

Kaska-B.C. Land Use Planning Project FAQ's

updated July 15, 2025

1) What is the Kaska-BC Land Use Planning Project (the Project) and why is it important?

The Kaska First Nations and the Province of British Columbia (the Province) have formed a partnership to undertake a land use planning process within 99,000 km² of Kaska's ancestral territory in northern British Columbia (B.C.). The planning process is guided by a shared land stewardship vision. It marks a new, yet continued path forward that builds on existing land use planning efforts within the Kaska First Nations ancestral territory in B.C. It is a path that will advance reconciliation, address conservation goals, provide shared economic opportunities, and provide clarity on land use and management.

A key component of the Project will focus on the proposed Dene K'éh Kusān Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). The Project realizes a shared commitment between the Province and Kaska to work together to support Indigenous-led stewardship and to build a land use plan that reflects the interests of Indigenous communities, all British Columbians and contributes to the Provincial commitment to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030.

Further, the Project will identify sustainable resource management opportunities and provide clarity on access to resources, including critical metal and mineral exploration and development. In this manner, the Project aims to meet mutual economic goals in tandem with environmental, social, and cultural objectives, promoting healthy ecosystems and healthy communities.

The process embraces Indigenous values and knowledge systems along with western science, respects neighbouring First Nations, and engages local government, stakeholders, and the public. The Province and the Kaska First Nations have chosen to enter a land use planning process where there is a shared interest in enacting the IPCA under both sets of laws and where such a partnership can meet both governments' needs.

The agreed upon collaborative process to engage in land use planning including the proposed Dene K'éh Kusān IPCA represents a significant opportunity to advance conservation, responsible land management, Indigenous reconciliation and co-governance within British Columbia through engagement with local governments, stakeholders and the public. It demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship, while addressing economic needs, preserving cultural heritage, and advancing collaborative land management, to the benefit of the Kaska First Nations and all British Columbians.

2) What is Kaska's proposed Dene K'éh Kusān Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) and how does it relate to the Kaska-BC Land Use Planning process?

Dene K'éh Kusān (DKK) in the Kaska Language means 'the people's way we follow'. It holds the vision of the Kaska First Nations by which they will ensure that their people and lands will thrive today and into the future. DKK is the heart of the cultural homelands of the Kaska and lies at the center of their ancestral territory in Northern B.C.

DKK is a proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) and part of a Global Indigenous movement to advance IPCAs. These are defined by Indigenous peoples and outline their stewardship approach to their respective territories so each IPCA may look different and include different priorities.

The Province acknowledges the proposed Kaska IPCA as an expression of Kaska's community land vision for stewardship and conservation for a specific area and recognizes it as an important starting point for shared land use planning that seeks a jointly supported outcome that will reflect values and interests of Kaska First Nations and British Columbians.

In summary, IPCAs are an innovative approach to conservation and land use planning that help sustain healthy lands and waters — places that are home to iconic species like salmon and caribou and places that store massive amounts of carbon, benefiting the entire planet. DKK represents a significant step towards recognizing and respecting Kaska rights and the Kaska First Nations important contribution to environmental stewardship.

3) What is guiding the Project?

There are many important factors that are guiding the Project and within its heartland, the proposed DKK IPCA:

- **Government-to-Government Relationship:** Kaska First Nations and the Province have agreed to jointly undertake the Project on the footing of a strong and trusting government-to-government relationship. The partnership aims to co-create a land use plan that is inclusive of both First Nations and provincial interests, fostering mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation ensuring that decisions are respecting both Indigenous and provincial governance structures and values. This aligns with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and with the province's commitments to reconciliation and a shared approach to land stewardship.
- **Indigenous Rights:** The Project acknowledges and respects that Kaska First Nations have inherent rights within their ancestral territory in B.C.
- **Indigenous-led Stewardship:** Central to the Project is the recognition of DKK as Kaska First Nations' Indigenous-led stewardship vision. The Kaska First Nations and the Province have agreed to seek and advance this vision through the collaborative development of conservation and sustainability objectives which align both with Kaska First Nations cultural, spiritual and ecological values, and with the Province's conservation stewardship mandates and commitments.
- **Engagement:** Engagement is integral to the project. Opportunities will be available to local communities, neighbouring First Nations, local governments, stakeholders, and the public to ensure local perspectives and concerns inform plan development.
- **Environmental Stewardship and Economic Development:** The Project aims to achieve conservation goals to protect biodiversity, preserve habitats and maintain ecosystem integrity and to also advance economic and employment opportunities at local, regional and provincial levels. This approach supports long-term environmental and economic sustainability for the benefit of Kaska and B.C. communities in the north as well as all British Columbians.
- **Adaptive Management and Monitoring:** The Project incorporates adaptive management principles, allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions. Monitoring mechanisms will be recommended to assess the effectiveness of management strategies and ensure ongoing sustainability.
- **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** The land use planning process operates within existing legal and policy frameworks at both the Indigenous and provincial levels. This includes considering land tenure, regulatory requirements, and jurisdictional responsibilities to ensure that decisions are enforceable.
- **Reconciliation:** The project aims to advance reconciliation by fostering trust, mutual respect, and understanding. It aims to build a foundation for cooperative governance between the Kaska First Nations and the Province and sustainable land management for the benefit of all British Columbians.

4. What is the mineral tenuring pause associated with the Project?

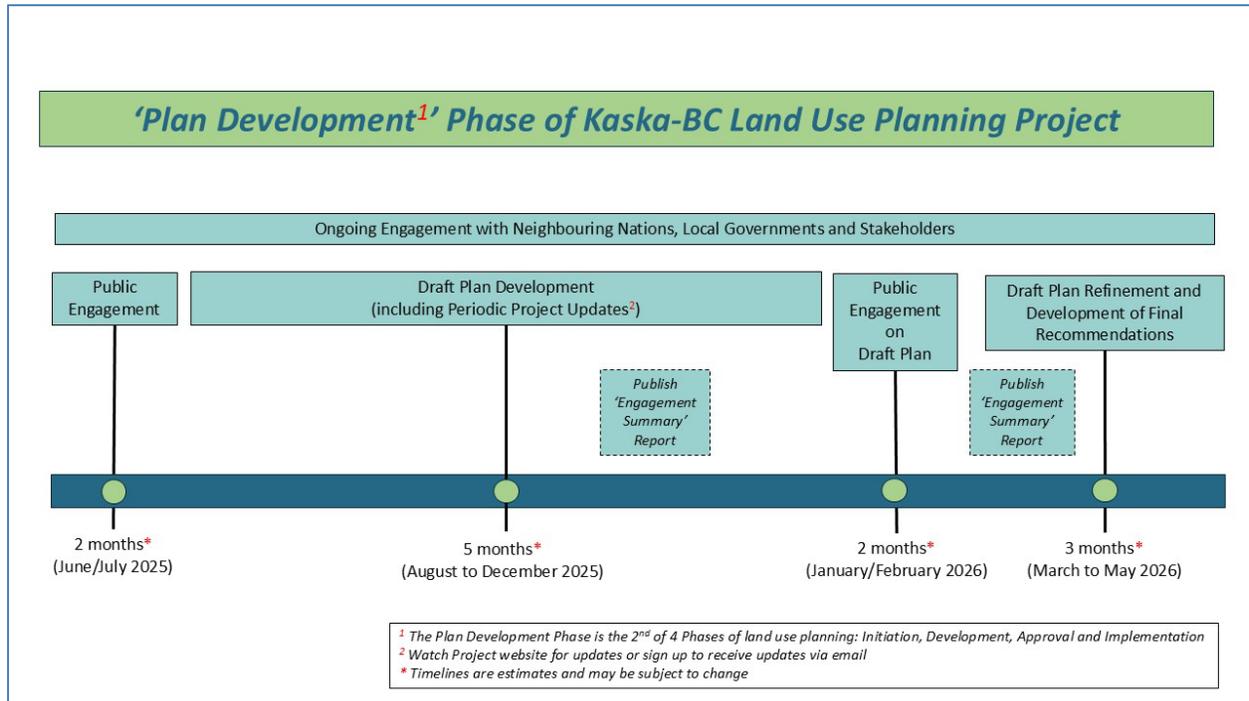
For the Project, a mineral tenuring pause for a period of 1 year has been set to protect environmental and cultural values in the proposed IPCA area during the land use planning process. The tenuring pause uses an Order in Council (the Order) enabled by the [Environment and Land Use Act](#) (ELUA). The Order prohibits the registration of new placer and mineral claims, and the issuance of new coal licences, within the area for a 1-year period.

The Order does not apply to existing valid placer and mineral claims, and existing coal licences. Existing tenure-holders can still exercise their rights associated with an existing title, including applying for a [Mines Act](#) permit, conducting mining activities authorized by an existing permit, or selling their claim.

For more information related to the tenuring pause, please visit the [Environment and Land Use Act Orders and No Registration Reserves for Northwest and Northcentral B.C.](#) website. The order that applies to this Project is the Northcentral ELUA Order.

5. What is the timeline of the Project?

The estimated timeline of the Plan Development Phase of the Project is over a 1-year period, as shown in the Figure below.



6. How does the Project relate to existing plans for land use and resource management?

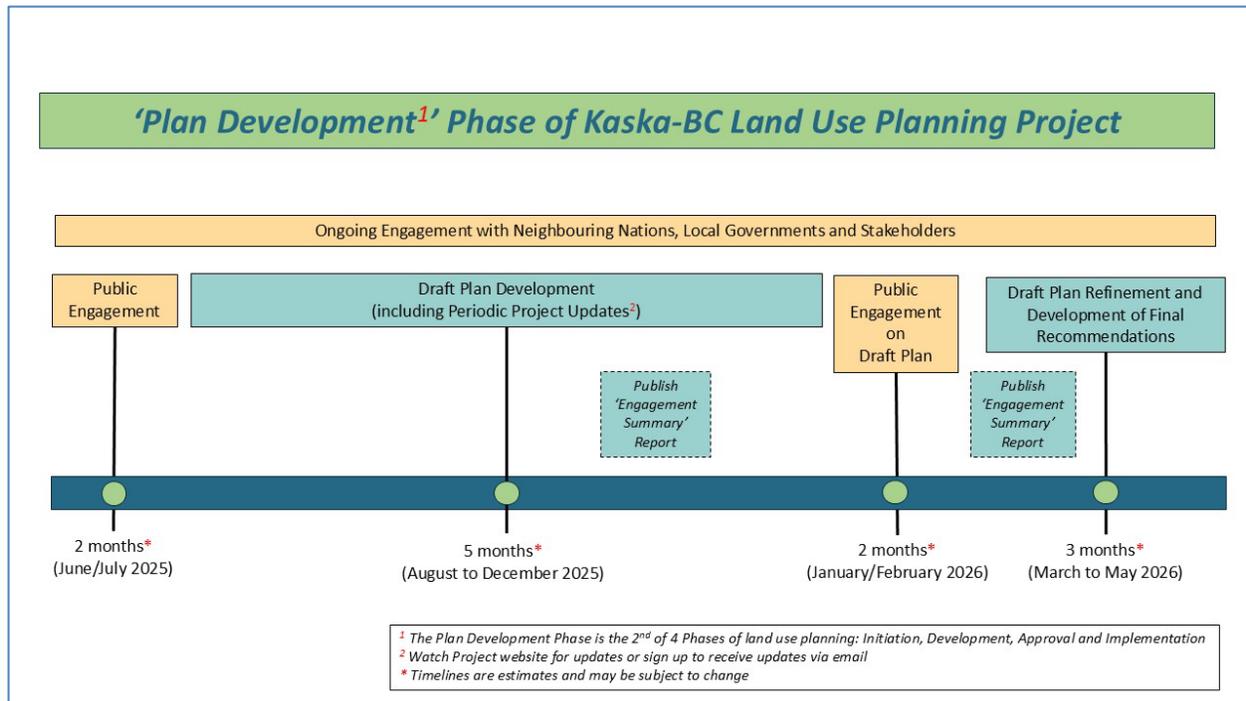
Existing land use plans cover 99% of the Project area and were developed from 1997 to 2017. The current planning process for the Project will be informed by the extensive work done under existing plans for land use and resource management.

The Project will update the existing plans to reflect present and future considerations and needs, including:

- Shared land stewardship vision of the Kaska First Nations and the Province
- Health of ecosystems
- Climate change impacts and related emergency response
- Cumulative effects over time and into the future
- Sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits

7. Will there be opportunities to get involved?

Yes, engagement opportunities for local government, stakeholders and the public will be made available at specific stages (see orange boxes in the Figure below).



Please continue to check back to the project webpage for updates.

If you are interested, on the project webpage you can find the following opportunities.

- Sign up to receive notification of Project updates by email
- Complete an initial survey for the Project by Friday July 25, 2025.

Additional Information

[Kaska-BC LUP Project](#)

[Dene K'éh Kusān](#)

Note 1: Kaska First Nations is defined as Dease River First Nation, Kwadacha Nation, Ross River Dena Council, and Liard First Nation including Daylu Dena Council, all of whom are Indigenous peoples of Canada that have Aboriginal Rights and Title within the Kaska Ancestral Territory within British Columbia

Note 2: Details on existing land use plans can be found on the Project website