



# Kaska Elders Newsletter

VOLUME 1 - EDITION 1 - NOV '22

## Kaska Nation Hosts its 2nd Annual Elders Gathering

Kaska elders from all the Kaska communities gathered together on September 21-23rd, 2022 at Iron Creek. The gathering provided an opportunity after the difficult days of Covid for long-time friends to meet in person, to catch -up on family and community news and to share stories around the fire.



## Dene K'éh Gusān: Guidance for the Nation

*The theme of the gathering was Guidance for the Nation which the Kaska Elders provided with enthusiasm, wisdom and laughter.*

The Iron Creek Lodge was recently purchased by the Daylu Dena Council. It was very fitting for this important gathering to be the first held there giving the elders the opportunity to bless the site and open the Lodge site in a good way.

Throughout the 3 days, there were lively discussions on rebuilding a unified Kaska Nation with the phrase "One Land, One People." being mentioned several times.

We heard the message that it is up to us as a nation to reclaim our traditions, culture and language by returning to and respecting our "old ways."

The 1st annual Kaska Elders Gathering was held in Watson Lake in 2019 where the elders provided their input into how we can better steward our lands. The knowledge and direction shared at that meeting has been invaluable in guiding the work of DKI regarding land stewardship initiatives including the expansion of guardian's programmes in the communities.

It was great to see "Famous Amos" from Ross River make the long trip from Ross River to Iron Creek to address the gathering in his Kaska language and letting us know that age is just a number. Amos is still actively making snowshoes, drums and

travelling to Handgames tournaments where he is very well known across the North.

During the three days elders shared stories with each other, laughed together and also raised important concerns, it was more than clear how much they enjoyed being together and sharing that joy, warmth

and laughter put smiles on everyone's faces. They feasted on traditional foods together as the coordinator and cooks ensured we had more than enough moose and groundhog for our elders to enjoy. The elders entered their names into draws where they won awesome prizes including a generous supply Caribou dry meat.



Elder Hammond Dick, chaired the gathering in the Kaska way, respectfully providing each elder the opportunity to share their wisdom and exchange important knowledge, ideas and opinions. It was three days of rich discussion.  
**Mussi Cho Hammond!**



One key theme that emerged during the gathering was that for Kaska there were no artificial boundaries between our communities and we need to bring together the collective voices of our communities through our elders. As a result of those discussions a consensus emerged to create a National Kaska Elders Council. Gillian Staveley and Michelle Miller facilitated the conversations around a number of key areas relating to a Kaska National Elders Council such as, who is an elder, what would the council's purpose and structure be, and what would their authority be?

We began putting pen to paper on the Council but realized there is still a lot of engagement and work that needs to be done. So, with the direction of the elders, a committee was struck that will work on a draft framework of a Kaska National Elders Council that will be brought back for input by the communities. This is known as the creation committee and will consist of representatives from each of the 6 traditional Kaska communities.

The first committee meeting was held on Thursday October 27 to follow-up on immediate actions of which this inaugural newsletter is one.



The gathering was greatly appreciated by all our elders that were able to attend and everyone is looking forward to the next one, to be held in the spring of next year.

*We all know the work that goes into planning a gathering, so a big shout out to everyone involved in making this gathering happen.*