

# Eeyou Eenou

the voice of the people

WINTER 2004

N A T I O N



## The Grand Council of the Crees

Report on federal  
negotiations

Gambling

Environment hearings  
a first for Quebec

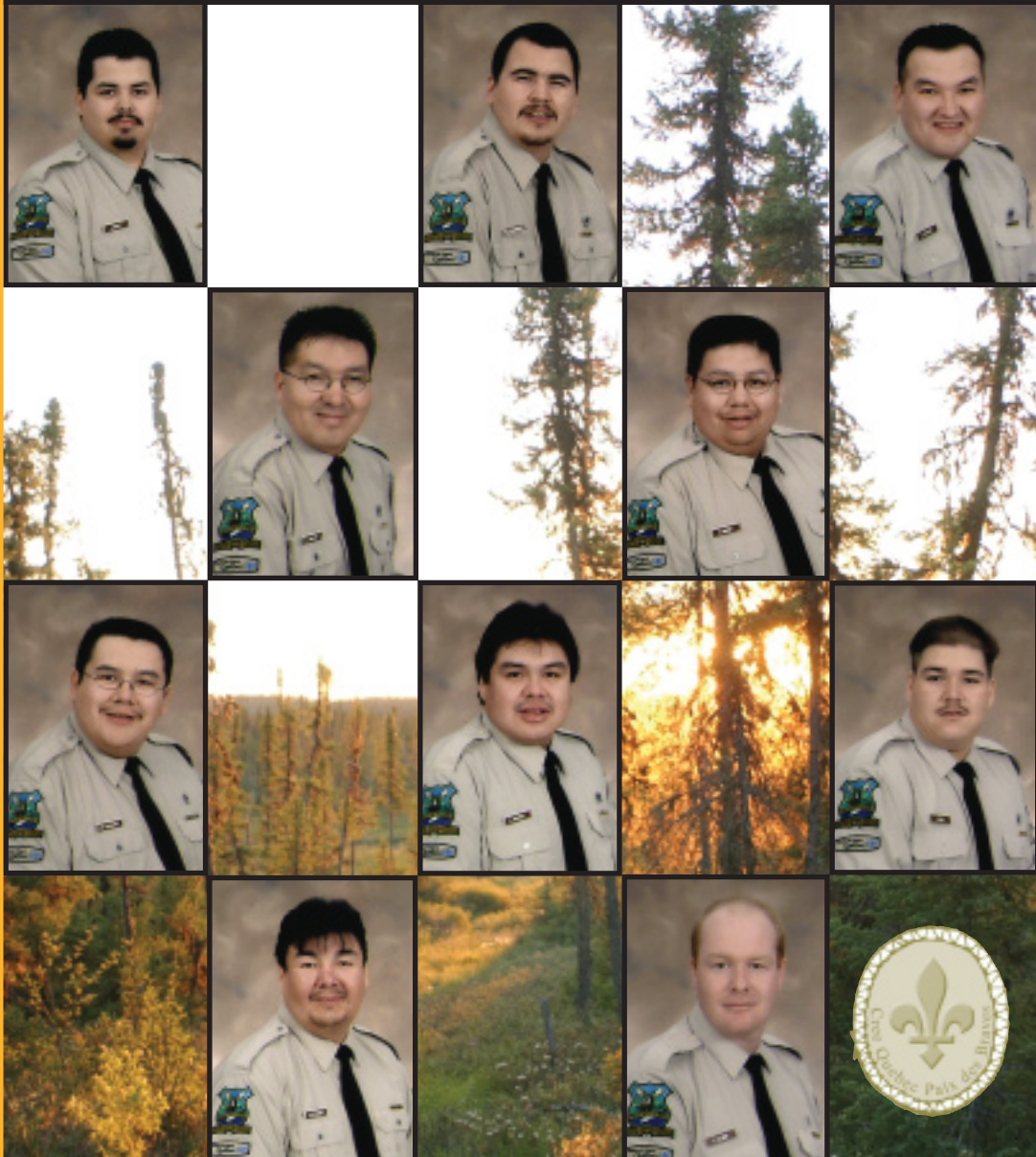
New forestry regime  
begins to take root

Forestry board head  
welcomes challenge

What is happening  
offshore

Washaw SIBI: The  
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## The Grand Council of the Crees

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# A Message from the Editor,

Bill Namagoose



I hope you will enjoy reading the winter edition of Eeyou Eenou, the publication that reports the issues in depth.

One of the features in this issue delves into gambling, an emerging issue in Aboriginal communities. At last year's general assembly, the Cree Health Board and Social Services identified gambling as a serious social problem affecting the Crees. In Radisson alone, Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) take away \$4.6 million every year, mostly from Crees in Chisasibi and Wemindji. This is money that could be used to pay for children's clothing and for food. If spent in the communities this could allow businesses to operate and provide employment. How much more is taken away in other city centres that Crees frequent? Through the VLTs the government always wins and the home, our home, always loses.

A major agreement between the Crees and Hydro Québec was reached this fall and winter. The comprehensive agreement, one of the undertakings of the Paix des Braves, settles the outstanding obligations of Hydro

Québec towards the Crees. It will be up to the Cree Nation governments to decide on what actions they will take to deal with the impacts of the La Grande Complexe with the resources from the agreement.

During the community consultations on that Agreement we heard the comments of many individual Crees about this new relationship with Hydro Québec. One of the messages we often heard is that we should treat each other with fairness and equity when we allocate the resources from this agreement or other agreements.

This is a good message and goes to the heart of our Nationhood and the consideration Crees have always displayed for each other. It is part of our rich traditional culture.

During periods of hardship, the Crees did not blame each other or deny other Crees their right to sustenance, but dealt with the hardship and always implemented a recovery plan to help others.

We must use these same values when we discuss and allocate the resources acquired through the New Relationship Agreements signed in 2002. These agreements were not to deal with the past, so we should not rationalize our use of these resources on the same basis as the new agreement with Hydro Québec on past damages. This is an impossible task; everyone has been impacted by development.

We need to govern ourselves on the basis that these resources are to be allocated for investment in the future of the entire Cree Nation and not just for repairing past damages. We can never buy a river or a lake nor can we turn the clock backwards and live like we did 40 years ago. We cannot base our use of these resources for the future on what happened in the past.

If we were to operate on the basis of past damages, then we might fail to support proposals that build for the future.

If we are always to allocate our resources to the biggest victims of development how then do we reward the champions of Cree rights? Clearly, it was the people of Whapmagoostui that raised the bar during the six-year battle over the Great Whale hydro project. How do you treat Waskaganish who resisted the Rupert River diversion proposal from Hydro Québec and some Cree communities and orchestrated the canoe incident, which was a turning point in our relations with the Quebec government?

How do you treat the communities that did the least in defence of Cree rights?

None of these formulas are viable and that is why allocation must be based on need

through fairness and equity throughout the entire Cree Nation, judged on the basis of need and opportunity.

Some of our people face difficulty in adapting to the rapid cultural change brought on by natural resource exploitation but this is not unique to the Crees. This difficulty in part comes from the deep spiritual attachment to the land and animals that all Aboriginal people share.

Adapting to a new way of life should not be considered the end, but as the means for the Nation to keep thriving. Without quoting him, I believe in what Elder John Petagumscum of Whapmagoostui said to us during the consultation meetings. He explained that the Creator did not mean for us to only have one way of life, but planned it that we would have several. This teaching will help those who feel that the Cree Nation was chosen by God to pursue only one way of life and that it would be lost if it strayed from that path.

It was the defence of Cree rights that raised the standard and now we have in the Paix des Braves, the only agreement in North America where the amount that flows to the Cree Nation is based on the value of natural resources extracted from Cree traditional lands. According to Charles Cheezo of Waskaganish this is the beginning of the restoration of the excessive amounts taken from Cree Nation trappers by the fur trade. It is only recently that a Cree trapper had to stack his beaver pelts to the height of the gun he wished to purchase in order to pay for it. Charles also takes the view that he should not stand in the way of benefits that will flow to his grandchildren.



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# Message from The Grand Chief

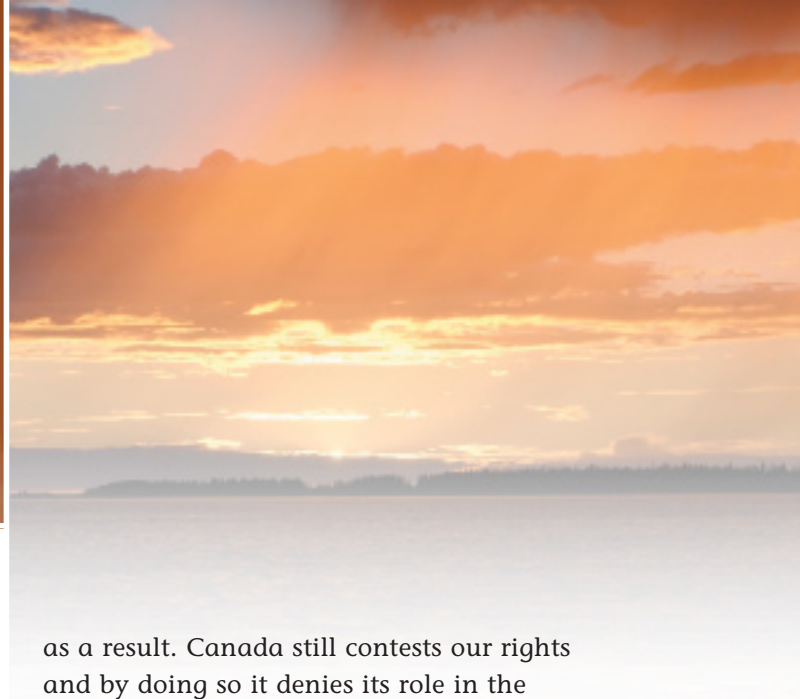
**We are now ending the second year of the Paix des Braves Agreement and we are making progress.**

The funds have gone from \$26 million in year one to \$46 million this last year and for 2004, \$70 million will be coming in. These funds are helping to build our communities. Housing, community facilities, training of Cree workers, trapper benefits and the Cree Tourism Association are all being helped with this money. With the New Agreement we have a new partner in the development of the Cree Nation, Premier Charest and the Government of Quebec. Talks continue on the Cree Board

of Health and Social Services and on other issues, including the problems of contamination at Oujé Bougoumou. We also just finished discussions with Hydro Québec on an agreement to resolve outstanding issues stemming from the La Grande Complexe. This would not have gone ahead without the political support of Premier Charest.

While we have a new relationship with Quebec, the old and adversarial relationship continues with Canada. The new government of Prime Minister Martin has just come into power and he has not yet announced his policy on the development of the Cree communities and Cree government in James Bay. Can we look for more of the same where every little step in implementation takes years to negotiate or can we look forward to a new approach? The irony of the situation is that it was a new relationship that Canada promised the Crees back in 1997 when then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Jane Stewart organized the Canada-Cree Roundtable to implement the 1975 Agreement. Very





little came out of this. It seems that the minister responsible did not have control of Canada's policy towards James Bay, Quebec at the time.

In 1975, Crees were promised a choice between continuing to live in the bush as we had always done, or taking

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**... and we have begun to build our nation as a result.**

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up employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and becoming beneficiaries of development. In fact, opportunities to participate in development never materialized. We were also promised a Cree Project, the construction of the housing, services and community facilities necessary to establish our lives in the Cree communities, a base from which to deal with the changes that development would bring to our people.

What we got was 25 years of argument and fighting over what was our due. Both Canada and Quebec contested our rights. Quebec has now largely settled with us and we have begun to build our nation

as a result. Canada still contests our rights and by doing so it denies its role in the development of James Bay. The James Bay Agreement set out not just the approval of the La Grande Project, it also set out the joint project of Quebec and Canada to build the Cree communities.

For 28 years Canada has refused to come in as the partner of the Crees and Quebec. Rather than deal with the situation on the ground, it has denied its obligations, hidden behind legal cases and allowed the situation to deteriorate. The Crees are as a result, years behind on training, years behind in our employment targets, years behind in meeting out housing needs and needs for community facilities. With the Quebec Agreement we can begin to address this, but we only have half of the resources needed to do the job. With the Martin Government there is a new chance to build a new relationship. The coming months will tell us what to expect.

I look forward to working toward this goal of a new relationship with Canada and to continued co-operation with our new partner the Government of Quebec.







# Report on federal negotiations

## **Comprehensive proposal made to Canada**

After the signature of the Paix des Braves, DIAND was in a state of disarray in regard to its handling of Cree files. The historic and groundbreaking agreement with Quebec caught DIAND totally by surprise.



It is known that the agreement with Quebec was badly received at DIAND. It was preoccupied with the fact that Quebec's evaluation of its part of the joint obligations it has with Canada in the James Bay Agreement put Canada's implementation shortcomings under a very large spotlight. While DIAND officials were incapable of articulating a coherent response to the new political, legal and financial situation, other than recom-

mending court actions against Quebec, the Grand Chief attempted to seek higher level discussion with Canada. He sought to resolve the impasse with a new initiative but this was apparently blocked by then-Minister Nault.

In light of this, on June 28, 2002, the Grand Chief submitted a comprehensive proposal for a Canada-Cree new relationship agreement directly to Minister Nault. The terms of this proposal were clear:

- accountable self-government under the existing *Cree/Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* and recognition of the Cree Nation, through a Cree Governance Act;
- tools for economic and community development to promote economic self-reliance;
- means to achieve economic benefit for the Crees from future development in Northern Quebec;

- federal involvement in Cree development to parallel the scale and scope of the Quebec's commitment in 2002;
- resolution of long-outstanding issues dealing with policing, environmental and social protection, oversight of hunting-fishing-trapping laws, regional and local economic development and community development;
- end to litigation (the contingent liability of which currently amounts to billions of dollars) mechanism for resolving future disputes;
- maintenance of existing arrangements, including ongoing federal operations and maintenance (O&M) and capital for Cree school Board, for local government and other normal programs;
- Long term agreement, subject to renewals.

### **Cree-Canada discussions on the proposal proceeded at a rapid pace.**

On receiving the proposal, the Minister asked his representatives to “work on the possibilities of reaching an implementation agreement.”

Cree-Canada discussions on the proposal proceeded at a rapid pace. The Cree negotiating team provided substantial details and economic studies in support of the plan as well as documentation on capital and housing needs. The Crees commissioned economic studies demonstrating that the James Bay Developments were an annual benefit just to Canada of over \$800 million, far exceeding the cost of the settlement with the Crees.

The federal representatives insisted on a framework agreement to set out in detail the scope of the mandate they wanted from the federal cabinet to negotiate with the Crees. The first drafts contained all the essential elements of the Cree proposal. However, it soon became evident that they had refused to set any financial guarantees in the framework agreement, but still wanted the Crees to suspend the court proceedings and commit to the negotiations.

In July 2003, the federal position changed radically. Instead of an agreement to implement outstanding obligations, they proposed to lump together all existing federal funding undertakings to the Crees, whether in or outside the JBNQA, including education, adult training, band operations and capital, and

funding for issues like the Eastmain community centre. Rather than implement outstanding federal obligations for economic and community development, as Quebec had done, existing federal funding would be rolled into a single package designed to diminish federal obligations to the Crees for many decades.

The federal representatives attempted to use the negotiations on implementing the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement to, in fact, undermine Cree rights guaranteed in it. If the resolution of these matters is to proceed, the Martin Government will have to take some initiative to put the discussions on the right track. Preliminary discussions have already begun.

## **Normal business**

Throughout the last year, representatives of DIAND have shown their unwillingness or inability to address in a meaningful way any of the normal business issues with the Crees. These include but are not limited to the following:

Funding adjustments for community operations called for under the O&M agreement with Canada—\$3.55 million has been acknowledged but this does not include some prior capital adjustments and the past two years;

Refusal to explain the calculation of the Cree fair share of Indian housing funding and to negotiate an adjustment, even though DIAND has acknowledged the shortfall;

Refusal of Canada to implement the environmental impact review procedure set out in Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, unilateral replacement

of this regime by the procedure set out in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the use of this act to unreasonably block funding for Cree projects.

Negotiations on the comprehensive proposal have been used by DIAND as an excuse to freeze normal business matters. Each has become ruled by DIAND's very narrow interpretation of its obligations. Council-Board has decided to proceed as follows:

**O&M adjustments** – Rather than proceeding with these adjustments to the O&M Agreement, DIAND has proposed to delay discussions on the renewal of the Agreement until 2005 and has refused to proceed with the release of the agreed adjustments in the interim. DIAND and the Crees have agreed that Judge Réjean Paul of the Quebec Superior Court will act as the Chair of a mediation panel to adjudicate this issue under the dispute resolution process set out in the O&M Agreement.

**Cree share of Indian housing funding** – The Council-Board has authorized the Grand Chief to initiate all actions he deems advisable, including court proceedings, to secure a fair share of the Indian housing monies.

**Environmental assessment processes** – The Council-Board authorized the Grand Chief to initiate all actions he deems advisable, including court proceedings, in order to ensure that Section 22 of the JBNQA process has priority over the federal CEAA process, and that the CEAA provisions no longer be used as an impediment to access by Cree bands to federal project funding.





## Premier Charest addresses Cree assembly

Premier Jean Charest became the first Quebec premier to address the general assembly of the Grand Council of Crees when he spoke in Waskaganish on September 11, 2003.

He noted that his predecessor, Premier Bernard Landry, had signed the Paix des Braves in the same meeting hall, in February 2002.

“I think you should take it as a sign that, a little over 18 months later, a second premier of Quebec, from a different political party, is with you,” he said.

Charest spoke of building a “relationship of trust” between the Crees and the rest of Quebec on a “nation to nation” basis and also addressed the urgent need to make improvements to health care for the Crees. Charest met privately with Grand Chief Ted Moses and his top advisers, before and after the address.



# Gambling

## The house always wins . . . The home always loses

**The good news? Canada spends more on the treatment of gambling addictions than any other country in the world. The bad news? Canada's gambling addicted population is increasing. And many experts believe it's doing so at a rate higher than any effective treatment can be made available.**

However, the worst news, at least for Canada's Aboriginal population, is the fact that several studies have shown that native people—along with other economic marginalized groups—are much more likely to become addicted to gambling. In fact, a study conducted by the Canadian Medical Association says native Canadians are four to five times more likely to become problem gamblers.

Why Aboriginals are more likely to gamble, and become addicted to gambling, is not always clear. Most studies found there was link between gambling and the social and economic situation many Aboriginal groups face today.

According to Statistics Canada, 6.3 per cent of Canadians are “at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers.” Problem gamblers, it says, or those most at risk of a dangerous addiction, make up about 0.6 per cent of Canada's adult population. In Quebec, authorities estimate that about 2.1 per cent

of the population—or about 125,000 people—are problem gamblers.

While the statistics may vary from region to region across the country, most experts agree that the biggest contributor to the rise in gambling problems is the popularity of video lottery terminals, or VLTs. The most addictive form of gambling in Canada and the United States, VLTs are often referred to as the “crack cocaine of gambling.”

In Quebec, the number of VLTs has exploded since they were introduced in 1994. Today, there are more than 14,000 VLTs in approximately 4,000 licensed venues in the province. In 2002, profits from VLTs totaled \$692 million.

For its part, Loto-Québec, which oversees the machines, openly recognizes that VLTs can be a problem. In response, it has stated it will reduce the number of VLT lounges, prominently display problem gambling helpline numbers, slightly decrease the



## Are you a compulsive gambler?

If you exhibit any of the following symptoms, you may be, or be in danger of becoming, a compulsive gambler:

- You're spending large amounts of time gambling and have little time for family, friends or other interests.
- You are beginning to place progressively larger and more frequent bets.
- Your debts are growing.
- You make repeated but unfulfilled promises to cut back on gambling.
- You're experiencing high and low moods. Often, if you can't gamble, you're depressed, restless or withdrawn.
- You tend to speak about your big wins but downplay your losses. Or you may not tell anyone if you're winning or losing.
- You would rather gamble than attend a special occasion. In fact, you may miss or be late for important gatherings and events.

playing speed, and make fewer games available. Warning messages about compulsive gambling will also be posted.

For many, any measure to curb problem gambling is already too late. In Quebec, a problem gambler commits suicide every two weeks—a five-fold increase from just five years ago. Since 1999, 126 gambling addicts have taken their own lives, 27 more than in

the previous five-year period. A spokesman for the Quebec Coroner's Office says that "in the great majority of those cases, the victims were addicted to VLTs."

Perhaps the most distressing part of the VLT story is that the machines are most available to those they hurt the most. A *Montreal Gazette* study conducted in late 2002 found that the higher the proportion of low-income families in a given area, the more likely there would be VLTs in the area.

Not everyone is content to allow the province's growing gambling problems to go unchallenged. A Québec City lawyer recently launched a \$579 million class-action suit on behalf of the 119,000 people he maintains have become addicted to VLTs since 1993. He points to the case of Jean Brochu, also a lawyer, who lost his job, was disbarred and eventually charged with fraud due to his gambling addiction. Brochu became so hooked on VLTs—often losing \$500 a day—that he would forget to meet with clients or even take the time to eat.

For those battling an addiction to gambling, the lawsuit, and similar initiatives, are a welcome indication that they need not fight alone.



# Environment hearings on Rupert diversion

**The James Bay Territory will be the site of public hearings to be held toward the end of (2004 or early 2005) into the environmental impact of the Eastmain-1-A Rupert Diversion project.**

"It will be the first time since Great Whale that Quebec has put money into public participation in the environmental review process," says Ginette Lajoie, an Environment Coordinator in the Traditional Pursuits Department at the Cree Regional Authority. "Normally, Quebec does not provide direct funding for public participation except on very few occasions.

Under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement signed in 1975, developments go through an environmental assessment process conducted by representatives of the Cree Regional Authority (CRA) and the Quebec and federal governments.

Except for Great Whale, the Eastmain-1-A project is the first development to be reviewed by two different procedures according to rules of harmonization negotiated by the CRA with Quebec and Canada. Public consultations are being funded jointly by the federal and provincial governments, as provided by this ad hoc agreement. Both governments

are also funding the operation of an independent public information office for this project, a first in the history of impact assessment.

The project will divert some of the waters from the Rupert River watershed into the

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**The agreement ... allows 20 months to complete the environmental assessment, but gives Hydro-Québec additional time to prepare an impact statement.**

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Eastmain watershed. It will include a generating station, four dams, a spillway, approximately 50 dikes, two diversion bays, control structures between the bays, and structures to restore some of the instream flow to the lower reaches of the Rupert River.

Once the environmental review process is complete, and is government approvals have been granted, construction work on the Eastmain-1-A project could begin in



2005 and the generating station could be commissioned by 2010.

The agreement between the two governments and the CRA allows 20 months to complete the environmental assessment, but gives Hydro-Québec additional time to prepare an impact statement. The utility began preparing its statement in August 2003, about five months into the process. It expects to present its statement in late spring or early summer 2004. The assessment process will then resume and be completed in about 15 more months.

Once the process resumes, public hearings on the environmental impact of the new project will be held in eight locations, six of them Cree communities. "There is a wide range of issues to address," says Lajoie, "and a lot of possibilities for interventions. Any Cree community can bring its concerns forward during the hearings."

For more information about the impact review of the Eastmain-1-A project, consult the public information office's Web site at [www.bip-pio.qc.ca](http://www.bip-pio.qc.ca).





# New forestry regime begins to take root

For those working to implement the new forestry regime, the past few months have been exceptionally productive. Most significantly, the Cree/Quebec Forestry Board is now up and running. Since its inaugural meeting in Waswanipi on October 17, 2003, the board has met twice to discuss the establishment of internal operating rules, address some immediate administrative issues and schedule their work for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Two projects promise to figure prominently on the Forestry Board's agenda this year. One is the review of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Parks (MNRWP) proposed Forest Resources Protection and Development Objectives. The other is the establishment of Wildlife Protection Directives.

While both projects are mandated through the Paix des Braves Agreement, the Wildlife Protection Directives are the sole responsibility of the Cree/Quebec Forestry Board. Board members will develop a series of protective measures, and a process for their implementation, to recommend to the Minister. As well as enhancing existing wildlife protection laws, the goal is to better harmonize forestry operations with Cree hunting, fishing and trapping activities.

In contrast, as a MNRWP project, the proposed Forest Resources Protection and

Development Objectives will apply provincially. The objectives will add a number of measurable targets that licence or CAAF holders will have to meet (in addition to the normal harvesting and production requirements of their licences). Objectives range from improving the biodiversity of Quebec's forests to conserving soil and water resources.

Specific targets include: reducing the amount of rutting in the soil caused by heavy machinery; reducing sediment inputs into watercourses; protecting the habitat of threatened or vulnerable species; and maintaining the visual quality of forest landscapes.

The Cree/Quebec Forestry Board is now working with Joint Local Forestry Working Groups to ensure the recommendations they put forward will improve the MNRWP proposed objectives.





In addition to their involvement in the review of the proposed Forest Resources Protection and Development Objectives, the Joint Local Forestry Working Groups are preparing for the transition when the Adapted Forestry Regime is applied in full (2006). In December, Cree members of the Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini Forestry Working Groups met to finalize one last intercommunity trapline boundary. As a result, the Crees have now completed mapping out all of the trapline boundaries within the Adapted Forestry Regime territory. Firmly establishing these boundaries was necessary to ensure that company forestry planners had the necessary information to develop future plans.

With the trapline boundaries firmly established, all but one of the Joint Local Forestry Working Groups were able to finalize the location of the 1 per cent protected areas of interest and the 25 per cent wildlife interest areas. Many of these areas were completed several months ago, but had to be readjusted to comply with the final Cree traplines. With this baseline work behind them, members of the Joint Local Forestry Working Groups can begin to fine tune the annual forestry management plans and develop comprehensive field monitoring programs.

## **Explaining the 1 per cent and 25 per cent areas**



### **Sites of Interest for the Cree (1 per cent)**

Under the new rules of the Adapted Forestry Regime, each tallyman is allowed to designate up to 1 per cent of his trapline as a single or multiple sites of special interest. Unless otherwise authorized by the tallyman, these sites are fully protected from forestry activities.

### **Sites presenting wildlife interest for the Cree (25 per cent)**

Specific portions of each trapline will benefit from special protection to improve harmonization between forestry and Cree hunting, fishing and trapping. In this case the tallyman is allowed to designate up to 25 per cent of the productive forest area of the trapline. Within these areas, the tallymen, company forestry planners and Joint Local Forestry Working Group members will develop a strategic plan to ensure that the stand diversity of these areas is maintained over the long term. To meet this goal, only mosaic harvesting will be allowed in these areas. Additionally, at least 50 per cent of productive stands over 7 metres must be left standing. At least 10 per cent of these stands must be over 90 years old. The location of the mosaic standing timber blocks must be determined in co-operation and these blocks must be distributed in an interconnected manner. Special rates of harvest will also be applied to ensure it occurs in a measured fashion.



# Forestry board head welcomes challenge

**Although he's been chairperson of the Cree/Quebec Forestry Board only since September 2003, Jean-Pierre Gauthier is confident that he and his fellow board members can achieve "real progress" before his three-year term ends in 2006.**

The reason for his optimism is simple, says Jean-Pierre. "It's the goodwill of everyone involved," he explains. "In the short time that we've worked together, the people around the table have made it clear that they want to share their knowledge. Both the Cree and the Government of Quebec recognize that they have their own ideas, their own culture and their own understanding of what's best for the forests. They also know they have to collaborate and, on occasion, adjust their objectives for the greater good."

Certainly, the board has been active since Jean-Pierre was named chairperson. In the first four months, a secretariat was established and staffed, by-laws and regulations were determined, three meetings of the full board were held and a number of long-term and short-term priorities were established. Also, board members have gone over all existing agreements that might impact their work in the future.



For Jean-Pierre, the opportunity to put his considerable experience to work in the James Bay territory is a fitting climax to a career spent protecting the environment. The biologist, and self-described ecologist, began his career with what is known today as the Ministry of Natural Resources in Quebec. In the 1970s, he went to work for Environment Canada, focusing on one of the environment regions being established in the province at that time. In the late 1980s, he joined the federal government, working with Environment Canada in the Quebec region.





*The Chairperson of the Cree/Québec Forestry Board, Jean-Pierre Gauthier, visits Cree Camp with the Vice Chairperson, Sam ETAPP*

“My first job was helping to develop an action plan to clean up the St. Lawrence River,” Jean-Pierre recalls. “That was a considerable achievement, considering we had to have the agreement of the province, municipalities, industry and universities.” Although he didn’t know it at the time, his experience on the St. Lawrence Action Plan—which remains in effect today—would service him well as head of the Cree/Quebec Forestry Board.

“Actually, when I retired in May of 2002, I didn’t think I wanted to get involved to this extent again,” says Jean-Pierre. He says a couple of things changed his mind. “First, I took six months off to walk a famous trail in Europe, from the north of Spain to the Atlantic Ocean. That took me seven weeks, and gave me the chance to be alone, clear my head and think about what I wanted to do.” Not that time alone was enough to convince him to take the job—“I actually said ‘no’ the first time.”


The second thing was a lot more straightforward. “In my time with the province and the Government of Canada, I had often come across the term ‘traditional knowledge.’ I realized that the Cree/Quebec Forestry Board was

a great opportunity to see just how that knowledge could be applied.” Perhaps, he says, what we do in James Bay will help Aboriginal people all over the world deal with the increasing exploitation of their forests.

For now, Jean-Pierre is content to focus his attention on the task at hand. “We need a vision,” he says, “a long-term vision and a short-term vision for the James Bay Territory. That should keep us all occupied for a long time.”

## **Forestry logo competition**

Now that the new Cree/Quebec Forestry Board is up and running, it wants a distinctive look so James Bay residents understand and appreciate its work. In the coming months, the board hopes to launch a competition among schools in the nine communities to come up with a new logo. Watch for details in the spring. In the meantime, you can put your imagination to work on what an ideal logo would look like for the forestry board.



# Updating the Oujé-Bougoumou pollution issue

**An environmental contaminant study by C.L. Covell in 2001 indicated the presence of toxic elements from mine tailings residues and suggested possible impact on human health. This report was subsequently critically reviewed by Dr. Evert Nieboer, Professor of Toxicology at McMaster University, who endorsed the environmental conclusions but not the interpretation of the contaminants in hair data on which the human health risk judgment had been based.**

A 2001 survey by the Quebec Ministry of the Environment confirmed the presence of toxic elements in sediments near mine tailings sites. Subsequently, the Oujé-Bougoumou Council accepted the Nieboer recommendation that an environmental risk assessment be initiated, as well as a human health study.

In early September 2003, at a special Oujé-Bougoumou Community Assembly, community members received the results of a health survey carried out to determine if there were any serious medical issues related to the presence of contaminants in several of the lakes and rivers and in the sediments within Oujé-Bougoumou's traditional territory.

The health survey was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Evert Nieboer, representing the Cree Health Board, and Dr. Eric Dewailly, representing the Quebec National Institute of Public Health. The survey was

based on samples of blood and urine taken in the fall of 2002 from approximately 225 community members. About 100 samples were taken in Nemaska for comparison purposes since there is no mining activity in the Nemaska area.

The health study concluded that the residents of Oujé-Bougoumou are not at risk of internal (systemic) exposure to the key heavy metals detected in the environment. This

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**Cigarette smoking was determined to be the major exposure source of cadmium in both Oujé-Bougoumou and Nemaska.**

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means that the heavy metals which were found to be present in the water and the sediment have not accumulated in the bodies of the human population in a way which requires any emergency medical intervention.



Cigarette smoking was determined to be the major exposure source of cadmium in both Oujé-Bougoumou and Nemaska. Lead exposure is related to hunting activities and consumption of wildfowl and game in both Cree communities.

Exposure to mercury and PCBs was higher in Oujé-Bougoumou than in Nemaska, a fact which could be explained by a higher consumption of fish which prey on other fish. The concentrations of the insecticide DDT were judged to be relatively high in the over 40 age group, especially in Oujé-Bougoumou. In both communities, the status of the essential elements copper, selenium and zinc were judged to be normal and adequate for sustaining proper health.

In their report, researchers recommended that:

- the impact on the general environment of the elements related to mine tailing residues should be assessed as part of the ongoing environmental risk assessment, even though there is no evidence for intake by humans;
- the source of PCBs and DDT/DDE be investigated as part of the ongoing environmental risk assessment;
- replacement of leaded ammunition should continue to be encouraged;
- regular consumption of game organs is not encouraged; and
- consumption guidelines should be reviewed, updated and their use by the Cree communities promoted. The following factors should be incorporated in a more formal consumption guideline program:
  - routine monitoring of local fish tissues and kidney, liver and fatty tissues of fowl and of game which prey on fish should be initiated.
  - consumption guidelines should be based on the monitoring results obtained for fish caught in local lakes and rivers and for wildfowl and game bagged in the communities' hunting grounds.
  - the importance of fish consumption in maintaining health should continue to be factored in.

# What is happening offshore

By Roderick Pachano, Chief Cree negotiator for the Cree-Canada Offshore Discussions

**The Crees and the Inuit now have an agreement on their respective land right in the offshore. Basically, in the area between Richmond Gulf and Cape Jones, the Inuit and the Crees will jointly own all islands. From north of Gillies Island to Cotter Island, Crees will have the right to hunt while Inuit will own the islands.**

The Crees and the Inuit now have an agreement on their respective land right in the offshore. Basically, in the area between Richmond Gulf and Cape Jones, the Inuit and the Crees will jointly own all islands. From north of Gillies Island to Cotter Island the Crees will have the right to hunt, but the Inuit will own the islands. In a similar manner, the Inuit will be able to continue to hunt in the area south of Cape Jones to Duckling Island. The Inuit will also have the ownership of three small islands in the mouth of the La Grande River, Governor Island, Seal Island and Sam Island. South of Duckling Island, the Crees will own all of the islands down to Chiyask Bay.

There has already been another development. Canada has indicated its agreement that the Crees and Inuit would be recognized as owning about 80 per cent of the off-shore islands and that Canada would own about 20 per cent. Moreover, Canada wants to exercise its entire land quantum on the Twin Islands. Except for an area on

South Twin that will revert to the Crees if Canada ever changes the status of the Islands from that of "Wildlife Preserves," the Twin Islands would belong to Canada. This, however, will not stop Crees from hunting on the area.

The Cree land selection committee meeting in Chisasibi, took the position that the Cree and Inuit should select in priority all islands located near the Quebec shore, and leave Canada to select its 20 per cent out of the Twin Islands. Canada initially proposed to take lands for a park near Wemindji or in the Natapoka Islands-Richmond Gulf areas, but it decided to take the Twin Islands for a wildlife preserve. This essentially means that the Crees will own all of the other islands in eastern James Bay from Hanna Bay to Cape Jones. From Cape Jones north to Gillies Island, the Cree and the Inuit would own the islands within our joint claim area.

Canada's first proposal was that all of the Twin Islands (North Twin and South Twin)





must be selected by Canada. Since these islands are large, the selection of both by Canada would lead to the Crees holding slightly less than 80 per cent of the land mass of the offshore islands. Canada has now modified its proposal and would select North Twin and only a part of South Twin.

To compensate, Canada has proposed that any difference in the Cree land quantum between 80 per cent and the precise actual

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**Canada ... insists that both islands be held by the Crown as a wildlife preserve.**

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percentage of land would be compensated by an option to the Crees to acquire an equivalent amount of land on one of the Twin Islands in the event these islands are no longer maintained as a wildlife preserve or park. We are now assessing this proposal and awaiting technical information from Canada on the precise land mass of each of the concerned islands. We will then verify it with our own calculations.

In addition, outside of the discussions with Canada, we have asked Makivik to settle with the Crees of Whapmagoostui the overlap areas on the mainland north of the 55th

parallel, as contemplated by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, as a gesture of good faith. Makivik representatives have agreed to this in principle. However, in other matters that would be part of the Cree-Canada Agreement on the offshore, the Cree party and Canada have not yet made much progress towards a negotiated solution. The two main issues of dispute are:

- The Cree party has suggested that principal JBNQA programs be extended to the offshore islands. In other words, education services delivered in the offshore should be provided by the Cree School Board, health services by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services; and policing and public safety by Cree police forces. Also, the Income Security Program should be extended to the offshore. Canada refuses this proposal.
- The Cree party has asked that the federal JBNQA Section 22 environmental and social impact and review process be extended to the Cree offshore area. Canada refuses this and insists that the environmental regimes of Nunavut solely apply there.

# Washaw SIBI:

## The tenth Cree First Nation



**The Annual General Assembly of the Cree Nation held in Waskaganish this past September passed an historic resolution recognizing the Washaw Sibi Eeyou as the tenth Cree First Nation. The delegates of the Assembly warmly welcomed the representatives of Washaw Sibi and provided them with encouragement in their efforts to secure a permanent home for their people.**

The Washaw Sibi Eeyou are a community of approximately 350 Cree people who live throughout their traditional territory in the Abitibi region of Quebec, but who reside primarily in the Abitibiwinni Algonquin First Nation (Pikogan Reserve) and in Amos, Quebec.

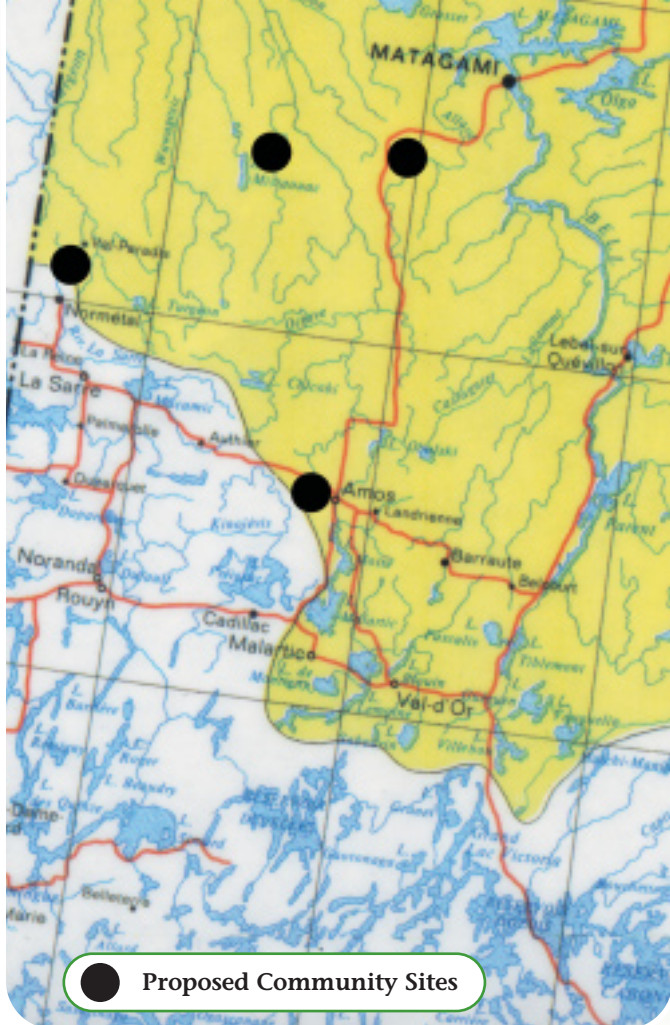
Historically, a number of groups of Cree families, including the Washaw Sibi Eeyou, traditionally hunted and trapped in the southern James Bay area. These families congregated during the summer months in Waskaganish and Waswanipi for the purpose of selling fur. However, at a certain point in their history, the Washaw Sibi Eeyou chose to bring their furs down the Harricana River to trade at various outposts in the southern part of the territory. Washaw Sibi is the Cree name for the Harricana River and, literally, means “the river that runs into the bay.”

The Washaw Sibi Eeyou met for the summer in the southern part of their traditional

hunting grounds near what is now the town of La Sarre. They met there annually until the late 1950s.

At that point, the Department of Indian Affairs forced the Washaw Sibi people to relocate from their traditional area to the Pikogan Reserve. Although they were a distinct Cree group with acknowledged Cree traplines, they began to be governed by an Algonquin First Nation which did not become party to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). Therefore, although the Washaw Sibi people are formally Cree beneficiaries under the JBNQA, they cannot obtain the benefits available to other Cree people residing in the nine Cree communities.

This situation has caused serious hardships for the Washaw Sibi. They have encountered significant discrimination in the areas of housing and employment. Also, they experience substantial discrimination on a cultural level as it is increasingly difficult



for them to maintain their Cree language and cultural practices in the context of an Algonquin community.

As a result, a wide range of programs and services available to the other Cree communities and beneficiaries are not available to the Washaw Sibi Eeyou. They have become marginalized in their own territory and are the last to receive even basic services.

The Washaw Sibi people, with assistance from the Grand Council, are now developing a campaign to obtain recognition of their distinct Cree status and recognition of their traditional hunting territories as Cree territory. They wish to receive and administer the full range of programs and services now

available to residents of the other Cree communities. They want to have their own programs and services in the context of a separate Cree community.

As part of their efforts to achieve these objectives, Washaw Sibi has established its own local political organization. The affairs of the community are now led by Chief Billy Katapatuk, Sr., Acting Deputy Chief Annie Weistche, and Councillors Kenneth Weistche and Dorothy Polson.

The Grand Council is assisting the Washaw Sibi Eeyou in their efforts to become integrated into the life of the Cree Nation. The Grand Council is taking an active role in facilitating Washaw Sibi's integration into all of our Cree entities so that we can begin to provide programs and services to the people of Washaw Sibi.

The Grand Council, the Board of Compensation, the Cree Trappers Association and several Cree communities—notably Waskaganish and Waswanipi—have provided concrete financial support for the Washaw Sibi community over the past several years in addition to ongoing technical advice and support.

The Washaw Sibi Eeyou are beginning to develop a local administration so that they can begin to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities they will have when they are eventually recognized by governments as a Cree First Nation. Their office is small and sparse. If any of our communities have any used office furniture, computers or office equipment they no longer need, they would be very much appreciated by the Washaw Sibi office.





# The story behind the job numbers

**Look only at the number of Crees participating in the permanent employment created by development in the region and it might appear that little progress has been made since Canada and the Crees agreed to a program under Section 28 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.**

Cree participation in the permanent jobs in the northern Quebec economy—which that section was designed to address—is as much the same level today as it was when the Cree-Canada Agreement was signed in 1999.

Even before the agreement was in place, Cree representation was well below their overall population. For example, while Crees make up about 30 per cent of the James Bay regional population, they make up only about 10 per cent of the regional mining work force, 5 per cent of the regional forestry work force and only about 1 per cent of the work force with permanent employment at Hydro-Québec. Worse yet, in some of the more northern parts of the territory—where Crees often represent some 60 per cent of population—their representation in the regional work force is as low as 1 per cent.

However, the numbers tell only part of the story. In truth, a lot of work is being done, and has been done, to increase Cree representation in the territory's work force.

Cree companies are working together and have gained many very important contracts from Hydro Québec and in mining exploration, new training programs for Cree workers are being developed and introduced, and Hydro Quebec and the Crees have agreed to seek new ways to increase both part-time and full-time employment opportunities.

In some cases, advances have been negated by unrelated events. For example, mining in the territory has slowed considerably over the past few years, leaving fewer Crees employed in the mining industry and mining exploration. Employment gains in the forestry sector, particularly in the area of silviculture, have been offset by the closing of the lumber mill in Wemindji and, to perhaps to some degree, by the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

More promising is the progress being made with Hydro-Québec. Under the recently signed Cree Employment Agreement, or





Eeyou Apatisiwin Niskamowin, Hydro-Québec has agreed to employ at least 150 Crees (who meet the hiring requirements) by 2017. Already, 12 Crees are enrolled in a training program to become dam operators. About 300 Crees have been retained in various positions—such as heavy equipment operators—on Hydro’s Eastmain 1 Project.

In truth, says a representative for Cree Grand Council, the Cree-Canada Agreement on Human Resource Development is a long-term project, and it would be wrong to place too much emphasis on the results of the first two years. “When we first negotiated the agreement,” he said, “Canada and the Crees knew, that it would take up to 20 years to get a real feel for what impact the agreement would have.”

In the next year or two, representatives from both sides will start meeting with Canada to determine what we need to do for the next five-year segment of the agreement. One thing they’ll be considering is how best to use the increased funding that kicks in for the next five-year term. Certainly, training for territorial jobs will command a significant portion of the increased revenues.

“When we look at the training needs of the Crees, it’s clear that the amount of money available right now isn’t nearly enough.” The Agreement increased the amount over the first five years, year by year, to allow the Cree capacity to deliver the program to increase. The funding for the Territorial Programs started at \$1 million for the first two years, \$2 million for the third year and \$3 million for the fourth. The fifth year is \$5 million. This is the floor for the renewal of the program agreement for the next five years.

“Success for this agreement, equitable employment for the Crees in the regional economy, may be a long time coming,” says the Cree official Brian Craik, “but we want to do everything possible to be sure we attain it in the foreseeable future.” Adding to the urgency is this fact—if the Cree portion of the regional population keeps growing at its present rate, they will be a majority in the territory by 2050.

# The Cree Mineral Exploration Board

**The Cree Mineral Exploration Board (CMEB) was formed to develop and enhance mineral exploration in the territory. Under Section 5.3 of the Agreement concerning a New Relationship between the Quebec government and the Crees of Quebec, it states that:**

Quebec will promote and facilitate the participation of the James Bay Crees in mineral exploration activities in the territory. In particular, Quebec and the Crees will set up before April 1, 2002, a Mineral Exploration Board which will be largely composed of Cree representatives but with some representation by Quebec.

The CMEB was set up on March 22, 2002, in accordance with that section of the Agreement. The remainder of Section 5.3 specifies the purpose of the board and the financial terms:

This board will benefit as of the 2001-2002 financial year from the available regular program funding of Quebec for such purposes presently set at \$300,000 per financial year. The main purposes of this Mineral Exploration Board will be to:

a) assist the Crees in accessing mineral exploration opportunities;

- b) facilitate the development of mineral exploration activities by Cree Enterprises;
- c) facilitate and encourage the access by the Crees and Cree Enterprises to regular Quebec program funding and other encouragements for mineral exploration activities; and
- d) act as an entry mechanism for offers of services by Crees and Cree Enterprises in the field of mineral exploration.

In addition, on March 22, 2002, the Cree Regional Authority, the Government of Quebec and the CMEB signed an additional and specific Agreement entitled Agreement concerning Mineral Resources Development in the James Bay Region.

Although established formally in March 2002, the CMEB became fully operational only in the fall of 2002. After a preparatory meeting on October 2 in Montreal, it held its first meeting in Wemindji on October 22-23 with



the objective to set itself up internally, to organize its operations and to develop a working plan, given the above framework and purposes.

CMEC activities will focus on the following five programs:

1. awareness and promotion, which aims at increasing awareness among the Crees of mineral exploration and at promoting the mineral potential of the James Bay territory. Awareness and promotion is targeted at those various constituents: the Cree communities, the various exploration companies working within the territory or contemplating to do so, the Cree Regional Authority, the Government of Quebec, the individuals acting as prospectors or contemplating to do so, or a larger public.
2. training and job assistance which aims at a) promoting, initiating or supporting training programs and activities to increase the skills of native individuals at mineral exploration, and b) providing assistance to job development and placement, including monitoring and on-the-job training programs. The desired
3. prospector's assistance which aims at providing financial assistance for mineral exploration carried by individuals conducting mineral exploration activities and which can show that they have the adequate training and/or experience to do so. The desired impact in the short term is to promote mostly surface prospecting by individuals to increase the reconnaissance level and cover the largest amount of ground, or cover intensively selected areas for surface exploration.
4. project development and entrepreneur's assistance which aims at a) financing special exploration projects, b) possibly participating with mineral exploration enterprises in joint exploration projects under partnership agreements, or c) promoting the creation of Cree mineral exploration enterprises, by financing up

impact is, in the short term, to train individuals to the level of accessing the immediate job market in exploration, and in the mid-term, to provide ways to lead to higher education and more developed skills in mineral or natural resources management.



to 50 per cent of various start-up expenditures or bringing them to being listed on a stock exchange.

5. geoscience expertise and technical assistance which aims at a) providing geological and geoscience-based expertise to the board, the communities, the individual doing or contemplating to do exploration, start-ups, and ongoing companies, b) providing guidance to the geoscience data base of the MRN, and c) providing guidance for environmental impacts assessment and compliance with regards to mineral exploration.

In accordance with the additional and specific agreement, the Cree Regional Authority participates in providing financial assistance for the board's internal operations. This assistance is decided on a yearly basis by the Council of the Cree Regional Authority upon the submission of the budget by CMEB. The head office of CMEB is situated on Category 1 lands in Wemindji. A full-time geologist, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_(name?) has been contracted and works out of the Wemindji office. The geologist's primary responsibilities include the implementation of the program activities of the board. To date, the board has funded approximately \$470,000 in various projects and programs as listed in the following:

### **Wemindji exploration**

- 1 Wemindji diamond project-2003
- 2 Wemindji exploration and renewal-2003
- 3 Helen Lake-2003-2004



## **Nimsken**

- 1 32J–2003
- 2 Michwacho–SOQUEM–2003
- 3 32J Airborn–2003
- 4 Cummings–2003–2004

## **Cree Gold**

- 1 Perch River copper–2003
- 2 Mistissini JointVenture–2003

## **Cree Nation of Mistissini–2004**

- 1 Mistissini Basin

## **Niogold–2003**

- 1 Investment

## **Individual prospector**

- 1 Henry Salt–2003
- 2 Harry Meskino and Simeon Longchap 2003–2004

## **2004–2005 activities**

One of the main priorities of the CMEB will be the Prospectors Assistance Program for the Crees. To date, the CMEB has utilized some of the communication systems available to the Crees to promote the program and will consider further options in the promotion of this program. One of the options to be considered is working together with the local CTA people to devise a program to get the trappers to participate in prospecting. The CMEB is already in position, through the geologist, to offer a basic prospecting training program for the trappers.

The CMEB is embarking on a study to determine the possibility of establishing a Cree Mining Development Fund. The firm of Econotech will be engaged to do the study on behalf of CMEB. There are three phases

to the study. The first phase, to be completed during this fiscal year, will determine if there is a need to go to the next phases of the study. The CMEB believes that if the Crees want to be players in this industry, they will need to make substantial investments in projects on the territory. There are already some very serious players investing in projects on the territory, including SDBJ with its economic development fund which includes mining exploration, and also SIDEX, the investment firm owned in part by the Quebec government and FTQ—the worker's organization of Quebec.

The CMEB, in collaboration with the government, plans to visit all companies in the territory to inquire about the possibility of acquiring jobs for the Cree. The plan is to include discussions with the companies about training programs for the Cree people who are interested in working in the mining industry. As a matter of fact, CMEB has requested the participation of Cree Human Resources Development Office of the CRA, to attend their board meetings and be part of the discussions.

## **Members of the board**

Jack R. Blacksmith

James A. Macleod

## **Grand Council of the Cree Gold**

Chief Reggie Mark

Alain Simard

## **Cree Nation of Wemindji Quebec Natural Resources**

Mining sector

Alfred Loon

Cree Regional Authority



# Wildlife conservation officers on the job

**Several new wildlife conservation officers, hired and trained as part of the 2002 Quebec-Cree New Relationship Agreement, are on the job in the nine Cree communities of northern Quebec.**

Their positions were created under the wildlife protection section of the agreement, the Peace of the Brave. The agreement calls on Quebec to maintain its existing complement of wildlife conservation officers while contributing to the hiring and training of additional Cree officers by April 2003.

As a result of the agreement, two full-time Cree officers were assigned to the traditional territory of the Chisasibi Band while two half-time officers are responsible for each of the traditional territories of the eight other Cree Bands. Another two full-time conservation officers will work in territories adjacent to the construction sites of the EM-1 Project and the Eastmain 1-A/Rupert project. When their work there is complete, they will be assigned to the territory.

Initially, says Willie Iserhoff, Director of the Cree Regional Authority (CTA), 20 Cree protection officer positions were to be created for the nine Cree communities in northern Quebec. However, Weh Sees Indohoun (Chapter 14) led to the hiring of two

additional seasonal officers (instead of assistants), bringing the number of positions to 22. Of those, 13 positions remain to be filled.

The positions were established in part to help address any land issues that might arise as the result of construction in the Cree territories.

The next step for nine successful candidates is making sure they have an opportunity to acquire the practical knowledge they'll need to do their work effectively. "Under an agreement reached by FAPAQ and Cree representatives, new officers are being paired with more experienced officers to help them learn on the job." These "mentor" officers, selected from among 75 candidates who stepped forward to volunteer, travelled to Cree communities throughout the territory to pass on their knowledge in seven eight-day training periods. They were then asked to evaluate the performance and progress of each of the new officers.



## Cover Photo

Adario Masty • Benny Blacksmith • Samuel Trapper • Peter Longchap • Samuel Moses • William P. Shecapio • Gordon Snowboy • Jeremy Derek Einish • Roger Pepabano • Frédéric Le Ber



Filling all 22 positions will require a lot more work, says Willie. “Many interested men and women don’t really know what wildlife protection officers do or what role they’re expected to play in the community.” As a result, the Cree Regional Authority and FAPAQ have prepared a video explaining what is expected of candidates. The video is now being distributed. There are other challenges as well, he says, including an inability on the part of some candidates to speak French (and in one case, Cree).

While a number of new responsibilities has been identified for the new wildlife conservation officers, the key one is education. “In visits to the nine communities,” Willie explains, “we were told by the Chiefs, Band Council Members, tallymen and trappers that they wanted the officers to play a front line role in educating others about wildlife, habitats, and the protection of the environment.” In fact, consultations are already underway between the Cree School Board and FAPAQ to develop various and appropriate educational programs.

For the future, says Willie, CTA and FAPAQ are looking at establishing an innovative relationship between wildlife protection officers

and police officers. “Whether they are employed as police officers or as wildlife protection officers, these people are in the community to offer their services and to meet the needs of the population. We just feel that, in some respects, greater efficiency could be achieved if their efforts were combined or complementary on certain files.”

For the moment, interested parties are looking at what needs to be done to establish a solid foundation for such a partnership. In the meantime, says Willie, both CTA and FAPAQ are delighted with the overall progress of the wildlife conservation officer program to this point. “We must take advantage of the momentum we’ve created—with the help of all our partners—to make sure the population benefits from the arrival of the officers as quickly as possible.”



# Director of police walks a new beat

Michael Petawabano thought he was making a radical career change when he left the police force after 15 years. When he thinks about it now, though, he says: “I’m really still involved in human resource work, just coming at it from a different direction.”

Michael has been Director of Territorial Programs with Cree Human Resources Development (CHRD) for the past year. At the outset, he admits he was a little lost: “After 15 years you get very used to one thing.” It wasn’t long before he felt at home, though. As Director of Police, he’d learned how to manage people and deal with administrative details and once he grasped the nature of the programs, he relaxed and started to enjoy the work.

CHRD is unique: it delivers Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) programs within the James Bay Territory. It’s the only place in Canada where federal powers are delegated to a local agency for this purpose. A joint implementation committee with representatives from HRDC and the Cree Regional Authority oversee its operations.

In addition to administering standard HRDC programs such as Employment Insurance and assistance for youth and



the disabled, CHRD runs four training and employment programs specifically for the Cree people. They support individual and group training through courses, apprenticeships and on-the-job experience, and help start-up businesses to meet their training needs.



CHRD has had community-based programs for years. The territorial programs were added to help expand employment opportunities in a number of key economic sectors throughout the region. Michael handles the transport, telecom and hydro sectors. He works with a sectoral officer for mining and construction and another for forestry and tourism.

"We go after the companies in the territory, to expand employment and increase opportunities for the Cree," he explains. "We're looking for concrete, full-time results." The first year of operations has been encouraging. Meetings with Telebec, for example, led them to hire two Cree technicians and a customer service representative.

Helping young people stay in the James Bay Territory is important to Michael. A family man with three young adult sons, he coached hockey and baseball for many years. "It was a way of getting to know the kids." One thing he especially enjoys about his new job is travelling around the territory monitoring the programs he manages. "You meet all kinds of people, and you're always learning something about the community."

## School Board seeks new funds

The Cree School Board is negotiating with the Quebec and the federal governments for a new funding package that could support substantial new educational initiatives in the James Bay Territory.

The proposed funding package includes money to build new elementary schools in Chisasibi and Waswanipi, provide community-based continuing education programs, help fulfill the training needs associated with the new Rupert Diversion hydro electric development, and add administrative space.

In preparation for the negotiations, the school board commissioned an extensive study of its system. "We wanted to find out what the school board was and wasn't doing," explains Gordon Blackned, Director General of the board. The study, chaired by Henry Mianscum, produced a "report card" identifying deficiencies. The school board, meanwhile, set up task forces to develop action plans for addressing them. The new funding proposal is designed to help advance these action plans.

New elementary schools in Chisasibi and Waswanipi are the top priority because of the projected increase in demand for educational services in those communities.



# First obligation agreements Hydro Québec/Crees

The Cree communities recently ratified an agreement between Hydro Québec and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee).

The Agreement resolves certain matters outstanding from the construction and operation of the La Grande Complexe which were the object of litigation. One of these matters was the fact that certain members of the community of Chisasibi had expressed

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**Hydro Québec commits to undertake state of the art monitoring of its dams and other facilities and to establish an effective and permanent system of communication with the community of Chisasibi. This will include an emergency preparedness plan.**

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concerns about the safety of the dams. Hydro Québec has always affirmed the safety of the LG2 dam. The agreement calls for Hydro Québec to build and maintain a road to a safe area to the south of Chisasibi and also provides funding for the construction of a traditional village there, to be used for tourism and to be maintained by the Crees. Moreover, Hydro Québec commits to under-

take state of the art monitoring of its dams and other facilities and to establish an effective and permanent system of communication with the community of Chisasibi. This will include an emergency preparedness plan.

In addition, the Agreement is aimed at improving the relationship between the Crees and Hydro Québec. Its goal is to have both parties start out on a new footing, characterized by mutual respect, good faith, reconciliation, partnership, and mutually beneficial economic and social relations. To ensure

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**In the future Hydro Québec will facilitate Cree involvement in hydroelectric development through partnerships, employment and contracts resulting from the maintenance and up-keep of the La Grande Complexe.**

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harmonious relations, to strengthen economic and social relations, and to avoid, to the extent possible, future litigation, the Agreement calls for a high-level Cree/Hydro



Québec Standing Liaison Committee and when necessary, allows for the setting up of a process of mediation or arbitration to resolve issues. In the future, Hydro Québec

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**...“Eeyou Fund” is set up into which Hydro Québec will pay \$7 million per year, for as long as the dams exist on the river.**

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will facilitate Cree involvement in hydro-electric development through partnerships, employment and contracts resulting from the maintenance and up-keep of the La Grande Complexe.

In order to provide the Crees with the means to address the long-term economic, social and environmental impacts of the project, including impacts on changes in Cree traditional-hunting and fishing activities, an “Eeyou

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**The Agreement will likely be signed soon since the agreement is scheduled to come into force on April 1st, 2004.**

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Fund” is set up into which Hydro Québec will pay \$7 million per year, for as long as

the dams exist on the river. The fund may be used for remediation measures in respect to the environment or for measures to ameliorate the Cree way of life on the land. It may also be used to perpetuate traditional Cree knowledge or to provide training for those wishing to access jobs on the La Grande Complexe. It may also be used for the replacement or construction of community facilities or housing in the community of Chisasibi.

The Agreement will likely be signed soon since the agreement is scheduled to come into force on April 1st, 2004.



# Eastern James Bay Eeyouch Interests in the Offshore Region of James and Hudson Bays

