

# *Ne'āh'*

The Kaska Dena's Horseranch Area



*This is the place where the animals go to get fat*



# *Ne'āh'*: The Horseranch Area

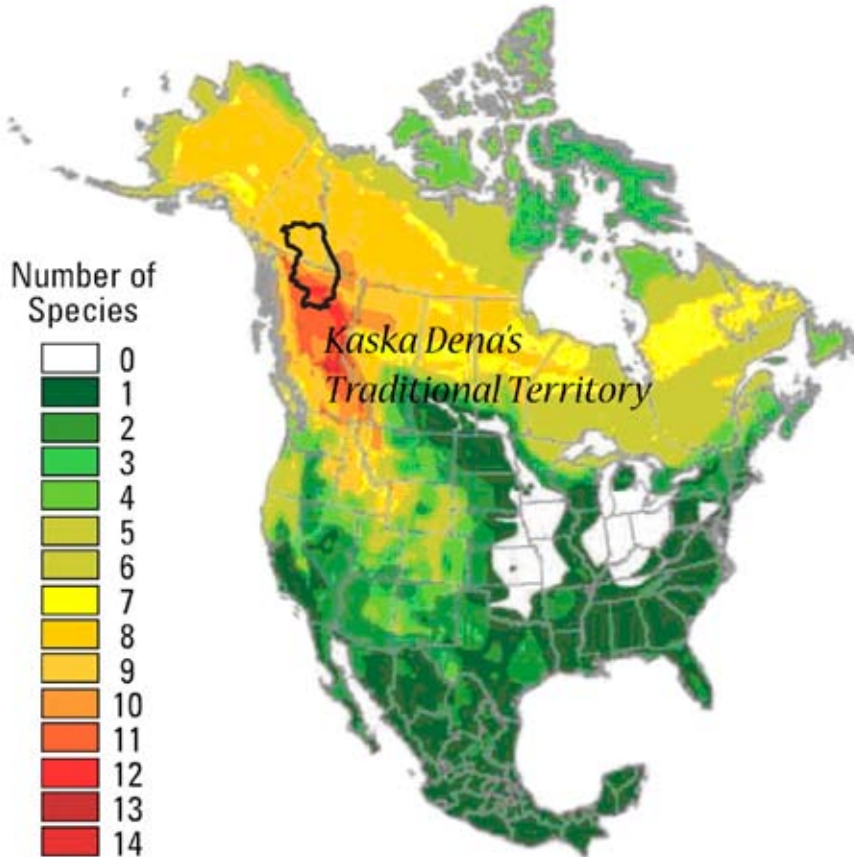


Since human beings have inhabited this landscape, we have been here. As long as human beings inhabit this landscape, we will remain here. Our occupancy of this land establishes both our right and our responsibility to ensure this land remains intact and able to support our people and culture.

A long north-south range, spanning 40 kilometres, the Kaska name for the Horseranch, *Ne'āh'*, means '*it is long.*' It is the place where animals go to get fat.

While the Horseranch Range has long been identified by the Kaska Dena as well as others as a place of special significance, we insist it is now time to protect *Ne'āh'* in its entirety in order to protect a broad diversity of resources and values that are critical to our culture and our economic opportunities within our homeland.

# The Kaska Dena's traditional territory is rich in carnivores and ungulates



# Protection of *Ne'āh'*



*Ne'āh'*, the Horseranch Range, is an 'island' mountain range nestled between the Cassiar Mountains and the Liard Plains in northern British Columbia.

This area is rich in watersheds, with rivers that run clear and clean. Immediately adjacent to the range is a series of lakes at the northern end of the range, including Horseranch Lake, Pike Lake and Vincent Lake, and to the southeast foot of the range, Looncry Lake and Deadwood Lake.

Countless scientific studies confirm that road access into wilderness areas always results in dramatic decreases in wildlife populations, sometimes in excess of 90%. We have witnessed the impacts on other First Nations who have lost most of the biological intactness and richness in their traditional territories.

Permanent protection for this area will provide some surety for our culture, primarily by ensuring that this area remains roadless.

Therefore, we seek the permanent protection of *Ne'āh'* in its entirety.

# The Kaska Dena

The Horseranch Range region lies entirely within the traditional lands of the Kaska Dena.

Our great northern nomadic indigenous culture has prospered over millennia through gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping, moving with the seasons and the migrations of the animals.



Bill Lux, Norm Maclean, Walter Carlick and Kevin Carlick examine Horseranch maps

The Kaska Dena have two clans called Crow and Wolf in English.

We have lived in this region ‘since time immemorial.’



Larry Johnny (left) and Dennis Porter

Our diet is rich, varied and healthy, including fresh and dried goat, moose, sheep, caribou meat, and soapberries, cranberries, gooseberries, salmonberries, and vegetables, such as fern roots, rose hips and wild onions.



Bill Lux



Corrine Porter



Constructing a moose hide boat



Dennis Porter (left) and Leon Johnny

In the fall, our families gather at lakes for the winter where there is easier access to fresh fish.

We are actively involved in cultural revival, teaching our children their history, language, and traditional practices.



Derek and Amos making a drum at the MK Kaska Youth Camp



Mida skinning moose hide at the MK Kaska Youth Camp



Warming a drum over the fire at the MK Kaska Youth Camp



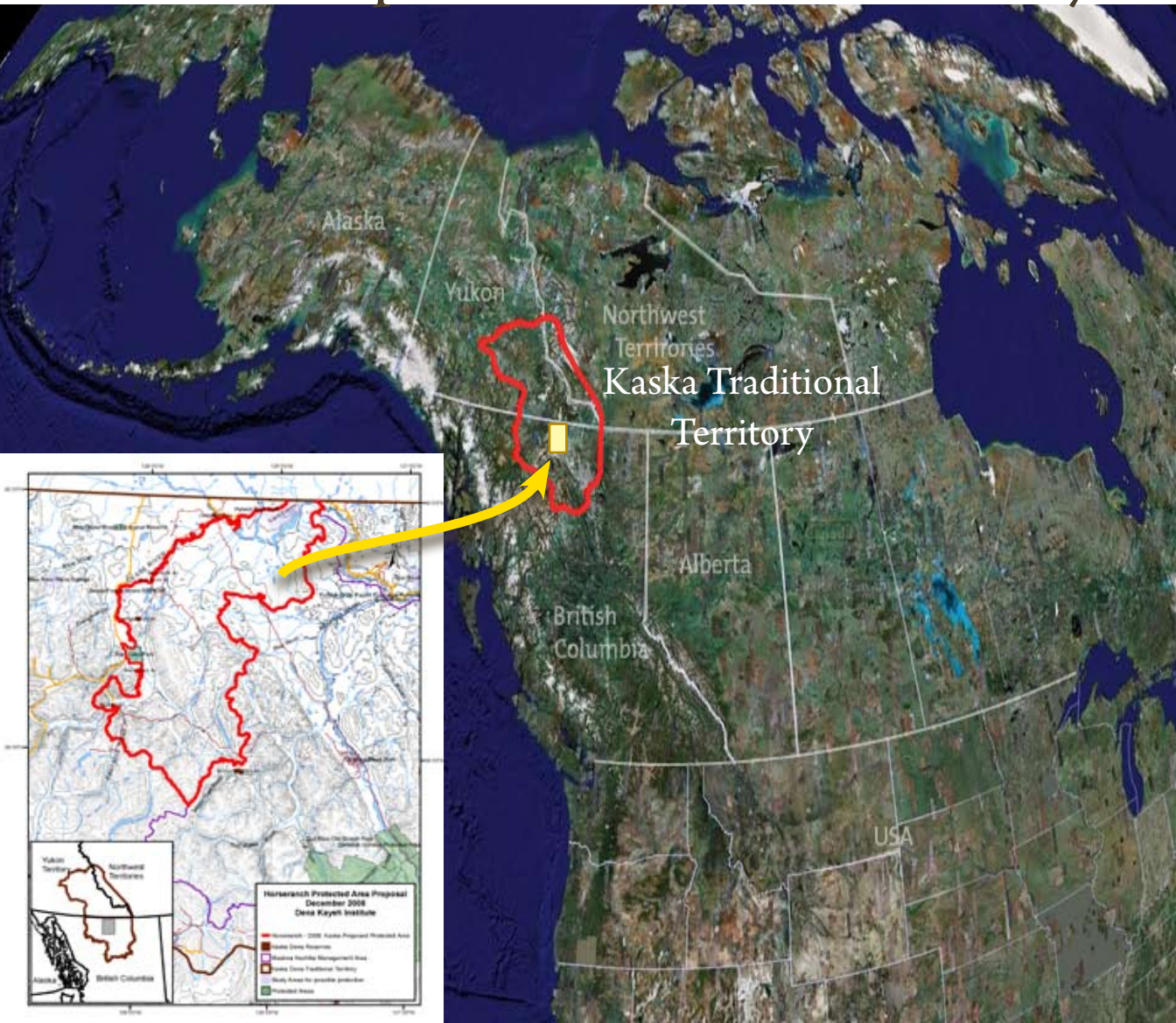
“We are the land. The land





is us.”

# We seek to protect *Ne'āh'* in its entirety



# Kaska Dena Vision Statement

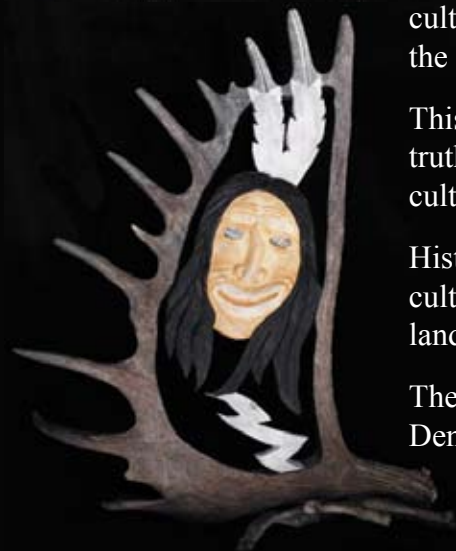
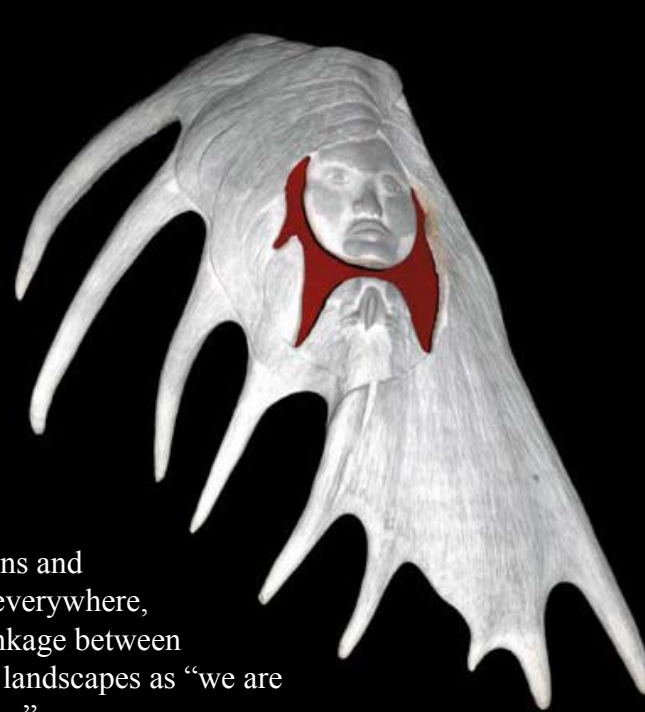
We, the Kaska Dena, are the stewards of the land and resources in our traditional territory. Toward this end, we want to develop long-term capacity and capability to promote and implement a Kaska land ethic.

Our land ethic is an ecosystem-based approach to land management, based on the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological integrity. This approach requires that areas of high ecological, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values are identified and protected, and ecological processes continue to generate biological diversity.

Our traditional territory is 24 million hectares (93,000 square miles), about the size of the entire state of Oregon. It spans three provinces and territories (British Columbia (BC), Yukon and Northwest Territories) and constitutes fully 25% of the Yukon Territory, and 10% of the entire

land area of BC. The majestic northern boreal forest regions of interior BC and the Yukon have some of the continent's most expansive and impressive wilderness areas, with a great diversity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Extensive mountain ranges and wild rivers frame pristine boreal forest watersheds. Large free ranging populations of woodland caribou, moose, Dall's sheep, Stone sheep, a full suite of large carnivores, and hundreds of thousands of migrating neo-tropical songbirds and waterfowl make their home in these diverse boreal landscapes. Only a few roads cross this region, one of the wildest landscapes on the North American continent.

Corrine Porter, BNRS  
Executive Director  
Dena Kayeh Institute



Canada's First Nations and indigenous peoples everywhere, often describe the linkage between cultural identity and landscapes as "we are the land, the land is us".

This is not hyperbole or cliché, but a measurable and describable truth, that when ignored, has led to the extinction of numerous distinct cultures and languages around the world.

History demonstrates conclusively that in order for indigenous cultures to survive and prosper a significant portion of the natural landscape these cultures rely on must remain intact.

The Horseranch Study Area has long been identified by the Kaska Dena as a special place, both biologically, and spiritually.

# Animals of the Horseranch



Āhdiyónéh'  
*Moose*

The Horseranch Range region, known for its abundant and diverse wildlife, is an extremely important historical hunting ground for the Kaska Dena, a place where we have always been guaranteed food during scarce times. Caribou, moose, mountain goats, sheep, marmots, bears and other fish and bird species are critical components of Kaska culture, economy and health.

Northern bears are believed to need to forage for berries, greens, roots and small mammals over a much larger area, comparatively, to fulfill their dietary needs.



Dlögéh  
Grizzly Bear



Wützeh  
Caribou

The Caribou of the Horseranch region represent approximately 12% of the entire provincial caribou population. The two herds have overlapping boreal forest winter range in the Liard basin but separate alpine range.

Moose are an important wildlife population for local communities, as well as an important component to large predator-prey systems. They are a primary food source for the Kaska Dena, and a primary target species for commercial guide outfitters in the region.



Dābēh'  
Stone's Sheep

Mountain ungulates of the Horseranch area include Stone's sheep (*Ovis dalli stoneii*) and mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*). Stone's sheep are a subspecies of thinhorn sheep.



Uśbāh'  
Mountain Goat

*As people of the boreal forest and hunters, the health of our culture requires large intact landscapes which support healthy populations of traditional plants and animals.*

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