha.) in the core Ancestral Territory of the Kaska Dena in British Columbia.

The Kaska Dena Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area represents the spiritual and cultural core of the Ancestral Territory of the Kaska Dena in British Columbia. As a way of describing our efforts we have developed the traditional knowledge and science-based Kaska Conservation Analysis that provides a biological and cultural justification for the protection of our proposed Kaska Indigenous, Protected, and Conserved Area (KIPCA).

The reason for protecting the area is based on our needs to protect our land, preserve our way of life, protect special, and sensitive ecological sites; ancient, historical, and cultural sites; spiritual, social, and economic areas; and revive our customary laws and our role as land stewards. In protecting the area, we also provide opportunities to pursue a green economy, to build capacity, expand our knowledge of the environment, our heritage, and offset the potential effects of climate change, as well as help revive our languages.

It is an area which supports the criteria of Title as laid out by the Supreme Court of Canada. The boundaries have been established through discussions with elders, youth, and community members in all of the three Kaska communities in British Columbia. The proposed area lies within the exclusive use area of the Ancestral Territory to reduce potential concerns with neighbouring Nations. It also has been developed recognising existing and potential resource development, and the boundaries were developed to reduce conflicts with these sectors. For example, forestry interests have been met and are exclusively Kaska controlled, as the tenures are area based, and strategically located outside of the KIPCA to reduce the impact of forestry operations.

The three First Nations Woodland Licences will provide jobs in sustainable forestry. In regard to subsurface development (e.g., mineral development and oil and gas development), the proposal boundaries were designed to capture the largest contiguous core area of the territory while avoiding or minimizing overlap with existing dispositions. In addressing fee simple lands or leases, the parcels identified will be netted out due to exemptions to Right of Ways and proximity to settlement areas (e.g., Toad River or Muncho Lake). The remainder of surface dispositions are not in conflict with the protected area and have a history of being grandfathered as allowable land uses (e.g., commercial recreation, guide outfitting, commercial trapping, or recreational land leases) in existing provincial protected areas.

The Kaska Dena are supportive of the existing guide outfitting territories and recognise it has been an activity providing long term economic opportunities for Kaska members, communities, and non-Kaska communities and families for generations. It is



Obo Lake

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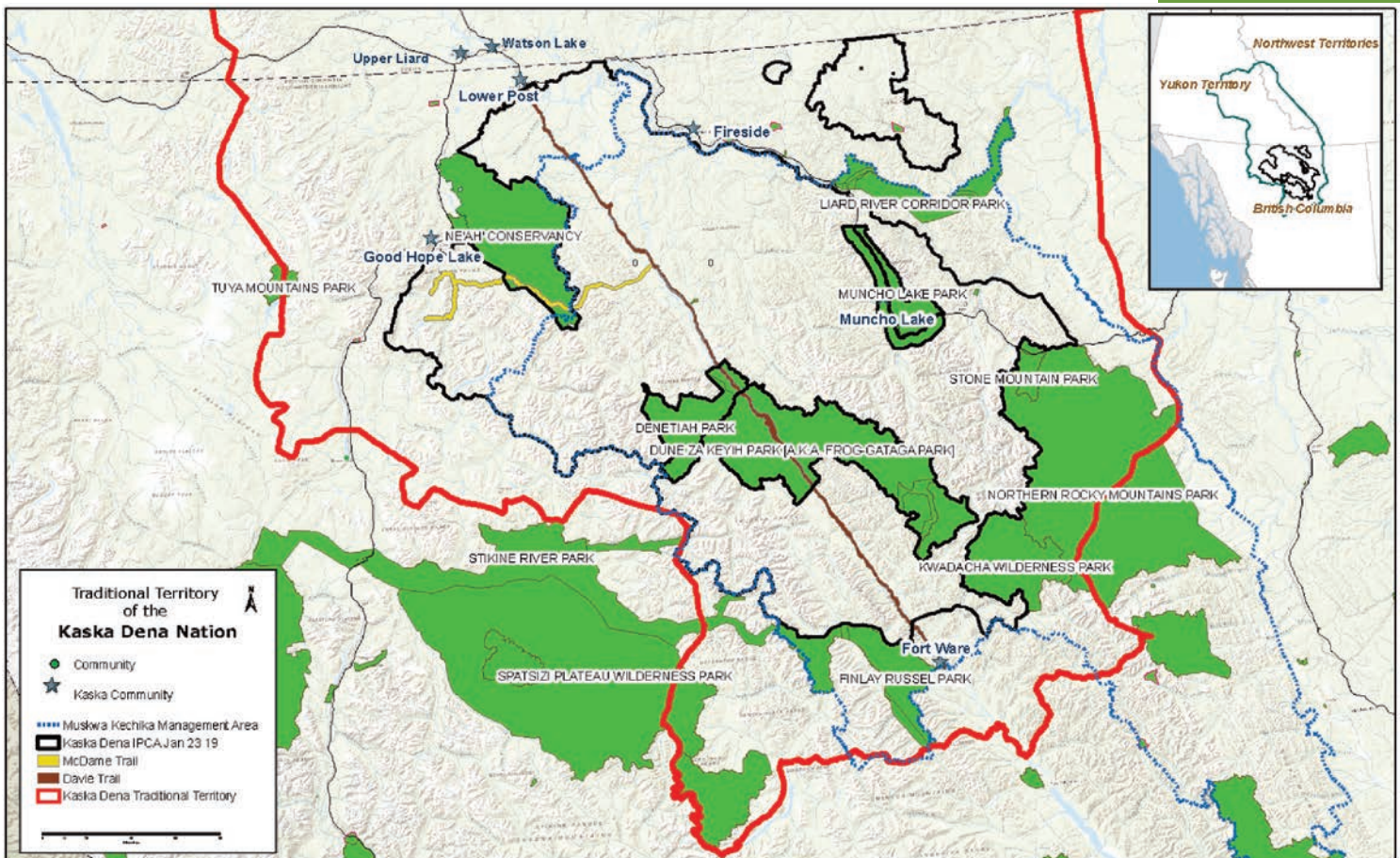


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our approach to have guide outfitting infrastructure, activities, and authorizations included as an ongoing activity with renewable authorizations. It is with this same view that Adventure Tourism, and Registered Traplines for the commercial sale of fur are incorporated into the management of the proposed area.

The structure of co-management is envisioned to be through existing government to government agreements. It is with this view that the Kaska are working towards the designation of the proposed area as a

Conservancy under the provincial protected areas legislation. In turn, the Kaska will introduce Kaska law for the KIPCA, under section 35 of the Constitution of Canada, to protect the title and rights of the Kaska and protect the new KIPCA. It is, in our view, the most preferred means to protect the KIPCA, as it utilises both BC and Kaska law. The joint management decision-making allows for the protection of Kaska ancestral, spiritual, and traditional uses, including the protection of our rights and title.



Map #1 Kaska IPCA Base Map



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KASKA ELDER'S GATHERING - MARCH 19-21, 2019

The event was special as it was the first time in over ten years that the Kaska Elders from all seven Kaska communities have had the opportunity to gather together, discuss important issues and socialize.

In March 2019 a three-day Kaska Elders Gathering took place in Watson Lake. Organized by KDC and Dena Kayeh Institute, Elders from Ross River, Upper Liard/Watson Lake, Lower Post, Good Hope Lake, Kwadacha, Fireside and Muncho gathered together to discuss land protection and visit with one another.

The event was special as it was the first time in over 10 years since the Kaska Elders from all seven Kaska communities have had the opportunity to gather together, discuss important issues and socialize.

The gathering was co-facilitated by Hammond Dick, and long-time Kaska friend, Melody Morrison. A special guest, Captain Gold of the Haida Nation, who had just attended the First Nations National Guardian Gathering, opened the Kaska Elders Gathering by speaking to the Elders about his life-time experience as a Land Guardian for the



Haida Nation. Captain Gold is recognized as a founder of the modern-day Indigenous Guardians movement in Canada.

Corrine Porter and her team from the Kaska's own Dena Kayeh Institute (DKI) gave informative presentations on land protection and management initiatives that Kaska are undertaking, including the Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network and the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area proposal (KIPCA).

The cooks from Lower Post always provide fantastic meals, and they did not disappoint. Kaska hunters provided a moose for the gathering which was cooked specially for the Elders. Youth attended as helpers, bringing in the food from the kitchen assisting in serving Elders, and helping to clean up.

The Ross River drummers were a big hit, as was Dena Zagi and their wonderful performance of original songs sung in Kaska, with Dennis Shorty on guitar and Jennifer on drums. Kaska drums were provided for people to join in and drum along with them.

The gathering was a huge success, and



Melody Morrison
Captain Gold, Hammond Dick

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Kaska Drummers - Ross River

there was a unanimous voice from the Elders saying, "it's been great reconnecting with old friends, family, sharing stories, laughing, dancing this must happen again!"

Elders further expressed their appreciation for the important work being done by

DKI and their strong support to advance the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area proposal. Kaska Dena Council is committed to work with others to help ensure that future Elder's Gathering can take place annually, to keep our people connected.

*Thanks go out to:
Ruby Johnny,
Corrine Porter,
Lacey Johnny,
Selena Pye, Pam
Moon, Bobby
Faye, Jessica
Scott, Marilyn
Miller, Christina
Magun, Zanna
Moon, Jamie
Dennis, Justin
Dennis, Patricia
Case, Justice
Loots and
William
Shepherd*



Elder's Gathering, Watson Lake, 2019



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Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network

Our land ethic is an ecosystem-based approach to land management, based on the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological integrity.

The Kaska Nation wants to reclaim our role as stewards of land and resources in our traditional territory. Toward this end, we want to develop long-term capacity and capability through training Kaska Guardians to promote and implement a Kaska land ethic. Our land ethic is an ecosystem-based approach to land management, based on the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological integrity.

This approach requires that areas of high ecological, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values are identified and protected, and ecological processes continue to generate biological diversity. Our goal is to develop a long term ecological and cultural monitoring program based on Kaska Dena knowledge and western

science that is driven by specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives. This vision will be best accomplished by encouraging a regional approach among our communities in BC.

Objectives of our program include building/increasing capacity in wildlife management, species at risk management, habitat management, water management and land use management. Monitoring and maintaining culturally and socially acceptable land use for economic purposes; maintaining and monitoring Kaska culturally important wildlife, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems over time; and maintaining and monitoring Kaska culturally important large rivers, wetlands, and lakes and the respective water quality over time.



Ice Rescue River Training



Water Sampling

2018-2019 Program Outcomes

Monitoring of Land Use	Community Engagement & Knowledge Mobilization	Wildlife & Ecosystem Monitoring	Training and Certification
40 Hunter harvest/camp surveys 139 environmental concern surveys 252 wildlife observations 4 traditional knowledge surveys Monthly water monitoring at high cultural use sites and at the Liard River (for YTG) Game Check with conservation officer (BC)	2 Community meetings 2 Kaska culture camps Kaska Elder's Gathering Canadian Parks Council Climate Change working group in Yellowknife On panel at the WWF water monitoring roundtable Presented at Climate Change workshop in Whitehorse Updates on program to 3 nations/ Collaborative Stewardship Forum Partners	GigaMetals - conducted archaeology test sites Jade Boulder Road - conducted mine site inspection with the BC Government Cantung - participated in mine site tour and received update on reclamation planning underway Ecofor - conducted an archaeology assessment at the Silvertip mine site Kutcho Copper Corp. - assisted with the collection of baseline data, moose surveys & water sampling	Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network Protocols Wildlife and Ecosystem Health Training RISC Archaeology & CMT Inventory Certification Conservation Officer Training Communications Swift Water Rescue Community Climate Change Monitoring training Microsoft Office Ice Rescue Ice Safety Rescue Wilderness first aid GPS operation field documentation apps Regulatory Enforcement and Compliance Mining Compliance



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STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT (SEA) – UPDATE

On April 1st, 2019, the Kaska Strategic Engagement Agreement (SEA) was renewed for its 8th time. The SEA represents a government to government relationship between the BC Kaska communities and the Province. This relationship focuses on consultation, accommodation and the shared interests between our Governments. This relationship is one which emphasizes the collaborative management of the lands, waters and resources in the Kaska ancestral territory.

This shared vision has taken shape over the past seven years of the agreement's implementation. Upon the evaluation currently taking place at the negotiations table, a new reconciliation agreement is being proposed. With the existing SEA set to expire on March 2020, our negotiating team has proactively worked on a new vision with BC that focused on consent-based decision making for our BC Kaska communities. During these discussions BC has taken an active role in adopting and implementing UNDRIP and Free, Prior and Informed consent as it applies to all legislation, administrative and decision-making applicable to First Nations.

To highlight the decisions that were made in the past fiscal year (2018/19) the Kaska Lands and Resource offices in BC reviewed over 124 applications. The most prevalent sector of these was mineral based decisions. Applications of note include the Mining Rate Amendment for the Silvertip Mine, A Forest Stewardship Plan amendment in the Omineca region, proposed developments near Skooks Landing and various notices of work for mineral exploration.

Some of the strategic initiatives for this upcoming year are the continual work on the Collaborative Stewardship Framework (CSF). This initiative is a collaborative vision and funding source for the 3 Nations – Kaska, Tahltan and Tlingit to work collaboratively in managing the stewardship of our collective territories. CSF over the past year has provided a regional framework to incorporate our indigenous knowledge, interests and rights into resource stewardship and decision-making bodies. The Kaska have

been able to design our own stewardship initiatives that fit with our 3 BC Kaska communities and have the financial means to support these priorities.

In addition to CSF, the Natural Resource Council (NRC) which represents the main government to government body of the SEA is having a community-based meeting in Lower Post the summer of 2019. NRC meetings are held four times a year – and this community session will include a focus on the wildfire recovery efforts from the Lutz Creek fire, the Kaska's new non-timber forest resource monitoring program, alongside highlighting important initiatives to the Daylu Dena Council.

For more information on SEA referrals please contact your community lands and resource officer:

Kwadacha Nation – Shawna Case
kfnref@gmail.com

Daylu Dena Council – Vanessa Law
ddclro@gmail.com

Dease River First Nation – Cat Lee
drfnreferral@gmail.com

For all other SEA inquires please contact the regional coordinator: Gillian Staveley
knrscsea@gmail.com

Some of the strategic initiatives for the upcoming year are the continual work on the Collaborative Stewardship Framework (CSF).



Mark Your Calendar

Kaska Dena Council 2019 General Assembly Thursday, August 8th – Saturday, August 10th

This year our 2019 KDC General Assembly will be hosted by Daylu Dena Council and will take place at the Liard Airstrip from Thursday, August 8th to Saturday, August 10th. The theme of this year's assembly is "Protecting Our Land".

KDC business and reporting will take place during the mornings, allowing for eating, socializing and reconnecting with family and friends in the afternoons and evenings.

We will be camping at the Liard Airstrip so remember to bring your camping equipment, supplies, and fishing equipment. There will be cultural activities, activities for the kids, hand games and fishing derby. In our efforts to protect our environment we are asking people to bring their own utensils, cup and plate as there will be no use of Styrofoam or plastic.

**For more information contact the KDC office: 250-779-3181
or DDC office: 250-779-3161**



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www.kaskadenacouncil.com/newsarchives/newsletter-archive.

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