

THE KASKA DENA

a profile

The Kaska Dena have lived in north-western British Columbia and the southeast Yukon for tens of thousands of years, long before the existence of provincial and territorial borders.

Kaska traditional territory

The Kaska First Nations in BC are: the Dease River First Nation at Good Hope Lake; the Lower Post First Nation, near Watson Lake, Yukon; and the Kwadacha First Nation at Fort Ware, north of Prince George, BC.

Kaska Dena also live in the BC communities of Fireside and Muncho Lake, between Watson Lake and Fort Nelson. Two Yukon First Nations – the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation – are part of the Kaska family as well.

Despite the provincial and territorial borders separating Kaska families, and the division into Bands by the Indian Act, the Kaska view themselves as one nation.



Government structure

Each Kaska Band or First Nation is represented by an elected chief and council. An elected tribal chief presides over the Kaska Tribal Council, which comprises all five Kaska First Nations. In BC, an elected chairperson heads the Kaska Dena Council, the negotiating body for the BC treaty.

Status of treaty negotiations

The Kaska are negotiating with Canada, British Columbia and the Yukon on the settlement of their land claim, self government and treaty agreements. Negotiations are proceeding well, and the Kaska are confident that a fair and just settlement will be achieved.

Agreements related to energy and mineral development, forestry and tourism have been signed between the Kaska, Canada, and British Columbia. These agreements provide opportunities for the Kaska to participate in resource management and benefit from resource-related development on the Kaska traditional territory while treaty negotiations continue.

Resource development

The Kaska traditional territory is rich in natural resources, and the Kaska are working cooperatively with industry and government to create opportunities for new investment and economic development. Forestry, oil & gas, tourism, and mining initiatives are currently being pursued.



Meaningful involvement

For the Kaska, meaningful involvement in development takes the form of joint-ventures, cooperation and participation agreements, impact benefit agreements, and ownership of projects. These kinds of agreements have been struck with several different companies in British Columbia and the Yukon. The Kaska look forward to working in partnership with industry to further develop natural resources in a responsible way that respects the land.

The Kaska have also been actively involved as committee members in several planning initiatives, including the Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board, the Mackenzie LRMP planning team, the Mackenzie River Basin Management Board, and a Landscape Unit Planning team within the Cassiar Timber Supply Area.

