April 22, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Public Statement

The Cree leadership took the opportunity to recognize Earth Day and all the efforts the Cree have made to protect the land including the successful conquest over the Great Whale Project which involved a very important protest on Earth Day in New York.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

It will take cooperation to keep COVID-19 out of the bush, which likely remains the safest place for community members to be at this time. Special care will have to be given to how certain cultural practices are observed considering the gatherings that might be considered for Walking Out or First Kill Ceremonies. Even though it will be challenging practicing social distancing and taking pre-cautionary measures like not receiving guests at the camp will be extremely important.

Eeyou Istchee remains stable with only 5 cases overall with two that have recovered and the remaining cases well on the road to recovery.

It is important to note that today is the 16th day with no new cases in the region; this is a very important milestone for Eeyou Istchee. The local leadership and community members should be proud of the implementation and compliance with measures that allowed us to achieve this. It is also an important testament to the good contact tracing teams, and skill of all our health care professionals.

- 235 tests have been administered.
- 207 tests returned negative.
- 23 awaiting results.

Unfortunately, the delay for awaiting test results has gone up to 3 days due to the significant increase in testing that is done in South. There is a backlog which governments are working hard to address.

The Cree Health Board is doing its best to manage Charters and the transportation of Cree patients to allow for other organizations to access the limited seats available for compassionate purposes. The Cree Health Board is also supplementing and redeploying resources to ensure that the care for the elderly and long term patients in our community is appropriate considering how much we value them as community members.

Cree School Board

The Cree School Board continues to examine possible scenarios for the remainder of the school year and will discuss any updates with the CNG, CHB, and communities' leadership.

All post-secondary students have been asked to inform the CSB and their respective communities of their travel. It is essential for all parties to work together to ensure a safe passage home and that the mandatory health protocols are respected.

Eeyou Eenou Police Force

The EEPF has put in place many procedures and protocols to ensure that the works spaces and equipment that the staff and public come into contact with is clean and safe for everyone.

It is reported that although there is an increase in relation to interventions required to ensure compliance with COVID-19 Precautionary measures there is a clear decline in crime overall. The continued use and implementation of tools like Crime stoppers and the vigilance of local officers is important to keep things on this trend. The EEPF is also paying to attention to special crime prevention measures and program such as those related to preventing domestic violence during these trying times.

Cree School Board
Commission scolaire crie

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Community Update

Whapmagoostui

Chief Wynne underlined the importance of Earth Day and thanked past and current leadership for the key protest that resulted in the protection of the Great Whale River.

Chief Wynne has implemented an Emergency Measures Committee and explained initial challenges considering the need to coordinate with the Inuit local authorities on matters like a curfew for example. Whapmagoostui being accessible by air only has facilitated the monitoring of people that come into the community and making sure that they are properly advised.

The local CTA has been very active in assisting land users access their hunting grounds. The help of Jason Coonishish and Tina Petawabano was instrumental in ensuring a spring airlift was available.

Finally, the community continues to plan local construction and infrastructure activities with proper protocols to ensure that activities can be undertaken safely.

Cree School Board
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Eastmain

The Chief is very thankful for the support being received from all the regional leadership.

The community has made special efforts to ensure that essential services know they are greatly appreciated. There has been real evolution locally in anxiety. The information and protocols being made readily available have greatly assisted in alleviating concerns which were initially very high.

The community is preparing for goose break and with the assistance of Waskaganish has been able to ensure that the necessary transport is in place.

Mistissini

Working closely with the regional leadership.

Since March 17th the community has reduced operations to essential service and implemented protocols. The leadership has been communicating with the community on a weekly basis and coordinating with neighboring leaders such as the mayor of Chibougamau.

The community access point has been monitoring traffic and providing information to travelers.

A special program initiated by the local youth council encouraging youth to go in the bush by providing food vouchers has been very successful.

Although mining and construction activities have yet to resume, the community is cautious and will ensure proper health protocols are in place.

Reliable Sources

People are advised to continue exercising caution on where they get their information in relation to COVID-19 and to keep in mind that the reliable sources of information remain:

https://eeyouistcheecovid19.org/
www.cngov.ca/covid-19/
www.creehealth.org
www.eeyoueducation.ca
https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/
https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.htm