

ŁĪ'ÉH KADZ'ĪŁA: DENE K'ÉH KUSĀN

Translation: 'We Are Working Together: The People's Way We Follow'

The Kaska First Nations (Liard First Nation and Daylu Dena Council, Dease River First Nation, Kwadacha Nation and the Ross River Dena Council) have entered into a partnership which has been formalized through a Process Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, through the Ministry of Water, Land

and Resource Stewardship, to work towards the establishment, management, and operation of Dene K'éh Kusān and to complete modern land use planning in the Kaska Ancestral Territory within British Columbia. The Dena Kayeh Institute (DKI) is supporting the Kaska First Nations in this work.

WHAT IS THIS AGREEMENT ABOUT?

This agreement outlines how the Kaska First Nations and the Province will work together to achieve two important outcomes:

- 1** Establish and manage Dene K'éh Kusān (DKK) as a 3.9 million hectare Kaska Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) together with complimentary provincial protection designations, to promote stewardship and using Indigenous laws, knowledge, and leadership.
- 2** Complete land use planning for the remaining 6 million hectares of the Kaska Ancestral Territory in British Columbia.

SHARED PRINCIPLES

The Kaska First Nations and the Province have agreed to advance this work under principles that uphold and respect Kaska's constitutionally protected Aboriginal Rights and Title. This work will also advance the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

They will also be guided by the Gūkēyeh Gūk'éh Gūs'ānī (on our land we follow our ways), the Kaska stewardship principles.

The shared intention is Gūnīé' Yedānehdī' Gūtīe Nédzúdá Dege (We must protect our Land so we can Live Well).

RESPECT
(Yédānendīh)

RESPONSIBILITY/HONOUR
(A'ī)

RECIPROCITY
(Nadowa dedeh'suts)

RELATIONSHIPS
(Kats'īnī)

SHARED OBJECTIVES

Through the work they will do together under the Process Agreement, the Kaska First Nations and the Province intend to do several things:

- 1 **Establish DKK as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area**
- 2 **Protect the land and water to support Kaska culture, health, and the environment.**
- 3 **Create new economic opportunities for Kaska and neighbouring communities (e.g., new jobs and businesses to support tourism, guiding, guardianship, etc).**
- 4 **Determine joint governance and stewardship structures.**
- 5 **Develop a DKK Stewardship Plan and Implementation Plan.**
- 6 **Ensure public engagement and work with neighbouring First Nations, local governments, and stakeholders.**

HOW WILL IT WORK?

The Process Agreement says that the Kaska First Nations and the Province will work towards their shared objectives in a ‘two phased’ approach.

Work under these two phases is happening at the same time.

While this work is underway, a one year pause has been put in place on new mining claims and coal license in the proposed DKK IPCA to protect environmental and cultural values during the land use planning process and to avoid new encumbrances.

PHASE

1

Identify options for protection, governance, management and stewardship for the proposed DKK IPCA.



PHASE

2

Complete land use planning across the rest of Kaska Ancestral Territory in BC by building on the existing land use plans and any other relevant land use plans or planning processes.

The current land use planning process seeks to update and tweak existing objectives and zones within the plans to ensure they reflect changes that have occurred since they were created – including new DRIPA (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act) legislation, climate change and emergency preparedness.

There is also an opportunity to ensure clarity by making the language of the different plans more consistent.

WHO DECIDES WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Once Consensus Recommendations have been achieved by the Project Team, they will be submitted to Kaska leadership and Provincial Cabinet for approval. The recommendations will cover both the DKK and the land use planning zones and objectives for the rest of the Kaska Ancestral Territory in British Columbia.

To reach Consensus Recommendations, Kaska First Nations and the Province have agreed to work towards consensus-based decisions in this process. They have organized their Project Teams to achieve that goal.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chiefs and Deputy Ministers review Consensus Recommendations or seek to resolve any disagreements;

TEAM MANAGERS

Oversee the work and guide the Project Team;

PROJECT TEAM

Does the day-to-day work of planning, engagement, and developing the Consensus Recommendations.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE AGREEMENT SAY?

The Process Agreement also includes ways that Kaska First Nations and the Province will work together towards reconciliation under Kaska law and BC law.

In addition, the Process Agreement includes the commitment to work with Neighboring Nations. The Process Agreement is not a treaty and has been designed to ensure that there will be no impact on the existing Aboriginal or treaty rights of other Indigenous groups. The Kaska First Nations and the Province are fully committed to engagement and consultation with neighbouring Indigenous Nations whose rights and interests may be affected.

There will be frequent opportunities for neighbouring nations to contribute their thoughts and ideas towards advancing this work.

Also, the Process Agreement includes the commitment to work with local communities, stakeholder groups and the general public. There will be frequent opportunities for the public, stakeholders to contribute their thoughts and ideas towards advancing this work.

SUMMARY

The Process Agreement sets the stage for Kaska First Nations and the Province to do the following:

- 1 Work Towards Consensus
- 2 Engage With Others in a Respectful Way
- 3 Strengthen and Promote Indigenous and Local Values
- 4 Respond to Changing Environmental Conditions
- 5 Accommodate Responsible Public Uses
- 6 Support Science and Research
- 7 Promote New Economic Opportunities in the Region