

Kaska Elder's Gathering – March 19-21, 2019

In March 2019 a three-day Kaska Elders Gathering took place in Watson Lake. Organized by KDC and Dena Kayeh Institute, over 75 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.



*Melody Morrison
Captain Gold, Hammond Dick*

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, Kaska Land Guardians and the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area proposal (KIPCA). Dr. John Weaver, representing the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada, presented an overview of a conservation assessment of the greater Muskwa Kechika area. A focus of his presentation was climate change, which was of great interest to Elders. A copy of Dr Weaver's presentation is available from DKI (Corrine Porter) email: denakayeh@gmail.com

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

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



attended as helpers, bringing in the food from the kitchen assisting in serving Elders, and helping to clean up.



Kaska Drummers - Ross River

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 there was a unanimous voice from the Elders saying, "its 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.

Thanks go out to those who worked so diligently to make this such a wonderful success including: 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.

Kaska Dena Council is committed to work with others to help ensure that future Elders Gatherings can take place annually to keep our people connected.



Elders Gathering, Watson Lake 2019