The reclamation and rematriation of *Tsē Zūl*: the *Tū Łídlīni Dena*'s story of the Faro Mine

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elders[1]

Brittany Tuffs

Caitlynn Beckett

Tū Łídlīni

Tū Łídlīni Dena Lands Department

Memorial University, Canada

Abstract

Tū Łídlīni (Ross River) is a *Kaska Dena* village nestled at the confluence of the Ross and Pelly Rivers, in so-called Yukon, Canada. 70 km north of *Tū Łídlīni*, the lead-zinc Faro Mine was developed illegally on unceded *Kaska* traditional territory in 1969, in the region known as *Tsē Zūl*. Over the following three decades, *Kaska* peoples' objections to mining and their claims to land rights were ignored by several different mine owners and *kuskāni* (settler) governments. Despite this, *Tū Łídlīni Kaska* resisted the dispossession of their territory, questioned the contamination of their lands, fought for economic opportunities, and continued to steward the *Tsē Zūl* region. This collaboratively written article, based on a community research report, is rooted in *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elders' stories of the injustices and resistance associated with the Faro Mine. These stories form a roadmap for a reclamation project that could and should include actions grounded in compensation, rematriation, and healing – a reclamation that moves beyond colonial, Western-science based solutions towards *Kaska Dena* visions for the future of *Tsē Zūl*.

Key words: Mine reclamation, remediation, mining history, Faro Mine, Indigenous rights, *Kaska Dena*

Résumé

Tū Łídlīni (rivière Ross) est un village *Kaska Dena* situé au confluent des rivières Ross et Pelly. À 70 km au nord de *Tū Łídlīni*, la mine de plomb-zinc Faro a été développée illégalement sur le territoire traditionnel non cédé des *Kaskas* en 1969, dans la région connue sous le nom de *Tsē Zūl*. Au cours des trois décennies suivantes, les objections des peuples *Kaska* à l'exploitation minière et leurs revendications en matière de droits fonciers ont été ignorées par de nombreux propriétaires de mines différentes et par les gouvernements *kuskāni* (coloniales). Malgré cela, les *Tū Łídlīni Kaska* ont résisté à la dépossession de leur territoire, ont remis en question la contamination de leurs terres, se sont battus pour des opportunités économiques et ont continué à prendre soin de la région *Tsē Zūl*. Écrit en collaboration avec des aînés, ce texte est basé sur un rapport de recherche communautaire. Il est ancré dans les histoires partagées par des membres du conseil *Dena* de la rivière Ross au sujet des injustices et de la résistance associées à la mine de Faro. Ces histoires constituent une feuille de route

---

[1] *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elders. Brittany Tuffs, MA, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Lands Department. Caitlynn Beckett, PhD Candidate, Memorial University and Owner/Researcher, Red Rose Consulting: Community-Based Research. Email: beckett.caitlynn@gmail.com (ORCID: 0000-0002-6003-7265). Brittany Tuffs is a Ross River *Dena* Council Member and independent researcher. Caitlynn Beckett is a settler researcher working for Ross River *Dena* Council (RRDC) and the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Lands Department. Research was completed as a part of her PhD agreement with RRDC and funded through a NSEC Canada grant, 'Towards Environmentally Responsible Resource Extraction Network (NSERC-TERRE-NET), and a 5-year initiative on community consultation and consent supported by the BHP Foundation, implemented by Landesa, RESOLVE, Conservation International and the University of Queensland. All quotes used were reviewed and approved by *Kaska* Elder prticipants. When we use the term 'we' or 'our' throughout this article, it reflects *Kaska* Elders and community members voices – not that of the authors specifically. In Sarah Holcombe, Arn Keeling & Rebecca Hall (eds.). 2025. Special Section on "Self-determination in mine closure and mine site transition across nations." *Journal of Political Ecology*, 32.

pour un projet de réclamation qui pourrait et devrait inclure des actions fondées sur l'indemnisation, le ramatriment et la guérison – une réclamation qui va au-delà des solutions coloniales basées sur la science occidentale pour s'orienter vers des visions *Kaska Dena* pour l'avenir du *Tsē Zūl.*

Mots clés: Réclamation des mines, remédiation des mines, exploitation minière, histoire de l'exploitation minière et droits autochtones

Resumen

Tū Łídlīni (Río Ross) es un pueblo de *Kaska Dena* ubicado en la confluencia de los ríos Ross y Pelly. A 70 km al norte de *Tū Łídlīni*, en 1969 se desarrolló ilegalmente la Mina Faro de plomo y zinc en el territorio tradicional no cedido de *Kaska*, en la región conocida como *Tsē Zūl*. Durante las siguientes tres décadas, las objeciones del pueblo *Kaska* a la minería y sus reclamos sobre derechos sobre la tierra fueron ignorados por varios propietarios de minas y gobiernos (colonos) *kuskāni*. A pesar de esto, *Tū Łídlīni Kaska* resistió el despojo de su territorio, cuestionó la contaminación de sus tierras, luchó por oportunidades económicas y continuó administrando la región de *Tsē Zūl*. Este artículo escrito en colaboración, basado en un informe de investigación de la comunidad, está arraigado en las historias de los miembros del Consejo *Dena* del Río Ross sobre las injusticias y la resistencia asociadas con la Mina Faro. Estas historias forman una hoja de ruta para un proyecto de recuperación que podría y debería incluir acciones basadas en la compensación, la rematriación y la curación – una recuperación que vaya más allá de las soluciones coloniales basadas en la ciencia occidental hacia las visiones de *Kaska Dena* para el futuro de *Tsē Zūl.*

Palabras clave: Recuperación de mina, remediación de mina, minería, historia de la minería y derechos indígenas

1. Introduction

> Now no one goes there. The mine tore up half the mountain now. People from that country try other areas, could not find anything as good. After that, just like people get lost, don't know where to go. They tried back in there, up that way. Not as good as down there no more. So, people don't get good living like long time ago" (Elder Arthur John, in Weinstein, 1992, p. i).

This is the *Tū Łídlīni Dena*'s story of the Faro Mine. *Tū Łídlīni* is a *Kaska Dena* village (also called Ross River) nestled at the confluence of the Ross and Pelly Rivers, in the southeast portion of so-called Yukon, Canada (Figure 1 & 2) (Volfová, 2022).[2] Some 70km north of *Tū Łídlīni*, in the region known as *Tsē Zūl*, the lead-zinc Faro Mine was developed illegally on unceded *Kaska* traditional territory in 1969 (Figure 3).[3] In the *kuskāni* (settler) stories of the discovery and development of the Faro deposit, there are few mentions of *Tū Łídlīni Dena* community members, our opposition to mining, or our experiences of violence and injustice associated with the Mine.[4] Kuskāni histories also fail to mention that the Faro Mine and townsite were developed on unceded *Dena Kēyeh* (our land). In other words, the Faro Mine was developed without consent or treaty negotiation, despite the Canadian Government's legal commitments to treaty-making with Indigenous Nations (Ross River Dena Council vs. Canada, 2017; Walsh, 2019).[5] For the *Tū Łídlīni Dena*, the heroic

[2] We use the term 'so-called' to bring attention to the fact that the Yukon is a colonial boundary and jurisdiction, where territorial authority is disputed and incomplete. See Volfová (2022) for an analysis of the politics of naming in the Yukon and on *Kaska* territory.

[3] *Kaska* territory is unceded because the *Kaska* Nations have not signed treaties or land claims with the Canadian Government. In other words, they have not ceded any of their lands in exchange for jurisdictional recognition, funding, services etc.

[4] *Kuskāni* is the *Dena k'eh* (*Kaska Dena)* word for a settler or non-Indigenous person.

[5] The Royal Proclamation (1763) and the British North America Act (1867) established that no land belonging to an Indigenous Nation was to be allocated to newcomers without having been ceded or purchased, and without having signed a treaty. Although treaties were signed across southern Canada until the early 1900s, in the North, the federal government avoided demands from Indigenous Nations for treaty negotiations, preferring instead to attempt to violently assert their sovereignty from afar, denying Indigenous sovereignty. In the Yukon, this approach was directly connected to the Crown's interest in assuming and maintaining mineral rights (Coates and Morrison, 2005; Jones, 2019; Klein 2021).

kuskāni narratives of the discovery and wealth at Faro, told time and time again, have nothing to do with development or success, but rather, are centered around the theft and contamination of our land, marginalization from decision making, and broken promises.[6]

Figure 1: The Yukon in the context of Canada and North America. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025

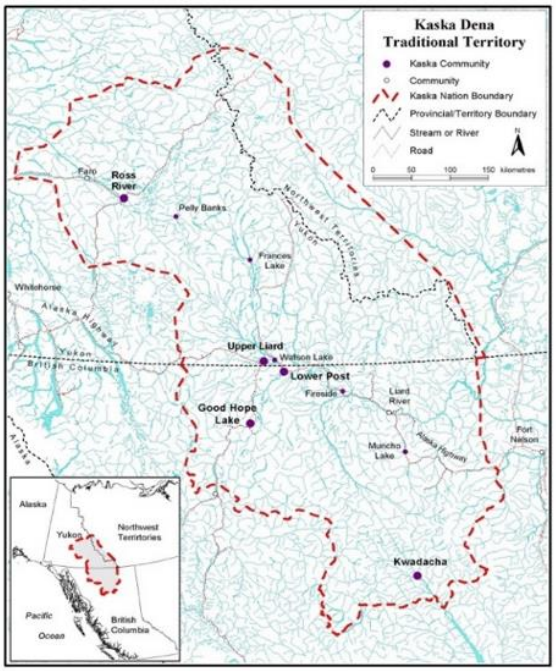

Figure 2: *Kaska Dena* Traditional Territory, crossing the borders of British Columbia, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. *Kaska Dena* Council, 2024

[6] Across Canada, there are numerous examples of colonial land theft via extraction and state regulation of extraction, illuminating the capitalist-colonial foundations of extraction (Hoogeveen, 2015; Beckett, 2020; Sandlos & Keeling, 2021; Leddy, 2022; Hall & Ascough, 2023).

Figure 3: Major abandoned mines in Yukon, Canada. The village of *Tū Łídlīni* (Ross River) is marked with a red star. Yukon Government, Type II Mine Site.

The Faro Mine was abandoned in 1999, and twenty-four years later, the Canadian Government has yet to begin full remediation of the site.[7] As remediation moves forward, telling the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* story of the Faro Mine is a pivotally important part of holding the Canadian Government accountable for the environmental and cultural harms associated with Faro. Our community has been asking for accountability for decades. Therefore, in this article, we center *Kaska* strategies for resistance and reclamation of *Kaska* lands, through which justice can be achieved (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Smith, 2012; Simpson, 2017; de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018).

The key objectives of this article – namely, to tell the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* story of Faro and to begin charting a reclamation path based in Kaska knowledge – were identified by *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elders as fundamental for healing *Tsē Zūl* (Beckett & Tuffs, 2019). Research priorities were determined collectively with Ross River Dena Council (RRDC), Elders and researchers, and were documented in a 2019 Research Agreement between RRDC and Caitlynn Beckett (Memorial University). Elders asked for research that would bring together historic community documentation with archival records and contemporary community interviews to create a public platform for their story of the Faro Mine: this story can then help to direct remediation and plan for perpetual care at Faro.[8] Following this guidance, between 2019-2023, co-authors Caitlynn Beckett and Brittany Tuffs completed archival research, interviews and community meetings in collaboration with the *Tū Łídlīni* Lands Department.[9] Interviews with *Kaska* Elders were used to direct archival analysis of regulatory, media, and industry records – pointing to specific ways that *Kaska* were included in, excluded from, or resistant to, mine operations and environmental regulation (Leddy, 2022). The results of this work were collaboratively reviewed and edited by *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elders and leadership (Tū Łídlīni Dena Elders *et al*., 2024).

[7] The federally managed Faro Mine Remediation Project does not yet have the appropriate permits in place to move forward with full remediation. However, they have completed some remedial works as 'emergency acts,' including installing additional water treatment and seepage collection (Faro Mine Remediation Project, 2021).

[8] The Faro Mine will require water treatment and monitoring in perpetuity, i.e. it is a 'perpetual care' site.

[9] 40 interviews were completed with 42 people.

Focusing on specific *Tū Łídlīni Dena* experiences with settler regulatory processes imposed on *Tsē Zūl* – including claim staking, land permitting, water regulation, infrastructure construction, and government services – this article identifies key moments and mechanisms of land, water, and cultural *theft*. We use the term 'theft,' instead of dispossession because this word points directly to the responsibility that corporations and governments had in the strategic targeting of Indigenous peoples' relationship to land (Harvey, 2005). Haudenosaunee author Alicia Elliot describes theft as the basis of colonialism and capitalism: "Under colonialism everything is subject to extractivism – words, language, resources, children… then after all of this extraction, the nation-state has the audacity to tell us we should be glad, that the theft was for our own good." (2020) Our archival findings, interwoven with Elders' memories and analysis, detail how land and cultural theft at Faro was facilitated through *kuskāni* bureaucracy, infrastructure and media. This approach follows Pasternak and King's call for an understanding, detailing, and dismantling of 'infrastructures of theft' – the structures that are created and used to 'legally' (in a Western sense) steal Indigenous land (Pasternak and King, 2019; Pasternak *et al*., 2023).

Tū Łídlīni Dena leaders and Elders have never stopped fighting for our voices and our people – and resisting the impacts of the Faro Mine. The *Tū Łídlīni Dena* story of the Faro Mine is one of intergenerational community trauma, resistance, and resilience. Alongside our detailing the political ecology of the mechanisms used to steal land, water, wealth and culture via the mining of *Tsē Zūl*, we also point to the resistance that has always existed alongside, and in spite of, extractive theft on *Kaska Dena* land. We outline the various strategies that *Tū Łídlīni Dena* have used to resist mining, racism, and economic marginalization in the past and the contemporary articulations of compensation and reclamation that *Tū Łídlīni Dena* are fighting for. This community-based work is grounded in *Tū Łídlīni Dena's* resurgence and sovereignty, outside *kuskāni* government processes. As such, we begin the article with a grounding in place and community before introducing the story of the Faro Mine, and we end it with *Tū Łídlīni Dena* visions for the future of *Tsē Zūl*.

2. *Dena Kēyeh* (Our Land): *Tū Łídlīni Dena* worldview

Kaska Dena Elders always place great importance on *Dena Kēyeh* and its inhabitants, including animals, plants, waters and people. *Kaska* understandings of *Dena Kēyeh* can be found amongst *Kaska* people's stories, traditions, and histories, which are key to understanding the endurance and strength of the *Kaska* people. Teaching younger generations about those stories, traditions, and experiences is vital to the survival of *Kaska* ways of living. Responsibilities and obligations to *Dena Kēyeh* and its inhabitants are passed down from generation to generation within those stories and traditions. These stories and traditions represent a shared understanding of how *Kaska* people relate to *Dena Keyah*. On-the-land gatherings and visiting amongst each other are important for communication, respect, conservation, decision-making, celebration, and reciprocal relationships.

Kaska legal concepts such as *á'ī, á'nenzen* and *dene k'éh gū s'ān* (codes of conduct, respect, and governance) are often depicted in stories, traditions, and experiences. Everyone and everything deserve respect, in thought and in action. One should not be disrespectful towards any animate or inanimate beings because they are a part of us. The animals we hunt and eat should be respected. The plants we gather and use should be respected. The trees we use for our houses and traps should be respected. The lakes and rivers we drink and catch fish from should be respected. The *Kaska* people have always had a sustainable and stewardship-oriented view of *Dena Kēyeh*. This view is that *Dena Kēyeh* is alive, and it is our responsibility to care for it and its inhabitants (Ross River *Dena* Traditional Knowledge Team, 2014; Stavely, 2018; Tuffs, 2023).

3. Grounded in place: Blind Creek and *Tsē Zūl* before the Faro Mine

The territory of the *Kaska Dena* Nation spreads across so-called northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories in Canada:

> Our country is big…Before the settlers came here, our *Dena* tracks were all over the place, you know… It's a land of mountain ranges and interconnected river systems. Wide river valleys are criss-crossed by trails deeply beaten down by the annual trek of caribou, moose, and wolves; the bones of this vast country carved by millennia of movement (Barichello & Charlie, 2022).

The Ross River *Dena* Council (RRDC) represents the northern third of the *Kaska* Nation, in the eastern part of the Yukon. RRDC and its members are centered in *Tū Łídlīni* (Ross River), at the junction of the Ross and Pelly Rivers (Figure 1).[10] Located 70 km north of *Tū Łídlīni*, downstream along the Pelly River, the *Tsē Zūl* (Faro) region is defined by three mountains: *Dzeł Jedé*, *Kesba Tsel*, and *Tsē Zūl*. These mountains overlook the Rose Creek and Blind Creek valleys. The Faro Mine is nestled in the Rose Creek valley, between *K'esba Tsel* and *Tsē Zūl* (Figure 4).[11]

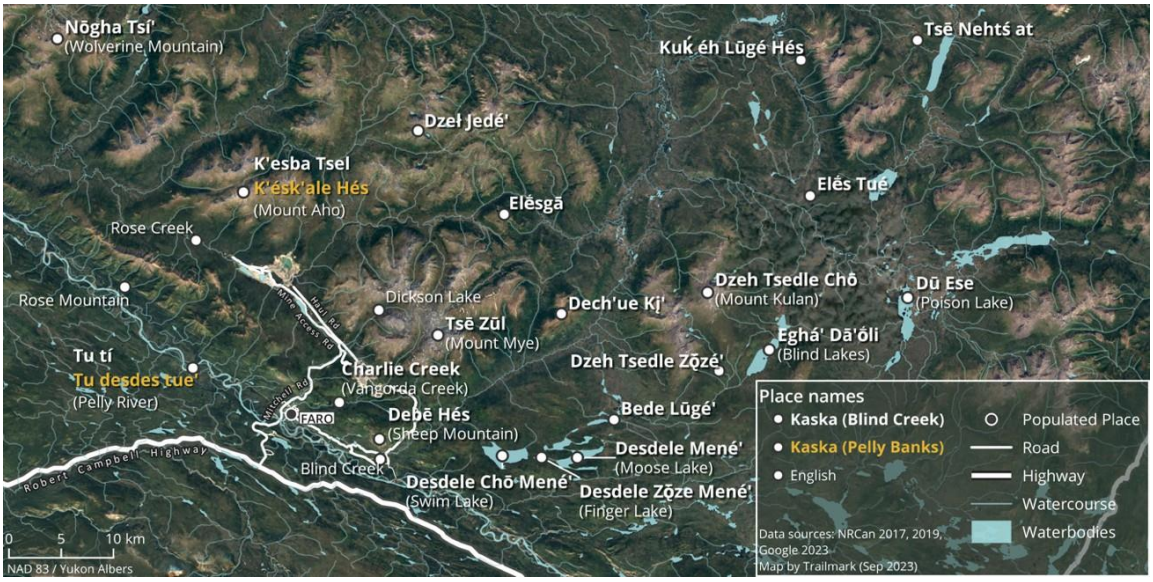

Figure 4: The Tsē Zūl region, with *Kaska* place names, including the Blind Creek and Pelly Banks dialects of *Kaska* (Frances Etzel, William Atkinson, and Pat Moore, n.d.). Map created by Trailmark (September 2023)

The *Tsē Zūl* region is a gathering place, a supermarket, and a resting place of *Kaska* ancestors (Elder Jack Caesar, RRDC Report on Faro, 2015). Historically, after early summer gatherings at *Tū Łídlīni*, the families who stewarded the *Tsē Zūl* region rafted down the Pelly River to Blind Creek and other fish camp locations (Figure 4). Blind Creek, named after *Das Ēti* (Blind Fred), was a particularly important gathering spot, where fish traps

[10] RRDC was established in 1966 under the *Indian Act* and is the governing body (recognized by the Canadian state) of the *Tū Łídlīni* (or Ross River) *Dena*, representing the *Kaska Dena* who live in and around *Tū Łídlīni*. In this article, we use the name *Tū Łídlīni Dena* to refer to the *Kaska Dena* who steward this northern portion of *Kaska* territory and are members of the Ross River *Dena* Council.

[11] According to Elder Arthur John, the name *Tsē Zūl* means 'hollow rock' – this mountain was renamed Mount Mye and is located southeast of the Faro pit, just beyond the Vangorda mine area. Dzeł Jedé means "old" or 'rotting' mountain – this is the mountain that was mined out by the Faro operations and it does not have a *kuskāni* name. K'ésk'ale Hés (Mount Aho) is the mountain immediately northwest of the Faro pit and means Ptarmigan mountain in English. Dzeh Tsedle Chō (Mount Kulan) is southeast of the Faro/Vangorda pits and means little or lonely mountain in English (Ross River *Dena* Council, n.d.).

were set to catch Chinook salmon swimming up one of the longest salmon migrations in the world.[12] Blind Creek was also an entry point to the bounty of the mountains and lakes to the northeast.

Elder John Atkinson

> It's just like our store... that's where we get everything. Right down to the berries, right down to the sweets. Moose, sheep, beaver, salmon... right there… used to be a lot of people drying salmon during the salmon run. And then sheep come out right there and you can have sheep, moose, caribou up in the mountains, groundhog, you know… And then you go back up to the lakes, 15-mile Lake, Swim Lakes, Orchie, Tay Lakes, that's where we used to go when it's winter… and when it's springtime, they come down with a raft all the way back through the cycle (John Atkinson, October, 2021).

Kaska trails still line the base of *Tsē Zūl* and surrounding mountains, connecting communities across generations: "The trail up the Mountain from Blind Creek was worn deep from generations of use by the families who harvest in that area" (Arthur John in Weinstein, 1992, p. 61).

Referencing Elders' memories of *Tsē Zūl*, RRDC Councillor Robby Dick emphasized the sacred nature of the *Kaska Dena* relationship with *Tsē Zūl*: "this place has a spirit" (Robbie Dick, 2019). The Faro Mine disrupted this intergenerational relationship of reciprocity, and the consequences continue to haunt our community (Ross River Elder 3, 2019; Minnie Besner, 2021; Ross River Elder 2, 2021; Clifford McLeod, 2021).

Elder Louie Tommy

> There used to be a lot of game up where the mine is... it was good harvesting. Now we'll be lucky if we see one little sheep there (October 2021).

4. Mineral staking around *Tsē Zūl* and *Tū Łídlīni*: the root of theft

Mineral staking in *Dena Kēyeh* was (and continues to be) connected to broader processes of Canadian state-led Northern development aimed at securing land for profit and crown sovereignty (Cameron, 2015; Boutet, 2024). Free-entry mineral staking, more specifically, enables anyone registered as a prospector to 'stake' a claim to a portion of land and hold exclusive 'rights' to mine that land. Under the Yukon *Quartz Mining Act*, this right precedes almost all other types of land 'rights', including Indigenous rights (Hoogeveen, 2015; Boirin-Fargues & Thériault, 2024).[13] According to Grady Sterriah, daughter of *Dena* Cho (Jack Sterriah), while the history of *Tsē Zūl* and the *Dena* families who lived there reaches back through generations, the story of the Faro Mine begins at staking.

Prior to military road construction in the 1940s and mineral prospecting throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the *Tsē Zūl* region had not experienced any western, settler-state development. Some minor gold panning took place in the region alongside the Cariboo (1861-1867) and Klondike (1897-1899) gold rushes, but *Tū Łídlīni Dena* relationships with *Dena Kēyeh* remained largely intact and unthreatened. When road building and mineral prospecting began in earnest in the 1940s, the only Western commercial facilities in the region were trading posts (Weinstein, 1992; Honigmann, 1947). Despite interactions with settlers through trading posts and some

[12] Elder Dennis Shorty recounted the story of his uncle, *Das Ēti* (Blind Fred), and the Creek being named after Blind Fred, personal communication while reviewing the Community Report, Feb. 22, 2023 (Ross River *Dena* Council, Tuffs & Beckett, 2024).

[13] Across Canada, mining legislation is based in historic principles of 'terra nullius' and the Doctrine of Discovery, which asserted that land now inhabited or claimed by colonists or corporations was without existing systems of Indigenous sovereignty or governance – ownership was claimed via 'discovery' (Coulthard, 2014; Jones, 2019).

mineral exploration, *Kaska* governance and stewardship systems dominated. Families were matriarchal, based on the Wolf and Crow clan system, and followed seasonal rounds like the *Tsē Zūl* trails described above, selling furs to trade for goods that could not be gathered locally (McDonnell, 1975).

These systems began to shift drastically in the early 1940s, when, with the assistance of *Kaska* hunters such as Arthur John, the American Army surveyed and built the Canol Road and pipeline, connecting militarily strategic oil in the Northwest Territories to the recently constructed Alaska Highway. When the Alaska Highway (1942) and Canol Road (1944) were built, hundreds of soldiers and construction workers flooded into *Dena Kēyeh*. Increased road access to *Kaska* territory introduced more *kuskāni* to the region, many of whom were on the hunt for mineral riches (Bob Sharp, 1977; Cruikshank, 1974; Iceton, 2019).

Amid these ongoing changes, in the early 1950s, Dena Cho and his son Jack Sterriah Jr. noted a mineralized outcropping near Charlie Creek (now called Vangorda Creek, Figure 4) while hunting in the *Tsē Zūl* area (Elder Dennis Shorty, 2019; Elder Grady Sterriah in Beckett & Tuffs, June 2019). In 1953, Joe Ladue, Dena Cho, Jack Ladue Jr., Arthur John, and Robert and Joe Etzel shared this finding with Al Kulan, a *kuskāni* prospector (Gaffin, 2005). Elder Grady Sterriah remembers her family, and other *Kaska* families, assisting Al Kulan and other *kuskāni* prospectors, providing them with food, clothing, and guidance:

> Al Kulan was really poor in those days – he would sleep in the corner of the tent. Mom would patch him up and give him moccasins and everything – he never turned around and looked at us or gave us anything. He built his own house down there – if I knew how to do these things, it would have been my house, I would have done it. You can't trust anybody. Al Kulan teach all the people not to trust. There are so many stories – I could write a book (in Beckett & Tuffs, June 2019).

Although Al Kulan and his business partners, Bert Law and Dr. Aaro Aho, are often credited with the discovery of the deposits that became the Faro Mine, it was *Kaska* families who knew where those minerals were:

> **Caitlynn Beckett**: [An Elder] was telling me that the men, the white men who discovered it...
> **Clifford McLeod**: They never discovered it. It was First Nations who got it, and we get left out again. They never discovered it. You better retract that [laughs]
> **Caitlynn Beckett**: Okay [laughs]! The white men who stole the place...?
> **Clifford McLeod**: That's more like it (July 2019)

After being shown the mineralization found by *Kaska* men, and being fed and clothed by *Kaska* women, Kulan hammered several stakes into the ground, naming the claim after Del Vangorda, a local *kuskāni* trapper. Kulan and his partners recorded these claims under their own names, leaving out the names of the *Kaska* who originally found the ore body and shattering promises that *Kaska* people would see big profits.[14]

After a lull in exploration financing, in 1964, Kulan partnered with Dr. Aaro Aho, Gordon Davies, and Ronald Markham to create Dynasty Exploration Ltd. In June 1965, Dynasty staked the Faro claim, which, combined with the Vangorda claim staked by Kulan in 1953, would later become the Faro Mine (Dynasty Explorations Ltd., 1966). The name 'Faro' comes from a gambling game popular during the Klondike gold rush, ironically one that became infamous for cheating and was outlawed. In naming the claim 'Faro', Dynasty attempted to erase the original name of the mountain, *Dzeł Jedé*, while focusing instead on glorifying the Klondike days (Clifford McLeod, July 2019; Ross River Elder 4, Oct 2021). Dynasty crew also strategically

[14] *Dena* Cho and his fellow *Kaska* men, could not stake a mineral claim under Canadian law unless they traveled to Whitehorse and took a course to be a certified prospector. Without this certificate, *Kaska* community members assisted *kuskāni* prospectors based on verbal agreements that claims would be staked on their behalf and that future profits from sales would be shared, or that they would be paid for transferring claims. It is unclear if Kulan and Law simply didn't register claims under these men's names, or if they did and then subsequently purchased the claims for a small fee – both accounts exist (Ross River Elder 5, November 2019; Grady Sterriah in Beckett & Tuffs, 2019; Gaffin, 2005; Sharp, 1976).

obscured the large role that *Tū Łídlīni Dena*, particularly Joe Ladue, played in finding the Faro mineral deposit. As a friend of Joe Ladue's later wrote:

> Joe's trapline, in past years, was located where the Faro pit and the mine are located today. Even today, all around the mine site, this trapline is operated by his sons and friends. On one of his prospecting adventures in this area, Joe discovered a very rich deposit of lead and zinc, and other minerals. The news spread rapidly of the find, setting off a series of events, from claim staking, and exploration, to strong control over the discovery of the deposit laying in the ground beckoning to be mined. From my understanding, there were crafty transactions rapidly taking place in order for ownership to be settled. Joe Ladue received a few dollars and little recognition for his input (Lawson, 1993).

Joe Ladue later died in a tragic car accident with a Faro ore truck. His family continued to use his trapline, despite encroaching mine development (Ross River Elder 4, October 2021).

The Faro claim ushered in a staking spree on *Tū Łídlīni Dena* land, precipitating the largest mineral rush in Yukon history since the Klondike (Aho, 1966 & Sharp, 1976). By the end of the 1960s, almost all the *Tsē Zūl* region was staked without *Tū Łídlīni Dena* consent and without any treaty negotiations.[15] Between 1964-1966 alone, nearly 27,000 claims were staked and over five million dollars of mineral assessment work was recorded across the Yukon. Nearly 60% of these claims were staked in the *Tsē Zūl* region (Strobbe, 1969; Sharp 1977; Dimitrov, 1987). Elders vividly remembered the scramble to claim mineral wealth.

***Tū Łídlīni* Elder 5**

> In the springtime [1965], Easter holidays… I went back [to Ross River, from residential school in Whitehorse]. At that time there were a lot of choppers going back and forth between Ross and Faro because... each day going back and forth and a lot of people were working that time… All kinds of different companies... there was a sort of staking rush I think because of the discovery of Faro (November 2019).

Extensive mineral exploration ensued, including widespread drilling, airborne electromagnetic surveys, and the construction of exploration roads and camps throughout *Tū Łídlīni Dena* territory with no regard for gravesites, traplines, hunting areas, camps or sacred places. Meanwhile, because of the widely publicized staking and exploration spree, Dynasty's stock rose from forty cents to CA$20.00 (US$14-15 today) per share (Aho, 1966; Mackenzie, 1966; Friggens, 1973).

During the early years of exploration, the *Tū Łídlīni* village changed dramatically as industry and *kuskāni* governments forcefully constructed their vision of Ross River as a Northern crossroads for extraction, rather than a generational *Kaska* gathering place. In one of his many media interviews, Dr. Aho recounted:

> Ross River has exploded with development. In 1965 it contained only about 30 people, mostly Indians and a small trading post, with minimal facilities, no schools, no electricity, little or no supplies, no sewer or water… A few short months later, spurred by the heat of the exploration activity, Ross River attained a development area status and boasts a fixed wing and helicopter base... electricity and water, a school, a modern motel and restaurant, several new permanent houses, two new churches, a large and well stocked store, fuel and propane depot, and many other facilities of an organized community (1966, p. 3).

While Aho painted this as a rosy picture of an 'organized' community for Ross River residents, he failed to note that almost all the new businesses in Ross River were owned and operated by *kuskāni* who were new to the area. As one Elder noted, Al Kulan himself built and owned the Ross River bar: "So they [workers] went

there, and he get all his money back from the bar... You know people work for him... and he get all his money back" (*Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 1, July 2019). New services and infrastructure were contingent on mining, and the profits from both exploration and services landed, overwhelming, in *kuskāni* pockets.

Despite, and in resistance to this economic exclusion, some *Kaska* Elders have fond memories of line cutting and surveying work, operating the ferry that crossed the Pelly River near Blind Creek, and running RRDC's cooperative sawmill:

***Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 1**

> We all worked in prospecting – my grandparents – we all told them where all the rock is. Us younger generation worked with Al Kulan, stayed in Vangorda – stayed where the mine is now… where the tailings pond is now was a tent city (in Beckett & Tuffs, June 2019, p. 23.)

***Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 2**

> Ken Garvish… he ran a sawmill… and we wind up living there. My dad, Mac, built his own house there… I didn't even bother coming back to Ross and I had a good time out there, we're tumbling around in sawdust...and then we had sawdust everywhere… some happy things, we do some funny things, we do, and it's all about living in the bush with my parents, it was so awesome (October 2021).

This work allowed many people to earn money while continuing to hunt, trap, and follow their seasonal rounds, with families nearby at Blind Creek (Weinstein, 1992). Elder Louie Tommy remembers using the exploration roads to hunt and travel by dog team: "Just an exploration road, that's all I know of then. I never thought there would be a mine there. Maybe I walked on that mine when I was young. I walked over a million dollars. I sure wish they had never found that mine down there" (October 2021).

While mineral staking and exploration did bring some jobs, those benefits were short-lived and inconsequential in light of the expansive profit made, and destruction wrought, by the Faro Mine. Once claims were staked, *Tū Łídlīni Dena*'s sovereignty began to be eroded by a colonial state seeking to secure land for further extraction. The impacts of these moments of staking – of theft – have radiated through decades. Because of the free-entry staking system, many of the claims staked and exploration roads built in the 1950s have since been maintained and expanded on – mineral companies continue to lay claim to unceded *Tū Łídlīni Dena* territory.

Elder Willie Atkinson

> [When] I was just a young fella about 14 years old, I worked for Al Kulan… and I was out there working doing soil sampling for them. Not knowing I'm, you know, giving my land away... but that's all we had for jobs. Back then there was no jobs, but the mining companies were here, and everybody was working for mining companies, staking... and all the young fellows they got well known for working hard and getting things done… I worked staking claims... just helping them find the ore and stuff and we were paid peanuts... We were staking for 25 bucks a day [US$18 today]... that's working 10-12 hours a day […] We're making people rich, I mean in our own backyard, you know... we kind of regret it now, but back then we really didn't know what was happening and white people were making all the rules (October, 2021).

5. Attempts to steal *Dena Kēyeh*: land, water, wealth, and culture

Once the mineral claims were staked, both the mining companies and *kuskāni* governments worked to characterize *Dena Kēyeh* as an empty, extractable, and sparsely populated place in need of

development. The very literal land theft inherent in claim-staking was translated to paper, permits and prejudice; theft of *Dena Kēyeh* was expanded via territorial land-use permitting, the construction of the town of Faro, the regulated contamination of *Tū* (water), the extraction of wealth from *Dena Kēyeh*, and violence against *Kaska* people.

Land theft: structures of colonial inequality

Riding a wave of promotional media, favorable government policies, and the excitement of the so-called 'Tintina Rush,' in August 1967, Cyprus Anvil, the first owner of the mine, quickly penned an agreement with the federal and territorial governments. The *Anvil Agreement* provided the framework for considerable financial assistance from both the federal and territorial governments. Estimated to total about CA$100 million (US$ 72m today), these subsidies included direct funding for access roads, bridges, and townsite construction and indirect assistance through highway upgrades, water services, power lines and telecommunication (Rea, 1967; Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners, 1968; Macpherson, 1978; Huskey & Southcott, 2016; Hodge *et al*., 2021). The federal government invested heavily in Faro with the explicit understanding that its construction would facilitate further mineral extraction across Northern Canada (Sandlos & Keeling, 2021). In return, Cyprus Anvil was asked to hire local Indigenous people (25% of the workforce) and to complete a feasibility study for a smelter, neither of which came to fruition (Indian Affairs & Northern Development and Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation, 1967).

The signing of the *Anvil Agreement*, without consultation or consent from *Tū Łídlīni Dena*, set in motion the construction of the town of Faro and the transportation, energy, and communications infrastructure necessary to support the Mine. Immediately after the signing of the *Anvil Agreement* in 1967, James Smith, Commissioner of the Yukon, designated the area near Charlie Creek (Vangorda Creek), including the Blind Creek area, as a 'development area' and selected a location, in consultation with Cyprus Anvil, for the construction of accommodation for 1,000-1,500 inhabitants (Office of the Commissioner, Yukon Territory, January 2, 1968). The Yukon Government agreed to provide all municipal services, including surveys, streets, sewers, lighting, water distribution, power, recreational facilities, schools, fire and police stations and health services. Beyond giving Cyprus Anvil land that was not theirs to give, the federal and territorial governments paid the mine company to manage the construction of the townsite. Cyprus Anvil was hired as the "prime contractor for the study and development of the townsite so that the townsite development may be geared directly to the mining development" (Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners, 1967, n.p.) The town plan was finalized by May 1968 and within weeks, telephone poles were erected, surveys were completed, and 230 miles (370 km) of transmission line were strung across the region (Dynasty Explorations Ltd., 1968; Sharp, 1977).

In comparison, 70 kilometres south, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* community members continued to experience the drastic changes introduced by the staking rush in the mid-1960s, but received far fewer dollars, engineers, or urban planners. Services established in Ross River in the 1960s were supposed to be temporary – the Yukon and federal governments asserted that RRDC members and community services would eventually relocate and assimilate into the town of Faro (Sharp, 1977).

On top of this planned obsolescence, infrastructure and services established in Ross River favored the 'white side of town' – the water line was located on the white side of town, roads on the white side of town were graveled and maintained, and the British Columbia curriculum was taught in the new school. In 1966, the Department of Indian Affairs established a Chief and Council reserve system through the Indian Act and restricted the kinds of services that could be offered in the *Kaska Dena* area of the community (McDonnel, 1975; Sharp, 1977). Between 1966-1970, offices for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Department of Territorial Engineering, Yukon Forest Services, and Public Health were constructed and staffed. Land in town was surveyed, parceled, and sold for individual ownership through a title purchase system in Whitehorse, located over 400 kilometers away (Figure 3).

While the territorial government was planning for the *Tū Łídlīni Dena*'s assimilation into the new town of Faro, *Kaska* families already living and working in the Faro region were being pushed away from their ancestral homes as the town and mine encroached on their camps and traplines:

Elder Norman Sterriah

> I was displaced from there when the mine was discovered. And my grandfather... he was a traditional land steward of that area. So, when the mine was operating, my grandpa was displaced from there and we ended up in Lapie Lakes. It wasn't very ideal place compared to what we were experiencing down there… the game wasn't as plentiful as it was around the Blind Creek area. (July 2019).

Not only did the construction of the Faro townsite make *Kaska* families feel uncomfortable and unwanted in their own territories, but it also destroyed sacred places, including gravesites:

Elder Willie Atkinson

> I remember that's where we grew up. There's a fairly big gravesite there. And up by Swim Lakes, people stayed all the way around there. When that mine came... We moved out, they chased all the game away. [The mine company] just started taking over the whole place (October 2021).

According to *Kaska* Elders, the townsite of Faro, in addition to the mine, is central to land theft and environmental injustices that have yet to be rectified: "The town of Faro itself is an impact on us… I think the impacts when we look at it are huge culturally" (Elder Jack Caesar in Beckett & Tuffs, 2019, p. 34).

The Yukon and Canadian Governments gave Anvil unceded land for the development of the mine and the townsite, with no treaty, land claims agreement, or consent. The vast quantity of resources that the federal and territorial governments were willing to put into developing services and housing in support of the mine stood in stark contrast to the resources dedicated to *Tū Łídlīni Dena* in years leading up to the operation of the Faro Mine, and those since. In addition, government services, such as communications networks and health care, were contingent on, and coincided with, the theft and extraction of *Dena Kēyeh*. This relationship is materially reflected when driving south on the Robert Campbell highway. Just past the paved turnoff for Faro, the remainder of the road to Ross River and Watson Lake abruptly transitions to gravel: "And you can see it with the road... it's only paved to Faro. And from Faro to here, it's unpaved yet. And so, there's like, a lot of racism behind it. I think. And a lot of displacement. A lot of people still hurting" (Robbie Dick, November 2019). Paved roads were only built for ore, its extractors, and transporters.

Elder Dennis Shorty

> When the mine started, they forgot about us… My grandpa said, when they destroyed that mountain – he seen it was an open pit, and [he said]: 'it's just like somebody took my heart right out of my body', he said that when he seen that big hole (November 2019).

Water theft: contamination and tailings dam breaches

By the 1970s, Faro Mine had become Yukon's largest industrial project and the largest producer of lead and zinc in Canada. In fact, for years, it was the largest open pit mine in the world. These so-called achievements came at a cost. In this section, we document some of the violence inflicted on *Dena Kēyeh*, focusing specifically on *Tū* (water). Through multiple public water license hearings, land claim negotiations, and environmental regulatory processes, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* community members have made clear connections between water contamination, environmental harm and community harm. The historic environmental injustices inflicted on Tū and *Dena Kēyeh* expand into the present day, as contaminated water in aquifers seeps to the surface.

Cyprus Anvil, the owner of the mine throughout the 1970s, produced about 3 million tons of tailings annually, which they stored in a tailings pond at the bottom of the Rose Creek valley. Before Cyprus Anvil declared bankruptcy in 1982, approximately eight major contamination events occurred, including tailings spills and cyanide leaks (Golder Associates, 1978; Indian and Northern Affairs, 1981; Bailey, 1982). When Curragh Resources purchased the mine in 1985, they added to Cyprus Anvil's legacy of contamination, struggling to control cyanide levels and releasing additional tailings (Flather, January 20, 1989). After Curragh's bankruptcy in 1992 and the sale of the mine to Anvil Range, the long-term impacts of decades worth of tailings accumulation were beginning to surface.

Over three decades of mine operations, as tailings piled up along the banks of Rose Creek, the sulphide particles within began a long process of interaction with oxygen, slowly acidifying the surrounding waters in a process called acid-rock drainage (ARD). As the sulphuric tailings acidified, lead, zinc and other metals precipitated (detached) from tiny kernels of crushed waste rock, resulting in serious toxicity problems for fish and vegetation. Studies completed in the 1970s-1980s found clear evidence of detrimental effects on the conditions of the Rose and Anvil Creek water systems, including high suspended solids, high turbidity, and negative impacts on fish, due to erosion and pH levels (Hoos, 1973; Weagle, 1975; Macpherson, 1979; Yukon Water Board, January 1980). This research also identified acid-rock drainage (ARD) as a key issue to be managed proactively, noting that ARD would be "particularly problematic when the mine is closed" (Hoos, 1973, p. 1; Indian and Northern Affairs, 1974; The Leader-Post, October 23, 1977).

Behind the scenes, the federal government was well aware of the consequences of acid rock drainage and the potential for the need for long-term water collection and treatment. And yet, as spills of contaminated water, cyanide and other chemicals accumulated, mine companies were able to maintain production; they were never required to shut down or complete clean-up work. Government regulators consistently allowed the owners of the Faro Mine to increase production and waste accumulation, resulting in climbing profits (Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation, 1979; Curragh Resources Inc., 1987). Territorial and federal regulators permitted the contamination of *Tū*, and by extension, they violated *Tū Łídlīni Dena* rights to the use and stewardship of *Tū* in the *Tsē Zūl* region.

As detailed in section six below, in the 1970s and early 80s, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* community members began voicing their concerns about water safety and the storage of tailings. In 1982, RRDC Councillor George Smith stated that: "Ross River Indian people have been extremely reluctant to fish anywhere in the Pelly River. We have seen the contamination of water and fish that has occurred on the Grassy Narrows reserve in eastern Canada, and we do not want this experience repeated here" (Yukon Territorial Water Board, March 3-4, 1982, p. 304).[15] Importantly, Elders and leadership directly linked the contamination and theft of Tū to impacts on their Indigenous rights and sovereignty. RRDC argued that federal regulators should not be able to approve the expansion of mining and waste accumulation at Faro while Indigenous rights to land and water were still being negotiated at land claim tables.[16]

Elder Dennis Shorty

> Yep. Just, I remember as a little kid... the land was pristine... *Tsē Zūl* was there, but there was a little airport down there. I remember that. A whole bunch of us, family, eh... We were back there. Now we can't do that. Anywhere, even up Wolverine Lake, just contamination all over (November, 2019).

[15] On Grassy Narrows, see Youdelis *et al*. (2021).

[16] After decades of requests for land claim negotiations from Yukon First Nations, the federal government finally came to the table in 1973 and began negotiations, which lasted intermittingly for over two decades. The *Kaska* Nation, including the *Tū Łídlīni Dena*, was unhappy with the final *Umbrella Final Agreement* (the agreement that provided a template for agreements between Canada and individual Yukon First Nations), and therefore refused to sign, deciding to instead remain unceded (Alcantara, 2013).

***Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 3**

> It's really a place our people used to go for a long, long time... they live down there to hunt and fish and trap and gather. Now you can't do it and because it's such a big mess, and no one knows what kind of chemicals they used over the years. And... how large is the area that's affected by this Faro mine, is it greater than one hundred miles, is it greater than 500 miles [805 km]? (November 2019).

Today, all the acid-generating potential of an entire sulphide mountain is spread out across *Tsē Zūl*, in tailings ponds, ground water aquifers, and tailings dust that blows across the surface of the site. Acidification of *Tū* is projected to become exponentially worse over the coming years if remedial measures are not put in place quickly to limit the rate of acidification (Faro Mine Remediation Project, 2019). The *Tū* flowing through *Tsē Zūl* will need to be collected and treated in perpetuity. In other words, *Kaska Tū* will carry the burden of contamination at Faro for generations to come. The long-term impacts of water contamination are intertwined with the community injustices reflected in Elders' stories of land theft and racism, creating a reservoir of mistrust and pain that cannot be addressed through water treatment alone.

Economic theft: lack of benefit sharing and employment

Linked to the theft of *Dena Kēyeh* and *Tū*, our people did not receive the benefits of consistent and meaningful wage employment or any kind of profit sharing – the companies' racist attitudes created a space where many *Tū Łídlīni Dena* felt uncomfortable, were fired, or quit. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, many people from *Tū Łídlīni* and Blind Creek worked in exploration, including line cutting and soil sampling, and worked on the construction of the town, mine site, and road networks: "We put in all the culverts up to the mine to the town site, every culvert that's there. We put it in, me and my dad, Clifford, and Franklin... Because I remember we used to set traps and snares for game while we were working" (Willie Atkinson, October 2021). However, job opportunities for RRDC members at Faro proved to be fleeting. Many men who got jobs as assistant prospectors were not paid the same amount, even though they were adept at finding mineralized deposits and were experienced line cutters and equipment operators (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984). Even fewer *Kaska* people got jobs once the mine was operational. As the mine ramped up in the 1970s and *kuskāni* families moved in, the few remaining *Kaska* families living in *Tsē Zūl* lost jobs and felt pressured to move.

Elder Minnie Besner

> We've been chased out of there by the Faro people, and you know, we don't have anywhere else... we came up to Ross – we had a house up here with our grandparents – but [Blind Creek] was more where we stayed most of the time and... not very good experience with Faro Mine. I even tried to get a job there and I was turned away from the very place where I was born (October 2021).

Elder Clifford McLeod

> When they get into production, nobody got work at Faro... they picked all the other people from different areas. They never think about Ross River people that could work in there. So, we never get no compensation, nothing, still waiting for it… I don't know how many Elders pass on already, so we can never get benefits from that area when they pass on (October 2021).

Elders' memories of job discrimination are reflected in employment records. The Anvil Agreement stated that once the mine entered the production stage, Cyprus Anvil would make a bonafide effort to: "employ competent local residents, particularly Indians and Eskimos, to the extent of at least 5 percent of the total number of employees within the first year, rising to 10 percent in the second year and 25 percent in the fifth year" (Indian

Affairs & Northern Development & Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation, 1967, p. 4). However, with no legal consequences for breaking this agreement, and with no requirement for the monitoring of these employment goals, the Anvil Agreement did not lead to the successful establishment of an Indigenous workforce at the mine or of any kind of community benefit structure (Koring, November 8, 1975). Throughout the mine and townsite construction period about 500 people were employed, only 15 identified as Indigenous.[17] After construction was finished, this number quickly dropped, and Indigenous employment rarely exceeded one percent, with no consequences for the company (Macpherson, 1977; Anvil Range Mining Corporation, 1994).

Resisting this economic marginalization, in the 1970s and 1980s, RRDC began completing their own socio-economic research (Sharp, 1977; Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984). Interviews conducted in 1983-1984 revealed that, for most *Tū Łídlīni Dena* people, employment at the mine was neither attractive nor realistic alongside community and family commitments. Several *Tū Łídlīni Dena* who had worked on site indicated that they were unsatisfied with the unskilled work. They had little interest in working in the ore mill or other labor positions that exposed them to dust and contaminants. *Tū Łídlīni Dena* also emphasized their discomfort with *kuskāni* mine workers who came to Ross River on days off: "Anvil workers were taking young girls and partying and dumping them out on the highway. Once, someone in the village shot off a 30:30 and scared them Anvil workers" (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984, p. 243-244). Community research found that: "From the standpoint of Ross River residents… the Anvil Agreement was of little relevance" (Sharp, 1977, p.78).

The few *Tū Łídlīni Dena* who did work at the site experienced countless acts of prejudice and instability. In an interview in the 1970s, the personnel manager at Cyprus Anvil stated: "This group [Indigenous people] is the worst of the lot. We have tried to hire them, but they don't work out well" (Miller, 1970, p. 80). Such racism was particularly prevalent in housing. Although the company provided subsidized housing for employees (until the mid-1980s), *Tū Łídlīni Dena* experienced racial prejudice when applying for company housing.

Elder Louie Tommy

> I worked for the mine one time... and I tried to get a house for my family and my boy was two, three years old… I asked the manager of the mine… I wanted a house, cause my family was staying down by the River in tent frames... getting wintertime. So, I asked him. He says, okay, you got to work for a month… before you could apply for a house…I worked there for over a month and a half, and this white person come in... he worked there one week, and he got a house and that's how bad they think about us. So, I turned around after working about a month and a half… and walked over to the office. The project manager there... I tell him, look, I worked for over a month and a half, and I never get a house... and I got a wife and a young boy... they're staying down by the River in tent frames. This guy come here one week, he got a house and everything already. So, I just got mad, I took off my hard hat, threw it on the table, I quit! That's how much they think of me too I guess, so that's why I quit… Never did go back. That's what you call prejudice (October 2021).

If Indigenous families did secure mine housing, mine managers were quick to find reasons to evict them. For example, families were sometimes kicked out of housing for engaging in cultural traditions, such as butchering and curing moose meat (Miller, 1970). In addition to housing and job discrimination on an individual level, mine management framed the entire *Kaska* community as a 'problem' for business: "The growing Indian community at the Pelly River bridge is not generally recognized by the Faro residents. This area and its inhabitants may generate problems for Faro in the future" (Laatsch, 1972, p. 155).

During the decades of mining operations, RRDC repeatedly requested the negotiation of socio-economic agreements and profit-sharing arrangements (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984; Yukon Territorial Water Board, 1984, July 1986). They were continually ignored by government regulators and mining companies, until 1994, when RRDC secured an economic agreement with Anvil Range, two short years before the mine

[17] Employment data from this time did not track whether employees were *Kaska Dena*, only if they were Indigenous.

suspended operations, eventually closing for good in 1999. This economic history of *Kaska* marginalization continues to impact our community today. For example, the company hired to complete Cyprus Anvil's first feasibility study – Parsons-Jurden Corporation, these days known as Parsons – went on to secure the contract to construct the mine and townsite, and countless other contracts at Faro Mine. Today, Parsons holds the care and maintenance contract for the Faro Mine Remediation Project, valued at CA$108 million (US$78m) for two years of work (Crawford, February 19, 2022). Even after the closure of the mine in 1999, large non-*Kaska* companies continue to pocket most of the profits generated by the remediation project.

Elder Norman Sterriah

> Faro Mine. Well, a lot of people got rich from that place. A lot of people got rich, at our expense. Didn't give a shit about us. You can quote me on that (July, 2019).

Cultural theft: Residential schools and forced resettlement

Mineral permitting and prejudiced employment weren't the only tools used to steal *Kaska* Land, water and economic wealth. As mining exploration and profits boomed, the Canadian and Yukon governments were simultaneously using settler colonial tactics to create an illusion of empty, extractable, and carefully controlled places and people – namely, residential schools and community relocation (Piper, 2009; Fraser, 2019; Boutet, 2023).[18] Residential schools and community relocation actively 'made space' for mining and non-Indigenous settlement – both materially removing *Kaska* people from our land, and disrupting intergenerational knowledges and governance systems centered on stewarding and protecting *Dena Kēyeh* (Simpson & Coulthard, 2016; Thomas & Colburn, 2022).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, just as Al Kulan, Dynasty Explorations and Cyprus Anvil were receiving government support for exploration and mine development, the Canadian government was facilitating the construction and expansion of residential schools across the North (Fraser, 2019). New residential schools opened in Lower Post in 1951 and in Whitehorse in 1960. The Chooutla Residential School in Carcross was renovated and expanded in 1953 (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2024). Increased state and church access to *Kaska* communities via the re-opened Canol Road (1962) and the new Robert Campbell Highway (1969) escalated both mineral development and forced enrollment in residential schools (Cruikshank & Sharp, 1977). As the first stakes for the Faro and Vangorda claims were being hammered into the ground and the mine began operations, *Kaska* children were taken in increasing numbers from *Kaska* territories to residential schools in Lower Post, Whitehorse, and Carcross (Figure 1, 3). Many *Tū Łídlīni Dena* families decided to move to Whitehorse or Lower Post to be closer to their children, causing disruption in stewardship practices (Weinstein, 1992). The Chooutla School closed in 1969 – but the schools in Lower Post and Whitehorse remained open until 1975 and 1985 respectively.

In the early 1960s, a few years before the construction of the Faro townsite, the village at *Tū Łídlīni* was forcibly moved by the government from the eastern confluence of the Ross and Pelly Rivers, across to the western bank of the Pelly River (Yukon Indian Peoples, 1973). In this new settlement, the area on the west side of the Canol Road was surveyed and sold to *kuskāni* coming to work in the mineral industry (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984).

[18] Residential schools were institutions set up by the Canadian state and churches. Indigenous children were taken, sometimes forcibly, from their families and sent to residential schools, where they were forbidden to speak their language, were often malnourished or forced to do physical labor, and were educated in Western systems. There was a high rate of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools. More than 150,000 children attended them. The first opened in 1831 and the last one closed in 1997. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concluded that residential schools were "a systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples." The TRC characterized this intent as "cultural genocide." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Elder Minnie Besner

> I remember... there was me and a whole bunch of kids at that time – we came back from [residential] school and we – I don't know what happened, because the families from down at Blind Creek ended up going up here [to Ross River]… when we come up here all the cabins were moved from across [the river], over on this side, all kinds of stuff (October, 2021).

Through a combination of resource roads, residential schools, and relocations, the federal government began exercising increasingly direct control over *Kaska* families and livelihoods. The simultaneous creation of an Indian Act reserve system in Ross River (1966), the forced movement of the village, the removal of children to residential schools and the creation of state police departments in Ross River between the mid-1950s and the 1960s, alongside government funded mineral exploration and road construction, was no small coincidence (Moody *et al*., 2021). When *Tū Łídlīni* Dena Elders speak of the history of the Faro Mine, their stories often return to residential school – they were detached from *Dena Kēyeh* and community because of mining and because of residential school.

Elder Minnie Besner

> I went through all these bad experiences with the 60s scoop and residential school, you know, so we were taken away quite young. When we come back, we hardly know our parents and our grandparents – but one thing I really value was... I had the chance to be with my grandparents [at Blind Creek] when I was young. So, they taught me at an early age of the value... So 'how to be.' And pretty well everything else is taken away... it's a horrendous experience (October 2021).

Elder Willie Atkinson

> When the kids got taken away all my uncles and grandpa's and stuff – they all lost their jobs as teachers, as uncles. [They used to take] the young ones out... teach them how to hunt, how to preserve, how to respect animals and how to take care of meat, dogs, and everything. And the aunties, they were teachers, storytellers. I remember some of our storytellers, man, they were just like watching a movie. They talk *Dene k'éh* [*Dena* language] and everything... it was a whole family. I tell you about maybe 30 people all related... that's how many people lived there [at Blind Creek]. We hunt and travel. After that, everything was gone... all the people didn't know what to do. No kids. The job was gone. And a lot of them turn to alcohol because they missed their kids and stuff.
>
> I wanted to move back for a long term but... that's where I want to be buried [Blind Creek], that's where I grew up, that's where all the good things happen before I got taken away to residential school (October 2021).

6. Resistance against theft: Asserting *Kaska* sovereignty

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elders and leadership were quick to document the connections between violence in our community and the development of the Faro Mine. From the moment of staking, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* people began identifying the impacts of extraction on our community, including racially motivated violence, alcohol and drug abuse, gendered violence, housing and employment discrimination, and environmental contamination. These concerns were first recorded publicly in the seminal 1973 document, "Together Today for Our Children

Tomorrow," (Yukon Indian Peoples, 1973) which demanded self-governance for Yukon First Nations and catalyzed the negotiation of contemporary treaties (land claims) in the Yukon: "Although Indian people helped find the Klondike Gold, none were rich ten years later. With the Dynasty Discovery in 1965 leading to the development of Anvil Mine, the Indian people of Ross River were suddenly faced with large numbers of Whitemen moving in... Now there is a mine with an all-White payroll" (Yukon Indian Peoples, 1973, p.12).

Grounded in this early resistance work, throughout the decades of operations at Faro, RRDC, *Kaska* Elders, and community members employed several different tactics to resist the various forms of theft and violence associated with the Faro Mine. First, multiple community-based reports and research projects were completed between the 1970s and 1990s that outlined the impacts of the Faro Mine on the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* and our demands for change. Secondly, RRDC used colonial regulatory platforms, such as the Yukon Territorial Water Board, to express our concerns – linking demands for environmental protections and socio-economic equity at Faro to the legal negotiations for land claims. Finally, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* actively resisted the harm inflicted by Faro in our everyday life as we participated in protests, continued to steward the *Tsē Zūl* region, and fought for jobs, contracts, and other economic benefits through direct negotiations with mining companies.

Throughout the 1970s Ross River Dena Council produced substantial evidence of the impacts and challenges we were facing due to the Faro Mine (Sharp, 1976, 1977). Community-directed reports outlined the need for local control over resource governance, the lack of work opportunities, and the inequity in resource wealth distribution:

> When the classic question of development is asked, 'Who benefits and who pays', it appears that, in this case, the interests of the mining company have prevailed followed by those of a few established white entrepreneurs and in-migrants. The interests of the Indian people of Ross River were given little consideration (Sharp, 1977, p. 87).

These concerns were repeatedly communicated to local governments and fed into multiple reviews for other Northern extractive projects in the 1970s (Cruikshank & Sharp, 1977). In response to the expanding number of exploration projects, failure to secure economic benefits, and the impending bankruptcy of Cyprus Anvil, in 1984 Ross River *Dena* Council published "So that the Future Will be Ours" (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984). In this report, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elders documented their experiences with extractive industries, road construction, and state sponsored development. Elders provided guidance for land use planning and outlined their expectations for future governance of industrial developments on *Dena Kēyeh*. "So that the Future Will be Ours" included a draft Terms and Conditions for Regional Development Agreement that RRDC hoped would lay the groundwork for co-governance of mineral extraction: "The Band Council wanted not only to express its range of concerns, it wanted legal guarantees for its members that could weather the storms of change" (Dimitrov and Weinstein, 1984, p. 10).

Despite being ignored by mine companies and *kuskāni* governments alike, RRDC continued to produce research and reporting that outlined our community's concerns and demands for mining on *Dena Kēyeh*. In the 1990s RRDC updated and added to work completed in the 1970s and 1980s and framed our concerns within new federal impact assessment regulatory frameworks (Weinstein, 1992). Notably, this research argued that Yukon and Canada's impact assessment and environmental regulation procedures focused mainly on the potential for projects to generate employment and to what extent development would affect existing businesses. RRDC's research argued that the focus on employment and income was not necessarily suitable for Indigenous communities or for regional development: "industrial activity is often seen as the basis on which Indian individuals and Bands can begin to 'pull their own weight in Canadian society," (Weinstein, 1992, p. 3). RRDC and researchers working for them suggested that additional factors, such as traditional hunting and trapping economies, cultural practices, language and the risk of gendered violence needed to be included in impact assessment for Indigenous communities, and for *Tū Łídlīni Dena* more specifically.

Tū Łídlīni Dena leadership and Elders used the community research completed in the 1970s-1990s to regularly intervene in Yukon Territorial Water Board public hearings and impact assessment processes. In resistance to colonial land and water regulations, RRDC often used the Water Board public hearings to voice our concerns and fight for our community's rights, even though the Water Board continually dismissed or undermined our demands. Throughout multiple hearings, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* passionately expressed worries about animals such as moose, fish, and Fannin sheep accessing contaminated water or other waste materials – a concern directly connected to the mine's impacts on food and economic sovereignty (Yukon Territorial Water Board, March 3-4, 1982). In 1982, RRDC Councillor George Smith began his address to the Water Board:

> We believe it is important to outline our historical experience with the mine… Our concern for the wellbeing of the land, its animals, and the water and the fish, is not only based on spiritual and cultural beliefs, but also on economics. Subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping are still the foundation of the Ross River economy… The alienation of these lands from subsistence use has never been compensated for to the Ross River Indian people (Yukon Territorial Water Board, March 3-4, 1982, p. 403).

Smith emphasized that while Cyprus Anvil had made some small attempts to hire *Tū Łídlīni Dena*, the mine destroyed *Dena Kēyeh*, polluted creeks, and rivers, introduced the townsite and provided very few economic benefits to the community in Ross River. Smith did not let the federal and territorial governments avoid responsibility:

> Likewise, through our eyes, the record of Government has been less than desirable. Government has not compensated Ross River Indian people for alienation of their traditional lands; and have not consulted respecting the location of the mine, the townsite, and the tailings ponds, have not adequately monitored and prevented the contamination of Rose Creek, and have not lived up to the terms and conditions of the Section 3, Subsection 2 of the 1967 *Anvil Agreement* respecting employment of Indian people… for all the positive benefits that Cyprus Anvil provides to the Yukon economy, the evidence is very clear, little benefit, if any, has trickled down to the Indian people, and more importantly, this mega-project has reduced our capacity for self-employment in subsistence renewable resource harvesting (Yukon Territorial Water Board, March 3-4, 1982, p. 404).

In hearings in 1982, 1986 and 1987, Smith demanded that the Water Board consider meaningful permit changes that would require mine owners and *kuskāni* governments to mitigate and compensate for negative impacts on the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* people and their water rights (Yukon Territorial Water Board, 1984, July 1986, 1987). *Tū Łídlīni Dena* leadership were not only fighting to protect environment and water quality, but we were also fighting to protect our histories, our families, and the future of *Dena Kēyeh*.

As the mine transferred ownership in 1985 and again in 1993, RRDC continued to use the Water Board public hearings as a platform to assert our rights and to argue that these rights were being circumvented in favour of the companies' right to pollute water while profiting from ore. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, RRDC asked the Water Board to stall water license renewals until land claims with Yukon First Nations, which included negotiations of water rights, were finalized – to little avail. RRDC also asked the Water Board to require that mine companies implement community-directed monitoring programs, install protective layers under tailings pond expansions, commit to full financial securities, and negotiate socio-economic agreements (Yukon Territorial Water Board, July 1986). In 1987, RRDC stated that:

> The Band claims Aboriginal title and rights to this territory and the resources within it... members of the Band have used and continue to use the resources affected by Curragh's proposal and past activities, although the interests of the Band and its members have not been adequately considered to date. The Band is opposed to approval of the application by the Board at this juncture. *The Band says its consent should be sought for mining activity in the area* (Yukon Territory Water Board, March 11-12, 1987, p. 76).

The Water Board never addressed these demands and instead permitted the expansion of Faro Mine, while land claims negotiations were still ongoing. In the 1990s, when Faro underwent an impact assessment for the development of a second deposit, again expanding the footprint of the mine, RRDC Chief Hammond Dick expressed frustration, stating that the Water Board had ignored the Band's concerns time and time again: "When asked what the Council may do if its concerns aren't met, Dick said: 'What can we do?'" (Flather, August 7, 1989, 4). Frustrated with the ways that environmental regulations were used to further dispossess *Kaska* lands and waters, many *Tū Łídlīni Dena* used alternative, on-the-ground forms of protest to express their demands (Figure 5). For example, in 1985 members of the Ladue family cordoned off an area in Faro that their family had traditionally used and planned to build new cabins on – an area that town management had slotted for a future golf course. The town of Faro would not let them construct cabins, and the town manager questioned the legal status of their claim, saying: "they may have historically or traditionally squatted there," but that didn't amount to legal ownership (Wise & Padgham, June 26, 1985). "[I]n defiance of Faro officials," several members of the Ladue family constructed tent frames and cabins. In response, RRDC Councillor George Smith stated: "When the federal government gave the Town of Faro our land we weren't even consulted. The issue of the land in Faro has never been settled" (Wise & Padgham, June 26, 1985). Today, there is a golf course in Faro.

Tū Łídlīni Dena also continually found ways to adapt the infrastructure and services introduced by mining to facilitate resistance, self-determination and traditional practices within a changing economy and community. Members used newly built roads to access and monitor traditional territories and assert their presence in Faro. Most importantly, tele-communication networks facilitated political organizing and connected families across communities (Sharp, 1976, 1977).

In 1999, Anvil Range, the final owners of the Faro Mine, abandoned the site, leaving behind 70 million tons of tailings and 320 million tons of waste rock. In 2003 the Canadian Government took on the liability for the site and began reclamation planning (Faro Mine Remediation Project, 2021). Alongside the acidifying tailings and waste rock, the violence and racism associated with Faro have continued to fester – and the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* have continued to demand justice for the theft of *Tsē Zūl*, arguing that, without a reckoning with the full history of the Faro Mine, *Tsē Zūl* will never heal.

7. *Tū Łídlīni Dena* visions for the future of *Tsē Zūl*: reclamation and rematriation

While fighting for our rights at Faro through various regulatory avenues, we have never stopped stewarding the *Tsē Zūl* region. Visions of the future at *Tsē Zūl* are centered around maintaining and strengthening this stewardship, while reckoning with the truth of Faro and demanding accountability. Reclaiming stewardship structures at *Tsē Zūl* will require access to meaningful reclamation employment and contract opportunities, a share in the profits of reclamation, support for community services, support for community-led environmental monitoring, a focus on the health of wildlife and plants, direct involvement in governance, and compensation for historic theft and injustices. In the eyes of our Elders, justice for the harm inflicted through the Faro Mine is linked to strategies and supports for healing in many forms. More than anything, justice at Faro is about taking back place – reclaiming *Dena Kēyeh* – which, in turn, is a rematriation of community wealth, culture, and language.

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elders identified exclusion from 'bigger picture' economic and public service benefits associated with Faro as a fundamental challenge to overcome. Over the past decade *Tū Łídlīni Dena* have used several strategies to get a 'foot in the door' for employment and contracts at Faro, including the creation of *Dena* Nezziddi and *Dena* Cho Environmental and Remediation Inc. (Sterriah, July 2019; Peter, November 2019).

These are steps forward that should be celebrated and built upon: "There's a 150-man camp up there. That's gonna be owned by Ross River... So that's really good. You know, there's a promise for employment. We're purchasing new equipment" (Dick, August 2019). Elders see these small shifts forward as a window into additional opportunities.

Figure 5: Lydia Glada, Lawrence Tommy, Edith Ladue, and Jim Ladue. In Wise & Padgham, "Native family 'claims' traditional land.' *The Whitehorse Star*, June 26, 1985. Elder Dorothy John's personal collection.

However, despite glimpses of some economic benefits, as the town of Faro 'booms' with remediation opportunities via increased housing values, service sector opportunities, government infrastructure and contracting, the Faro Mine Remediation Project risks perpetuating the inequities of the past if *Tū Łídlīni Dena* continue to see minimal benefits when compared to *kuskāni* communities and businesses (Beckett & Keeling, 2019; Beckett, 2020). As Elder John Atkinson noted: "They took all that away and in return we just got tears, not a cent from Faro Mine, I never got a cent from there… And they still... them down there, they're still getting income from there... And down here nothing" (October 2021).

***Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 4**

> It's pretty sad. I think, you know, somebody should have been writing books that lived here about Faro because it was almost like a different continent altogether. Because you come here [to Ross River] and everybody is like – you don't have the services like Faro had? You know, we still don't. And Faro benefited in a big way. Like they had all kinds of services. And when the mine shut down, and people started moving out, they still kept the services there (October 2021).

To confront inequity and injustice at Faro, Elders argue that mechanisms should be put in place for the community to benefit from reclamation, even if few *Kaska* are interested in working on site. In other words, Elders are asking for socio-economic equity that goes beyond vague commitments to jobs (as seen in the *Anvil Agreement*). For example, community services, such as cultural spaces, language revitalization, addiction services and mental health supports, are essential to mitigate the cumulative and ongoing socio- economic impacts of the Mine.

Elder Clifford McLeod

> They [mining companies] bring a lot of bad stuff here and it stayed... that bad stuff stayed, and it hasn't gone away, it hasn't gone away and there's nobody to put money to social programs. Like if I was... I guess... at least a mining company should have some sort of treatment....in our area… They could provide us the money; we would have our own treatment (October 2021).

Most notably, the kind of community wellness that Elders are fighting for is inextricably connected to the wellbeing of *Dena Kēyeh*. Impacts on wildlife, hunting, and food security are well documented in Ross River *Dena* Council's 1980-1990s reports on Faro (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 1984; Weinstein, 1992). Since closure, trends of overhunting by *kuskāni*, combined with fear of dust and water contamination, have persisted. And yet, Elders argue that the health of *Tsē Zūl*'s wildlife and plants has never been taken seriously by *kuskāni* companies or government regulators. While the mine was operating, and countless times since the closure, Elders and leadership have asked for fencing, hunting regulations, and other animal protections to be put in place. These requests have largely been ignored or delayed. In response, the *Tū Łídlīni* Lands Department has implemented their own hunting permitting system and is focusing on building a Land Guardian program – both of which would focus on monitoring hunting and wildlife health in the *Tsē Zūl* region (Volfová, 2022).

Hunting permitting and Land Guardian programs are tangible strategies for enacting resurgence and sovereignty on the ground. Strategies for resurgence and sovereignty also extend to regulatory interventions and negotiations related to Faro and prospective mines on *Tū Łídlīni Dena* territory. Elders and leadership have continually pointed to *kuskāni* regulatory disregard for our rights: "This is particularly apparent in the mining sector, which operates in a free-entry system. In this outdated frontier approach, where prospectors have unencumbered rights to acquire mineral claims, mineral exploration trumps all other land interests" (Ross River *Dena* Traditional Knowledge Team, June 2014, p. 1). In response to the land theft that is perpetuated through mining regulation, such as the free-entry system, RRDC has set up the *Tū Łídlīni* Assessment Process, an independent impact assessment structure based on *Kaska* knowledge and legal structures: "We are a government too, ourselves, right here. We have been self-governed all our life…. Raised up by our grandparents telling us what to do. So why settle, when we have our own rights through our Elders" (Elder John Acklack, in Beckett & Tuffs, June 2019, p. 39).

Additional strategies for resurgence and sovereignty include compensation negotiations for Faro (and other industrial development on unceded *Kaska* territory), implementing an Indigenous Conserved and Protected Area (IPCA), and negotiating direct collaboration agreements with mining companies currently operating on *Kaska* territory (Ross River *Dena* Traditional Knowledge Team, June 2014; Ross River *Dena* Council v. Canada, 2017; Greene, 2024).These initiatives will bring about justice for the historic harms of Faro and other nonconsensual developments on unceded *Kaska* territory and will protect *Dena Kēyeh* and *Kaska* sovereignty into the future.

***Tū Łídlīni Dena* Elder 5**

> I think compensation should be there. I believe that, you know... it's a big loss for the people in terms of hunting area and trapping. And this loss of all these opportunities that we use to rely on the land there. It's all gone. You know, I think there needs to be some sort of compensation to people that... lived down there and help with their loss..." (November 2019).

Justice for the violence and theft of the Faro Mine cannot be found through job opportunities or environmental monitoring alone. As important as these aspects are, similar promises have been made and broken many times in the past. Justice for the *Tū Łídlīni Dena* means directly confronting the racism, violence, inequality, and theft that are the foundation of the Faro Mine and townsite, while building alternatives foundations for the future of *Dena Kēyeh*.

8. Conclusions: Reclaiming *Dena Kēyeh* and community wealth

Tū Łídlīni Dena land, water, wealth and culture were strategically stolen through the *kuskāni* regulatory infrastructures that promoted and maintained the development of the Faro Mine. Free-entry claim staking, territorial land permitting, road and town construction, assimilative federal services, water regulation, employment and housing discrimination, and residential schools all contributed to the theft of *Tsē Zūl*, manufacturing a landscape that was 'open for extraction' (Harris, 2008; Hoogeveen, 2015; Thomas & Colburn, 2022; Pasternak *et al.*, 2023). Despite the inequity and social erosion of extractive theft, Faro Mine is, more importantly, a story of intergenerational community resistance. Archival evidence and Elder's stories detail the many ways that *Tū Łídlīni Dena* have resisted extraction and continue to govern and steward *Dena Kēyeh* – we have never ceded our territory. As expressed by RRDC in the 1990s: "The area is not abandoned, in the sense of 'to go away from without intending to return.' People have deep ties to place. Monitoring of changes at various sites, which have been left because of intrusion, takes place because people return to try the fishing or berry picking or the hunting, simply because they miss the place" (Weinstein, 1992, p. 81).

Tū Łídlīni Dena visions of reclaiming *Tsē Zūl* go beyond capping tailings and treating contaminated water. Reclamation is also a process of rebuilding respectful and reciprocal relationships with *Dena Kēyeh*; *treating water with respect* encompasses much more than chemical water treatment. Taking back the land that was stolen, and receiving compensation for the violence associated with that theft, are starting points in a long healing journey. Through community efforts to build a Land Guardian program, create an independent assessment process and IPCA, and manage hunting permits, *Tū Łídlīni Dena* are beginning to take-back *Tsē Zūl*.

Elder Norman Sterriah

> I want a repatriation plan – a sovereignty plan – a *rematriation* plan… What is the definition of reclamation anyway?... Well clean it up and give it back, that's what we want – clean it up and then we want it back (in Beckett & Tuffs, June 2019, p. 7).

> The first part is to admit that, you know, that things happened. And we'll talk about the reconciliation later. I don't know if you could ever right something that they did so, so wrong, you know. You're displacing people... my grandfather was responsible to look after that place for future generations. Him and Arthur John and other Elders that were from down there, Joe Ladue... they were responsible to look after that place for future generations. And when they displaced them, it's like pulling you out by your roots... out of the ground... some people died because of displacement. They took that responsibility away from my grandfather, and from me too because after my grandpa passed on, it was my responsibility to look after Faro, Blind Creek. I find that it's my responsibility today. To look after it for my boy, and for my grandchildren. When we go past there, I tell them, look over there, look to the north. That's all you guys'... that's you guys' country over there, you're responsible. You're responsible to look after that" (July 2019).

References

Aho, A. E. (January, 1966). Intensified exploration on Yukon's central plateau. *Western Miner* 39 (1). Yukon Archives PAM 1966-0057.

Alcantara, C. (2013). The Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the *Kaska* Nations in the Yukon Territory. In Alcantara, C. (Ed.). *Negotiating the deal: Comprehensive land claims agreements in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Anvil Range Mining Corporation. (1994). 1994 annual report. Yukon Archives PER 0978.

Atkinson, J. (October 4, 2021). Interview with author(s).

Atkinson, W. (October 6, 2021). Interview with author(s).

Bailey, R. D. Head, Water Resource Division, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (August 11, 1982). Letter to Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives ACC 2005/137, Box 2003-0736, Location 61/1/2b, Vol 23.

Barichello, J. & Charlie, L. (January 5, 2022). We have our footsteps everywhere: the Ross River *Dena*'s fight to protect *Dena Kēyeh*/*Kaska* Country. *Briarpatch*. Retrieved from https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/we-have-our-footsteps-everywhere

Beckett, C. & Keeling, A. (2019). Rethinking remediation: Mine reclamation, environmental justice, and relations of care. *Local Environment* 24 (3), 216-230. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2018.1557127

Beckett, C. (2020). Beyond remediation: Containing, confronting and caring for the Giant Mine Monster. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 4 (4), 1389–1412. https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848620954361

Beckett, C. & Tuffs, B. (June, 2019). Ross River Elder's Council workshop on the Faro Remediation Project. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council.

Besner, M. (October 7, 2021). Interview with author(s).

Boirin-Fargues, Z. & Thériault, S. (2024). The space left for Indigenous peoples' voices in Canadian and Fennoscandian mining legal frameworks: A comparative analysis. T. Rodon, S. Thériault, A. Keeling, S. Bouard, & A. Taylor, *Mining and Indigenous livelihoods*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003406433-8

Boutet, J. S. (2024). *Welfare mines: Extraction and development in postwar Northern Canada*. PhD dissertation, Department of History of Science, Technology and Environment. KTH Royal Institute of Technology. https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn%3Anbn%3Ase%3Akth%3Adiva-346429

Cameron, E. (2015). *Far Off Metal River: Inuit lands, settler stories, and the making of the contemporary Arctic*. UBC Press.

Coates, K. & Morrison, W. (2005). *Land of the midnight sun: A history of the Yukon*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. Minnesota University Press.

Coulthard, G. S., & Simpson, L. B. (2016). Grounded normativity/place-based solidarity. *American Quarterly*, *68*(2), 249-255. https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0038

Crawford, L. (February 19, 2022). Twenty years of mining in Faro, means billions of tax dollars for care and clean-up. *Yukon News*. Retrieved from https://www.yukon-news.com/news/twenty-years-of- mining-in-faro-means-billions-of-tax-dollars-for-care-and-clean-up/

Cruikshank, J. & Sharp, B. (1977). *Yukon case studies: The Alaska Highway and the Anvil Mine development*. Prepared for University of Canada North (Yukon) Research Division, Whitehorse.

Curragh Resources Inc. (1987). Annual report 1986-87. Yukon Archives PER 0981.

Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation. (1979). Cyprus Anvil Annual report 1979. Yukon Archives 658 CAMC AR 1979.

de Leeuw, S. & Hunt, S. (2018). Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass* 12(7), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12376

Dick, R. (December 11, 2019). Interview with authors.

Dimitrov, P. & Weinstein, M. (1984). *So that the future will be ours: Volume 1 and 2*. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council.

Dynasty Explorations Ltd. (1966). Dynasty Explorations Limited: second annual report 1966. C.B. "Bud" Johnson Library at University of Western Ontario.

Dynasty Explorations Ltd. (1969) Annual report 1968. Yukon Government Energy Mines and Resources Library, ARM008942. Retrieved from https://data.geology.gov.yk.ca/Reference/60698#InfoTab

Elliot, A. (2020) *A mind spread out on the ground.* Doubleday Canada.

Etzel, F., Atkinson, W. & Moore, P. (n.d.). *Kaska geographic names*. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council, the Yukon Native Language Centre, and the Yukon Geographical Names Board.

Faro Mine Remediation Project. (2019). 2019 Project Proposal. Submitted to YESAB, YESAB Registry 2019-0149. Retrieved from https://yesabregistry.ca/projects/39ca43c0-bd52-4dcd-90c7- 37d55a305ebd

Faro Mine Remediation Project. (August, 2021). Plain language summary. Submitted to YESAB YESAB Registry 2019-0149-0638.

Fraser, C. (2019). *T'aih k'ìighe' tth'aih zhit dìidìch'ùh (By Strength, We Are Still Here): Indigenous northerners confronting hierarchies of power at day and residential schools in Nanhkak Thak (the Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories), 1959 to 1982.* PhD Dissertation. Department of History. University of Alberta.

Flather, P. (August 7, 1989). Mine's abandonment plan inadequate, chief says. *The Whitehorse Star*, 4.

Friggens, P. (1973). Anvil! The Yukon's fabulous mine. *Readers Digest* 30. Yukon Archives, PAM 1969-0152.

Gaffin, J. (March 2005). Aaro Aho: the mine finder. *The Yukoner Magazine* (29).

Golder Associates (1978). An update study concerning design and construction of tailings retention structures at Cyprus Anvil Mines, Faro, Yukon Territory. Yukon Archives PAM 1978-0461.

Greene, J. (December 10, 2024). First Nation, Yukon and federal gov'ts agree to look into new protected area. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-ross-river-*Dena*-indigenous- protected-area-1.7405780

Hall, R. J., & Ascough, H. (2023). Care through closure: Mine transitions in the mixed economy of the Northwest Territories, Canada. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *30*(10), 1415-1436. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2023.2178392

Harris, C. (2008). How did colonialism dispossess? Comments from an edge of empire. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94 (1), 165-182. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2004.09401009.x

Harvey, D. (2005). *The new imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

Hodge, A., Kunz, N., Hay, S., Carmen, I., Hamely, C., & Batdor, B. (2021) Through a prism of time: Faro retrospective initiative, phase 1 report. Robert M. Buchan Department of Mining Engineering, Queens University.

Honigmann, J. J. (1954). *The Kaska Indians: An ethnographic reconstruction*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology 5.

Hoogeveen, D. (2015). Sub-surface property, free-entry mineral staking and settler colonialism in Canada. *Antipode* 47 (1), 121-138. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12095

Hoos, R.A. (1973). A preliminary assessment of the effects of Anvil Mine on the environmental quality of Rose Creek, Yukon. Yukon Archives PAM 622.611.

Huskey, L. & Southcott, C. 'That's where my money goes:' Resource production and financial flows in the Yukon economy. *Polar Journal* 6(1), 11-129. http://doi.org/10.1080/2154896X.2016.1171002

Iceton, G. (2019). *Defining space: How history shaped and informed notions of* Kaska *land use and occupancy*. PhD dissertation. Department of History. University of Saskatchewan.

Indian and Northern Affairs. (1981). Water Resources – general – industrial Files – Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives ACC 2003/105, Box 02-048, Location 59/16/4c, Vol 15.

Indian Affairs & Northern Development and Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation (August 21, 1967). *Anvil Agreement: Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen and Anvil Mining Corporation Limited*.

Jones, J. (2020). Confronting settler colonialism when assessing the impact of mining on Indigenous peoples' health and well-being. PhD Dissertation, Department of Geography. University of Guelph.

Kaska Dena Council. (n.d.). Map of *Kaska Dena* Traditional Territory. Retrieved from https://*KaskaDena*council.com/our-land/

Klein, R. (2021). *Reviewing and redefining relationships: Intergovernmental relations and modern treaty implementation in Yukon, 1986-2016*. PhD Dissertation, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. University of Saskatchewan.

Koring, P. (November 8, 1975). Buchanan takes new look at our Northern policies. *The Financial Post*.

Laatsch, W. G. (1972). *Yukon mining settlement: An examination of three communities.* PhD dissertation, Department of Geography. University of Alberta.

Leddy, L. C. (2022). *Serpent River resurgence: Confronting uranium mining at Elliot Lake*. University of Toronto Press.

Mackenzie, A. (September 1966). The Anvil Project: Preliminary economic analysis of a mineral development opportunity. Prepared for Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. Yukon Archives, 622.344 Mac 1966-09.

Macpherson, J. (1977). Cyprus Anvil Mine. In *Northern transitions: Northern resource and land use policy study*, (pp. 113-143). Canadian Arctic Resources Committee.

McLeod, C. (July 18, 2019). Interview with author(s). McLeod, C. (October 4, 2021). Interview with author(s).

McDonnell, R. F. (1975). Kasini society: some aspects of the social organization of an Athapaskan culture between 1900-1950. PhD Dissertation. Department of Anthropology. University of British Columbia.

Miller, G. W. (Ottawa, 1971). The economic acculturation of an Indian Band. Prepared for The Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian and Northern Development.

Moody, S., Mason, A., Yukon Status of Women Council, & Moorcroft, L. (2021). *Never until now: Indigenous and racialized women's experiences working in Yukon and Northern British Columbia mine camps*. Prepared for Liard Aboriginal Women's Society. Retrieved from https://iportal.usask.ca/record/106690

National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation (NCTR) Archives (n.d.). Retrieved on June 28, 2024 from https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/northern/carcross-choutla/

Office of the Commissioner, Yukon Territory, Canada. (January 2, 1968). Commissioner's Order 1968-14. Area Development Ordinance. In Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners. (1968). *Anvil townsite Yukon Territory: report no. 2R: townsite location and development*. Prepared for the Territorial Government of the Yukon in Association with Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives, 307 Tho n.2R.

Pasternak, S. & King, H. (2019). *Land Back*: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper. Yellowstone Institute.

Pasternak, S., Cowen, D., Clifford, R., Joseph, T. Scott, D. N., Spice, A., & Stark, H. K. (2023). Infrastructure, jurisdiction, extractivism: Keywords for decolonizing geographies. *Political Geography* 101, 102763. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102763

Rea, K. J. (1976). *The political economy of northern development*. Science Council of Canada. Yukon Archives 338.9 Rea 1976.

Peter, G. (November 16, 2019). Interview with author(s).

Piper, L. (2009). *The industrial transformation of subarctic Canada*. UBC Press.

Ross River *Dena* Council. (2015). Report on Faro.

Ross River *Dena* Council v. Canada (Attorney General). (2017). YKSC 59.

Ross River *Dena* Elders & the Ross River Traditional Knowledge Team. (October 2011). *An inventory of cultural and natural resource values of the Ross River Dena, and a summary of the Dena worldview*. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council.

Ross River *Dena* Council. (n.d.). Ross River place names: Tay River map.

Ross River *Dena* Elders, Tuffs, B. & Beckett, C. (June 2024). The reclamation and rematriation of *Tsē Zūl*: Ross River's true story of the Faro Mine. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council.

Ross River *Dena* Traditional Knowledge Team. (June 2014). *Gu Cho Ka-Ka Dee: our ancestors instructions*. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Elders and the Ross River *Dena* Council.

Sandlos, J. & Keeling, A. (2021). *Mining country: a history of Canada's mines and miners.* James Lorimer & Company Ltd.

Scottie, J., Bernauer, W. & Hicks, J. (2022). *I will live for both of us: A history of colonialism, uranium mining and Inuit resistance.* University of Manitoba Press.

Sharp, B. (May 1976). The impact of the Anvil Mine on Ross River. Presentation to the Berge Commission Hearings. Yukon Archives 307 Sha.

Sharp, B. (June 1977). Changes in Ross River during the Anvil Mine development. In *Yukon case studies: Alaska Highway and Ross River*. Prepared for University of Canada North (Yukon), Research Division, Whitehorse.

Shorty, D. (August 2019). Interview with author(s).

Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done*. University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (Second Edition). Zed Books.

Stavely, G. (2018). The *Kaska Dena*: a study of colonialism, trauma and healing in *Dena* Kēyeh. Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Sterriah, N. (July 16, 2019). Interview with author(s).

Stobbe, L. H. (1969). Who will discover tomorrow's mines in the Yukon? An interview with Dr. Aaro Aho, president of Dynasty Explorations Ltd. *British Columbia Business Journal* 1(4). Yukon Archives, PAM 1969-0152.

The Leader-Post. (October 23, 1977). Cyprus Anvil Mining Corp. has been plagued by problem.

Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners (1967). Anvil townsite proposal. Prepared for the Territorial Government of the Yukon and Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives, 307 Anv 1967.

Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners (1968). Anvil townsite Yukon Territory: report No. 2R: townsite location and development. Prepared for the Territorial Government of the Yukon in Association with Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives, 307 Tho n.2R.

Thomas, D. P. & Colburn, V. (2022). *Capitalism and dispossession: corporate Canada at home and abroad*. Fernwood Publishing.

Tommy, L. (October 4, 2021). Interview with author(s).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. https://nctr.ca/education/teaching-resources/residential-school-history/

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*, 1 (1), 1–40. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630

Tuffs, B. (2023). Kaska *legal understandings of land*. Master's Thesis. Department of Indigenous Studies. University of Saskatchewan,

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elder 1. (July 17, 2019). Interview with author(s).

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elder 2. (October 4, 2021). Interview with author(s).

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elder 3. (November 2019). Interview with author(s).

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elder 4. (October 2021). Interview with author(s).

Tū Łídlīni Dena Elder 5. (November 11, 2019). Interview with author(s).

Walsh, S. (December 16, 2019). Interview with author(s).

Weagle, K. (March 1975). A case study of the Cyprus Anvil Mining Corp. Ltd: tailings pond break. Prepared for Biological Services, Environmental Protection Service, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Yukon Archives PAM 1977-0459.

Weinstein, M. (1992). Just like people get lost: a retrospective assessment of the impacts of the Faro Mine development on the land use of the Ross River Indian People. Prepared for Ross River *Dena* Council.

Wise, D. & Padgham, M. (June 26, 1985). Native family 'claims' traditional land. *The Whitehorse Star*.

Women's Earth Alliance & Native Youth Sexual Health Network. (2016). *Violence on our land, violence on our bodies*. http://landbodydefense.org/home

Volfová, M. (2022). 'Often confused as:' Contestations of colonial place making in the Yukon Territory, Canada. In Niedt, G. (Ed.). *New directions in linguistic geography*. (pp. 167-194). Springer.

Youdelis, M., Townsend, J., Bhattacharyya, J., Moola, F. & Fobister, J. (2021). Decolonial conservation: Establishing Indigenous Protected Areas for future generations in the face of extractive capitalism. *Journal of Political Ecology* 28(1), 990–1022. https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.4716

Yukon Government (1984). Environmental audit: Yukon properties of Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Archives PAM 1984-0314.

Yukon Indian Peoples. (January 1973). Together today for our children tomorrow: A statement on grievances and an approach to settlement by the Yukon Indian People.

Yukon Territorial Water Board. (January 1980). Public hearing for license renewal of Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation. Yukon Water Board Archives Y2L3-2098.

Yukon Territorial Water Board. (March 3-4, 1982). Public hearing on application by Cyprus Anvil Mining Corp. to amend water license. Yukon Water Board Archives Y2L3-2226.

Yukon Territorial Water Board. (July, 1986). Reasons for decision: in the matter of application for amendment of license no. Y-IN85-05AL by Curragh Resources. Yukon Water Board Archives YIN85-05AL.

Yukon Territorial Water Board. (March 11-12, 1987). Public hearing for amendment to license YIN86-05AL. Yukon Water Board Archives YIN85-05AL.