

INTRODUCTION:

Representatives from the Kaska Tribal Council, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), and citizens from communities have taken part in Kaska Constitution Working Group meetings. The Constitution is being written down so that people have a right to participate in and control decisions affecting their lives and communities, laws will govern who makes the decisions and how they do it, and financial accountability rules govern what happens to the money.

The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society has received funding to increase public awareness and inform public debate on women's key concerns regarding governance. LAWS is surveying Kaska citizens to ask questions about the draft Kaska National Constitution.

After watching the DVD "Hearing our Voices", an interviewer will review the background information for each question, and mark your choice on the answer sheet. The project researcher, Lois Moorcroft, will compile the answers in a report to help the Kaska Constitution Working Group to finalize the draft Kaska National Constitution. Your answers will be anonymous, and personal information will be kept confidential.

Your views are important. Thank you for taking part in this important research.

QUESTION 1. QUORUM FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Quorum is how many people have to be present in order for the meeting to start. There must be a quorum present at the Kaska National Assembly before it can conduct any government business, make decisions, or pass resolutions.

QUESTION 2. KASKA ELDERS COUNCIL

The Kaska National Constitution proposes that:

- Each Kaska First Nation will set up its own Elders Council;
- Each community Elders Council will select two (2) Crow and two (2) Wolf representatives to sit on the national Kaska Elders Council, There will be 20 Elders on the Kaska Elders Council;
- The Kaska Elders Council elects two (2) Elders, one Crow and one Wolf, to the Kaska National Council.

QUESTION 3. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVES and MEN'S REPRESENTATIVES

The Kaska National Constitution proposes two representatives of Kaska women and two representatives of Kaska men be appointed to sit on the Kaska National Council. Kaska Dena are a matrilineal society, which means that kinship is based on the mother's line. Kaska women historically held leadership roles in governance and community life.

QUESTION 4. KASKA YOUTH COUNCIL

The Kaska National Constitution proposes that:

- Each Kaska First Nation will establish its own Youth Council;
- Each community Youth Council will select two (2) Crow and two (2) Wolf representatives to sit on the national Kaska Youth Council; and that the
- Kaska Youth Council elects two (2) youth, one Crow and one Wolf to sit on the Kaska National Council.

QUESTION 5. NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS

From time to time, the Kaska Tribal Council has been delegated the authority by Kaska First Nations to consult and negotiate joint socio-economic agreements with industry and other governments that ensure Kaska people have access to training, jobs, contracting opportunities and other benefits to offset any negative impacts these development projects may have on Kaska members and communities. The draft Constitution sets out how each First Nation may delegate this authority to the Kaska National Government. The Constitution Working Group proposes to develop and implement a national consultation policy and procedures to use before agreements are signed. The consultation policy would include advance notice, public meetings in Kaska communities.

QUESTION 6. LAW MAKING PROCESS

The Kaska National Constitution sets out a detailed law-making process. At step 5 of this process, each First Nation submits a record of decision to the Kaska National Council that either approves or rejects the proposal for legislation. (The Power Point presentation explains the law making process.)

Some facts to consider:

- Each First Nation must make this decision in a timely way
- Secret ballot votes are costly to administer, but give every citizen has the right to vote
- Community Special General Assemblies may be well attended
- Some Kaska First Nations do not have an approved consultation process in place
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QUESTION 7. RATIFICATION PROCESS FOR KASKA NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

The Kaska National Constitution is an important legal document that explains the foundation of Kaska rights, basic principles, and government structures. The way the Constitution is accepted, which is called 'ratification', must be set out in the Constitution. The Constitution should be approved by a majority of the Kaska people. The Working Group suggests that ratification take place by a secret ballot vote at a Special National Assembly with 60 days public notice provided to members in Kaska communities.

QUESTION 8. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Constitution sets out broad principles, and is designed so government can evolve. In future, it may be necessary to change, or amend, the Constitution.

QUESTION 9. CHAIR OF THE KASKA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Kaska National Council will select a Chair for the Kaska National Assembly. The Chair recognizes speakers and maintains order. The Chair does not take part in discussions and can not vote on questions before the Assembly.