



# KA'A'GEE TU FIRST NATION SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation (KTFN) and researchers from Wilfrid Laurier University's Northern Food Systems Research Group celebrate 10 years of sustainable food systems research and practice. This milestone was reached due to the trust-based relationships between community members and researchers that have been nurtured through collaborative Participatory Action Research.



Laurier  
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# 10 YEARS OF RELATIONSHIPS & RESEARCH

On June 6, 2023, Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation (Kakisa) and Wilfrid Laurier University researchers **celebrated 10 years of relationships, collaboration, and local food system transformations.**

To mark the occasion, community members and researchers gathered to share food, stories, and research outcomes from the past 10 years and to **develop a vision and action plan to further transform Kakisa's food system for the next 10 years.**

What makes the Northern Food Systems Research Group different is the use of participatory action research. Participatory methods ensure there is collaboration between community members and researchers. This approach puts an emphasis on **Indigenous knowledge and community members' ideas being heard, valued, and centered in the research.** Integrating action with research means that **researchers and community members work together on-the-ground to accomplish community goals.**



## MILESTONES 2013–2023

- 2013: KTFN and WLU establish partnership
- 2014: Waste management program begins; first gardens planted
- 2015: K'a'agee Tu Atlas maps traditional territory; On-the-land camps integrate Traditional Knowledge and science learning
- 2017: KTFN starts recycling program
- 2018: Work on harvester safety, climate change planning; pilot projects for sustainable agriculture funded
- 2019: KTFN leadership and WLU in Brazil, share experiences with climate change impacting food systems
- 2020: KTFN soils mapped to identify areas ideal for agriculture;
- 2021: first greenhouse planted; food hub delivers vegetables to every household
- 2022: KTFN receives Climate Change Resilience award from NWTAC
- 2023: Celebrations and food systems planning for next 10 years

# COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

## Envisioning a sustainable food system

Community members described their current and future food system by writing and drawing on post-it notes. This exercise **helped individuals to consider the current state of the food system, the types of transformations that are needed and what actions to prioritize.** Post-it notes for the current food system with descriptions they wanted to keep were moved to the future category. This activity **helped community members identify existing positive attributes while developing a vision for the future food system.**

## Community asset mapping

Community asset maps are used to **help identify existing community resources that can be used for community development purposes.** In Kakisa, community members identified local resources that can be used to transform the local food system. The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) was used to help guide discussions about the diversity of local resources available to the community to achieve their food system transformation goals.

## Planning for a Firebreak Farm

The firebreak farm uses the community's fire guard to help adapt to climate change, protect against fire, and support the community's food system. **Community members and researchers discussed their ideas for the firebreak farm and what needs to be done for this to become a reality.**





## World cafe

The world cafe promotes consensus building and community voices. Participants give opinions about specific topics as they move from one station to another. At each station, a facilitator summarizes previous discussions. Participants are asked if they agree with the summary and if there is anything they want to add to the discussion.



Community members visited five stations based on different food system action research projects. At each station, **participants discussed how the projects can be adapted to help meet community-identified priorities:**



1. **Social:** Dene culture, language, youth and elders, recreation, health and well-being and safety
2. **Economies:** Jobs, volunteering, selling, and sharing
3. **Environmental stewardship:** Taking care of the land and wildlife the Dene way, traditional food systems, and zero waste
4. **Governance:** Self-determination, self-sufficiency, Indigenous rights, and justice
5. **Knowledge:** Traditional knowledge, education, Western science and Indigenous knowledge working together.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?**

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