

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT
Between the Province of British Columbia and Kaska Dena Council

Annual Implementation Report
April 1st, 2022 – March 31st, 2023



Section 1 – Purpose:

The Strategic Engagement Agreement (SEA) between the Province and Kaska Dena is intended to foster and build upon a positive and respectful government-to-government relationship. The SEA allows for a platform to build on the reconciliation efforts of BC and the Kaska to help formalize a joint institution for decision making on lands and resource- based decisions within the ancestral territory of the Kaska Dena.

This Annual Implementation Report describes the achievements and staffing changes over the 2022/23 year and sets priorities for the next year. This report was drafted by Shawna Case and Michelle Larstone.

Section 2 – SEA Teams:

Responsible Officials:

The Responsible Officials provide executive guidance for the Natural Resource Council (NRC). The Kaska Dena Council (KDC) and the Province of British Columbia each appoint an individual to this position. The roles and responsibilities of the Responsible Officials are described in Section 6.1 of the Strategic Engagement Agreement. The previous year’s Responsible Officials remained the same for the 2021-2022 implementation year.

- Kaska: Danny Case, Chair of Kaska Dena Council and George Miller, Interim Chair for Kaska Dena Council (starting December 2022)
- BC: Dale Morgan, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Natural Resource Council:

The NRC is the main government-to-government body of the SEA. The NRC is co-chaired by an official from the Kaska Dena Council and from the Government of BC’s Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR). The rest of the NRC is made up of representatives from the three Kaska Dena communities and the three BC regional administrative units that make up the Kaska Dena’s Traditional Territory (Skeena, Omineca, and the Northeast). The roles and responsibilities of the Co-Chairs and the official NRC representatives are described in Section 6.2 and 6.3 of the SEA.

In 2022-23, these roles were filled by:

Kaska Dena:

- Co-Chair – Shawna Case
- Daylu Dena Council – Tanya Ball
- Dease River First Nation – James Malone
- Kwadacha First Nation – John R. McCook

British Columbia:

- Co-Chair – Camille Wilder, and Michelle Larstone (starting September 2022)
- Skeena – Roger McMillian
- Omineca – Vahid Mathiscyk (replacing Yvonne Parkinson)
- Northeast – Darius Low (replacing Roger Clewley)

SEA Implementation Leads:

- BC – Camille Wilder and Michelle Larstone
- Kaska – Shawna Case

NRC Working Group Co-Chairs:

- Fish and Wildlife Working Group – Ray Pillipow (BC)
- Fish and Wildlife Working Group – Norm McLean (Kaska)
- Parks, Conservancies and Protected Areas Working Group – Andrea Sommerville (BC)
- Parks, Conservancies and Protected Areas Working Group – Corrine Porter (Kaska)
- Mineral Working Group – Roger McMillian (BC)
- Mineral Working Group – Shawna Case (Kaska)

Working Group Attendees:

Although only official representatives of the NRC (those above or their designated alternates) can vote on NRC decisions, individuals from Kaska Dena or the Province may attend NRC meetings to speak on issues and express their views. Of particular note, the following individuals were present at meetings throughout the 2022/23 year:

- Gillian Staveley- Kaska Representative (New Director of Culture and Land Stewardship at Dena Kayeh Institute)
- Patricia Livingston – Kwadacha First Nation Lands and Resource Officer
- Vanessa Law – Daylu Dena Council Lands and Resource Officer
- Jennifer Pollard – BC Omineca Representative
- Greg Van Dolah – BC Northeast Representative
- Dave Crampton – Kaska Forestry Representative
- Vahid Mathiscyk – BC Mineral Working Group
- Todd Wikjord – BC Mineral Working Group
- Mark Wong - BC Fish and Wildlife Working Group
- Michael Klaczek - BC Fish and Wildlife Working Group
- Shannon McFayden – BC Parks Working Group
- Chris David – BC Land Use Planning representative
- Ed Hoffman – BC Parks Working Group

The NRC met twice between April 1st, 2022 to March 31st, 2023.

1. June 9, 2022 – Zoom Meeting was cancelled due to lack of funding for Kaska members
2. September 8, 2022 – Zoom Meeting
3. December 1, 2022 – Zoom Meeting
4. March 9, 2023 – Zoom Meeting was cancelled due to lack of Kaska representation

NRC meetings are typically held by video, with one in-person meeting per year. The NRC was unable to meet in person in 2022. A Record of Discussion was taken at each meeting, which was distributed by email to the participants.

Section 3 – Funding:

The Kaska Dena received \$350,000 to fund the implementation of the agreement for 2022-23. \$25,000 for special project funding for this implementation year was not distributed.

Section 4 – 2022/23 Highlights and Achievements:

Fish and Wildlife Working Group

The Fish and Wildlife Working Group (FWWG) meet monthly and prioritize a set of initiatives to deal with fish and wildlife issues between Kaska Dena and the Province. As part of the initiatives for the 2022/23 year, there was a continued relationship between the Dane Nan Yé Dāh (DNY) Kaska Land Guardian Program and the FWWG, as well as with the 3 Nations Collaborative Stewardship Framework Project. The Fish and Wildlife Working Group has representatives from all three regions, which allows for collaboration across the Kaska Traditional Territory in BC. The 2022/23 priority initiatives across regions were the following:

- Liard Basin Moose Stewardship Planning and Action Plan
- Collaborative Stewardship Framework
- Land Guardian Updates i.e. annual surveys and plans;
- Hunting Regulations in Northeast; and
- Hunting and Fishing regulations

CSF – Collaborative Stewardship Framework

The 3 Nations BC Collaborative Stewardship Forum (3NBC) is an initiative through which the Kaska Dena Nation, Tahltan Nation, Taku River Tlingit Nation and BC are building capacity to deliver on shared outcomes in environmental stewardship. The forum, funded as part of a broader provincial Collaborative Stewardship Framework (CSF), is one of five CSF cross-ministry pilot forums across BC. The 3NBC forum is focussed on collaborative wildlife management. The projects being undertaken through the forum fall into three categories: Governance and Capacity, Specific Projects, and the Guardian Program.

Governance projects have been focussed on supporting the development of shared decision making for wildlife stewardship. Research into co-management models and a report with recommendations for advancing wildlife shared decision making in the 3NBC context has been completed. Current efforts are focused on development of moose stewardship plans for 3 priority moose populations identified by each nation (Liard, Klappan, Atlin).

The CSF mandate expired at the end of March 2022. BC has committed to an additional year of bridge funding for fiscal 2022/23 for all existing forums to enable work that is underway to continue while BC works with all the forums to develop a robust vision and mandate request for a renewed program going forward.

A key recommendation from the co-management research undertaken in 2020 was to implement short term pilot projects focused on a specific species as a means for advancing shared decision-making models for wildlife stewardship in the 3NBC region. As a pilot, 3NBC forum participants have agreed to focus collaborative efforts on the work needed to support the development of moose stewardship plans through each nation's Fish and Wildlife Working Group (FWWG). This work will include:

- extensive community engagement to collect the information necessary to inform the moose stewardship planning process (currently underway);
- development of an approach to information and data sharing that supports incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into the planning process;
- setting joint population objectives based on shared, trusted information;
- identifying and recommending management approaches meet those objectives; and,
- development and implementation of stakeholder engagement plans.

The resulting moose stewardship plans for each of the three identified population units are intended to inform subsequent management decisions within those units. The lessons learned through the process will be used to inform further development of a model for wildlife shared decision making.

Forestry

The Kaska Forestry Task Force worked on a variety of initiatives during the 2022/23 year and achieved the following:

- Kaska Forest Tenure Processes for the Dease Liard Supply Block and North Liard Plan areas;
- Review of the Timber Supply Review for the Mackenzie Timber Supply Area and;

Land Management

There were a variety of land use planning and management initiatives that took place for the Kaska Dena in the 2022/23 year.

The BC Recreational Branch and the Kaska Dena continued to develop a strategy around the proposed recreational site at Skooks Landing. Consultation continued throughout the 2022/23 year on the options for the site. An archaeology assessment for the site was completed in 2022 and the final report will be sent to Kaska Dena in the Spring of 2023.

Conservancies, Parks, Ecological Reserves and Protected Areas

The purpose of this framework within the SEA is to have government to government discussions on the development and implementation of management plans and joint operational activities within conservancies, parks, ecological reserves, and protected areas (CPERPA's) within the Kaska Dena Traditional Territory. The scope of work for the CPERPA for the 2022/23 implementation year was as follows:

- Finalization of the Joint Ne'ah Conservancy and Tā ch'ilā Management Plan;
- Muskwa Kechika Protected Areas Strategic Management Plan;
- Liard River Hotsprings Management Plan;
- Discussions around signage at the Liard Hotsprings;
- Muncho Lake RV Park;
- Discussions around the Kaska IPCA proposal – Dene K'éh Kusān

Mineral Working Group

The Mineral Working Group (MWG) is one of the mandated working group tables within the Kaska SEA to facilitate the engagement of government-to-government discussions with respect to the mining sector and all related mining activities in the Kaska Dena Traditional Territory. The MWG met twice in the 2022/23 year.

The initiatives of focus for this implementation year are as follows:

- Silvertip Monitoring Committee Meeting with Coeur and BC Government;
- Jade Placer Collaborative Working Group;
- Discussions on specific mineral applications;
- Continual engagement between the DNY Land Guardians and Skeena Permitting Inspectors with Training Opportunities;
- Recommendations on Placer/Jade Collaboration; and
- Continued discussions on mining inspections and compliance status

Section 5 – 2022/23 Engagement Overview:

A total of 56 referrals to date were sent to the Kaska Dena under the Strategic Engagement Agreement for 2022/23. Table 1 shows the breakdown by Engagement Level compared to each year. Table 2 shows the breakdown by sector type compared to each year.

Table 1.

Levels	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018	2016 - 2017	2015 - 2016	2014 - 2015
1 (Notification Post Decision)	2	4	4	16	25	22	25	16	14
2 (Review and Comment)	35	56	59	84	81	69	73	90	48
3 (Shared Decision Working Group)	9	15	6	15	16	12	18	28	9
4 (Natural Resource Council)		1	2	4	4	6	0	3	0
5 (Strategic Shared Decisions)		0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1
Total	46	76	71	119	126	109	119	138	72

Table 2.

Sector	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Forestry and Range	7	7	20	33	18	14	17	20	12
Utilities (Water, Wind, Hydro)	0	4	3	5	5	6	0	1	2
Lands and Archaeology	22	25	12	33	30	31	42	15	12
Fish and Wildlife	0	20	6	17	24	16	18	16	4
Mineral	16	19	24	23	41	28	24	80	32
Parks	1	1	3	6	8	14	3	3	6
Petroleum and Natural Gas	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Other (public works)	0	0	3	2	0	0	12	3	4

Coordinated Engagement

For the 2022/23 year the highest level of shared decision making was at the Natural Resource Council level (Level 4), there were no Level 5 Strategic Shared Decisions.

The referrals of note for this annual report are as follows:

1. Strategic Management Planning for the Muskwa Kechika Protected Areas
2. Jade Boulder Road Special Use Permit
3. Skooks Landing Recreation Site Proposal
4. Hunting regulations proposals

Each of these files constitute their associated review process, four of which are still being consulted on and determinations will be made in the 2022/23 year.

Section 6 – Priorities for 2023/24

In the 2023/2024 implementation year, Kaska and BC plan to initially focus their efforts on extending and amending the Interim Strategic Engagement Agreement for another term, with changes to the signatories and administration. BC and Kaska will also enter discussions about what a new relationship will look like in future years.

Additionally, BC and Kaska will consider how to make improvements upon the already existing collaboration, effectiveness, and efficiency that has occurred through this agreement since 2008. To build on this, the G2G table will review the language and the existing processes (i.e., operational guidelines, recommendation platforms, working groups and engagement structures).

This Annual Implementation Report was prepared for the Responsible Officials.



Shawna Case
Co-Chair of the NRC
Kaska Dena Council



Michelle Larstone
Co-Chair of the NRC
Province of British Columbia