



# Dena Cho

**Environmental and Remediation Inc.**

A Dena Nezziddi Development Corp. Company

**Dena Cho Environmental Limited Partnership** (Dena Cho) is a 100% Ross River Dena Council owned and operated environmental management company.

Welcome to our newest newsletter! This newsletter focuses on activities from November 2021 to January 2022. Dena Cho is committed to regularly communicating with the community of Ross River, and more importantly, gathering feedback and direction on our projects. With this goal in mind, we aim to provide quarterly newsletter updates to Ross River community members and leadership. We also post our newsletters and other updates on our website:

**[www.denacho.ca](http://www.denacho.ca)**

We encourage feedback on the content of this newsletter as we aim to keep our community informed and engaged. Let us know what you would like to see from Dena Cho! Please contact Cassia Jakesta if you have any questions or concerns ([cjakesta@denacho.ca](mailto:cjakesta@denacho.ca)).



NOV 2021 — JAN 2022

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## Whitehorse Office

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*Some field tools being used at the Faro Mine Site.*

## Our Team

Mary Maje, Elder Support

Ted Charlie, Elder Support

Nora Ladue, Elder Support

Franklin Charlie, Elder Support

Jody Inkster, Biologist/Project Lead

Billie Maje, Field Technician/  
Project Lead

Cassia Jakesta, Biologist/Project  
Lead

Eric John, Field Technician

Danika Maje, Field Technician

Jasmine Tom, Field Technician

Stu Van Bibber, General Manager

Caitlynn Beckett, Researcher/  
Project Lead

## Current Projects

From November 2021 to January 2022, Dena Cho has worked on the following projects:

- ✧ Faro Mine Remediation Projects:
  - Leading the Faro Community-Based Revegetation Strategy with Integral Ecology Group
  - Reviewing and reporting to Kathlene Suza, Dena Nezziddi Development Corporation, the Ross River YESAB office, the Ross River Lands Office and RRDC Leadership on the Faro YESAB process.
  - Coordination of an Environmental Monitoring Program with Golder Associates
- ✧ Ketz River Mine Projects:
  - Coordination of an Environmental Monitoring Program with Hemmera
- ✧ Wolverine Mine Project
  - Coordination of an Environmental Monitoring Program with Environmental Dynamics Inc.
- ✧ North Canal Trail Projects:
  - Telegraph Wire Cleanup—Phase 3
  - Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)
- ✧ Cantung Mine Remediation Project
  - Reviewing and participating in a Cantung Review Committee, reporting to Dena Nezziddi Development Corporation and RRDC Leadership.

## Faro Mine Remediation Projects

**Faro Community-Based Revegetation Work:** Together with the Integral Ecological Group (IEG), we are planning for another tree planting program for June 2022. This year we will be planting 24,000 trees: ts'u (white spruce), gadze (lodgepole pine), and shoba (trembling aspen). In addition to the tree planting program, we are planning for two new revegetation programs this summer: local seed collection and research on contamination and metal uptake in plants at the Faro site. We will be having discussions with Elders and other community members over the coming months to help determine community revegetation priorities at Faro and how tree planting and other research should be shaped by Dena protocols.

**Faro YESAB Review Updates:** The Faro Mine Reclamation Plan is still being reviewed by YESAB (Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board), the organization in Yukon responsible for assessing projects before they start, including protecting and promoting the well-being of First Nations and guaranteeing the use of First Nations' knowledge and experience in the assessment process. In the fall of 2021, the Faro YESAB review process moved from the 'Adequacy' stage to the 'Screening' stage: <https://www.yesab.ca/the-assessment-process/how-does-yukons-assessment-process-work>. YESAB has been hosting workshops every few months to help them 'scope' aspects of the Faro Project that they will review in depth and how they will evaluate the Project Proposal. Dena Cho attended these workshops in October and December, 2021. There is another upcoming in March, 2022.



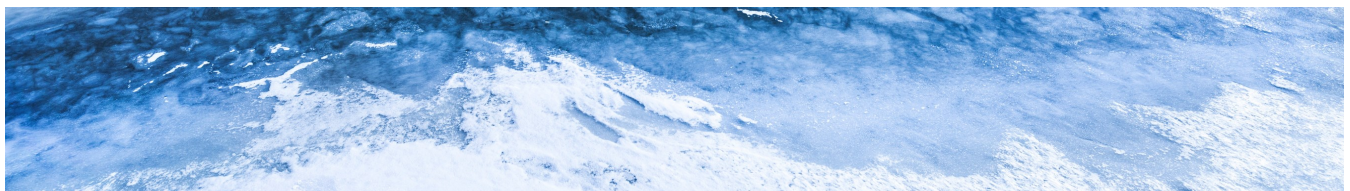
*A lowflow peristaltic pump used to collect a groundwater sample at Faro.*

If you are interested, you can view all Information Requests/Answers and the YESAB Scoping Documents for Faro here: <https://www.yesabregistry.ca/projects/39ca43c0-bd52-4dcd-90c7-37d55a305ebd>. For more information on the YESAB process, check out their website: <https://www.yesab.ca/faro-remediation>. As always, feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

**Faro Mine Environmental Monitoring:** Dena Cho assisted Golder during the surface water monitoring programs in November, December, and January. Additional work in January included collecting in-situ parameters at four overwintering ponds. Currently, Cassia Jakesta is the lead on this project on behalf of Dena Cho with the support of Golder and Dena Cho field technicians (Eric John and Danika Maje) and independent contractor,

## Ketza River Mine Project

**Ketza Environmental Monitoring:** Dena Cho has collaborated with Hemmera in the environmental monitoring program at Ketza since April 2020 and will continue until March 2023. Water samples are collected from streams and water bodies in and around the mine site. Samples also include a collection from the tailings pond and from the treated water. Dena Cho was on-site with Hemmera in November but was unable to participate in December and January. Currently, Dena Cho and Hemmera are working to design a training session for our staff and including the RRDC Land Guardians.





*Billie Maje collecting a water sample at the Wolverine Mine.*

## Wolverine Mine Environmental Monitoring

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

Billie Maje leads this project with the support of other community members. Lead contractor Environmental Dynamics Inc. continues to lead the program, with support from Dena Cho. It is Dena Cho's job to make sure that the water collected is done properly and is done by Ross River Dena members.

This fall, Dena Cho hopes to undertake a trail clearing and brushing program to make it safer for all of our staff.



## North Canol Projects

**North Canol Wire Cleanup- Phase 3:** In summers 2020 and 2021, Dena Cho worked with Hemmera to clean up the remaining telegraph wire along the North Canol, between Ross River and km 232 (to the NWT border). Our team, including Ted and Franklin Charlie, surveyed and removed telegraph wire, as well as historic garbage and waste associated with the construction and use of the North Canol Trail. This summer, Dena Cho will clean up any remaining wire and waste, as well as complete the cleanup of wire along the South Canol from Ross River to the border of the Teslin Tlingit Council Traditional Territory. After this, we will have completely cleaned up and remediated all wire and most waste along the Canol Trail in Kaska territory.

**Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment:** Dena Cho is working on a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), in coordination with Stantec, along the North Canol Road from Ross River to the NWT border. The purpose of this ESA is to locate and record any potentially contaminated sites (for example, areas on the road where oil spills have happened or contaminated areas where truck shops were located) along the North Canol Trail. This work includes archival and aerial photography research to identify potentially contaminated areas; interviews with Ross River community members to help identify sites of concern; and summer 2022 fieldwork to 'site truth' our desk research and characterize the sites that require cleanup. Our findings will be presented to RRDC leadership at the end of 2022.

Dena Cho has completed 11 community interviews to help understand where possible contaminated sites can be. Also, Dena Cho has reviewed over 300 aerial photos spanning from the 1940s to the present. Together with Stantec, we are currently planning the field component of the project for July 2022.

## Elder's Quote

**“There is a lot of healing that needs to happen at Faro. Plants are already doing this work, but it is hard because they can become contaminated. We need to work as hard as them and see this as a relationship. We need to treat the plants as relatives. They are part of what we breathe, a part of us—every plant that goes in the ground is a relationship.”**

## Hiring Opportunities

Dena Cho will be hiring for the following positions in the coming months:

- One wildlife monitor for the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment work in July 2022. A monitor will require a current standard first aid certificate and a Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) to carry a firearm. More information will be posted once we start hiring for this short-term position.
- Two trail clearing staff for the Wolverine Mine project that will occur in May 2022. This job will require the use of brush cutters, chainsaws and off-road vehicles to clear and maintain trails in and around Wolverine Mine.
- In April or May 2022, Dena Cho will begin hiring 10 tree planters for the tree planting program at the Faro Mine Site. The program will occur from June 15th to 30th. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months on how to apply.

Rose Creek discharge measurements being collected at the Faro Mine site.

