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DENA KAYEH INSTITUTE



DENA KAYEH INSTITUTE DANE NAN YĒ DĀH PROGAM

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 – Accomplishment Report

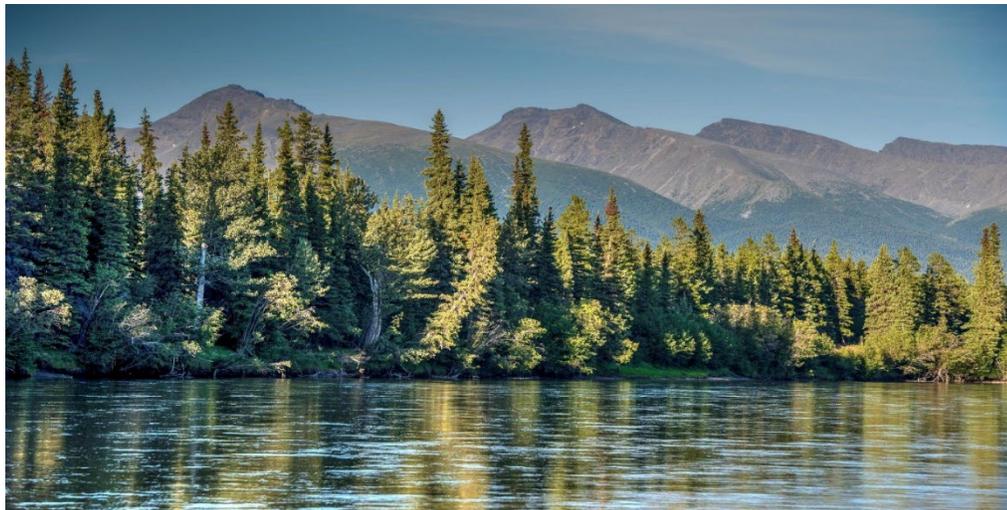
Dena Kayeh Institute:

Dane nan yě dāh Program Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022

Accomplishment Report

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I. Introduction

The 2018 – 2022 Dane nan yé dāh Program Strategic Plan Accomplishment Report documents the initiatives that were completed by the Dane nan yé dāh in Lower Post. The initiatives were guided by the Goals and Objectives of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.

Following the development of the 2018-2022 DNYD Strategic Plan, the DRFN and KFN took over the administration of their respective Guardian programs.

This Strategic Plan serves as a key management tool and roadmap for developing and measuring the success of annual work plans, and more generally for fulfilling the mandate of the DNYD and for the benefit of current and future generations of Kaska Nation citizens.

This Accomplishment Report covers the five years of the Strategic Plan outlining the successes of the DNYD during this timeframe. It should be noted that the last two years of this Strategic Plan (2020-22) were impacted by the COVID pandemic. This resulted in temporary shut down of the program and modification of the initiatives and hiring of Guardians in keeping with the COVID pandemic directives as set by the BC and Yukon Health Authorities.

II. Goals – 2018 - 2022

Goal 1: Expand the Program’s Stewardship Activities in the Territory

Objectives:

1. Expand data collection and monitoring activities with respect to water (including ground water), morel mushrooms and wildlife health and harvest.
2. Develop harvesting policies and processes for key wildlife and fish species.
3. Expand field patrol crew size, area work and frequency.
4. Develop a management plan for invasive species.
5. Develop a fish monitoring and habitat assessment program
6. Design and implement a cultural feature monitoring program to conserve, protect and support appropriate use of cultural areas.
7. Design and implement a human use monitoring program.
8. Continue to refine the Climate Change Risk Assessment and implement priority recommendations from the 2018 assessment.
9. Develop relationships with funders and advocate for core, stable, flexible funding to support long term monitoring programs, administrative capacity and effective resource management.

Accomplishments

Objective 1:

- Developed Standard Operating Procedures for water monitoring and sampling.

- Installed and collected data from 4 staff gauges on the Dease (French Creek and Blue River cultural camp), Liard, Blue and Hyland Rivers; Also collected Ph, temp, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and turbidity data using the YSI meter.
- Installed 2 number of data loggers and 2 baro loggers at the below sites:

Data Loggers

- Contact Creek
- Troutline Creek (2 locations)

Baro loggers

- Troutline Creek
- Contact Creek

- Collected monthly water quality samples at the Upper Liard River bridge (the “Liard River site“) as part of the Pacific-Yukon Water Quality Monitoring Network.
- Assisted YG Water Resource branch in hydrometric monitoring of Tom Creek and groundwater monitoring activities at Watson Lake and Upper Liard.
- Established water quality sampling site at McDames and Limestone Creek to collect baseline data. The impetus for the water quality sampling was the DRFN community concern about placer mining in the area.
- Ground-truthed reference sites and collected aquatic biomonitoring data at CABIN sites: LIAR10,12,13,14,15, 16, 17, 18; Deas 01,02, 03 and TROU 10 & 11.
- Developed Kaska Dena Non-Timber Resource Program (morel mushroom picking) to manage mushroom picking activities in our area. A final report was developed in 2019 outlining the deliverables of the program.
- Initiated implementation of a wildlife health sampling program. There was little community participation, so the program stalled.
- Identified wildlife survey areas, developed survey objectives for water monitoring, wildlife, daily field operations, morel mushroom harvesting, hunter harvest camp/observations, fish/frog/toad, environmental concerns, TK observation, plant/fungi identification/and First Nation harvest. Also developed community member survey on community harvest.

Objective 2:

- Assisted in the development of the DDC Hunting policy.
- Worked with YG to address harvest impacts of Grayling in McKenna Lake; provided community education around grayling spawning in the area.

Objective 3:

- Hired seasonal and youth guardians as funding and the impact of the COVID pandemic allowed.

Objective 4:

- Collaborated with the Invasive Species Council of BC and BC Government to develop a customized Kaska Dena Invasive Plant Management Plan including identifying priority sites to

monitor, creating an inventory of invasive plants in our area, conducting site treatment and training on invasive plant management and pesticide applicator certification.

Objective 5:

- Worked with YG fisheries biologist and fish and wildlife technician to address concerns around the Grayling population in McKenna Lake. Specifically, the overuse of the area, fishing while spawning and potential impacts from the beaver dams in the area. Ground-truthed and droned the area including Scoby Creek; developed signage to education the community and others using the area about Grayling, their habitat and DDC concerns for the population. Conducted an assessment and mapping of the beaver dams in Scoby Creek and the impact beaver dams have on the on the passage for Grayling.

Objective 6:

- A Traditional Knowledge/cultural features survey was developed and added to survey work while in the field.

Objective 7:

- Developed an Environmental Concerns survey. Data collected within survey are as follows:
 - Spills
 - Water contamination
 - Pollution
 - Environmental degradation
 - Land Use
 - Air Quality
 - Fish
 - Wildlife (poaching, roadkill)
 - New trails, roads or access points
 - Forestry issues
- Developed land user/hunter harvest objectives and surveys

Objective 8:

- Climate stations set up in Lower Post and at Crooked Lake.
- Climate station measures rain, wind and snowfall, we are looking at ways to record traditional knowledge on drastic weather changes and animal behaviour to weather changes.

Objective 9:

- Have developed relationships with a number of funders. Most funds are project specific. In 2018, the 3Nations Society and the Province established a Collaborative Stewardship Forum as part of a provincial pilot project and wish to continue and expand the work of the Forum. On September 30, 2022, the 3Nations Society and the Province entered into a Partnership Agreement including our guardian program. The Partnership Agreement is currently enabled until fiscal year 2026-2027.

Goal 2: Build Guardian Expertise within the Program

Objectives:

1. Train and employ 2 full time guardians, 2 seasonal guardians, 1 Elder and 1 Youth in environmental monitoring within each of the 3 communities.
2. Create a program orientation package and individualized training plans for all staff with a focus on develop future leaders within the Program.
3. Engage and educate community members about the DNYD successes and key land management trends/issues (e.g. Hunting practices with respect to cow moose).
4. Begin building a future guardian workforce by engaging youth and adults in schools and land-based initiatives, beginning with a focus on water monitoring.
5. Engage with Elders and knowledge holders to document traditional Dena land stewardship laws for key habitats and food sources, and the roles and responsibilities of being Dena on the land.
6. Establish communities-wide data “citizen scientist” initiative in which all community members can contribute to the collection of data and data reporting.

Accomplishments

Objective 1:

- Lower Post: 3 full time Guardians including an Elder Guardian were hired in addition to 2 seasonal 2 youth guardians as funding allowed. Two auxiliary guardians were available to call on when extra capacity was needed. Invited community members to accompany guardians on patrols when appropriate.

Objective 2:

- Orientation package complete. Training and Recruitment discussions took place as to what training and recruitment should entail.

Objective 3:

- Presentation to community on annual workplan and accomplishments. Informed them of what we are seeing on the land.

Objective 4:

- Presentations/on the land events: snowshoe, trapping, water monitoring, traditional medicine collecting and making, hide camp, bison harvest with community youth, Denetia school, Johnson Elementary school, Watson Lake Secondary school.
- Created posters about the importance of cow moose.
- Survival camp

Objective 5:

- Elders Facts recorded. (See Appendix: Traditional Knowledge – Kaska Elders’ Facts)

Objective 6:

- The citizen scientist initiative was deferred as a future initiative.

Goal 3: Support Co-Management and Consent-Based Decision Making

Objectives:

1. Assist with the implementation of the monitoring initiatives and opportunities negotiated for the Nation.
2. Complete the development of the Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (KIPCA) including an operational stewardship plan that sets out how the guardian programs assist with the stewardship and links to the governance.

Accomplishments

Objective 1:

- Conducted monitoring at Fireside Minerals site, Silver Tip site.
- Archeology work was undertaken at various sites, including Skooks landing and Silvertip.
- Conducted water sampling and monitoring for DRFN Troutline Creek micro-hydro project.
- Helped other Kaska Nation Guardian Programs with start up. Hosted Guardians from other emerging Guardian programs to share the work of DNYD.

Objective 2:

- This IPCA work will form an important element of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 4: Work collaboratively with neighbouring Nations to advance regional stewardship priorities

Objectives:

1. Continue to play a leadership role with the 3 Nations and neighbouring First Nation guardian programs to actively advance regional priorities.
2. Explore options to share data that informs collaborative decision-making across the region and helps to raise awareness within communities regarding key wildlife and habitat issues.
3. Begin discussions with the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council regarding the development of a Kaska Nation- regional guardian network.

Accomplishments

Objectives 1 and 2:

- Kaska Guardians are actively involved in the BC-3Nations Collaborative Stewardship Framework. Tanya Ball is the 3N guardian coordinator for the CSF initiative.

Objective 3:

- Provided Liard First Nation (LFN) and Ross River Dena Council (RRDC) with DNYD Program information and policies.
- Hosted RRDC guardians to demonstrate the DNYD program. Ongoing efforts to establish an opportunity to offer the same to LFN.
- Continued working towards the goal of a Regional Kaska Network.

Goal 5: Establish Strategic Partnerships to Build the Knowledge Base and Capacity in the Communities

Objectives:

1. Identify new partners such as education institutions and non-governmental organizations to help incorporate language and land-based curriculum into the DNYD programs.
2. Identify new partners to establish a land-based curriculum that engages community members in traditional and modern land/resource use and monitoring practices.
3. Identify partners to undertake research and education initiatives of mutual interest.

Accomplishments

Objective 1 and 3:

- Partnerships with Audubon, Wildlife Conservation Society, Yukon Government, British Columbia Government, Ducks Unlimited Canada, World Wildlife Foundation, Living Lakes Canada have all increased DNYD knowledge base and capacity with respect to birds, water, invasives etc.

Objective 2:

- DNYD initiated more work with the high school (education about the DNYD program) and Denetia school on the land events, which increased our capacity to host on the land events and participate in cultural knowledge and scientific knowledge transfer. We invited community members out to do patrols with us and demonstrated how to do water monitoring and surveys.

Goal 6: Address Key Infrastructure, Coordination and Communication Needs of the Program

Objectives:

1. Design a chain of command process protocols with communities which clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, processes and steps for reporting, responding and supporting data-informed decision-making.
2. Develop a dedicated program logo and brand for uniforms for Land Guardians so that they may be identified out on the land as well as within communities during gatherings or events.
3. Develop, implement and, maintain an annual “seasonal round” calendar to document the achievement of Land Guardian activities and commitments.
4. Develop a Human Resource Policy including a Code of Conduct that reflect Elders teachings about the roles and responsibilities of being Dene on the land
5. Establish a formalized Health and Safety Policy.
6. Engage with community leadership to explore options for new office space.
7. Conduct a cost-based equipment and infrastructure needs assessment of the Land Guardians and implement plans to fulfill gaps and understand capacity of uses.

Accomplishments

Objective 1: Developed an orientation package inclusive of all aspects identified in Objective 1.

Objective 2: Developed logo and Guardian ‘uniforms’ i.e. jackets, hoodies, t-shirt, long sleeve, toque, hats.

Objective 3: Developed survey areas and survey methods

Objective 4: This was not achieved within the 2018-22 Strategic Plan but will be within the 2023-2030 Strategic Plan.

Objective 5: Deferred and achieved in 2023-24.

Objective 6: Office space was acquired in the new DDC admin building in 2024

Objective 7: Deferred to 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

III. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the Strategic Plan requires the ongoing evaluation of progress. This duty falls to the Program’s leadership, who lead, monitor and measure the success of each of the goals and objectives in the plan, and making changes to those as required.

In addition to developing annual plans which link to the Strategic Plan, it is recommended:

1. Gather baseline data on an issue to demonstrate growth or change in a certain area.

2. Identify indicators and measures that will signify the completion of the objectives and achievement of a goal. Not done.
3. Create a plan for collecting the necessary data to measure success.

Accomplishments

Objective 1 and 2: Baseline data has not been systematically collected or tracked, we track growth when we are developing our Year-end reports and develop workplans.

Objective 2: Indicators have not been developed; however, we are using this Accomplishments Report to track completion of objectives and achievement of goals.

Objective 3: Developing more plans aren't always useful. We will consider this objective in our 2023-2030 Strat Plan.

*For further information on the work of the DNYD visit the Dena Kayeh
Institute website*

[https:// denakayeh.com/dane-nan-ye-dah/](https://denakayeh.com/dane-nan-ye-dah/)

IV. APPENDIX 1



Traditional Knowledge - Kaska Elders' Facts

Dates to Collect Berries

Type	When
Raspberries	July
Strawberries	June
Soapberries	June/July
Cranberries	September
Blueberries	August

Dates to Collect Medicines

Type	When
Birch Bark	Any time of the year
Tamarack	Any time of the year
Birch Water	First week in April, depending on weather.
Pitch	Summer/any time of the year
Caribou Weed	August
Sage	July/ August
Balsam	Any time of the year
Chaga	Spring and Summer

Wildlife

Species	TK
Moose	Depends on weather - frost brings on rut
Moose	Moose have calf on island to keep them safe
Bear	Cubs born in February. If it is foggy, Elders say that is sign that bears having their cubs.
Bear	Eat stone berries to bung up to hibernate
Grizzly	Are moving closer to where people live

Species	TK
Black Bear	Using a culvert as a bear ben
Caribou	Lots of predators kill calves when born
Elk	Colder weather brings on rut
Sheep	Eagles kill lots of baby sheep
Goat	Eagles kill lots of baby goats
Deer	Frost brings on rut
Deer	More deer moving up this way - cougar follow the deer so with more deer moving up there will be more cougar
Porcupine	Stay with Mom for couple weeks then they are left to be on their own.
Rabbit	They have 7 litters between 5/6 babies - sometimes more.
Rabbit	Lack of rabbits - might be their 7-year cycle
Lynx	If they don't have food source, they will eat their own.
Wolf	Have pups in den.
Wolves	More wolves are coming into community
Muskrat	Hard workers
Wolverine	They are fearless
Fisher	Kill porcupine. Odd ones come north, mostly in Alberta
Vulture Bird	Spotted in Two Mile
Fish	Fish are soft - when cutting it is like mush
Waterfowl	Swans are leaving later - still here in the winter - Ducks, Goose leaving later then normal

Wildlife	Pre Rut	Rut/Mating	Calving Season
Moose	1 st week September	Sept 20 - Oct 15	May-June
Bear		June - July	February
Caribou		Mid Sept - Oct	May-June
Elk		Mid Sept - Oct	May-June
Sheep		November 1 - 30	June
Goat		November 1 - 30	June
Deer		Nov 1 - 1 st Week Dec	May
Porcupine		Sept 20 - Oct 15	Mid May
Rabbit		April	
Lynx		March - April	
Wolf		February - March	May
Beaver		April	June
Wolverine		April	
Muskrat		April	June
Fox		April	May
Weasel		May	
Squirrel		May	
Fisher		April	

Culture and Environment

Culture and Environment
Young girls are not to touch Rabbits in the springtime (April/May) you will have lots of babies
Elders telling you stories when you don't say hum or nod your head, they tell you to git cause your not listing
Homemade light is made from moose, bear or beaver fat you make it into grease; braid pants strips or any fabric to use for the wick
Popular bark is good for cuts (chew it up and stick it on the wound)
Popular is good to boil and it helps with arthritis
Pitch is used for sours and cuts (heals the wound)
Mix caribou weed with balsam and tamarack makes a stronger medicine
Make a boat out of moose hide call it a skin boat
People use to paddle up to Dease Lake with full load; they would tie dogs and run them on the riverside
Weather patterns have something to do with the animal's rut season & behaviour of the animals are not active
Indian ice cream (soapberries) helps clean out your stomach
Hudson Bay use to get Indians to pile up the fur to what they wanted to purchase
You were never bored back in the day there is always things to do (pack water, get wood, check snares, if you got anything in your snare you have to skin it.)
Lots of unmarked gravesites, Graveyard Lake has about 14 graves that are unmarked (Fish Lake)
Moccasins telegrams back in the day they would walk to give people messages (cops use to use this communicate with other community's)
Fall weather is warmer then normal
Weather is changing fast - one minute it is sunny and the next it is raining
Lack of rain has an effect on the berries and plants - one-year berries were getting ripe by freeze up
Animal horns are deformed
Winter patterns have changed over the years - more snow to no snow
Lighting and thunder in the winters
Permafrost melting
Thickness of the ice is decreasing
Trees have worms with webs
No more -30 to -60 cold weather