

**Kaska Dena  
Council**  
P.O. Box 9  
Lower Post, BC V0C 1W0  
(250) 779-3181

**Ross River Dena  
Council**  
General Delivery  
Ross River, YK Y0B 1S0  
(867) 969-2278

**Liard First Nation**  
PO Box 328  
Watson Lake, YK Y0A 1C0  
(867) 536-2131

---

## NEWS RELEASE

September 27, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **KASKA NATION SPEAKS OUT AGAINST LOGGING IN TRADITIONAL TERRITORY**

**WATSON LAKE, YUKON**– The Kaska Dena Council, Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation are condemning the removal of forest resources from their Traditional Territory in the Yukon. An agricultural lease was approved for a parcel of land on the east side of the Liard River, near Upper Liard, and more than 5000 cubic metres were sold by the Government of Canada in August and September without consulting the Kaska Forest Resources Stewardship Council. The volume of wood that was taken is enough to build more than 50 homes.

In July, representatives of the Kaska Nation, the Government of the Yukon and Government of Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding on forest management for the southeast Yukon. The Memorandum paved the way for a six-member Kaska Forest Resources Stewardship Council with an independent Chair and representatives from the Kaska, federal and territorial governments. The Council is responsible for directing forest resource planning and recommending guidelines and policies. The Memorandum clearly stated that no interim wood would be issued until an economic benefits agreement is in place. All permits for the removal of forestry resources were to be directed and coordinated by the Council.

“This represents an arbitrary dispossession of our lands,” said Kaska Dena Council Chair Dave Porter. “The Forest Stewardship Council was not even informed of the application. The Memorandum of Understanding and the Forestry Stewardship Protocol both refer to forest resources; the fact that these forest resources were removed from agricultural lands does not change that fact that they are forest resources within the definition of the agreement. There is no loop hole on this point.”

(MORE)

The Forest Stewardship Council is currently working to find up to 128,000 cubic metres for interim wood supply.

“This could have been a winning opportunity for all parties, but this activity clearly goes against the word and spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding,” said Porter. “The logs were shipped to Fort Nelson, providing no apparent benefits to the people of the southeast Yukon. Kaska negotiators have been directed to deal with this issue immediately.”

Canada also signed a Kaska Dena Council Consultation Protocol that sets out a process for the Government of Canada to consult the Kaska Dena on forestry matters related to their traditional territory in the Yukon. The protocol recognizes that the Government of Canada and the Kaska Dena Council will work co-operatively to ensure that the Kaska Dena’s interests in the forest resource are addressed.

The Kaska Nation includes five First Nations in the southeast Yukon and northern British Columbia. Their traditional territory covers about 25 per cent of the Yukon, adjacent areas of Northwest Territories and about 10 per cent of B.C. The Kaska land claims are part of the first comprehensive claim accepted by Canada under its 1973 policy.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Celia Sollows  
Kaska Nation  
(867) 536-2805