

# Muskwa-Kechika Youth Environment Camp 2002



## Moose Lake, BC



MUSKWA-KECHIKA  
MANAGEMENT AREA



Kaska  
Dena  
Council

**MUSKWA-KECHIKA  
YOUTH ENVIRONMENT CAMP  
2002**

**Report by**

**Kaska Dena Council  
PO Box 9  
Lower Post, BC  
V0C 1W0**

**For**

**Muskwa-Kechika Trust Fund  
Suite 150 - 10003 - 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Fort St. John, BC  
V1J 6M7**

**March 2003**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
BACKGROUND.....	1
CAMP PREPARATION.....	1
DAILY ADVENTURES.....	3
LESSONS LEARNED AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23
CAMP PERSONNEL.....	25
YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES.....	27
RESIDENT ELDERS.....	29
PRESENTORS AND VISITORS.....	30
APPENDIX A - SCENERY SHOTS.....	33
APPENDIX B - DESCRIPTION OF CAMP BY MARTYN WILLIAMS.....	35

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our very special thanks to the MacDonald/Stone Family for allowing the camp to take place at Moose Lake in the heart of their traditional homeland. In particular we wish to thank Elsie MacDonald, Rose MacDonald, Walter MacDonald, Angus MacDonald, George MacDonald, Johnny MacDonald, Monty Lynch and Dione Lynch for their gracious hospitality and assistance with the camp.

We also wish to thank Sue Close, Executive Assistant and Jean Gleason, previous Chairperson of Kaska Dena Council for initiating the funding request letters and initial letters to the Kaska and Northern BC Chiefs and municipalities informing them of the upcoming camp.

Norm MacLean and Malcolm Foy of LGL Limited assisted in contacting corporations for financial donations to the camp.

Becky Edzerza set up the financial department, while Betty Shepherd and Sue Close assisted in bookkeeping.

Liard First Nation, Education Department (Kathy Magun) supplied a passenger van to transport the youth from Watson Lake to Muncho Lake. Crystal Porter assisted in forwarding youth enrollment forms to Kaska Dena Council's office and was instrumental in locating a Liard First Nation insured driver for two traveling days. Dorothy Dickson also assisted in enrolling youth.

Doug Hladun, Trans North Helicopters provided the flight service and cameraman, Victor Kisoun, was extremely appreciative of his maneuvering skills.

One evening's entertainment consisting of drumming and singing was provided by the Kaska Drummers, Brian Ledue, Jason Acklack and Russel Magun.

The Town of Watson Lake Recreation and Parks Department provided additional camp bowls, cups, plates and lifejackets.

Friends of Watson Lake supplied two canoes with lifejackets and paddles.

Financial contributions were provided by: Abitibi, CPAWS National, CPAWS BC, LGL Limited, Devon Canada Corporation, Yukon Conservation Society, Northern Thunderbird, Brooker Minerals, Western Geco, Kaska Dena Council, Yvon Chouinard (Patagonia), Duke Energy, and IWA Union.

M. Lynch Trucking Ltd., Fort Nelson, provided transportation of camp supplies and Eh-Cho Dene Enterprises Ltd. (William Kotchea) provided a trailer for transporting supplies.

Daylu Dena Council (Lower Post First Nation) contributed Vanessa Laverdure's time towards camp coordination. National CPAWS (George Smith), Yukon CPAWS (Juri Peepre) & BC CPAWS (Bob Peart), as well as Kaska Tribal Council contributed Corrine Porter's time towards camp coordination. We extend a special thanks to Vanessa and Corrine for the hard work put into coordinating the camp.

Schneider Foods (Lynn Clark) donated a case of Hotrods and Lunchmate Nacho Kits.

We thank Brian McDonald, Wolf Creek Contracting Ltd. for allowing the camp to use his camp equipment.

Derek Loots and Vanessa Laverdure wrote this report on behalf of Kaska Dena Council. LGL Limited edited and produced the report.

We wish to specially acknowledge and thank Dave Porter, Chairperson, Kaska Dena Council and Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board Member for his continued vision of the importance of this camp and his relentless efforts to secure funding.

And finally we wish to thank the Muskwa-Kechika Trust Fund for continued support of the Kaska Dena Youth Environment camps.

## BACKGROUND

Four years ago the Muskwa-Kechika Youth Environment Camp programme was initiated to train youth, both First Nations and non-First Nations, in basic traditional and contemporary land management and wilderness survival with a view to supporting and maintaining the wildlife and wilderness resources of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area. The camp provided a selected group of youth with an opportunity to learn the skills needed to contribute to the long-term protection and sustainability of this complex wilderness system.

The initial youth camp was a success and, as a result, the Muskwa-Kechika Youth Environment camp has become an annual event. The camps have been operating in different areas throughout the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area each year.

The 2002 Muskwa-Kechika Youth Environment Camp was held at Moose Lake, located in north eastern British Columbia, home to the MacDonald and Stone families.

## CAMP PREPARATION

Beginning in June 2002, letters were sent to the Kaska communities, Treaty 8 communities, and northern BC municipalities for the Chiefs or municipal officers to nominate eligible youth between the ages of 16-22 to attend the Muskwa-Kechika Camp. The following communities received invitations: Tahltan Joint Council, Telegraph Creek, BC; Halfway River First Nations, Wonowon, BC; Dene Tsaa K'Nai First Nation, Fort Nelson, BC; Acho Dene Koe, Fort Liard, NWT; Liard First Nation, Watson Lake, YT; Ross River Dena Council, Ross River, YT; Kwadacha First Nation, Fort Ware, BC; Dease River Band Council, Good Hope Lake, BC; Lower Post First Nation, Lower Post, BC; Fort Nelson First Nation, Fort Nelson, BC; Treaty 8 Tribal Council, Fort St. John, BC; Tsay Keh Dene First Nation, Prince George, BC; West Moberly First Nation, Moberly Lake, BC; McLeod Lake First Nation, McLeod Lake, BC; Town of Mackenzie; City of Fort St. John; and the Town of Fort Nelson.

In July there was still no secured funding, so whether the camp would proceed was uncertain. By August 2002, the camp was a go-ahead leaving approximately two weeks to finalize preparations.

With a smaller camp budget than previous years, a list of participants from the following communities was finalized: Fort Nelson First Nation, Liard First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Halfway River First Nations, Town of Fort Nelson, Town of Mackenzie, Kwadacha Band, Lower Post First Nation, Dease River First Nation, and Ross River Dena Council.

Rather than go through all the details, we've noted, as examples, some of the important preparations for camp operation:

- Obtain any necessary land permits for camp. No permits were required this year, as the campsite was on reserve land.
- Complete site inspection to determine equipment, supplies, and manpower requirements for camp set-up.
- Finalize program of camp activities.
- Obtain liability insurance. Kaska Dena Council has used Holt Agencies, Barton Insurance and Re-discovery International for various outdoor activities.
- Activate satellite phones. For Kaska Dena Council, the two MSATs are activated through Network Solutions and the Global Star (handheld) is activated through Personal Satellite Network.
- Ensure proper safety equipment (i.e., lifejackets, bear spray etc) and first aid kits are in place.
- Enquire about hunting regulations or other regulations (i.e., vehicular restrictions in the Muskwa-Kechika) relating to camp location.
- Prepare emergency contact list and an emergency evacuation plan (i.e., medical or natural disaster evacuation). The First Aid Attendant and Camp Counselors should be informed of this. The First Aid Attendant also needs to review all participants' medical history.

Further details can be found in Re-discovery's Camp and Safety Standards Manual, 2001.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous. 2001. Rediscovery International Camp Safety Standards & Environmental Guidelines. Rediscovery International Foundation, Vancouver, BC. 128 pp.

## DAILY ADVENTURES

August 15<sup>th</sup> 2002

The first day of camp was a travel day for all of the participants. The youth representatives located in and north of Lower Post were transported to the boat-landing site by van. The youth selected from the southern communities were transported to the site by Greyhound bus service. Once at the boat landing the youth were transported 25 kilometers up river by jet boat. The boat ride was extremely exhilarating and gave the participants a small taste of the excitement that they were going to experience in the following ten days.



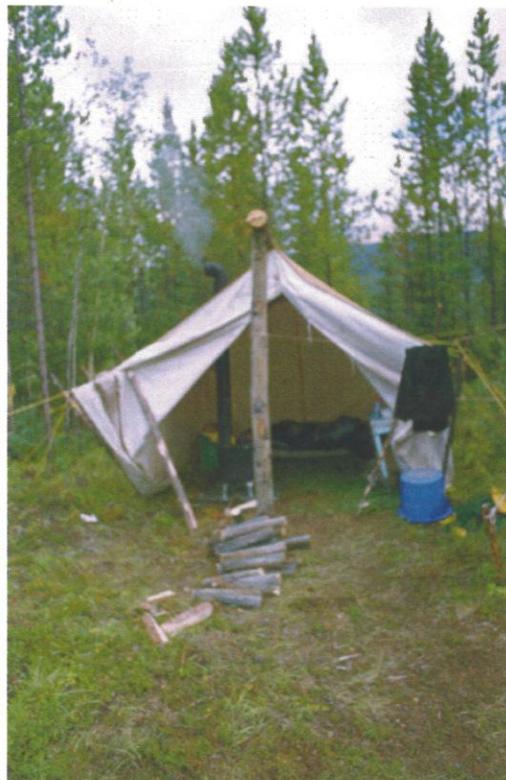
The jet boat used to transport the participants and camp supplies.



Moose Lake

The first day was very relaxing; the youth set up their sleeping areas and explored the environment around them.

The participants slept in canvas tents.



After enjoying a fabulous dinner prepared by Fanny and Temira Vance, the youth played bonding games in the corral and around the campfire.



Fanny and Temira slaving away on another fine cooked dinner.



The youth got to know each other better by playing games like wolf and deer, bear-bug-frog, and doxson eye.

## August 16<sup>th</sup>

The day began with a morning stretch and group hug. We then sat down for breakfast.

Following breakfast we started camp activities. The first activity was to have a camp initiation. This was the time that we set out health and safety regulations, rules, chore groups, and scheduling. We set up a bunch of safety problems and let the participants walk around and find them. We then corrected the safety issues.

After the camp was cleaned and safe we started our bear awareness safety briefing and what to do in case of emergencies.

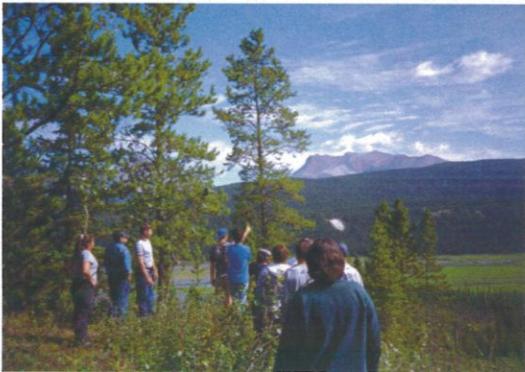


Derek Loots and Corrine Porter teaching the participants about bear spray.



Derek Loots and Victor Kisoun showing the proper way to protect yourself against a bear attack.

We showed the youth how to use bear spray and what to do if a bear attacks. We also showed them how to use bear bangers and flares.

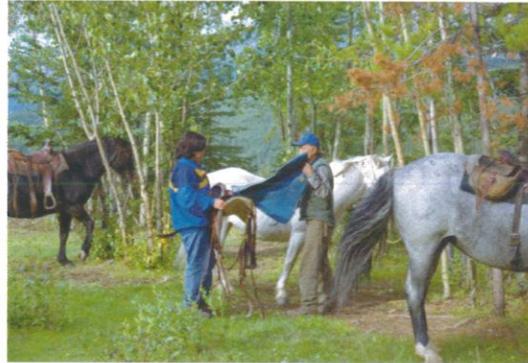


Victor Kisoun demonstrating how to properly release a flare in an emergency.

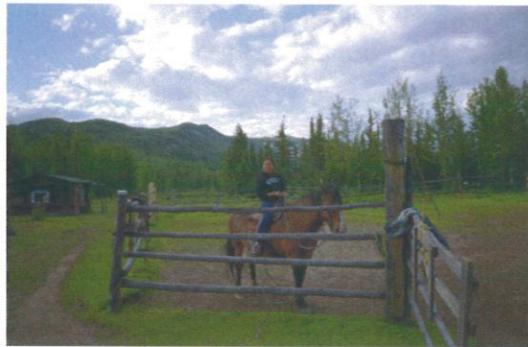
Each participant was given a whistle; the whistles were to be used as a warning device and to be used in case of emergency.

After lunch the participants broke into two groups, some went to wrangle the horses with George

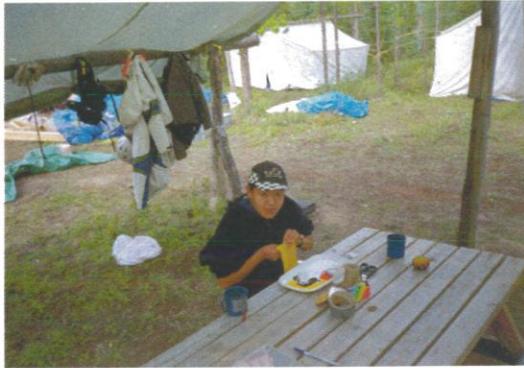
and Angus MacDonald (some of the world's top horsemen), and the others started their craft projects.



George MacDonald teaching Ashley Shepherd how to saddle a horse.



Jolanda Whelan was always riding horses; every time she was missing we knew we could find her at the corral.

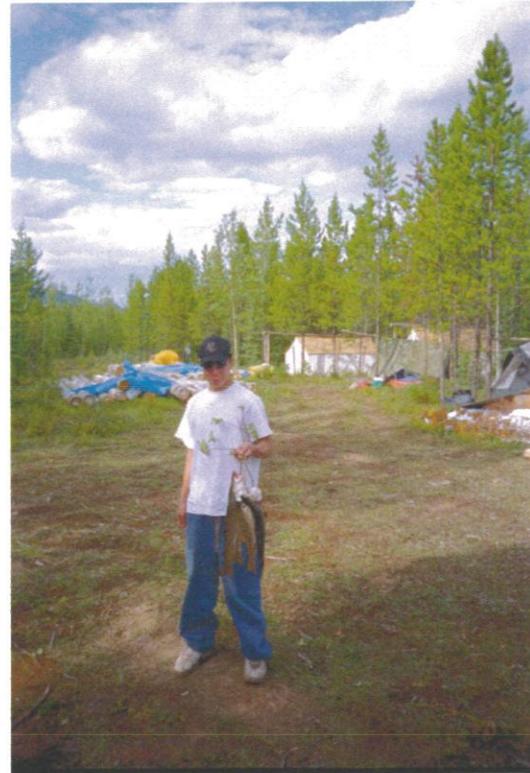


Chantel Davis enjoying an afternoon of sewing.



Derek Loots and Dione Lynch soaking the caribou hides in order to start making traditional Kaska drums.

After enjoying another meal from our excellent cooks we decided to have a free night where the participants could go horseback riding, fishing, and hunting.



Samuel Johnny went canoeing and caught some beautiful grayling and dolly varden.



Dione Lynch having a conversation with the horses.



Left Jolanda Whelan, Christopher Johnny, George MacDonald, Sherri-Ann McMillan, and Ashley Shepherd.



A beautiful night to canoe around Moose Lake with one of the world's top guides Angus MacDonald.

That night we sat around the council fire exchanging our feelings on what we had felt that day and on how we thought the camp was going. Some of the participants were very shy and just passed on the sharing feather.

## August 17<sup>th</sup>

That morning we awoke and had our usual group hug and stretching exercises then moved on to a wonderful breakfast. After breakfast Angus and George MacDonald went with some of the participants and scouted out a potential moose for the camp.

After lunch the participants did their group chores. These chores included packing firewood, retrieving water, checking the bathrooms, and helping the elders with any work that was needed.



Samuel Johnny and Shian Wolfe unloading a four-wheeler trailer of wood for the local community fire.

After the chores were done the participants broke into groups; some went horseback riding and some went hunting.

The hunting party was successful in getting a nice cow moose. This meant that there was a lot of work for the entire camp to do. Our resident grandmothers (Mida Donnessey and Elsie MacDonald) were very happy.

All of the participants canoed down the lake to the site of the moose and helped dress meat for transport back to the camp.



The participants (packers) watch closely as George and Angus MacDonald (the pros) quarter the moose to be carried to the canoes.

Once the moose was put in the canoes we had to paddle up stream to base camp.

When we arrived at base camp our resident grandmothers began telling us what we had to do. We had to hang and smoke all the meat, so that none would rot and be wasted.



George MacDonald, Derek Loots, and Samuel Johnny cutting up the moose ribs to be smoked.



Mida Donnessey teaching some of the oldest Kaska traditions to the elders of tomorrow.



Dione Lynch showing all the hard work that was completed that day.

Once the meat was all hung, the participants thought the work for the day was done; yet our resident elders told them that the hide still had to be tanned. The exhausted youth settled down for dinner.

That day we had three special guests arrive in camp - Dave Porter, Martyn Williams, and Mark Brodhagen. They arrived just in time to have a wonderful moose meat dinner.

After dinner the participants did their chores and went to their spirit spot. The spirit spot is a place where a participant spends half an hour all alone in a spot of their choosing. They can write in their journals, play instruments, or just sit and reflect on the beauty around them.

After spirit spot the resident elders began showing the

participants how to tan a moose hide.



Mida Donnessey and Corrine Porter showing the youth how to flesh the inside of the moose hide.

The rest of the youth went with Blandon Donnessey and started making their traditional Kaska drums.



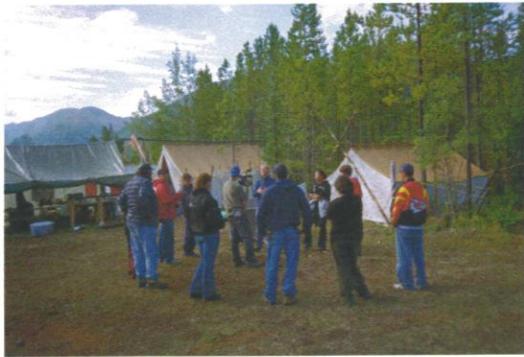
Dione Lynch was the first participant to finish her drum; here she is putting her own design on the drum.

George MacDonald taught the youth that a bear will go for the hide first. He connected a horse bell to the hide to warn the camp if a bear went for the hide.

That night we had a council fire and welcomed our new guests to the camp. It was an honour to have such highly respected individuals join our camp for a few days.

### August 18<sup>th</sup>

That morning after breakfast it was Martyn Williams' turn to take over and teach the participants about their own inner strength. He taught the youth that anything can be accomplished as long as they tried hard enough and believed in themselves. He played many games that taught the youth about teamwork and the strength of one individual.



Martyn Williams doing an exercise with the group. It showed that if you think positively and believe in yourself you are a lot stronger. When you think negative thoughts you lose your inner power.



This is a team building exercise. The point was to move every person from one side of the line to the other side without touching the line.

After Martyn Williams was finished his exercises Dave Porter gave a small seminar on what the Muskwa-Kechika Special Management Area is all about. He described the area and its importance to the people and animals which dwell in and around the area. He also gave a speech on Land Claims and how the Kaska were involved in this process. In his closing statements he described how important the youth will be in the future and how they will play a huge role in what becomes of the land. The youth have a future responsibility, as the next leaders, to take care of the land and make sure it will be available for future generations.

When Dave had finished Mark Brodhagen did his presentation. Mark did his presentation on how to become a Conservation Officer, the duties of an officer, and the type of situations he runs into at work. He also brought many animal skins with him, and did a seminar on wildlife behaviour and bear safety.



Mark Brodhagen showing the youth many different hides of animals that could be found in the area.

After dinner Martyn Williams took over again and started teaching the youth how to properly prepare for a hiking expedition through the mountains. He showed them how to properly organize a packsack and what type of materials should be taken along for the trip. This included everything from emergency gear to food.



The youth doing a mock hike to see how their packs felt on their shoulders.

That night the participants relaxed and worked on their drums and craft projects.

### August 19<sup>th</sup>

This was the day of the big hike; the helicopter came early in the morning. The plan was to fly the youth to the top of the mountain and hike around for two days, then return back to camp. We packed our food and supplies and flew to the top of the mountain.



We were dropped off at the top of this mountain. We then hiked down the valley.



The group enjoying the fresh mountain air.



Our pilot, Doug Hladun, teaching the youth about helicopters and how to safely enter and exit the machine.



Martyn Williams teaching Samuel Johnny how to properly ski down the mountain in his hiking boots.



Our drop off point.

After we were dropped off we explored the area and then set out for our next destination.



Mark Brodhagen checking to see if there is any wildlife around for the youth to view.

which we would take home with us. We never figured out what type of rock we were standing on in the picture above.

Along the trip Martyn Williams, Mark Brodhagen, Corrine Porter and our two guides taught the participants about animal behaviors, plant identification, hiking techniques, and 101 uses for a plastic garbage bag.



Some of the participants enjoying rock climbing.



Martyn Williams showing the youth some plant identification.



Just enjoying the view.

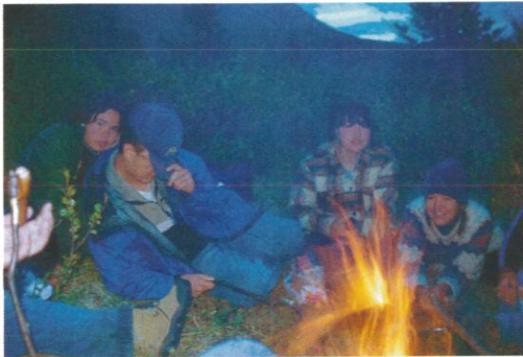
That night we camped out at Moose Pass. It was a beautiful spot that had slightly flat ground and a little bit of firewood.

In our explorations we found many animals and also many treasures



Our camp at Moose Pass.

That night we drank hot chocolate and told ghost stories around the campfire.



Relaxing around the fire after a hard day of hiking.

### August 20<sup>th</sup>

The next morning we slept in and everyone slowly got up around nine thirty. After breakfast we packed up the camp and headed out on the trail.



Samuel Johnny sleeping under his tarp.



Victor Kisoun and Samuel Johnny packing up camp.

While we packed up camp, Martyn Williams taught the participants about no trace camping. The idea is to not be able to find where we had slept that night and not be able to see any trace of our disturbing the land.



Martyn Williams teaching the youth about no trace camping.

After making sure we could not find any evidence of our camp spot we set off back to Moose Lake.

There were many plants and animals to view along the hike. The hike was pretty extreme yet there was not one complaint. We had a very strong group of hikers.



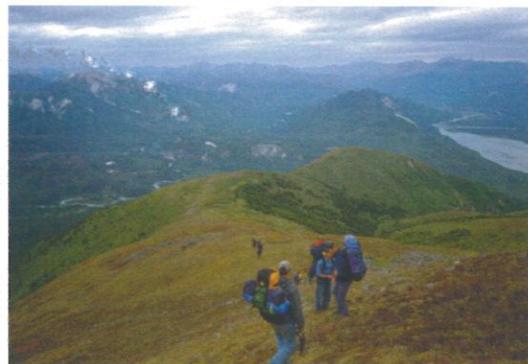
Jolanda Whelan feasting on the abundance of blueberries.



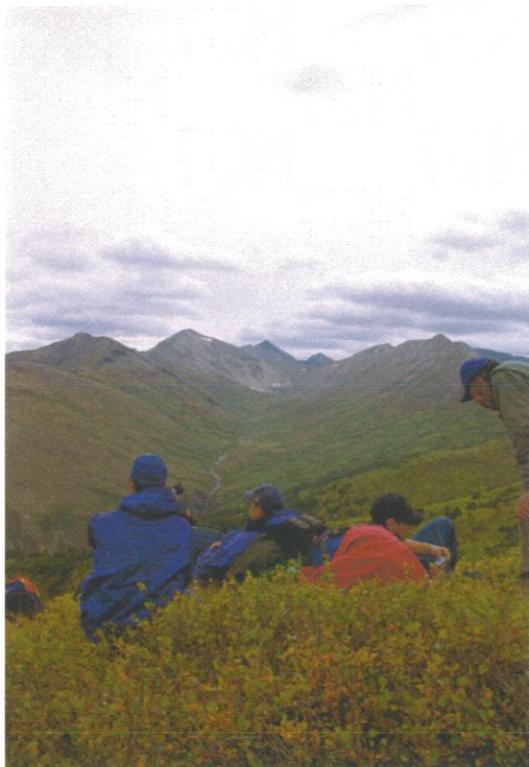
Martyn Williams telling the youth about one of his adventures.



It seems a lot steeper when you are hiking.



The last stretch down to Moose Lake.



The participants admiring the distance they had hiked that day.

It took hours to hike down the hill and it was a site for sore feet when we met our camp supervisors waiting at the bottom with the four-wheelers.



A tired hiking crew.

There was a huge feast awaiting us when we got back to camp. The cooks were everybody's best friends.

That night we had a council fire and shared the talking feather. There were many stories to tell about the exciting hiking trip.

### August 21<sup>st</sup>

We let the exhausted participants sleep in this morning. When they awoke they had free time to do laundry and have a nice hot shower. We had to say goodbye to Martyn Williams this day; it was sad to see him leave.

After lunch Mida and Elsie started teaching the participants how to tan a moose hide.



Mida showing the youth how to cut and scrape the hair off of a moose hide.



Mida fleshing a moose hide.

That afternoon we had some special guests show up to camp, the Kaska Drummers. They are a Kaska singing and drumming group.



The Kaska Drummers – Russell Magun, Brian Ledue, and Jason Acklack.

After dinner we sat down and enjoyed a few songs from the Kaska Drummers.

When the songs were done we got into a fun game of traditional stick gambling. It was the women against the men and the women took the championship five games to none. The men were a little upset.



The CHAMPS.



The men drumming away to try to increase their luck.

After stick gambling was over we started into a game of Pictionary. The men were eager to earn at least one win.



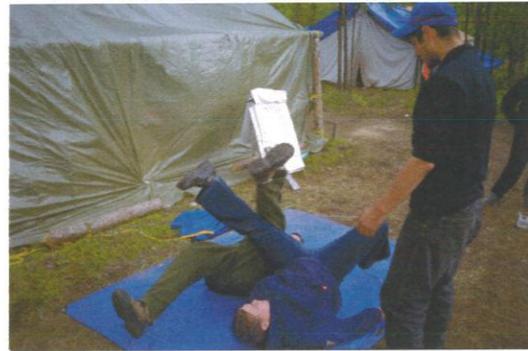
A game of Pictionary.

## August 22<sup>nd</sup>

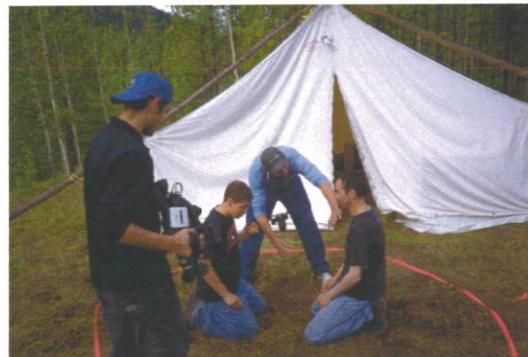
This morning the youth kept working on their drums and crafts. There were many craft projects that were nearly completed.

In the afternoon we got into the Muskwa-Kechika Olympic Games. This is a set of traditional native

games in which chore groups competed against one another. Some of the games included the Musk Ox push, leg wrestling, and the stick stretch.



Ashley Shepherd and Dione Lynch competing in the leg wrestling competition.



Brian Ledue and Shian Wolfe getting ready for the Musk Ox push.



Vanessa Laverdure and Jolanda Whalen in the heart of battle.

When the Muslwa-Kechika Olympics were finished we had an egg toss competition.



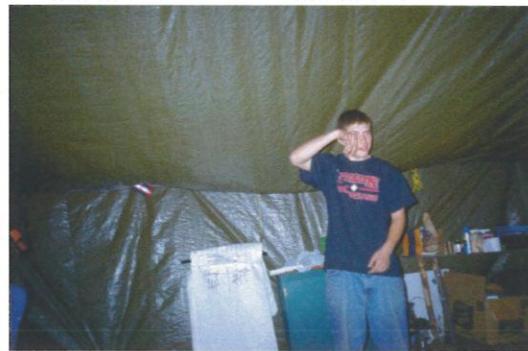
Unfortunately it did not get as messy as we would have liked.

When the competition was over we had to say goodbye to the Kaska Drummers and Mark Brodhagen. The participants were sad to see them go.

That night we decided to see how good the group was at acting, so we played a game of charades.



Dione Lynch getting ready to show her acting skills.



Shian Wolf acting out an animal of some sort.

After the acting games, we sat around the fire and told ghost stories. That night none slept comfortably; their minds were on the stories of the mad trappers, bears, and water snakes.

### August 23<sup>rd</sup>

This was the final day to finish their drums and crafts, so the participants spent all morning working on their projects.



Blandon Donnessey and Chris Johnny showing the final product of their hard work.

we had a special game planned for them. It was called the good man good women contest. This is where the participants were paired together and given two matchsticks, two potatoes, one fish, flour, water, and a small tin pot. With these supplies and Mother Nature's supplies they had to cook a traditional dinner consisting of herbal tea, fish, bannock, and potatoes.

Our judges then scored them on time, taste and appearance.



Dione Lynch showing her completed drum.



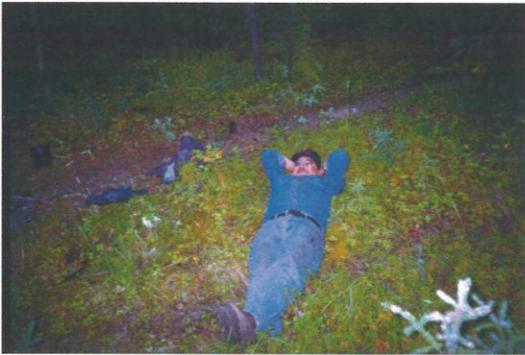
Shian Wolfe roasting his potatoes.

In the afternoon many of the youth went horseback riding.

When the youth had returned from their horseback riding trip,



Ashley Shepherd cooking some bannock on a stick by the fire.



One of our judges (Johnny MacDonald) relaxing after a fine dinner.

That night we had our final council fire. This was the time to reflect on the whole camp and what had

been learned, and felt. It was hard to think that the camp would be ending soon. Yet George kept up the spirits by paying a couple of youth some money for listing 15 uses for a garbage bag.

### August 24<sup>th</sup>

This was the last day in camp so we took down camp and packed our gear. We were heading to Nine Mile to have our last camp out.

After the camp was packed we had to cross the lake to Nine Mile. Some of the participants went in the jet boat and some went in the canoes. When we arrived on the edge of the lake there were a couple of four-wheelers waiting to take us the remainder of the journey.

We arrived in Nine Mile and met with Walter, Maggie, and Ron. We then set up camp and sat down for dinner.

That night we had a special treat; we got to watch an old western movie. Ron had a TV and VCR powered by a generator.

After the movie we all sat around together and reminisced about what we had all gone through in

the past 10 days. We laughed at some of the stories and talked about future camps for other youth. The mood wasn't that joyful because we all knew that the camp was over the following day.

That night we all stayed up very late and watched the northern lights sweep across the sky.



### August 25<sup>th</sup>

When we awoke, the participants packed up camp and had breakfast. After breakfast we decided who would drive the four-wheelers back to the Alaska Highway and who would float the canoes down the river.

We then said our goodbyes to the Nine Mile crew and headed out for our last adventure.



Victor Kisoun and Shian Wolfe floating the canoe down to the Alaska Highway.



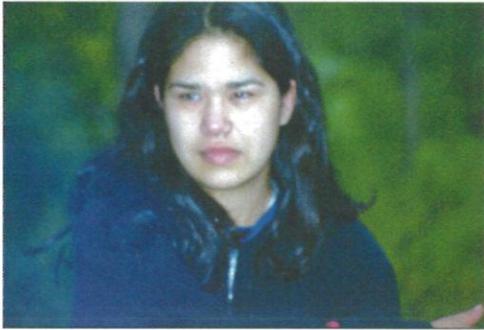
The end of the Muskwa-Kechika Youth Environment Camp 2003.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enroll participants with a medical form that they fill out and a liability form. Full medical checks should not be mandatory, especially since the health care system will not cover medical check-ups requested by a third party. Also, the enrollment form must clearly state that the camp is alcohol & drug free.
2. Ensure that all staff are aware of all phone numbers for satellite phones.
3. Be sure base camp is aware of routes that participants will take on hiking trips.
4. Make sure moose hide is covered (kept out of the mud) when skinning.
5. Pack appropriate amount of food for overnight hiking trips.
6. Remove all batteries before putting flashlights into storage.
7. Having a dog in camp adds a sense of security to all camp participants while in bear country.
8. The Kaska Nation leaders need to work on promoting Moose Lake as a protected area.
9. We would like to see that at least one Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board member become a participant in the camp's planning and day-to-day activities.
10. In order to ensure a successful camp with careful organization, the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board must commit to matching funds donated to the camp.

11. Prior to additional camps, ensure that counselors have acquired an FAC License, so they are qualified and insured to operate a gun in emergency situations.
12. Suggest that the age for camp participants be lowered to age 13. It is often difficult to find older youth because they are often employed in summer positions.
13. Ensure that good quality whistles are purchased for camp participants.

## CAMP PERSONNEL



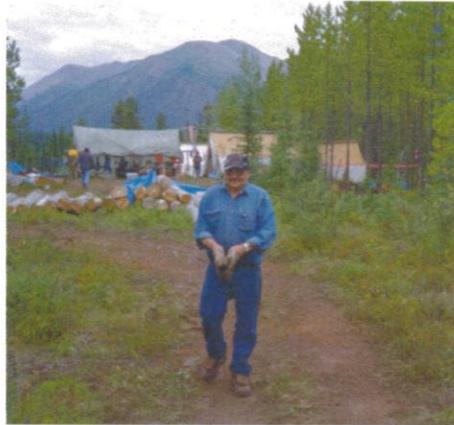
Temira Vance – Assistant Chef –  
Lower Post, BC



Monty Lynch – Camp Supervisor \  
Boat Operator - Fort Nelson, BC



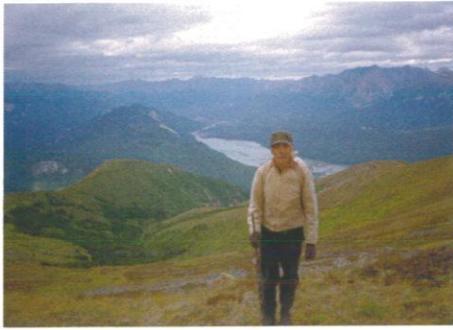
Victor Kisoun – Program Director \  
Photographer – Lower Post, BC



Johnny MacDonald – Camp  
Supervisor \ First Aid attendant -  
Fort Nelson, BC



Blandon Donnessey - Cultural  
Coordinator \ Councilor - Watson  
Lake, YT



Angus MacDonald – Guide \ Elder -  
Moose Lake, BC



Derek Loots – Camp Director -  
Lower Post, BC



George MacDonald – Guide \ Elder -  
Moose Lake, BC



Corrine Porter – Camp Coordinator -  
Watson Lake, YT



Fanny Vance - Head Chef - Lower  
Post, BC

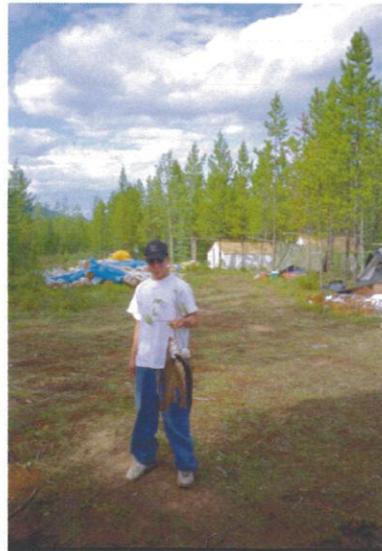


Vanessa Laverdure – Camp  
Coordinator - Lower Post, BC

## YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES



Sherri Ann McMillan  
Lower Post, BC



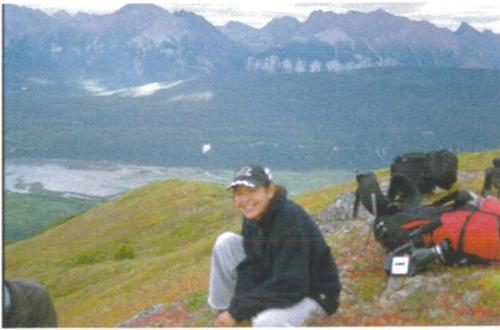
Samuel Johnny  
Good Hope Lake, BC



Christopher Johnny  
Good Hope Lake, BC



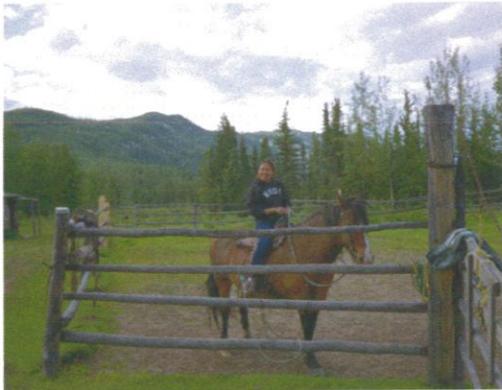
Shian Wolfe  
Watson Lake, YT



Chantel Davis  
Fort St. John, BC



Ashley Shepherd  
Lower Post, BC

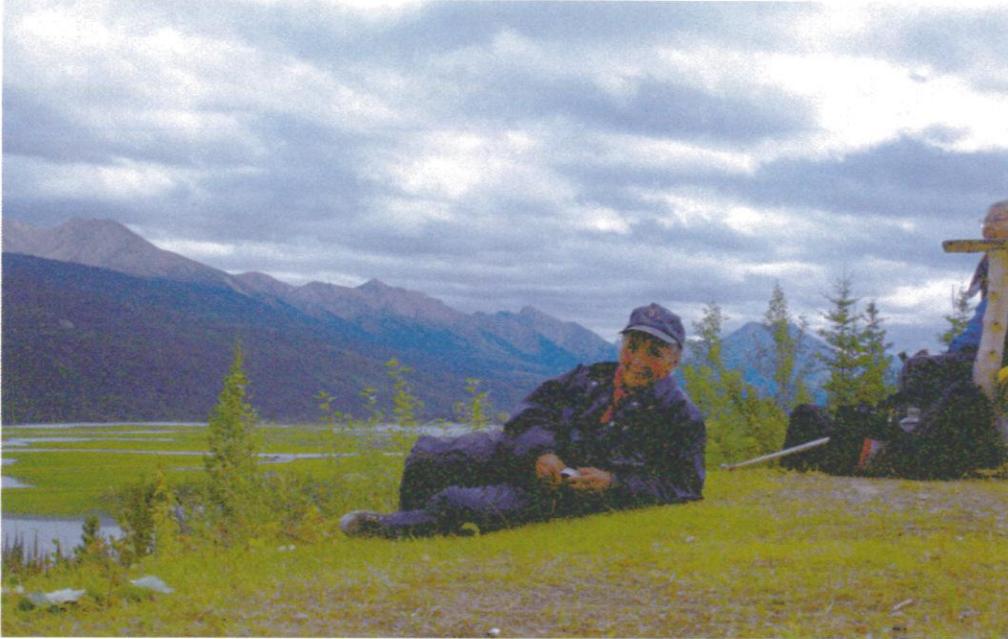


Jolanda Whelan  
Watson Lake, YT



Dione Lynch  
Fort Nelson, BC

RESIDENT ELDERS



Elsie MacDonald  
Moose Lake, BC



Mida Donnessey  
Upper Liard, YT

## PRESENTORS AND VISITORS



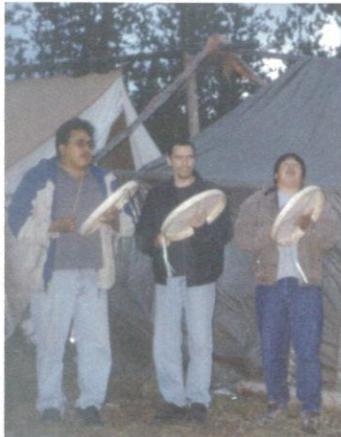
Martyn Williams



Dave Porter  
Chairperson Kaska Dena Council



Mark Brodhagen  
Conservation Officer  
Peace Region



Kaska Drummers – Russell Magun, Brian Ledue, Jason Acklack



Shirley Laverdure, Vice-Chair Finance, Kaska Dena Council  
and Debbie Groat, Lower Post, BC



Doug Hladun – Trans North Pilot

APPENDIX A - SCENERY SHOTS





## APPENDIX B - DESCRIPTION OF CAMP BY MARTYN WILLIAMS

The Kaska people have lived in a huge area of present day northern BC, the Yukon and Northwest Territories for thousands of years, and their cultural and spiritual roots are deeply tied to the land and its animal inhabitants. I was fortunate enough to be invited to teach at the Kaska youth leadership program at Moose Lake in the Muskwa-Kechika area of Northern BC.

Moose Lake is a long narrow lake surrounded by rugged mountains. The higher peaks are spear like and snow capped with glaciers dripping down their sides. This whole area has the highest concentration of wildlife I have seen anywhere in North America. Caribou and mountain sheep are to be found along the highway and off the highway; mountain goats, moose and both grizzly and black bears are found as well.

Moose Lake is aptly named as there was a moose in the water at the end of the lake, and the local people speak of regularly seeing 20 moose in the water and up to 75 moose in the valley. This is an incredible concentration of moose, and it makes this valley unique in North America. I certainly will be back to explore more in these mountains.

I traveled to Moose Lake by jet boat up the Toad River, a great fun filled, wild, adrenaline filled ride around tight bends and skimming over shallow water at 40 miles per hour.

At the camp there is a huge cultural divide. The elders still live their lives rooted in the land, living remotely in seasonal cabins with no amenities. The youth are plugged into the usual North American society; they know the latest video games, music and fashions. Yet they also display a great interest and respect for their culture. They have ideals based in their ancestors such as the value of wilderness. They possess a quiet stoicism and toughness, and an independent willingness to work hard, that defines them as the sons and daughters of Kaska people.

At the camp Kaska elders teach the young people the traditions that have developed over millennia - - how to hunt moose, how to eat all the parts of the meat, how to dry the meat by smoking it over a slow burning fire. The

young people are active in every stage of moose hide preparation, laboriously scraping the hide of meat and fat and learning how to extract the moose brains from the head to use in tanning the moose hide. The elders speak in Kaska and sign language to the youth; the youth reply with nodding heads, English and Kaska.

The youth are up early in the morning until late at night, beginning the day by stretching, and doing meditation. They then learn traditional skills, sing traditional songs, or are out on the land learning such subjects as plant ecology. The whole attitude is one of playful enthusiasm.

The camp provides an incredible opportunity for youth to experience the best of our first world leadership skills, combined with the best of Kaska wisdom and knowledge of the land, all in a setting that is world class. I believe that is very important to support these camps for two reasons: first these traditions and the Kaska worldview is growing more relevant as we seek solutions to global environmental issues; second these Kaska youth may one day have a sphere of influence within the leadership of the Kaska Traditional Territory that covers a huge area of land in North America. It is critical that they know enough and have experienced enough to hold a big vision that includes conservation and cultural values.