



# Kaska

NEWS

'21 SPRING EDITION

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## Message from KDC Chair



It has been a long and challenging winter in personal terms, for our people and for our organization. But spring is arriving, and with spring comes a sense of optimism and hope for relief from a difficult year of dealing with a global pandemic.

I want to first thank you for the many prayers and get well wishes sent my way after my snowmobile accident in January. They were much appreciated and certainly helped the healing process for my body and my spirits.

As KDC Chair I want to thank and acknowledge all the Kaska front line workers whose efforts went well above and beyond to keep our people safe and healthy throughout these difficult days of dealing with the global pandemic of Covid-19. From their vigilance about social distancing, quarantines and lock downs through to the efficient, orderly and extremely important life-saving vaccination clinics and the many urgent moments both small and large I salute these folks and their dedication as true heroes of our communities.

I am extremely proud of all of our people who over this last year have supported one another, shown immense courage and patience and continue to do so as the country and indeed the world works to bring an end to the frightening threat of the virus. It will be an incredible moment when we are once again able to gather in person and out on our lands to enjoy a visit and continue working together to build strong Kaska communities and celebrate a proud people and a proud Kaska Nation.

As chair of the Kaska Dena Council I am grateful for the efforts of the Board of our organization and our team to support the Daylu Dena Council, Kwadacha and Dease River in advancing their community priorities as well as collective interests to supporting the work of the Leaders of the Kaska First Nations and communities in both British Columbia and Yukon in unifying our Nation, to our involvement in the work of the 3Nations organization with our neighbours the Tahltan, and Taku River Tlingit Nations on issues of common concern as well as supporting the amazing work of the Dena Kayeh Institute to build thriving Kaska Guardians programs and permanent protections for our Ancestral homelands through the creation of the Dene Ke'h Kusān, the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area. I am pleased and proud that we can report in detail on the many challenges and the results of our work to meet those challenges in the expanded pages of this newsletter.

I encourage you all to read the newsletter, share the news in it with family and friends, discuss issues raised within your communities and let us know your thoughts and questions so we can continue to improve communications and as always, be inspired by your ideas and contributions.

I wish you all a Happy Spring and good health for you and your families. I look forward to our July Assembly even if it has to be a virtual one for this year. With my best wishes,

*Danny Case*

Chair  
Kaska Dena Council



# Our Land

Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

## Dena Kayeh Institute

### Dene K'éh Kusān

Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in British Columbia

The Dena Kayeh Institute has been advancing Kaska's Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (KIPCA) in British Columbia - Dene K'éh Kusān (DKK) on behalf of the Daylu Dena Council, Kwadacha First Nation and the Dease River First Nation since 2018. Dene K'éh Kusān rests at the spiritual and cultural core of the Kaska Dena in British Columbia. The Kaska have cared for this landscape for millennia, and now the communities are working to secure long-term protection for it.

Public engagement and communications help advance this goal by:

- ◆ Shining a spotlight on the Kaska's leadership in conserving globally significant lands;
- ◆ Keeping support for Dene K'éh Kusān on the radar of government decision-makers and stakeholders;
- ◆ Positioning Dene K'éh Kusān as a solution that delivers benefits for communities, BC and beyond;
- ◆ Demonstrating public support for protecting Dene K'éh Kusān.



Woodland Caribou, Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

We were successful in securing a 2 year contribution agreement, in the amount of \$587,000, from the Canadian Government to advance this indigenous-led conservation initiative. Due to Covid restrictions over the past year our work was delayed and we have obtained an extension of one year.

Early on in this process we invited the British Columbia Government to work collaborately with the Kaska to protect the KIPCA area under the BC Conservancy legislation. A delegation of Kaska, including the 3 BC Chiefs, travelled to Victoria and met with the Ministers of the Environment, Climate Change Strategy Ministry, the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Ministry and the Forest, Lands, Natural Resource & Rural Development Ministry where we presented Kaska's vision for DKK. Our vision includes a balanced approach to development and helping to meet the challenges of climate change. Protecting this area means



Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

new jobs and opportunities in the conservation economy for Kaska and other residents, the expansion of our Kaska Guardians program, training our young people in modern science and traditional knowledge to manage and care for the land, water and animals of our territory and exploring ways to share a truly unique and special part of the country with British Columbians and all Canadians.

Over the past year we have focused on creating communication tools, such as, brochures, fact sheets, a website, a story map, a photo library of the area and we've establish a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These tools help reinforce our key messages;

- ◆ **Kaska conservation leadership:** Kaska are leading the way in protecting lands rich in cultural and ecological significance. Honouring our aspirations for the land is reconciliation in action.
- ◆ **Lands that matter to us all:** Dene K'éh Kusān's hundreds of square miles is home to seven caribou herds, ten watersheds, and it's one of the last chances to conserve land on such a sweeping scale.
- ◆ **Certainty for industry, jobs for the region:** Dene K'éh Kusān's borders have been carefully drawn to support industrial projects and sustainable jobs, including land guardians.
- ◆ **Working in partnership:** The Kaska are working with partners in industry, conservation, the BC and federal governments and others to secure long-term protections for Dene K'éh Kusān.
- ◆ **A Kaska welcome:** The Kaska want to establish Dene K'éh Kusān as a world-class protected area that all British Columbians can explore and enjoy.

Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens



We have also engaged with the many stakeholders in the area building relationships and seeking support from those who currently work and live in and around the DKK area.

In addition, we have reached out to the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council, who are also pursuing the establishment of KIPCA's in the Yukon, to collaborate on a number of projects that we feel will benefit all Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas. The projects being worked on or being contemplated are as follows:

## 01 Develop and explore a joint governance plan for the Kaska IPCAs - addressing our common goals for Kaska IPCAs and how to achieve them: We believe it would be great to have one model that works for the Kaska Nation;

- a) Documentation of Kaska Law; The outcome of the project will be to explore the development of a Kaska Dena Governance Model aimed at managing Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.
- b) Develop a draft Kaska Declaration on the protection of the Kaska Ancestral Territory. (See pages 10-11)
- c) Develop a draft Kaska Protected Area designation and tools such as legislation based on Kaska Law;
- d) Explore the opportunity for the guardian programs to support priorities for IPCAs across the Kaska Ancestral Territory.

## 02 Collectively commission work on developing what a 'Kaska conservation economy' looks like in the Kaska Ancestral Territory; we envision this work to include gathering all the work that has been done in our communities to date such as tourism strategies, country foods, carbon sequestration. for ideas, models and inspiration.

## 03 Promote the Kaska IPCA's through a high-quality digital video production.

## 04 Jointly develop a draft Kaska IPCA Operational Management Plan:

- a) Allowable land use within Kaska IPCAs;
- b) Cultural and environmental information collection program;
- c) Adaptive management monitoring framework (AMMF).

We are passionate and excited about this initiative and it is our intention to use several communication tools to engage Kaska Dena, on and off reserve, to seek their input on KIPCA planning. We are also working on developing a Kaska Dena Contact Database to use to engage directly with you. Please go to the Dene K'éh Kusān website at: [www.denakayeh.com](http://www.denakayeh.com) to fill out the form and let us know how best to communicate with you. We look forward to hearing from you.



Angus and Charlie building moose hide boat  
Photo Credit: Theresa Gulliver

research will involve analyzing, documenting, and developing strategies to establish a Kaska Law regime that can be utilized by Kaska knowledge keepers, leaders, youth, elders, mothers, and land stewards. DKI hopes to apply Kaska legal principles to a full range of current challenges faced by the five Kaska communities.

The research supports modern, practical use and understanding of Kaska law by Kaska and non-Kaska alike. The goal of this research is to create a Kaska Dena Governance Model aimed at managing the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) that is based on Kaska laws and protocols. The Kaska IPCA's would provide ecosystem services; preserve our way of life; protect sensitive ecological sites; ancient, historical, and cultural sites; spiritual, social, and economic areas; and revive our customary laws and our role as land stewards. It would also provide opportunities to pursue a green economy, build capacity, expand our knowledge of the environment and our heritage, the revival of our language, and offset the potential effects of climate change. With the management of Kaska Lands by Kaska people, Canada can meet its international commitment to sustain biodiversity, while also achieving a degree of reconciliation by supporting this indigenous led conservation initiative to thrive.

Brittany is starting on the interview phase of the project and we will be in contact with communities very soon to put up notices and provide local members with surveys. The surveys will help identify who we should interview within the community. We are aiming for 5 people per community.

## Dena K'éh Gus'an Kaska Dena Law Project

Brittany Tuffs and Gillian Staveley are the project leads working for the Kaska Dena Law Project ("Dena K'éh Gus'an") with Dena Keyah Institute ("DKI"). The current workplan includes a literature review, framework development, interview and talking circles, analysis, community consultation and final written report.

The Kaska Nation was founded on the sacred responsibilities and inherent rights granted to the Kaska by the Creator. The Kaska believe that we are the custodians and traditional

land stewards of Dene Kēyeh - our ancestral territory. Our relationship is inseparable as these lands and waters were entrusted to us, and therefore, we have the responsibility of maintaining, preserving, and protecting them for present and future generations. In order to ensure our responsibilities are upheld, we need to demonstrate how our legal orders are weighted as the same as Canadian Law.

This research promotes the revitalization of Kaska law. This

## Introduction to the Declaration for Dena Kēyeh

We believe it is important to have a document which captures the essence of the relationship we as Kaska have to the land. We have therefore developed a draft Declaration for your consideration and very much look forward to your thoughts, comments and feedback about this important document.

DRAFT

# Kaska Nation Declaration for Dena Kēyeh

We, the Kaska Nation, make this Declaration out of the mutual aspiration to further the well-being of our people and Dena Kēyeh. Our lands, culture, and way of life is who we are as Kaska Dena. Since time immemorial, the Kaska Dena have existed, occupied, and relied on the lands, waters, and resources of the Peoples Country. We share a common culture, a language with distinct dialects, history tied to the stories, myths, oral traditions of our Elders, and our Dene K'éh Gūs'an. Within our traditional and present-day communities, we stand united in

support of our inherent collective rights, title, and interests to our ancestral lands that have been recognized and affirmed through various declarations, including the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples. Together we support each of our communities' unified aspiration and responsibility for the stewardship of Dene Kēyeh.

This Declaration represents our Nations' desire to work together to protect the land in unity and respect and is a solemn commitment to do so.

With this commitment, we will work to codify our traditional laws that will help make our vision operational for modern times. That vision, which our elders remind us, is for all Kaska Dena to acknowledge our gift as a Nation, to steward our lands in the Kaska way, and to move forward together in building a future for the generations of Kaska Dena to come that is founded on the sacred responsibilities and inherent rights granted to us by the Creator.

Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

This declaration sets out those responsibilities and rights:

### Our Land

The Kaska Nation has an inherent right to govern its ancestral lands and our communities. We have the right to protect our indigenous rights, titles, and interests within Dena Kēyeh.

### Our Laws

The Kaska Nation will protect our inherent rights by honouring our ancestors' traditions, the authority of our laws, and the wisdom of our Elders and are willing to live by the authority of Dene K'éh Gūs'an.

### Our People

The Kaska Nation has a sacred obligation to protect, preserve, and defend the air, lands, waters, plants, and animals of Dena Kēyeh for the well-being of our Nation and our people.

### Our Future

The Kaska Nation stewardship obligation includes maintaining and restoring conditions in our ancestral lands that provide our people and future generations with environmental, cultural, spiritual, and economic foundations to live in according to Denetie.

# Dane Nan Ye Dāh Network

Tanya Ball on Dease River preparing for installation of water depth gauge - Photo Credit: Land Guardian Program



Kaska Land Guardians have been busy over the winter and now going into Spring we are preparing for the patrol field season! We have been held back a bit by COVID but have gotten a lot of work done, such as completing the Guardian Orientation Binder and attending numerous conferences and workshops with guardians and monitoring programs across Canada via zoom.

## Conferences and Workshops attended:

- ◆ Freshwater data workshop
- ◆ Drought and WSA engagement session
- ◆ Indigenous Invasive Species network meeting
- ◆ Tanya presented at the Data tools and information management guardian webinar held by Nature United
- ◆ Tanya & Lisa both attended a virtual Indigenous conference on cumulative effects
- ◆ Tanya, Lisa and James will be attending the upcoming Northern Stewardship Gathering via zoom. Tanya will be a part of the panel to discuss “Community Participation in Monitoring Activities.”

Data loggers will be installed this spring within the Liard river watershed to collect continuous data on water levels, temperature and flow. This data is being collected to serve as baseline data to assist in tracking climate change and the cumulative effects happening within the territory. Staff gauge data collection will resume this spring as well.

Lisa Shepherd and Tanya Ball both assisted with Caribou surveys on the Rancheria herd led by Norm Maclean. Surveys went really well. In addition, Lisa Shepherd, James Malone and Norm Maclean conducted a stratified random block moose survey in December 2020. Both reports will be available, upon request, at the end of April 2021.

Tanya Ball and Lisa Shepherd at French Creek staff gauge center - Photo Credit: Land Guardian Program

Tanya will be conducting training for Kwadacha and Dease River First Nation Guardians on Survey 123 and Avenza maps, so that all Guardians are updated on use and proper data collection for each survey. This training will also serve to train the Guardians, in each community in data management. Currently all data management is being done by Tanya.

Community members can assist with wildlife data collection by using the free apps available from Survey 123. Community members are encouraged to contact Tanya or Lisa to get the Survey 123 app downloaded to an iPhone or an Android to assist with data collection on Moose observations, First Nation harvest and



Tanya Ball, Lisa Shepherd and James Malone doing CABIN sampling to determine water health Photo Credit: Land Guardian Program

Environmental concerns. Guardians are also collecting data on First Nation harvest. Community members are encouraged to fill out a survey with Guardians or provide info on known First Nation harvest. This data is kept strictly confidential and assists with management of moose and caribou populations.

Over the years our communities have raised concerns about the health of our wildlife populations. We are currently working to developing our own wildlife health sample collection program from First Nation harvest. The program will be implemented in Fort Ware, Good Hope Lake and Lower Post. Sample collection training will be available. We will provide notices when the program starts.

# Kaska Forest Tenures and Carbon Offsets

The Kaska Dena have spent the last 20 years working towards an opportunity to participate in the forest industry. There have been many attempts to find the best fit for the Kaska Dena to find a type of forest tenure that fits with the Kaska principles of forest stewardship that includes a means to provide a sustainable economy with the associated jobs. Retaining the inalienable Kaska Rights and Title associated with the Ancestral Territory while controlling a large portion of the Ancestral Territory for economic purposes associated with forestry has been a challenge.

However, in June of 2011, the British Columbia Government with the assistance of the First Nations Forestry Council created a forest tenure for first nations called the First Nations Woodland Licence (FNWL). The new tenure provides First Nations with exclusive rights to harvest trees, medicinal plants, and mushrooms within a specific area, called an area-based tenure. No other company can harvest trees, medicinal plants or mushrooms within the boundaries of the area-based tenure.

For example, the proposed new First Nations Woodland Licence that the Daylu Dena Council would hold through their economic development company is approximately 850,000 hectares in size. Kwadacha's FNWL is 240,000 hectares, while Dease River's is 330,00 hectares. The FNWL is a direct award to a first nation that has an Interim Measures Agreement through treaty. The FNWL requires a Forest Management Plan that provides the vision and stewardship requirements of the Kaska and a Forest Stewardship Plan that describes the location of the roads, and harvest blocks, and the



Photo: L to R - David Crampton and Robert Inyale taking age and height samples of trees - Photo Credit: Kwadacha Natural Resources Agency

type of harvest for a five-year period. The area within each FNWL that will actually have trees harvested ranges from 15% to 25% of the total area. That means that between 75% to 85% of the area within the Kaska FNWLs will be protected from any tree harvesting and can then be used for any other activities that the communities desire.

Another opportunity that the Kaska are investigating within the FNWL areas is Carbon Credits. Trees take in Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air and release Oxygen. The absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> into tree leaves or needles for tree growth is called photosynthesis. One of the great gifts of plants is the storing of CO<sub>2</sub>, which helps to reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, which in turn is helping with the issue of global warming that has resulted from excess CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. For a period of time, some companies are purchasing the amount of carbon that is stored in trees to offset the carbon emitted by themselves or other companies. These carbon offsets are likely to be a marketable product for the next 25 years or until the world becomes carbon neutral.

As a result, the Kaska can use the 75% to 85% of the area within the First Nations Woodland Licences that are not being harvested and capturing CO<sub>2</sub>, to offset against companies that are emitting CO<sub>2</sub>. This means that companies will buy the carbon our trees are storing for at least the next 25 years. All we have to do is try and protect the trees from fires, insects and disease. There are also jobs associated with the Carbon Credits market. There are jobs involved in the inventory of the trees that are going to be protected for carbon storage. The more carbon that is stored, the more valuable the trees are to the purchasing companies. Jobs will also be required to protect the trees, remeasure the size of the trees, and manage the trees for wildlife.

The Kaska Dena Principles of Forest Management will be used in the managing of the Kaska First Nations Woodland Licences.

## Goal

- ◆ Maintain the ecological integrity of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems
- ◆ Achieve high levels of human well-being
- ◆ Provide a sustainable economy

## Strategies

- ◆ Maintain ecosystem functions and processes (e.g., stream flow, water quality, soil productivity, natural disturbance rates and patterns) across scales and through the long term.
- ◆ Maintain the natural diversity of species, genes, and habitat elements across scales and over time.
- ◆ Protect and where necessary restore under-represented, endangered or degraded ecosystems.
- ◆ Recognise and protect the inherent Kaska Rights, Title, and interests.
- ◆ Achieve the health, wealth, and education statuses required for a high quality and secure life for the Kaska Dena.
- ◆ Build stable, resilient, well-served, and peaceful Kaska communities.
- ◆ Create a strong, diverse economy and mix of businesses in communities and across the Ancestral Territory.
- ◆ Create a strong and diverse mix of profit and non-profit organisations and a vibrant set of traditional, cultural, and non-market activities within Kaska Dena communities.
- ◆ Ensure a fair distribution of benefits, costs, and risks amongst the participants of the Kaska Forest enterprise.

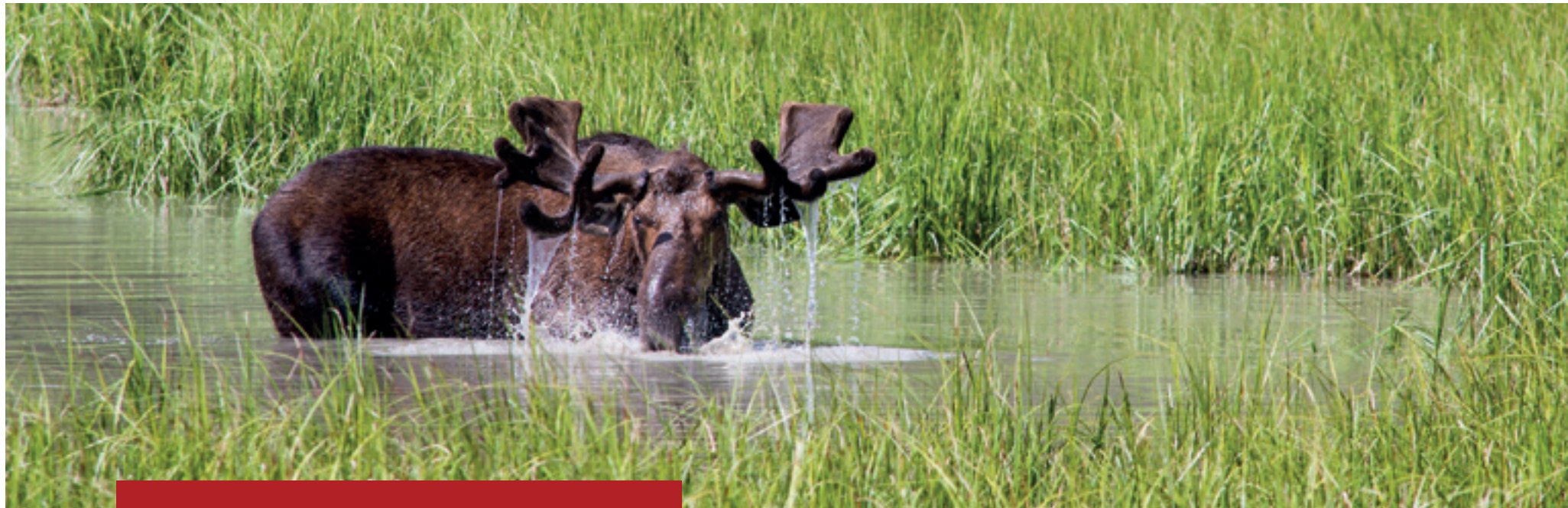


On March 26 2021, the Kaska Strategic Engagement Agreement (SEA) was renewed as an amending agreement between the Kaska Dena in British Columbia and the Government of BC. The SEA is a government-to-government agreement that focuses on consultation, accommodation, and the shared interests between our Governments. This relationship is one that emphasizes the collaborative management of the lands, waters, and resources in the Kaska ancestral territory.

Since the original signing of this agreement in 2012, the SEA has evolved with the changing landscape of Indigenous rights and title in Canada. Discussions of bringing this agreement to Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act (DRIPA) standards are ongoing, and new negotiations are set to take place in 2021 to create a more fulsome reconciliation agreement between the BC Kaska and the Province.

Due to the Pandemic, consultation and engagement around lands and resources have remained online, which has allowed for, in some cases, more regular communication and discussion on lands and resource decision making.

To highlight the decisions made in the past fiscal year (2020/21), the Kaska Lands and Resource offices in BC reviewed over 71 applications and referrals. The most prevalent sector of these was mineral-based decisions.



Moose Feeding  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

# Strategic Engagement Agreement



Stone Sheep  
Photo Credit: Maureen Garrity

Dease River  
Photo Credit: Maureen Garrity

The Natural Resource Council (NRC), which represents the central government to government body of the SEA, had five sessions this past year where some of the following strategic initiatives were worked on through our four working groups:

- ◆ Jade Placer Collaborative Working Group and Jade Boulder Special Use Permit – Mineral Working Group
- ◆ Strategic Management Planning for the Muskwa Kechika Protected Areas – Parks and Protected Areas Working Group
- ◆ Moose Action Plan – Fish and Wildlife Working Group
- ◆ Mackenzie TSR Engagement – Forestry Working Group

For the complete annual report out on the SEA for 2020-2021, please visit our website at:

<https://kaskadenacouncil.com/strategic-engagement-agreement-sea>

For more information on land and resource files, engagements, and decisions, please contact your community lands and resource officer:

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# The Kaska Dena and Treaty # 8 Court Decision

On May 19th, 2020, a split decision in the British Columbia Court of Appeal affirmed a decision regarding the boundary of Treaty # 8. Although the Court of Appeal decided on the boundary of Treaty 8 which overlaps the Kaska Ancestral Territory, it did not address or determine any issues with regard to Rights and Title. It is the opinion of the Kaska Dena that the Treaty # 8 boundary does not affect the Kaska's substantive Aboriginal Rights or Title within the Kaska Ancestral Territory.

The Kaska Dena, as good neighbours, will continue to work together, in the spirit of sharing, with the Treaty # 8 people on issues that are important to both our Nations.

The following document provides a clarification of the Kaska Dena position regarding the Treaty #8 court decision.

Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens



Dayla Dena Council  
Lower Post, B.C.



Kwadacha Nation  
Fort Ware, B.C.



Dease River First Nation  
Good Hope Lake, B.C.

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
February 8, 2021

### BC KASKA LEADERS STATEMENT RE: THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA DISMISSAL OF LEAVE TO APPEAL APPLICATIONS IN TREATY 8 BOUNDARY CASE

Lower Post, BC – The Supreme Court of Canada dismissed the applications of the Province of British Columbia and McLeod Lake Indian Band for leave to appeal the decision of the British Columbia Court of Appeal in *West Moberly First Nations v. British Columbia*, 2020 BCCA 138 (the "Treaty 8 Boundary Decision"). In the Treaty 8 Boundary Decision, the Court of Appeal upheld a declaration that the western boundary of Treaty 8 falls along the continental divide between the Arctic and Pacific watersheds. The case has now ended.

Kaska Leaders strongly disagree with the decision of the BC Court of Appeal but note that this decision does not affect Kaska Rights and Title within our Traditional Territory. The Appeal Court's declaration about the western boundary is a matter of importance only to those Nations who have signed or otherwise become part of Treaty 8. This does not include the Kaska. Moreover, the Court of Appeal did not decide that Treaty 8 Nations possess or can exercise Treaty Rights within the Kaska traditional territory.

Kaska have no doubt whatsoever that Kaska Rights and Title continue to exist throughout our traditional territory as they have since time immemorial.

Danny Case, the Chair of Kaska Dena Council, stated: "The Kaska Dena have always held the view that the issue of boundaries and shared areas in particular is a matter to be sorted out by agreement amongst Indigenous Nations themselves."

Kaska elders have long known the areas where Kaska people maintain a relationship with our neighbours, the Treaty 8 Nations. Throughout our proud history, we have respectfully accommodated each other's needs. We have shared certain lands and resources where appropriate. The Leaders of our respective Nations have a lengthy tradition of meetings and discussions with each other to maintain the historical friendship between our peoples as supportive neighbours.

It is the solemn intention of the Kaska to maintain a peaceful, respectful, and supportive relationship so both the Kaska Nation and Treaty 8 Nations can move forward in the important work of protecting the lands and waters of our respective homelands for the benefit of our peoples.

For Kaska Dena, this means moving forward based on our unextinguished Rights and Title and our own sacred traditions and laws. We respectfully expect and look forward to nothing less from Treaty 8 Nations.

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#### For further information, please contact:

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# 3NBC Collaborative Stewardship Forum

Photo Credit: Garth Lens



Currently the 3 Nations Society and Government of British Columbia (3NBC) are in the final year of a 3- year Collaborative Stewardship Forum pilot project. The 3NBC Forum, comprised of members from BC, Taku River Tlingit, Tahltan, Kaska, and 3 Nations Society is focussed on moving toward shared management of wildlife. Work on securing an additional mandate to advance co-management of wildlife in the collective territories is being sought with each of the governments involved in the program.

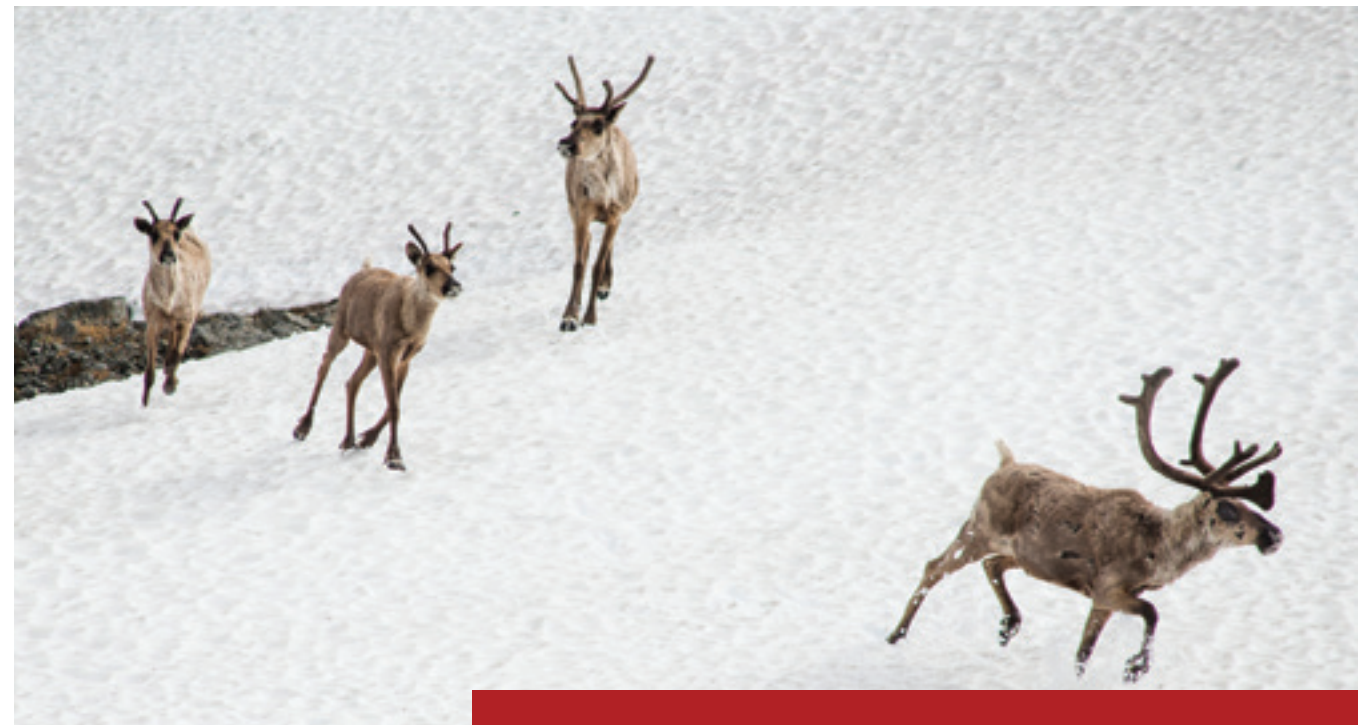
A key component of the relationship is the support of each Nation's Guardian Program. The 3NBC Forum continues to support each Nation's Guardian Program with continued

coordination in on-the-ground monitoring of licenced hunters and recreational land users in the collective territories, in addition to supporting coordination, monitoring, and capacity development between programs through the work of the 3 Nations Guardian Coordinator, Tanya Ball. This has included supporting additional employment for seasonal guardians, continued training, and exchange trips between Nation Guardian Programs. There is additional focus on information gathering to inform the development of community-based moose management plans.

Also, through the 3NBC Forum specific guardian led projects important to each Nation have

occurred. These include moose surveys of the Klappan, and Liard Basin in winter of 2020-21, Kaska caribou late winter calf survival survey in March 2021, sheep survey in the Atlin area in March 2021, Edziza mountain goat survey in March 2021, and ecosystem monitoring in 2021.

Finally, collectively the 3 Nations and BC are supporting the collaborative development of community-based moose stewardship plans for the Atlin, Klappan, and Liard Basin moose populations starting in 2020.



Woodland Caribou, Dene K'éh Kusān  
Photo Credit: Garth Lens

Through the 3 Nations BC CSF, it has been identified that it is important for all involved in creating moose stewardship plans that meet the needs of the communities, Nations, and BC. The management objectives and strategies need to be based on indigenous, local, and scientific knowledge and represent management based on western science and each Nations' knowledge, traditional practices, and laws.

For Kaska Dena in BC, the Liard Basin was identified to be a pilot moose population to work with communities, BC and 3 Nations on setting Kaska Dena management priorities, developing the plan that will meet the needs for all and supports decision making for all involved.

It is being delivered through the Kaska Dena BC Fish and Wildlife Working Group under the government to government agreement and they will work with communities, Leadership, 3 Nations, and BC to develop a plan that works toward:

- a) Population, habitat, harvest, and land use management objectives consistent with provincial and Kaska Dena moose management approaches;**
- b) A moose stewardship plan based on Kaska Dena , local and scientific sources of knowledge;**
- c) A moose stewardship plan consistent with moose management direction from Kaska Dena land use plans and conservation initiatives, Kaska Dena BC Natural Resource Council, and higher-level plan objectives; and**
- d) Community-based review and approval process for Kaska Dena.**

Kaska Community engagement on the Liard Basin Moose Stewardship Plan is set to begin in April 2021. We are working to develop online surveys, paper surveys and would be willing to conduct covid-safe family/household bubble sessions or zoom sessions to seek your input into the drafting of the plan. If you have a preference please let Vanessa Law, Land and Resource Officer for Daylu Dena Council or James Malone, Acting Land and Resource Officer for the Dease River First Nation know. We encourage you all to participate in the development of this plan.

To keep updated on the 3Nation Society activities please visit their website at <https://3nations.org>.



# Our People

Kaska Youth, MK Youth Camp  
Photo Credit: Theresa Gulliver

## Kaska Youth Gathering

In February 2020 Kaska Dena Council sponsored a four-day Youth Leadership Workshop in Prince George, attended by youth from Daylu Dena Council, Kwadacha First Nation and Dease River First Nation. An outcome of this workshop was a request from the youth for KDC to organize a Kaska National Youth Gathering at Turnagain Lodge in the heart of Kaska Ancestral Territory, with participation of Kaska Elders. KDC responded by committing to the Gathering and establishing a Kaska Youth Planning Committee (KYPC).

The KYPC had only just begun to meet when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, and health orders prohibited all social gatherings. The Kaska National Youth Gathering has had to be deferred to a time when gatherings are deemed safe.

The request for a National Youth Gathering stemmed from the memories of the MK Environmental Youth Camps that took place annually between 1999 and 2009. Those who attended the MK Environmental Youth camps remember them as

being life-changing; a time when they connected with other Kaska youth, learned more about themselves, spent time with Elders and learned about Kaska culture, as well as the critical role of being stewards of our land.

The Kaska Territory is so wide and due to the traditional disconnects our communities face (e.g.: we are no longer travelling along the Davie Trail to meet each other), we need to ensure there is space and time made available for our youth across



Kaska Youth, MK Youth Camp  
Photo Credit: Theresa Gulliver

the Ancestral Territory to meet and get to know each other. They will forge important relationships that could change the future of the Kaska Nation one day. Elders remind us that each of the youth attending these camps could be future Chiefs and Councillors, Land Guardians, Managers, etc. and their connection to each other is just as important as their connection to the land.

On a Kaska National level Kaska have made substantial accomplishments to protect and conserve Kaska Ancestral lands through the Dene K'eh Kusan and the Yukon Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas. Kaska Land Guardians are playing a key role in protecting Kaska lands now and into the future and we acknowledge how vital Kaska youth are to the future of Kaska culture and heritage and to the

protection of our Ancestral lands and resources. Connecting our youth with each other, with our elders and to our land is integral to our culture and our vitality as a Nation.

We remain hopeful that a Kaska Youth Gathering may be possible in the late summer or early fall. While a formal announcement for the dates of a Kaska Youth Gathering remain dependent on the changing COVID-19 health orders and directives, we want Kaska Youth to know that KDC remains committed to working with you to hold a Kaska Youth Gathering at Turnagain as soon as health orders permit.

Watch for our updates on the Turnagain Youth Camp on the KDC Facebook page, KDC website <https://kaskadenacouncil.com/> and at Kaska community Band Offices.

Kaska Youth, MK Youth Camp  
Photo Credit: Theresa Gulliver



**The camp opened their eyes to a larger world outside of their communities. They also got the chance to associate with each other and form strong bonds for when they come together, and some day take their place as leaders of this great land.”**

**DEREK LOOTS, PAST MK CAMP COUNSELLOR**



PROFILE



# Gillian Staveley

Director of Culture and Land Stewardship, DKI

Gillian Staveley is a Kaska Dena member whose heritage lies in the Muncho Lake Region of Dena K'eyeh in Northern British Columbia. Graduating from UBC with a Masters degree in Anthropology, Gillian's research explored the importance of multi-generational environmental knowledge and addressed issues of residential schooling, colonialism, and political ecology – all topics that are relevant to Indigenous Nations across the globe. In her work as a Regional Coordinator for the Kaska Dena, her goal has been to ensure that through the Government-to-Government relationship that exists with her Nation and the Province, that the respect

for Kaska Laws and the commitment under the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples is upheld in all consultations and engagements with her Nation.

Starting this spring, Gillian will be taking on a new role for the Kaska Dena with the Dena Kayeh Institute, the Kaska Dena non-profit society, with charitable status, and a community-run and led organization established in 2004 that was created to empower, preserve, and protect the Kaska Dena language, oral traditions, history, culture, and traditional knowledge. DKI's mandate reflects the Kaska Dena's vision to reclaim

our role as stewards of the land and resources within our Ancestral Territory.

Gillian's new position as the Director of Culture and Land Stewardship will be to work with the DKI team to manage various portfolios related to culture, heritage, land and resource stewardship. As an advocate for Kaska laws, culture and traditions, Gillian will be an important part of the team that helps fulfill the institute's mission to restore, sustain and protect our natural and cultural areas for the benefit of the Kaska Dena Nation.

PROFILE



# Brittany Tuffs

Lead, Kaska Law Project "Dena K'éh Gus'ān", DKI

Brittany Tuffs is Kaska Dena and Cree from Ross River and Saskatchewan. Brittany obtained a Certificate in Heritage and Culture, Diploma in Northern First Nation Studies from Yukon College, and an Honours Undergraduate Degree in Anthropology at the University of British Columbia.

While at UBC, her focus was on social/cultural anthropology. Much of her studying and research revolved around Indigenous issues and subjects, as well as her interest in other anthropology fields such as linguistic anthropology, biological anthropology, and archaeology.

Brittany is currently enrolled in a Masters in Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research explores Kaska traditional knowledge and understandings of our lands and laws. It is these understandings that inform the approach of our communities to settler governments and decisions about Kaska lands.

Brittany is currently working as the Project Lead for the Kaska Dena Law Project "Dena K'éh Gus'ān" with Dena Kayeh Institute. Her work involves documenting, analyzing and codifying our traditional laws to enable Kaska knowledge keepers, leaders, youth, elders and land stewards. to apply

Kaska legal principles to a full range of current challenges faced by the five Kaska communities. DKI hopes this work will also assist in creating a Kaska Dena Governance Model to manage the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas based on Kaska laws and protocols.

PROFILE



# James Malone

Kaska Land Guardian

James Malone is a member of the Dease River First Nation (DRFN) in Good Hope Lake, British Columbia. He graduated from high school at F.H. Collins Secondary School in 2000 and from Yukon College in 2003 with his Renewable Resources Management Diploma. James was hired as the DRFN Wildlife/Land Guardian in May 2017, initially in a seasonal capacity while he completed his studies at Yukon College.

In 2019 James graduated from Yukon College/University with his Bachelor of Science degree in Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences (NECS) program and became the full-time DRFN Wildlife/Land Guardian.

James' long-term career goal is to work in the renewable resources management sector.

The main duties and responsibilities as the DRFN Wildlife/Land Guardian include:

- 1)** Conduct routine patrols at locations that are culturally important for the DRFN and the Kaska Nation;
- 2)** Collect data (e.g. wildlife observations) during those routine patrols;
- 3)** Report wildlife infractions (e.g. purposeful wastage of moose meat) and all other infractions (e.g. dumping of used motor oil on the land) to the Government of British Columbia;
- 4)** Attend workshops and training sessions with respect to wildlife management, and;
- 5)** Conduct interviews to obtain wildlife harvest data on species such as moose and caribou that were harvested on the Kaska traditional territory.

Working as a DRFN Wildlife/Land Guardian has been a rewarding and prestigious privilege for James.

The overall purpose of the work by Kaska Wildlife/Land Guardians is to ensure that our Kaska traditional territory is protected and cared for as much as possible. Therefore, the future generations will have access to our clean Kaska traditional territory, and the ability to conduct activities such as the harvesting of moose for dietary and traditional purposes.

James strongly recommends that once graduation from high school has occurred, younger Kaska members should complete their post-secondary studies in natural/renewable resources management before commencing any work as Kaska Wildlife/Land Guardians. By successfully completing their post-secondary studies, those younger Kaska members will become successful professionals when they commence their work as Kaska Wildlife/Land Guardians in the future.

PROFILE



# Lee-Ann Martens

Registered Nurse, Bachelor Of Science In Nursing (Bscn)

Lee-Ann Martens, member of Dease River First Nation, grew up in Vanderhoof, BC and graduated from the Nechako Valley Secondary School. Now a Registered Nurse, Lee-Ann told her story of what it took to achieve this.

Lee-Ann says that high school was difficult for her and she wasn't sure what she wanted to do after she graduated. She worked for a time in a pizzeria and took some courses including level 3 First Aid and Food Safe. She also worked at the local Mill after school while she decided what she wanted to do.

While Lee-Ann was working at the Mill, she considered different options, but couldn't seem to find the right fit and didn't have any goals. That was until she met someone who was enrolled in the nursing program. Listening to this person talk about the nursing program inspired Lee-Ann. She learned about

how many opportunities there are in nursing, such as working with children, youth, Elders or in research and that you can later branch into whatever your passion is. Lee-Ann made the decision that she would like to become a Registered Nurse.

Now with a goal in mind, Lee-Ann did some upgrading at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George. She then enrolled and was accepted into the Northern Collaborative Nursing Program at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George.

Lee-Ann describes her experience in the program as initially very difficult, requiring a lot of hard work. She found the Aboriginal Resource Center a welcoming and friendly place to study, with supportive staff and incentives for people who identify as Indigenous. While she was initially concerned about

how challenging the coursework was for her, Lee-Ann says she continued to work hard, did not give up in the end excelled in her studies. Lee-Ann says a motivating factor for was that she learned about health care issues and found that there are not many First Nation representatives in healthcare positions. She felt it was important to be successful and bring an Indigenous perspective and experience to healthcare.

Lee-Ann graduated in April 2021 and was offered a nursing job before she had even finished the program. She has just finished a 300-hour practicum and starts her nursing job on May 18th. Looking back, she realizes that it wasn't always easy, but now that she is a Registered Nurse, she has reached an important goal that she set for herself and feels that she has a lot to look forward to.



# Our Communities

Hand Games, Lower Post  
Photo Credit: Maureen Garrity

## Health & Wellness

### Collective Community Health and Wellness Plan

Healthy communities are a priority. This is a constant theme that we heard through discussions in Fort Ware, Lower Post and Good Hope Lake. Our people said that healthy communities mean Kaska people living life to the fullest, free from the disruptive effects of alcohol and substance addiction, and that no one should be left behind. People stressed how important our land - Dena Kéyeh - is to us as Kaska and that when we are disconnected

from our land ill health can persist. The land heals, connects, and grounds us to our culture and to who we are as Kaska. Sadly, we also heard that community programs and services for health and wellness are lacking and underfunded.

In response to what our people told us, Kaska negotiators took the community's words to the KDC negotiating table with BC and Canada

and stressed the need for financial support for community health and wellness. Following discussions with Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), and in consultation with Kaska people, KDC submitted a proposal to First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) to develop a community supported Health and Wellness Path Forward Plan. FNHA approved the proposal, and the work has begun.



The first step was to establish Health and Wellness Working Groups in each community to seek community members' thoughts and ideas and help develop a Health and Wellness Path Forward Plan. With a Community Wellness Plan in place, we can seek funding from FNHA to implement the plan.

### KASKA HEALTH AND WELLNESS WORKING GROUPS

Fort Ware, KFN	Lower Post, DDC	Good Hope Lake, DFRN
Eileen Castelli	Vanessa Norris	Yvonne Moon
Mason Abou	Gina McFadyen	Marilyn Miller
Chris Tyler	Catherine Porter	Minnie Dennis
Shannon Pirhonen	Lisa Shepherd	

Moosehide slippers by Mida Donnessey  
Photo Credit: Media One

## Your voice is critical to developing Community Health and Wellness Plans

We are asking members what your vision or hope is for a healthy future for our communities and to help in developing a Collective Community Health and Wellness Plan. We are seeking your input on important topics such as:

- ◆ Prevention Programs and Pre-Treatment Support – What is needed?
- ◆ Post Treatment/Aftercare Program – What is missing and what would you suggest?
- ◆ On the Land Healing – What would the activities and traditional approach to healing look like?



We have the opportunity to utilize Turnagain Lodge as an on the land healing retreat for all Kaska, and potentially other Indigenous peoples who seek on the land healing. We know that healing rooted in the land, and traditional practices is a highly beneficial alternative to the mainstream treatment centers that take us away from our own land.

Let's work together to create a Health and Wellness Plan. We are hopeful

with the vaccine and healthier days ahead that by summer we will be able to speak face to face and hear your thoughts about what is needed to support healthy communities. There is an on-line survey that can be filled out as one way to provide valuable input or you can receive a copy of the survey from a member of your community Kaska Health and Wellness Working Group. Please take the time to fill out this survey:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/QHZHPND](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QHZHPND)

## Community Mental Health Initiatives

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, in support of our Health and Wellness Initiative offered up funds to support a mental health initiative in Lower Post, Fort Ware and Good Hope Lake. The challenges of COVID-19 and the related lock-downs and isolation have been challenging to all and these initiatives were

designed to provide immediate benefits. In discussion with members of the Health and Wellness Working Groups, Michelle Miller submitted proposals from each community for initiatives to be undertaken in the month of March and achieved funding for each community from MIRR for the following:

- ◆ LOWER POST  
Purchase of snowshoes and cutting of snow-shoe trails by Kaska youth.
- ◆ GOOD HOPE LAKE  
Purchase of insulating material and hiring of workers to insulate the cabins at Hot Lakes so that they can be used year-round.
- ◆ FORT WARE  
Funding support for a Women's On the Land Culture Camp during spring break.

Kaska Youth, Moose Lake  
Photo Credit: Theresa Gulliver



# Daylu Dena Council – Lower Post

Although Lower Post members have endured the challenges of this past year under the health orders and restrictions of COVID-19, this has not slowed down the great strides that have taken place within the community to improve the lives of members in a substantial way.

Daylu Dena Council, leaders past and present, have remained steadfast in their efforts to remove the Lower Post Residential School. These efforts have paid off, as on April 15th an announcement was made by the BC and Federal Governments to approve funding to demolish the Lower Post Residential School (LPRS) and construct a multi-purpose cultural building. The new facility will provide long awaited recreational, educational, and cultural spaces for youth and Elders and will include an indoor gym, industrial kitchen, program rooms for beading, story telling, Elder's Tea and administration offices and meeting spaces.

This is an achievement for all Kaska and for Kaska Leaders, past and present to be proud of and to celebrate, particularly as it has taken several decades of dedicated effort to achieve. On April 1st, the provincial government contracted the services of Brian Ladue, Kaska videographer



NORTH-WEST PERSPECTIVE

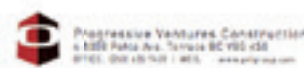


WESTERN PERSPECTIVE



SOUTH-WEST PERSPECTIVE

DAYLU DENA COUNCIL MULTIPURPOSE CULTURAL CENTRE



**“Removal of the Residential School building will finally allow this community to grow. The new building will be the heart and soul of our community.”**

DEPUTY CHIEF HARLAN SCHILLING

from Ross River, to come to Lower Post to video members speaking about what it means to have the LPRS finally removed, and a new building constructed for the current and future needs and enjoyment of Lower Post residents, Kaska and other First Nations. This video formed a part of the virtual announcement on April 15th at which Deputy Chief Schilling, Premier Horgan, AANDC Minister Miller and MIRR Minister Rankin spoke about the significance of the removal of the remnant of a horrific past, and the construction of a new building symbolizing hope and reconciliation. Tahltan President Chad Day and Taku River Tlingit Spokesperson John D. Ward also spoke powerful words about the significance for the 3Nations, Kaska, Tahltan, Tlingit and all Indigenous Peoples in Canada of having the residential school finally demolished.

The Government of Canada is investing \$11.5 million in this project, including \$10 million through Infrastructure Canada's Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and an additional \$1.5 million from Indigenous Services Canada. The Government of British Columbia is investing \$1.5 million. Daylu Dena Council is

also contributing \$538,960 to the construction of the new facility. Indigenous Services Canada is also contributing an additional \$1.3 million through the First Nations Solid Waste Management Initiative for the removal of hazardous materials and demolition of the last remaining part of the former Lower Post Residential School.

Lower Post has also seen construction of the 18 Plex which is now about 30% complete. The two wings of the 18 plex will provide housing for residents in the 16 rooms, with two common areas. Also underway in Lower Post is the construction of a water treatment plant which will provide service to the new infrastructure in Lower Post.

Dates are yet to be confirmed for the actual demolition of the LPRS and the celebration surrounding putting shovels in the ground for the construction of the Cultural and Multi-purpose building. It is hoped that by early summer the COVID-19 restrictions will be relaxed enough that Lower Post can host an event to witness and participate in the removal of the LPRS and celebrate the construction of the new building. Videos of the announcement and the Lower Post community video can be viewed at: <https://kaskadenacouncil.com/video-gallery/>

# Dease River First Nation – Good Hope Lake

The community of Good Hope Lake has been very busy over the past year. Although one of the main focuses was protecting the community during the Covid pandemic, the community welcomed a number of new staff, and was able to accomplish a number of other initiatives.

The community was diligent in their efforts to protect and provide for their community members during the Covid pandemic. The staff and leaders ensured that the members were provided with Covid care packages that included food, cleaning supplies and medical supplies. In addition, they were able to purchase a trailer that would be used as a place for members to self-isolate and/or quarantine if needed. Once the pandemic is over and the trailer is no longer designated as the community COVID trailer, it will have other multi-purpose uses.

An arena size skating rink with a roof was built for community members to use during the winter months but can also be used during the rest of the year as a gathering place.



Hockey Rink, Good Hope Lake  
Photo Credit: Ruby Johnny

Kevin Pete celebrates catch during Fishing Derby  
Photo Credit: Lacey Johnny



Always a popular event is a local fishing derby where fun was had by all. The community gathered on the frozen Good Hope Lake and spent their weekend fishing, socializing and competing to see who would take home the grand prize for the biggest fish. The kids had fun too and enjoyed the snow building snowmen. The rules of the derby were simple: have fun, must be willing to brag around, don't steal anyone's ice hole, and practise social distancing.

# Kwadacha First Nation — Fort Ware

This has been a year like none other for Fort Ware residents with the challenges that were faced by all of us in dealing with a global pandemic, and community members are to be congratulated for their diligence in adhering in the safety measures to keep our community safe.

Several projects have been completed in Fort Ware that are of significance to the community. The Airway runway widening, and extension is now complete which will allow larger aircraft to land, and in addition new lighting was commissioned which will allow flights to land and take off in darkness. Given the need for reliable flights in and out of this community, these runway projects are of critical importance for community safety and ease of travel. In addition, a building has been constructed adjacent to the runway to serve as a waiting room for passengers. This is a much-welcomed addition!

Among the completed projects is the water system improvement with a new storage facility (water tower), the chipper facility upgrade and 22 home renovations. The chipper facility was upgraded with safety features and a roof to allow for year-round chipping to provide fibre for the Biomass Plant.



New waiting room at Fort Ware airstrip  
Photo Credit: Danny Case

Safety upgrades were also made to the sawmill. We are happy to report that the renovation of 22 home renovations is now complete except for minor repairs.

Kwadacha has a number of projects in progress. These projects include the community sewer feasibility study which is near completion; the Flood and Erosion Study is also nearing completion and will form a part of the community sewer feasibility. Another

project in progress is repair of the pipes in the Biomass plant, damaged when the water services in the Biomass plant were shut off.

These projects are only a few of the initiatives being undertaken in the community. New projects and initiatives include house construction, asset management and initiatives to work toward a clean, drug-free community.



New lights at Fort Ware airstrip  
Photo Credit: Danny Case



# Kaska Certified Fire Fighters – Beat the Heat

In April, Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling, along with Hunter Wolfe, Aaron Johnston and Sid Atkinson participated in the Beat the Heat Training in Whitehorse. The memory of the 2018 fire brings to the forefront, the importance of having a skilled fire fighting crew to be able respond and protect our land and our communities. As we plan for the construction of the new multi-purpose cultural center for Lower Post, there is added incentive for trained Kaska firefighters to be able to protect our communities, our homes and our special infrastructure.

Beat the Heat is an annual training camp held by Yukon First Nations Wildfire (YFNW). While on the surface this 2-week program seems to focus mainly on wildland firefighting training, Beat the Heat and YFNW has

a far more important mission. YFNW believes that youth are the future stewards of lands and Indigenous traditions. They focus on resilience and diversity training, financial literacy, and land-based healing. YFNW recognizes that First Nations are now, and have always been, stewards of their land. The YFNW has developed training to help our youth become leaders who work to protect the communities of the Yukon and Northern BC from threats of natural disaster.

With these Kaska Firefighters now trained, the hope is that more Kaska will be inspired to also take the training and expand the team of certified Kaska Firefighters.

Participants, 2021 Beat the Heat Fire Fighting Training  
Photo Credit: YFNW



# Our News

L to R: Craig McCook, Willie Poole, Mary Jean Poole, Charlie Pete, Felix Charlie - Photo Credit: Maureen Garrity

## KDC General Assembly 2021

At the March 3rd Board of Directors meeting the KDC Board approved the date of July 6-8th for a KDC General Assembly. As vaccine roll-out continues in the province of BC we remain hopeful that by summer there will be a relaxing of health orders and directives and that we will once again be able to gather together safely. While the 2020 KDC General Assembly was not able to take place because of COVID-19, KDC is committed to a General Assembly this year – either an in person gathering, a virtual General Assembly, or potentially a combination.

The General Assembly is to be hosted by Dease River First Nation this year, and the planned site of the General Assembly is Rapid River. The General Assembly is an important time for Kaska. It is a time for us to report out on all the initiatives and successes of the past year, to hear from you and receive your feedback and ideas, as well as a time to connect with families, celebrate our culture and heritage, enjoy spending time on the land together, eating traditional foods and sharing good times together.

We expect to know closer to the date what the health orders are and decide by the end of May if a face-to-face General Assembly can take place and how, updated notice will be posted. So, mark your calendars for a KDC General Assembly July 6-8th, and as summer approaches we will confirm whether we can hold a in person gathering at Rapid River, a virtual General Assembly, or a combination of the two.

# KDC Election of Executive Officers

JULY 6, 2021

The KDC Board of Directors passed a resolution at the March 3rd Board of Directors meeting confirming July 6, 2021 for the 2021 KDC Election. On July 6th KDC members will vote to elect the KDC Chairperson, KDC Vice-Chair of Research and Reconciliation and Vice-Chair Representing Youth for the next three-year term. The KDC Vice Chair Representing Youth is a new position, passed by KDC members in the revised KDC Bylaws at the KDC 2019 General Assembly. As per the amended By-laws the position of Vice Chair of Finance will no longer exist as an elected KDC Executive Officer.

In accordance with the KDC Bylaws and KDC Election Code, the official announcement of the KDC Election is required 60 days prior to the Election date and will therefore be formally announced on May 6, 2021 on the KDC website, Facebook, via email/mail to KDC members and posted on signage in the communities.

This early announcement is intended to give KDC members advance notice of the election so that members can update their information including status number, email and birthdate and be assured of being on the KDC Voters List.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHO CAN VOTE IN A KDC ELECTION?

The KDC Board of Directors passed a resolution at the March 3rd Board of Directors meeting confirming July 6, 2021 for the 2021 KDC

### WHAT IS THE TIMELINE LEADING UP TO THE ELECTION?



### WHO IS CONDUCTING THE ELECTION?

The KDC Board of Directors passed a Board Resolution in January 2020 for KDC to contract the services of One Feather to conduct the entire vote process with the highest professional and ethical standards, ensuring complete transparency and executing established best practices in electoral fairness and democratic processes. One Feather is a First Nations tech company working with over 200 First Nations across Canada to provide a web-based secret ballot voting system and member registrar management for Indigenous communities.

➔ [www.onefeather.ca](http://www.onefeather.ca)

One Feather's role will include on-line, telephone and ballot box voting, hiring of the Chief and Deputy Electoral Officers, management of the nomination process, conducting the entire voting process on election day and counting, announcement of the results.

### HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO VOTE?

KDC members will be able to vote on July 6th by one of the following methods:

- ◇ ONLINE VOTING THROUGH EMAIL
- ◇ TELEPHONE VOTING THROUGH A TOLL-FREE NUMBER
- ◇ BY BALLOT BOX AT ONE OF FOUR POLLS (specific locations to be announced) in:
  - ◇ Community of Fort Ware
  - ◇ Community of Lower Post
  - ◇ Community of Good Hope Lake
  - ◇ Rapid River, site of the 2021 KDC General Assembly.

### WILL COVID-19 AFFECT THE ELECTION?

Closer to the election day we will be able to notify members of any COVID-19 safety practices that may need to be in place on election day to keep voters safe at the voting polls, and we will advise closer to the election date. While the intent is to have a ballot box on election day at Rapid River (intended site of 2021 General Assembly), we will also notify people in advance of the Assembly as to whether the General Assembly will go ahead as a physical gathering, or whether it will be a virtual Assembly in accordance with COVID-19 health orders and/or directions. We anticipate being able to advise members by early June.

### HOW DO I MAKE SURE I AM ON THE KDC VOTERS LIST?

To participate in the KDC Election your membership information must include your full legal name, birthdate, physical address, and email address (if you have one).

**OPTION 1** Email your full legal name, birthdate, and physical address to Michelle Miller, KDC Membership Clerk: [millermee@hotmail.com](mailto:millermee@hotmail.com)

**OPTION 2** Go to the KDC website and fill out either a KDC membership form (if you are a new member), or a membership update form, to update your information [www.kaskadenacouncil.com/our-members](http://www.kaskadenacouncil.com/our-members)

**OPTION 3** Phone Michelle Miller, KDC Membership Clerk, at **250-575-8365** and give her the information over the phone to either fill out a KDC membership form, or to update your current information.

# Turnagain Lodge – Update

L to R: Elder Clifford MacLeod, Councillor Malcolm Groat, Chief Myles Manygreyhorses, KDC Chair Danny Case, Chief Donny Van Somer, Chief Stephan Charlie, Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling, Chief Jack Ceasar. Center: Councillor Bradley Seymour - Photo Credit: Bill Lux

## Repairs and Renovations 2020

During the month of August 2020, a team of hard working Kaska members travelled into Turnagain Lodge to open the Lodge and undertake renovations in preparation for a Kaska National Leadership meeting scheduled for August 28-29th. As the work was undertaken with COVID-19 safety precautions, only a small team of workers were able to go in to do the work.

An initial assessment was done to determine the work required and the equipment needed to do the work. Supplies were purchased and delivered to Turnagain via riverboat and plane on the Turnagain airstrip.

Opening the Lodge after the winter included getting the water system up and running, electrical power functioning, ensuring the shower and bathroom were clean and functioning in the main lodge. The lodge kitchen and other rooms were scrubbed and sanitized, and guest cabins were updated with a fresh coat of paint, new bed frames and new wood stoves were installed. A new tin roof was put on the shop and the generator was replaced for the power system. The grounds were cleaned, new wall tents and platforms were built, mechanical work was done to get the tractor and bob cat up and running and four cords of wood were chopped.

## Kaska National Leadership Meeting 2020

All felt pride that Turnagain Lodge was ready for this important gathering of our leaders. Leaders of all five Kaska Nations arrived either by river boat or plane. Due to COVID, participants were kept to a small Kaska Nation bubble. Leaders gathered in the main lodge to discuss Kaska unity and important issues facing Kaska, and also spent time on the land together fishing and hunting. Thanks to Bradley Seymour's hunting skills, all participated in bringing fresh elk meat back to camp for the cooks to prepare.



Skooks Landing, preparing for the trip into Turnagain Lodge  
Photo Credit: Shawna Case

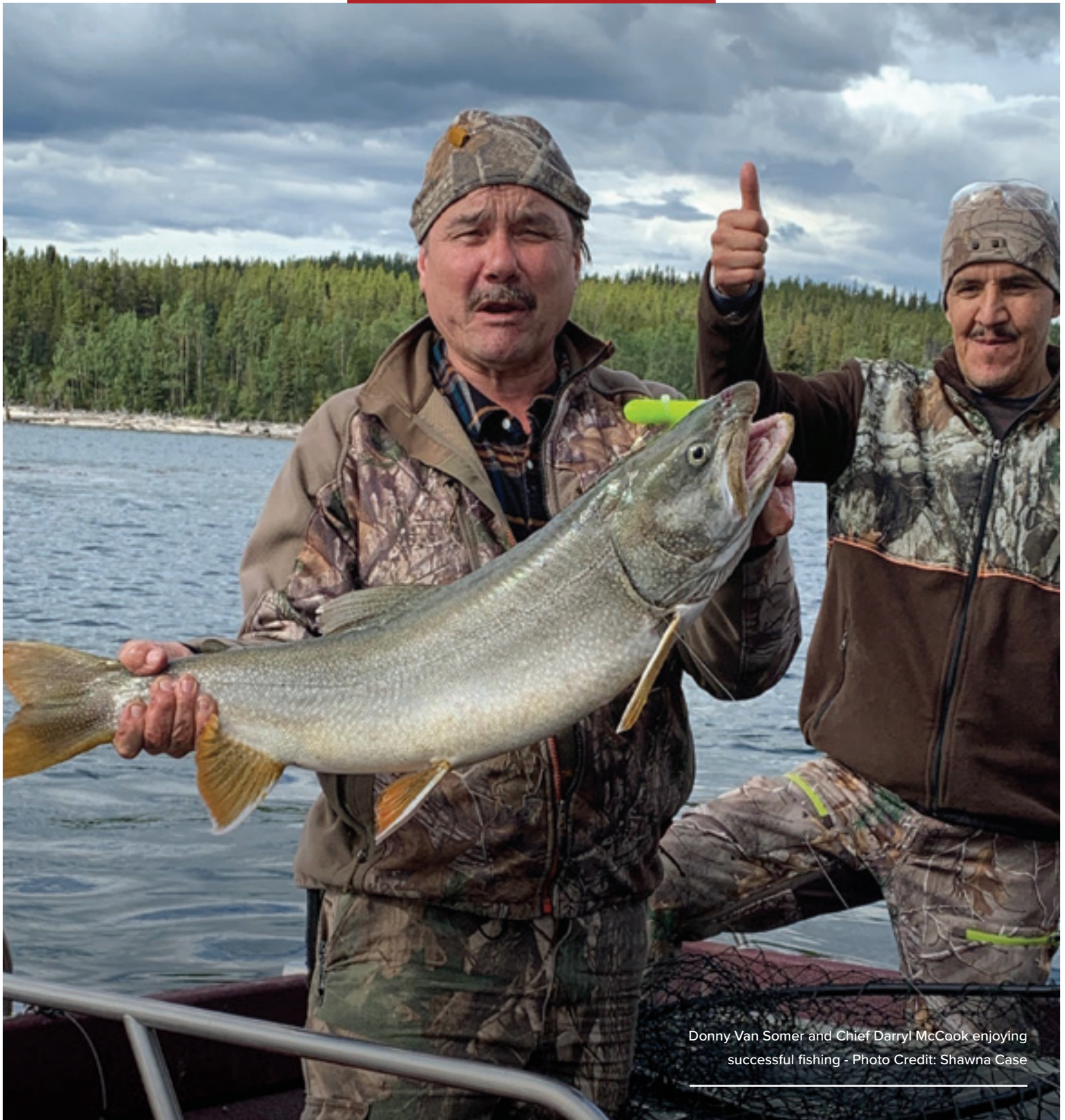
L to R: Councillor Bradley Seymour, Chief Donny Van Somer, Councillor Malcolm Groat, KDC Chair Danny Case, Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling, Chief Myles Manygreyhorses, Chief Stephan Charlie, Chief Jack Caesar, Elder Clifford MacLeod - Photo Credit: Bill Lux

## Plans for Summer 2021

This coming summer, (COVID-19 health orders permitting) we plan to undertake the work to reopen the lodge, and complete renovations to be ready to provide services for Kaska youth, Elders and Kaska meetings. Renovations for this summer will include replacing the septic field for the lodge and renovations to the generator house. Stay tuned for updates on plans for Turnagain this summer.







Donny Van Somer and Chief Darryl McCook enjoying successful fishing - Photo Credit: Shawna Case



250.779.3181

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