

# Dena Cho

## Environmental and Remediation Inc.

A Dena Nezziddi Development Corp. Company



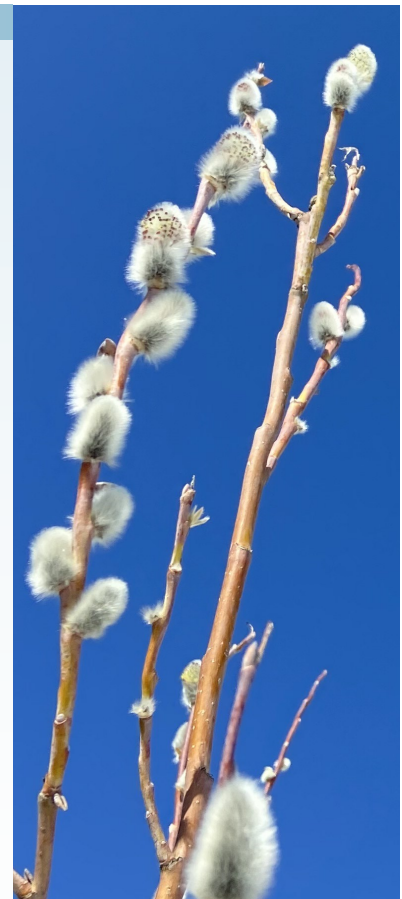
Dena Cho Environmental and Remediation Inc. (Dena Cho) is a 100% Ross River Dena owned and operated environmental management company. Dena Cho provides professional environmental services and management. Our team is proud to say that Dena Cho is the only 100% First Nation’s owned environmental management company in Yukon.

We are committed to consistently communicating with the community of Ross River, and more importantly, gathering feedback and direction on projects. With this goal in mind, we have committed to providing regular newsletter updates to Ross River community members and leadership. We also post our newsletters and other updates on our new website: <https://denacho.ca/>.

We encourage feedback on the content of this newsletter as we aim to keep our community informed and engaged. Please contact Caitlynn Beckett if you have any questions or concerns ([cbeckett@denacho.ca](mailto:cbeckett@denacho.ca) or 306-491-2672).

## Current Projects

- Faro Mine Remediation Project (3 parts of this work):
  - Leading the Faro Community-Based Revegetation Strategy
  - Reviewing and reporting to Kathlene Suza and RRDC leadership on the Faro YESAB process
  - Participation in the Faro Technical Review Committee
- Ketz River Mine Projects:
  - Ketz Mine Remediation and Working Group
  - Ketz Environmental Monitoring Program
- Wolverine Mine (water treatment and environmental monitoring)
- North Canol Telegraph Wire Cleanup/Environmental Site Assessment
- Contaminated Site Assessment at the Whiskers Lake Coal Mine



### Inside this issue

Current Projects.....	1
Faro Mine Remediation .....	2
Ketz Remediation.....	4
Wolverine Mine .....	5
Whiskers Lake.....	5
North Canol Wire Cleanup.....	5
Training.....	6
Job Opportunities .....	6

### Whitehorse Office

Suite 201-208 Main Street  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2A9

You can reach us at:  
[denachoteam@gmail.com](mailto:denachoteam@gmail.com)



*Cassia participating in a seed collection workshop (October 2020).*

**BIG NEWS!** Dena Cho has hired Cassia Jakesta as an Environmental Scientist and Project Manager to help us with the Faro Remediation Project and environmental monitoring. We are VERY excited to have her come on board and she brings years of experience in environmental monitoring, including wildlife surveys, water sampling, fieldwork planning and much more.

## Faro Mine Remediation Project

**Faro Community-Based Revegetation Work:** Over the winter Dena Cho has been speaking with Elders, leadership and community members about plants, revegetation strategies and the proper ethics for using plants on the Faro Remediation Project. We will be compiling this information into a community report over the coming months. We are now planning for a tree planting program at Faro in June and will be hiring 12 youth to help with this work. Elders will also be hired to be on site during the tree planting to provide direction, language and other teaching.

Part of this planting program will include a community camp at Blind Creek for five days towards the end of June (around June 12-17). We welcome all community members to stop by Blind Creek to chat about revegetation at Faro, to hang out and to eat some food!

**If you would like to talk to us about this project or would like to be interviewed about plants/revegetation, please let us know! Feel free to give us a call or send an email ([jinkster@denacho.ca](mailto:jinkster@denacho.ca)).**

**Faro YESAB Review Updates:** The Faro Remediation Project is currently moving through the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment (YESA) process. As new documents are posted on YESAB's registry, Dena Cho summarizes the content and provides this to Ross River Dena Council. Over the winter, YESAB hosted three technical workshops to review the plan for water management, the geographic scope of the remediation project, cumulative effects and other technical challenges. Dena Cho attended these workshops and provided summaries to leadership.

Dena Cho also attended a meeting between YESAB, RRDC and CIRNAC, where we discussed the best ways for YESAB to move forward with RRDC on the Faro Remediation Project.

If anyone would like more information on the YESAB process for Faro or would like to look at the summaries we have completed, feel free to contact us.



### Our Team

Stu Van Bibber, General Manager

Jody Inkster, Environmental Scientist and Project Manager

Billie Maje, Field Technician and Project Manager

Cassia Jakesta, Environmental Scientist and Project Manager

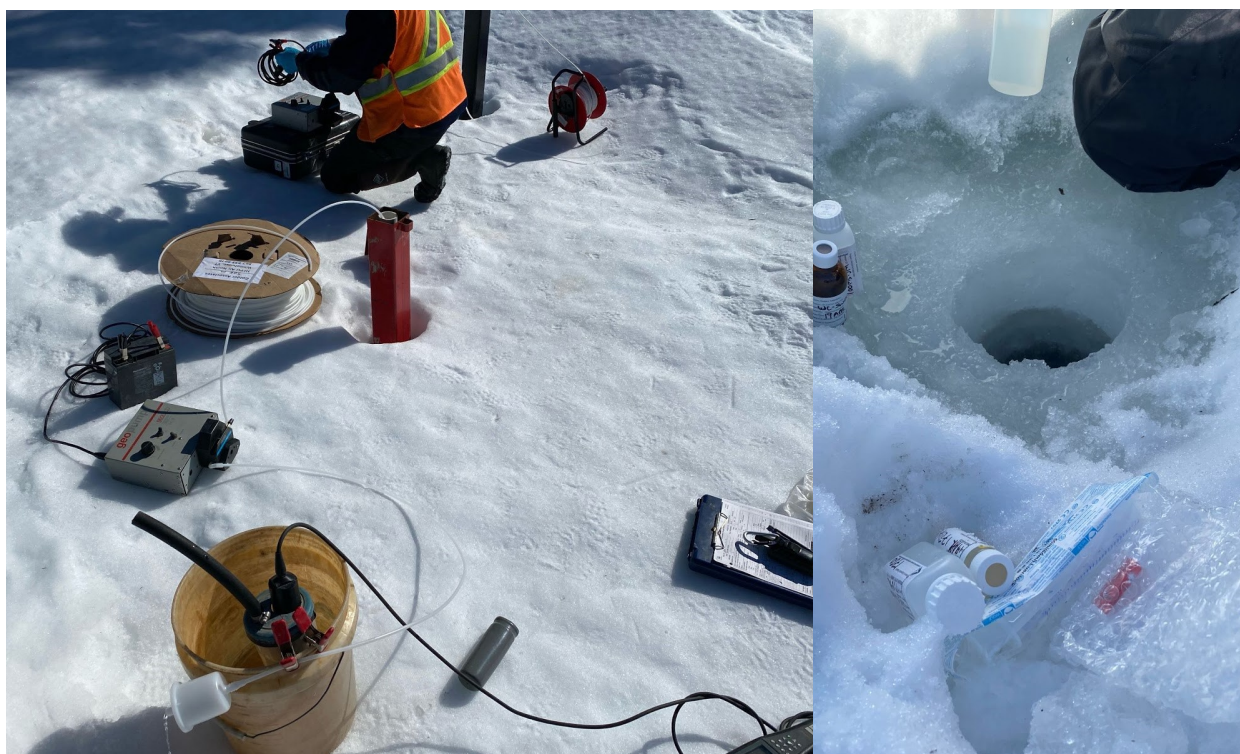
Caitlynn Beckett, Researcher and Project Manager

Amber Etzel, Field Technician

Eric John, Field Technician

Mary Maje, Elder and Support

Ted Charlie, Elder and Support



*Pictures from April 2021 water monitoring program at Faro (L to R): groundwater sampling at Faro, surface water and flow sampling, an aerial survey of the Pelly River (opposite page).*

**Faro Technical Review Committee (TRC):** Dena Cho attends bi-weekly TRC meetings for Faro (along with the Faro Secretariat, Kathlene Suza). These meetings include updates on site conditions, care and maintenance activities and remediation design planning. Updates from these meetings are provided to RRDC regularly.

- There was a 30% higher snowpack around Faro this year, which will mean careful water collection and monitoring
- Work has begun on quarrying, sorting and stockpiling rock and placing some of this rock on the tailings for ‘test’ covers and to help control dust
- The new Rose Creek diversion channel was finished in October 2020 and ‘contact water’ (water that has come into contact with waste rock/contamination) is being collected so that it doesn’t enter the diversion channel
- Seepage (contaminated water that seeps under the tailings dam) downstream of the tailings pond is being collected and sent to the Faro Pit for water treatment. A new seepage collection system will be put in place soon to improve this water collection and treatment

**Faro Mine Environmental Monitoring:** Dena Cho was recently successful in securing a contract to assist Golder with the environmental monitoring program at Faro. We have completed two rounds of environmental monitoring at Faro Mine. As we continue to become more involved in environmental monitoring at Faro Mine we will begin to include community members and Elders as much as possible.

Water sampling at Faro Mine includes surface and groundwater testing all over the Faro and Vangorda sites, in addition to testing along Rose Creek, Vangorda Creek and downstream on the Pelly River.

## Elder's Quote

*"We aren't actually miners, as First Nations people. We are land stewards. We take care of the land, animals. We're one with the land".*



*Jody Inkster collecting a water sample at the Ketz River Mine (April 2021).*

## Ketz River Mine Remediation Project

Dena Cho has attended monthly Ketz Mine River Working Group meetings with the Yukon Government, Government of Canada, and other participating First Nations (i.e., Liard First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council). The latest Working Group meetings focused on developing an Adaptive Management Plan for managing water during the care and maintenance phase of the project (the current status of the Ketz project). Upcoming activities for the remediation project will be a site tour, installing game cameras (as part of developing RRDC's wildlife management datasets), and land-based activities.

You can find additional information (i.e., an infographic, backgrounder, and virtual site tour) on our website at [www.denacho.ca](http://www.denacho.ca).

**Ketz River Mine Environmental Monitoring:** As part of Hemmera's First Nation Participation Plan and Yukon Government's procurement commitments to providing socio-economic benefits to affected First Nations, Dena Cho has been subcontracted to lead a portion of the surface water quality program at the Ketz Mine site. Subsequently, Dena Cho assists Hemmera with the quarterly sampling events and the annual groundwater program.





*Wolverine Mine Access Road*

## Wolverine Mine Environmental Monitoring

One of Dena Cho's long-term projects is the environmental monitoring program at the Wolverine Mine, which includes sampling local streams and creeks, groundwater monitoring wells, tailings storage water and water coming out of the mine portal.

Billie Maje continues to lead this project on behalf of Dena Cho, with the support of other community members. Lead contractor EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc. continues to support Dena Cho.

## Whiskers Lake Environmental Site Assessment

This past summer, Dena Cho completed a review of the Whiskers Lake coal deposit, located on the access road into Ross River from the Robert Campbell Highway. Dena Cho worked with Hemmera to identify potential contaminants associated with present and/or historical on and off-site activities and that may have affected soil and/or groundwater at the site. Dena Cho is now preparing to continue our work for the 2021 summer, where we will be looking more closely at the potential effects from the mine on Whiskers Lake and areas next to the coal mine. Our work will involve some basic soil sampling and water sampling in the general area of the mine site, where we will continue hiring Ross River Dena members and include Elders for any more we manage.

## North Canol Wire Cleanup

Last summer, Dena Cho worked with Hemmera to clean up telegraph wire along the first 75 kilometers of the North Canol Trail. Dena Cho hired Eric John, Amber Etzel, Freddie Dick, Robyn McLeod and Justin Etzel to assist in the field work, which included surveying the length of the North Canol for wire and cleaning up the wire and disposing of it at the local landfill. The program was a success and we are now preparing to clean up the remaining wire next year, from kilometer 70 all the way to the border. As with the Whiskers Lake work, we will make sure to continue hiring Ross River Dena members and include Elders in our work.

## Training

Jody Inkster completed a Project Management Professional course as part of her professional development. Billie Maje is completing a Project Management Professional course and the Yukon University Environmental Monitoring program.

## Job Opportunities

Dena Cho is looking for Ross River community members interested in a tree planting program at Faro in June 2021. This program will last three weeks (June 3-18), with four day shifts (1 day off in between shifts). This tree planting work will include training, supervision from Ross River Elders, food, accommodation and transportation. We have posted full job descriptions at the store and Band Office in Ross River. The deadline for applying was April 28, but if you are interested in being involved in revegetation work with Dena Cho, please contact Jody at [jinkster@denacho.ca](mailto:jinkster@denacho.ca).



*Caitlynn Beckett and John Acklack, Sr. checking the fish net at Finlayson Lake during the spring harvest camp in March 2021.*