



# LIARD FIRST NATION

MARCH 2026

Within the pages of this Spring 2026 issue, members will discover important updates from all the Liard First Nation Departments. We are excited to share details about their ongoing work, recent achievements, and their plans for the coming months.

We are also delighted to introduce you to the newest members of our leadership team. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our newly appointed Executive Director, **Alan Steel**, Capital Director, **Luke Pastulovic** and Health & Social Director, **Irene Pastulovic**. New workers that bring a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective that will undoubtedly contribute to the continued growth and success of the Liard First Nation.

**LIARD FIRST NATION  
BUSINESS HOURS:  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY: 8:30AM - 4:30 PM  
CLOSED ON HOLIDAYS**



## From the Desk of the Executive Director...

I have been your Executive Director for the past six months now and I am proud to play such an important role with the Chief, his Council, and the staff of the First Nation. It has been a busy six months. A few weeks ago, I was introduced to a member from Upper Liard who said he had not heard of my appointment - So please, if you see me around the community or at meetings, say "Hello".

Through a great deal of effort by all, we are now in our new Administration Building located at 113 Robert Campbell Highway, just behind Tags. There are still some improvements to be made but we are pleased to be under one roof. An Open House is being planned once we are settled in.

Community Meetings have been held recently on having a Constitution for the First Nation. Voting will be carried out electronically from March 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>. In person voting will also be available in our Administration Building from 8:30am to 4:30pm on the same dates. For those who are unable to leave their homes, arrangements can be made for an independent person to come to you, allowing everyone the opportunity to cast a ballot. More information on this process will be posted.

On the Administration front, **Dorothy Magun** is our overworked Executive Assistant to the Chief, Council, and to me. She is a tremendous asset to the Nation. **Melenie Dickson** is our Receptionist and Membership Clerk. We now have a new Interim Director of the Health and Social Services Department – **Irene Pastulovic**, and I am pleased to welcome her. She is with us on a three-month term appointment, which started March 2<sup>nd</sup>, while we advertise for a full time Director. This posting is already out. I also welcome **Tomas Stewart** to the Department as the new Medical Transport Driver, he can be contacted at **867 - 536- 6764**. Congratulations to **Elaine Stewart** for passing her Class 4 Driver's Licence exam.



We had been without a dedicated financial team for some time. Since late 2024, we have the services of Rice & Company, a Certified Public Accountant firm with services in Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon. **Tyler Rice** is our Chief Financial Officer and **Ian Mitchel** is our Manager of Finance. They both work remotely but are in daily contact with us. They had some catching up to do from previous years, however, we are now seeing good things happen. Our financial statements for the last seven years are progressing towards being audited. The Auditors have been approved by the federal Government and the work has begun. All our audits will be done by December, bringing us completely up to date. Our two very capable in-house Finance Officers are **John Dickson** and **Karen Caesar**.

**Luke Pastulovic** joined us as well in June 2025 as the Director of Capital Projects and Infrastructure. He brings with him a great deal of knowledge and experience and has made his presence known throughout the community, particularly during the cold period we had before and during the holidays in December. He and **Martina Donnessey**, the Associate Director of Capital Projects, have a number of projects planned for the building season of 2026 which you will read about in the Capital section of this Newsletter. We



## CONTINUED..

are all very excited about the three Paradigm homes that are being constructed with more on order for the spring.

Congratulations also goes out to **Melissa Lewis**, Supervisor of the Water Plant, for getting her Class 4 Driver's designation. She and her team keep us in water, and their work is greatly appreciated. Welcome to **Melody Janz** as one of our new water truck drivers.

**May Stewart** and her team continue to provide services to our members throughout the area. A new Family Services Building will hopefully break ground this spring.

**Amie Charlie** is alone in promoting and defending our needs on the territorial education front where other First Nations have multiple staff working in that area. Our Post Secondary file is well looked after by **Laurie Allen**.

Our Human Resources requirements are being handled, on a part time basis, by **Dena Zavier**, headquartered in Whitehorse. We have posted for a full-time HR Director. A two-day workshop on Lateral Violence was just completed in February with 17 participants, and another is scheduled in early June 2026.

Our Senior Management team is rounded out with **Travis Stewart** as the Director of Lands. With minimal staff he carries the load of keeping abreast of all that is happening on our lands that affects the Nation.

To the entire support team, your collaborative spirit and commitment do not go unnoticed. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your dedication and hard work. It takes all of us working together to help the First Nation achieve its goals and be successful in the future. Thank you for your continued support and making a difference.

There are lots of positive changes ahead and I looking forward to working with First Nation to help make the community a better place for all it's members.

In closing, you are probably wondering who that guy is in the canoe. That's me, twenty-three years ago.



Alan Steel

Executive Director  
LFN



## Finance & Governance Update – Q3 FY2026

As of the end of Q3 (December 31, 2025), Liard First Nation has received \$21.6 million in funding and incurred \$22.0 million in expenses, resulting in a modest year-to-date deficit of \$407,000. Q3 reflects important progress in strengthening financial oversight, improving reporting timelines, and building stronger internal controls across the organization whilst the Finance team works with Department Directors to eliminate the year-to-date deficit by Fiscal year-end.

### Strengthening Internal Controls & Governance

This quarter, our internal review processes successfully identified a procurement gap during a proposed contract engagement. As a result, additional review protocols have now been implemented, enhancing oversight by both Chief and Council and Department Directors.

We are also advancing a formal Delegation of Authority (DOA) framework to clearly define approval thresholds and responsibilities in alignment with the Financial Administration Law. These improvements ensure:

- More timely and accurate financial information for Directors
- Clear approval pathways and accountability
- Stronger compliance with funding and governance requirements
- Earlier identification of financial and operational risks

Directors are now receiving more consistent financial updates, and presentations to Chief and Council are occurring more frequently to support informed decision-making and transparency.

### FY2027 Budget Development Underway

Work has officially commenced on the FY2027 budget process.

This earlier and more structured budget process allows for:

- Improved planning and priority-setting
- Clear alignment between funding sources and program delivery
- Stronger cost controls heading into the new fiscal year
- Enhanced reporting to Chief and Council prior to final approval

### Audit & Reporting Progress

A structured 2026 Audit and Reporting Plan is actively underway to eliminate legacy backlogs and restore on-time reporting. Progress to date includes:

- 2019 Draft Financial Statements completed and in hand
- 2020 and 2021 audits anticipated before the end of March 2026
- 2022 audit targeted for completion in May 2026

This structured plan positions LFN to transition from catch-up reporting to sustained, timely compliance.

### GST Advocacy

As a non-UFA Indian Act band without reserve lands, LFN continues to face structural GST limitations. Since 2019, approximately \$3.05 million in GST has been paid, contributing to funding pressures. The Finance Department continues active discussions with the Government of Canada to pursue recovery options and advocate for equitable treatment.



## Finance & Governance Update – Q3 FY2026 Continued....

### Q3 Highlight

This quarter delivered several meaningful achievements:

- \$125,000 Jordan's Principle deficit funded through the Reaching Home Program
- 2019 Draft Audit completed
- Housing electronic payment pilot successfully launched
- P&ID funding confirmed
- Increased local financial management capacity
- Printer solution implemented with full service and support

### Looking Ahead

Q3 marks an important transition toward stronger financial discipline, clearer governance frameworks, and more proactive planning. With enhanced internal controls, earlier budget development for FY2027, and frequent reporting to Chief and Council, Liard First Nation is building a more resilient and transparent financial foundation for the future.



## Education Department Update

The Liard First Nation Education Department continues to support our learners from Kindergarten through Grade 12 and into post-secondary education. We are currently supporting 26 LFN post-secondary students as they pursue their studies across various programs and institutions.

Our focus remains on ensuring LFN students feel supported academically, culturally, and personally throughout their educational journeys. We continue to advocate for our students within the territorial education system and work closely with partners to strengthen supports and improve learner outcomes.

We are also excited to share that our upcoming Adult Education Program, in partnership with Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED), will be starting soon and will be based right here in Watson Lake. This program will provide Members with opportunities to upgrade, build skills, complete high school requirements, and build pathways toward employment or further post-secondary studies.

Education is lifelong. Whether supporting a student entering Kindergarten, a high school learner preparing for graduation, or an adult returning to school, we are committed to walking alongside our Members every step of the way.

If you have questions about student supports, post-secondary funding, or the upcoming Adult Education program, please contact the LFN Education Department.

Souga sinla,

Liard First Nation Education Department

## Message from Irene Pastulovic...



Greetings,

I am honored and humbled to join the Liard First Nation family as your new Director of Health and Social. Before we begin our work together, I would like to introduce myself not just as a professional, but as a person.

I am a colonial settler who came to Canada at the age of five. My parents were refugees who escaped during the Hungarian Revolution eventually finding a home in Montreal. Today I am a wife of 45 years, a mother of four, and a grandmother of nine. My journey into nursing began later in life, I have been nursing for over 30 years. I returned to school while raising our four children to become an RN, eventually specializing in remote nursing and kidney care.

For the past 17 years, I have worked alongside First Nations communities in BC and with FNHA. My heart has always been in caring for the youth and the Elders. While I bring my experience to the table, I am here NOT to do for, or direct from the outside. I believe in healthcare that is led by the community's own wisdom and needs.

Outside of the office, you will likely find me outdoors, I have a deep love for fishing, hunting and being on the land.

With respect and gratitude,

Irene Pastulovic, Director of Health and Social



## Spring Break and Easter

Spring Break runs from March 9th to March 20th. During this time, our Homecare staff will be juggling some well-deserved time off, so our staff numbers will be less over these 2 weeks. If there is anything you need during this time, please let us know we are here to help. We are also currently organizing our Easter Agenda, so please keep an eye out for those details soon!

My door is always open. Please feel free to stop by and say hello anytime. I am here to listen, to learn and to walk alongside you, in making a lasting impact on the health and well being of this beautiful community.



### FASD Workshop: March 23–March 24th

We are hosting a vital two-day session on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder:

- Day 1-(Morning): A listening session to collect community needs and concerns
- Day 1-(Afternoon): An information session on what is FASD
- Day 2-(Half-Day): Workshop on the clinical perspective and communication

### FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a **lifelong** disability that affects the **brain and body** of people who were exposed to **alcohol before birth**. People with FASD may need support in many areas of daily life, including:

- motor skills;
- physical health;
- learning and attention;
- communication;
- emotional regulation; and
- social skills.

### Elders Tea & Listening Circle

I am deeply eager to meet with our Elders and begin building a relationship rooted in trust and respect. Near the end of March, I will be hosting an informal “Tea and Snacks” meet and greet ( the specific date and time will be announced shortly).

The gathering is an opportunity for me to listen and learn from your wisdom. I would love to hear your thoughts and have you fill out a short survey to help guide our department. We want to ensure that our future Elder programming, workshops, and services are a true reflection of what you would like to see in the community. Your voice is the compass that will help us navigate our path forward.

# LIARD FIRST NATION LANDS DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY UPDATE

## Caribou & Cumulative Effects Workshop

The LFN Lands Department will be hosting a Caribou – focused Cumulative effects workshop on **March 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at the Watson Lake Curling lounge from 9:30 – 3:30.**

This project is considered Phase One of a multi-phase initiative that will develop a Kaska-centric Cumulative Effects Framework to address impacts that development have on all of our exercises of Kaska rights. During this workshop the Firelight Group and the BECAONS group will be giving a western science presentation on the different Caribou herds within the Kaska traditional territory and show the effects certain development decisions are having on Caribou populations and habitat from a western science perspective. Other workshops about cumulative effects will follow over the next few years, including how Kaska perspectives must be appropriately applied. Keep an eye out for an upcoming newsletter regarding this.

## Water Quality Objectives Workshop

The LFN Lands Department is preparing for a community workshop in **April 2026** to discuss water stewardship in Kaska territory. Water is a critical element and essential to LFN members' enjoyment and exercise of Kaska rights. As such, maintaining water quality and LFN citizens' confidence that the headwaters, freshwater bodies, and all the watersheds within the Kaska traditional territory remain healthy and free from contamination is critical. Through environmental assessments and regulatory processes like the Yukon Water Board licensing process, LFN has an opportunity to advance its own water quality objectives and standards in relation to water.

This workshop is an opportunity to define water objectives/standards that will be used in conjunction with industry and federal standards to shape future development decisions that relate to water and its uses.

## LFN – IPCA workshop

We are also planning another LFN IPCA workshop for **May 2026**. The LFN Lands department in conjunction with BEACON's and the Firelight Group have taken the information provided by the community along with the western science information gathered over the last number of years and synthesized it down into draft LFN IPCA proposal. We now want to share that document with the community and have a series of meetings to discuss the 3 candidate IPCA areas using the draft proposal as a guiding document.



## Traditional Knowledge Gathering

The LFN Lands Department is continuing to gather, manage and archive Kaska traditional knowledge. With some notable upcoming projects in front of LFN it is important that we hear from you, because the information you, confidentially share, will help change and improve potential projects so Kaska rights can remain meaningful. If you would like to be a part of a Traditional Knowledge gathering session please contact:

[Zuneza.cove@liardfirstnation.ca](mailto:Zuneza.cove@liardfirstnation.ca)



## LFN Infrastructure: Building Together for Our Community

Director of Capital & Infrastructure Luke Pastulovic:

As the snow begins to melt and we look toward the spring, I wanted to take a moment to share what our Infrastructure team has been working on since Christmas. Our goal is to make sure our families are warm, our homes are safe, and our community has the facilities it deserves.

We have been busy both on the ground and in the planning office. Here is a look at what we've achieved together and where we are headed next.

Winter Successes, Caring for the People of Liard

Keeping the Heat On for Our Elders

We know that winter in the Yukon is long and heating costs are a heavy burden. We worked hard to negotiate with CIRNAC to secure an emergency fuel package. Because of this, we were able to provide \$500 in fuel to every Elder to help keep their homes warm and comfortable through the coldest months.



### Help is Always a Phone Call Away

We have officially launched our **24/7 Emergency Line**, which many have used to date. Whether it is a midnight furnace failure or an urgent repair, Liard First Nations members now have support around the clock. You are never alone when a home emergency happens.

**EMERGENCY PHONE: 867-536-5059**

### Safe Streets & New Office

Our new snow removal and general labor crew worked hard all winter to keep our roads clear and our community accessible. We also have successfully moved our executive offices into our new facility, which allows our team to work more efficiently to serve you.

### Building a Place to Call Home

Housing remains our top priority. We are making great progress in ensuring every member has a safe, modern place to live:

Three of our new Paradigm homes are nearly finished! This is just the start—we are on track to build 11 more homes over the next eight months.



## LFN Infrastructure: Fixing What We Have:

We didn't just focus on new builds, we also completed two full renovations on existing family homes, making them safe and sturdy for the long haul.



## The 2026/2027 Roadmap

As we look forward to the next year, we are dreaming big for the community. We are currently working with CIRNAC on the "Big Three" projects for 2026/27:

- A New Youth Center: A safe space for our young people to learn and grow.
- A Bigger Community Hall: So we have more room to gather, feast, and celebrate.
- A New LFN Justice & Family Support Centre

We are also working with the Chief and Council to plan new subdivisions and roads, ensuring that as the nation grows, we have the land and infrastructure ready for new families.

## Our Land, Our Health, Our Home

Infrastructure is about more than just buildings, it's about the health of our environment and the people.

Healing at 2 Mile Lake, we are working hand in hand with the Health Department to design new structures at 2 Mile Lake for "Land Based Healing". This will be a place for the people to reconnect with the land and find peace. Dog Rescue Partnership, keeping the streets safe for walkers and children, we are partnering with the "Save The Res Dog Rescue Society" to help manage roaming dogs and find homes for those in need.

Spring Cleanup, it's time to tidy up! We are planning a community wide cleanup. If you have unwanted vehicles or old appliances sitting around your home that you'd like removed, please call the Capital and Housing Office. Once we have names of families that want removal of these items we set a date and notifying the community of said dates.

Community Events, look for the "Community Food Trailer" at events this summer! We are outfitting it with a new generator so we can serve the community better at our gatherings.

We Want to Hear From You!

We will soon host a Community Meeting (Date TBA). This is your chance to tell us what you think. We will be discussing:

- Where the new playgrounds should go.
- Plans for the future of 2 Mile Lake.
- Your priorities for future building projects.

If you need assistance or have questions, please stop by the new office or give us a call. We are here for you.

From the desk of – Martina Donnessey – I have been assigned a new role of Associate Capital Director and I am pleased to share and update on the current Capital Projects approved from CIRNAC. Another newsletter will be issued.

Water Projects

- Construction of a 3-bay garage at the Water Treatment Plant
- New Water truck
- Water system SCADA upgrades
- New Truck for Capital/infrastructure

Abase Funding

- Telehandler
- Frost fighter
- Wood Stoves for the modular Homes

B22 Targeted Funding - Construction – what coming up and what's done

- 11 House Demolitions – 6 completed and 5 to be demo'd
- Five 3 - Bedroom Homes
- Four 3 - Bedroom homes & Two Bedroom Homes
- Septic Replacement
- Multiple housing renovations

Emergency Management Operations

- Future EMO plans for evacuation drill in 2-mile area
- Brochures are being worked on for LFN Emergency Program Family Guide
- Flood Mapping with Yukon Government

Fire smart and Fire Smart ambassador certificate with LFN Fire smart employees

- funding for spring BBQ
- funding for fall fire smart project

Additional Housing Initiatives

- We have received Reaching Homes funding to support homelessness and housing needs. With this support we are currently refurbishing two apartments located upstairs at 714 Adela Trail, also the common area at the 9-unit plex in 2 Mile.

## Paradigm – Open House Success – February 25th, 2026

Paradigm Homes and Liard First Nation are pleased to announce the highly successful open house event held on February 25th, 2026. The event, designed to showcase our latest residential offerings, attracted an impressive turnout, with over 100+ visitors throughout the day. Paradigm Homes has demonstrated a dedication to high standards and modern design. We are encouraged by the enthusiastic response and look forward to further projects with Paradigm.



## Dena K'eh Justice Department

The Department will continue hosting monthly family workshops this fiscal year creating meaningful opportunities to bring Elders, families and youth together. These gatherings are centered on sharing, storytelling, healing journeys, letting go, spirituality, day-to-day challenges, support, encouragement, 7 teachings, peer support, grief and loss, land base healing, respect and healing circles, and strengthening connections through relationship building. Participants have the opportunity to engage in learning about Kaska history, ceremonies, language, medicines, harvesting, and traditional preservation practices. The workshops provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable space where knowledge Keepers can share teachings rooted in care, respect and community values.

Additional on-the-land activities will take place at Two Mile Lake, offering hands-on cultural experiences that further support intergenerational learning and connection to the land.

Our February workshop focused on sewing and toolmaking. A total of 32 Elders, families, and youth participated, creating ribbon skirts and handcrafted mini ulus while learning traditional skills and sharing knowledge across generations.



**Dene K'eh Justice & Family Support Program** *cūchō' Ke'eh cū'kēh cūs'an*

**2026**

- SCHOOL DAYS OFF & HOLIDAYS
- PRE-CIRCUIT & TERRITORIAL CIRCUIT COURT
- BIRTHDAYS

*Proposed Dates With Diane Smith Knowledge Keeper Joe Migwans Cultural Consultant Practitioner*

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**COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAM  
UPCOMING EVENTS**

**BUS SHUTTLE IN THE COMMUNITY**  
A bus shuttle will be offered for Youth and Elders in the community, three nights a week. Stay posted for the schedule and itinerary!

**LIFE PROMOTION EVENT #2 - YOUTH**  
Following the success of our first event, we are coming back with the sequel on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>!

**DRUMMING SESSIONS**  
In collaboration with experienced Kaska drummers, we will be offering drumming classes. Everyone is welcome!

**OPEN HOUSE AND COMMUNITY DINNER**  
We are bringing back open houses and community dinners. Come share a meal with us and share your feedback on our programs!

**CULTURAL MOVIES**  
Free cultural movies and snacks? You got it right! Come enjoy movies at the Northern Light centre. Stay tuned for the film schedules.



**Watson Lake Community  
Safety Plan**

Coming in the  
Spring of 2026

- Cultural and Traditional activities
- Youth programs
- On-the-land workshops
- Community engagement and feedback
- Shuttle service
- And more!



*Stay tuned for updates*



**LIARD FIRST NATION**

**MAIN OFFICE : 867 - 536 - 7901**

**CAPITAL & HOUSING : 867 - 536 - 2401**

**EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER : 867 - 536 - 5059**

