

Grand Council of the Crees/ Cree Nation Government

Annual General Assembly 2023



Cree Cafe Report



About this Report

On October 24-26, 2023 the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government held its Annual General Assembly in Eastmain, Eeyou Istchee. The last 2 days of the session offered a new format to the AGA through the Cree Cafe sessions.

The Cree Cafe is a consultation format, that provides roundtable discussion to provide diverse and focused input on key issues that are relevant to Eeyou Istchee, our communities and Cree the Nation Government.

Methodology

There were two main topics that were covered during the Cree Cafe format:

1. Governance
2. Traditional Skills and Knowledge

On each topic, three questions were provided, and each table was given 5 minutes per question to discuss and provide responses. A notetaker was designated for each group, and responses were compiled into a summary presentation, where each community had 5 minutes to share their highlights.

Summary of Findings

Responses are organized by community, and summarized by topic in the following sections. Some text may be modified to fit the layout of the document.

[A Full Table of Responses can be viewed at:](http://www.cngov.ca/resources/cree-cafe-2023)
www.cngov.ca/resources/cree-cafe-2023

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**It's the people who will
lay out the foundation
who will define the
governance, it will come
from the people.**

On the Cree Constitution



Cree Nation of Mistissini

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Michael Petawabano
2. Christine Petawabano
3. Emmett Matoush
4. Richard Iserhoff
5. Daylon Longchap
6. Alice Petawabano

NOTETAKER: ROBIN CAMPBELL

The Cree Nation of Mistissini is the second largest Cree community in Eeyou Istchee.

Mistissini sits on the south-east end of Lake Mistassini, the largest natural freshwater lake in Quebec, and in the centre of the largest wildlife preserve in the province. Cree for Big Rock, the Cree Nation of Mistissini was formerly known as Mistassini or Baie du Poste.

The French first established a trading post in the area in 1673. In the 1800s, the community became a summer encampment for employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Today, hunting, gathering, fishing and trapping remain a major part of Mistissini's heritage.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe


1. Governance needs to come from the people
2. Respecting the unique realities of communities
3. Traditional values and our way of life is what makes Cree governance unique and legitimate

Current Chief:

Michael Petawabano

Michael Petawabano was elected as Chief of Mistissini in 2021. The Deputy Chief of Mistissini is John S. Matoush

Current Population:

 **4,109**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **30.9**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 27.4



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



Question 1: What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

- 1 People, land, our values, history, Cree language, we were governing before contact. We are still here.
- 2 JBNQA brought us together for a purpose and we are past that purpose and bring back our original way. It was the people who decided who would lead the people at the local level first. Late Isaac Shecapio was the last traditional Chief of Mistissini. The people decided.
- 3 We need to listen to the people. A Chief is never wrong if he listens to the people. Way of life, identify ourselves with our spirituality. We don't forget where we came from: the Land. Cohesive existence with the land.



Question 2: What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

- 1 Thinking Mistissini, it must be defined by the people. It must be their constitution. How do you bring one Cree Constitution from 9 other Cree communities. Focus should be on our own area. There could be some similarities, but it should be owned by the community.
- 2 Should be culturally relevant to today's times and remain timeless.
- 3 Cree language in Mistissini is unique and should be recognized. There are commonalities in our language across Eeyou Istchee and should also be recognized.
- 4 Reconciliation between governing bodies. (CNG, local governments & EIJBRG). What would define us is our Cree values.



Question 3: How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

- 1 It's the people who will lay out the foundation who will define the governance, it will come from the people. The mandate should come from the community. The community should define the agenda.
- 2 Recognizing local authority each community has its own authorities. CNG is starting to define our housing allotment, and recognizing the levels of readiness (some communities are more advanced than others).
- 3 Finding the uniqueness of each community and defining the strengths and improving our weaknesses.
- 4 Recognize autonomy. Eliminate those conditions that self-regulate and reduce the community's independence.



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

-
1. Help support the youth to be on the land, to mentor the youth and to transfer the knowledge of hunting and traditional practices. Seasonal traditional activities.



With the changes, challenges and impacts in Eeyou Istchee. what services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituuun Governance?

-
1. Increase subsidy for hunters to go to their camps, to inform our youth the awareness of climate change to be safe on the land.
 2. Climate Friendly equipment, solar panels instead of generators.
 3. To respect the land keepers, there should be agreements with land keepers and communities. Eeyou Ituuun governance, to work with the land keepers with the local CTA.



3: When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

-
1. It depends on the size of the moose, most of it goes to the community for donations. It could be eaten at feasts, especially moose head and intestines.



**We need a relationship based
Nation to Nation status that is
guided by mutual respect and
understanding**

On Local and Regional Government Relations



Cree Nation of Waswanipi

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Irene Neeposh
2. Ella Neeposh
3. Don Saganash
4. Donovan Blacksmith
5. Johnny Saganash
6. Louise Saganash
7. Paul Gull

NOTETAKER & FACILITATOR:
 GILLMAN OTTEREYES
 OLIVIER KÖLMEL

Located 95 kilometres west of Chapais on Highway 113, on the Waswanipi River, Waswanipi is often referred to as the gateway to Northern Quebec. Waswanipi residents resettled at the community's current site in the late 1970s, making it the southernmost community in Eeyou Istchee.

The name Waswanipi (Cree for Light on the Water) refers to the time when residents held lanterns or torches over the water at night to lure sturgeon that had gathered to spawn at the mouth of the Waswanipi River.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Improving relations between local government and Cree Nation Government requires a plan to engage and inform the members as often as possible.
2. It is the power we built over time that makes Cree governance unique.
3. We need to broaden access to the income security program so that it aligns with Cree values and needs.

Current Chief:

Irene Neeposh

Irene Neeposh was elected as Chief of Waswanipi in 2022. The Deputy Chief of Waswanipi is Rhonda Oblin

Current Population:

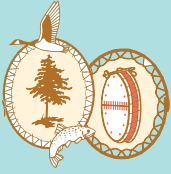
 **2,123**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **27.9**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 24



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



Question 1: What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|--|
| 1 | Eeyou / Eenou Istchee | 6 | Culture |
| 2 | Self Governance | 7 | Powers obtained over time |
| 3 | Eenou wiishuwewiin | 8 | Shaped by Eenou understanding |
| 4 | Unity | 9 | Persistence (ongoing influence, local control) |
| 5 | Language | | |



Question 2: What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|
| 1 | Evolution and balance between culture and development | 5 | Cree/Eenou Led |
| 2 | Population growth vs territory access territory to preserve cultural | 6 | Defined by unique needs as Eenou |
| 3 | Greater control of our land and resources (Cat 1,2,3 +) | 7 | All Eeyou Istchee |
| 4 | Mutual respect and unity | 8 | Values of presence on territory (occupation and stewardship) |



Question 3: How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Develop an educational curriculum in constitution | 6 | Powers to language and culture |
| 2 | Educate, inform, and better engage the people on the Cree constitution | 7 | Maintain Open Dialogue on Governance |
| 3 | Initiate youth early by creating a form, mentorship and education | 8 | Local designed strategies |
| 4 | More consultation required and educating public. | 9 | Dissemination of more resources |
| 5 | Mutual Respect based on Nation to Nation Status | | |



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|---|
| 1 | Increase equipment subsidies. | 5 | Redesign the income security program: recognize traditional laws. |
| 2 | Increase gas subsidies. | 6 | Maintaining Cree traditional activities based on Cree values. |
| 3 | Easier access to traditional tools. | 7 | Eliminate discriminatory practices under ISP. |
| 4 | Establish youth programs. | | |



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituun Governance?

- | | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Climate change monitoring. | 6 | Environmental expertise. |
| 2 | Studies (data). | 7 | Facilitate access to employment opportunities. |
| 3 | Use traditional knowledge. | 8 | Land based teachings. |
| 4 | Capacity development. | 9 | Transfer of traditional hunting practices. |
| 5 | Need to learn more about the six seasons. | 10 | Safety training for the environment. |



3: When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

- 1.** Sharing is caring.
- 2.** Elders first.
- 3.** Equitable amount and mixed pieces.
- 4.** Teach youth proper butchering of moose.
- 5.** How to prepare gapapeatusit and outitshee.
- 6.** 20 families and 2-3 feast/Whole community.
- 7.** Modernize approach to more communal share.



Our Cree way of life, our unity - it has always been our strength.

On defining our constitution



Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Lance Cooper, Deputy Chief
2. James Wapachee
3. Terrilyn Gull
4. Wesley Mianscum
5. Erin Gull

NOTETAKER: TERRILYN GULL

Located on Opemiska Lake, Ouje-Bougoumou is about 45 minutes from Chibougamau and 25 minutes from the nearest airport. With the exception of Washaw Sibi and MoCreebec, it is the newest Cree community. Construction of Ouje-Bougoumou was finally completed in 1994 after residents were repeatedly forced to abandon their homes to accommodate the region's mining industry.

Today, Ouje-Bougoumou is home to Aanischaaukamikw (the Cree Cultural Institute). As a result, tourism plays an important role in the community's economy. Ouje-Bougoumou is Cree for Where People Gather.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Mandatory forestry monitoring and management in response to climate change
2. We need to continue to find ways to broaden land based and traditional employment in Eeyou Istchee
3. We need to increase the number of dialogue sessions we have with the communities

Current Chief:

Gaston Cooper

Gaston Cooper was elected as Chief of Ouje-Bougoumou in 2023. The Deputy Chief of Ouje-Bougoumou is Lance Cooper

Current Population:

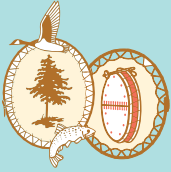
 **885**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **27.4**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 24.2



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



Question 1: What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Provides us more autonomy of our affairs and traditional territory
2. We can govern with the guidance of our culture, values and beliefs
3. To be able to participate over municipal management regional development including land and resource planning
4. We have the ability to determine our future



Question 2: What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Our Cree Way of life
2. Our Unity – it has always been our strength
3. Members to be involved: Take over ownership and Freedom of Expression maintain dialogue with our members



Question 3: How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. Enhance and maintain communication between local governments and CNG
2. “Maamuu Building for the future with honour to the past.” In order to build the future together we need to understand the diversity across all the Cree Nation, and we need to build on them. ...Diversity is good, we can work through our differences together. We need open dialogue and work together towards solutions
3. Discussions like these should occur more often. Ouje-Bougoumou governs with the participation of our people. The people are involved and provide their insight that our leadership builds upon. The people have a greater say in our governance



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Improvement on air transportation: Families that have traplines in other community trapline
2. Cabin insurance: review the premiums, and factor for depreciation
3. Cabin inventory per trapline
4. Publicizing and promoting CTA Programs



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituun Governance?

Climate Change

1. purchase ecofriendly equipment/ low emissions ex: fourstroke
2. fish habitat restoration
3. spawning restoration
4. mandatory forestry harvesting monitoring

Development in the Territory

1. to develop employment for tallymen or land users
2. wildlife management
3. service agreements on MTQ/forestry & mining
4. compensation plans (restoration)

Eeyou Ituun Governance

1. Families' responsibility to equip the future hunter/trapper
2. Trapline history
3. Transfer tallyman ship
4. Trapline history



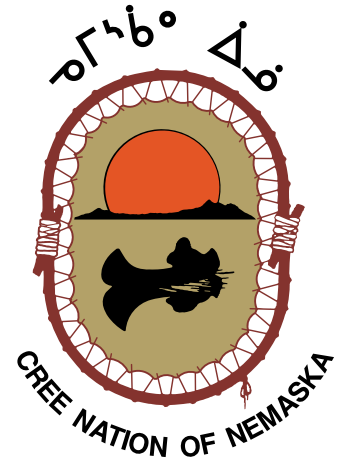
3: When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. Jeemouch
2. Strategy, we provide for family,
 - Elders, single families, widows/widowers, Costumery sharing
3. Moose Hide to Cultural Departments for training/workshops
4. Antlers sold/donated to authentic traditional artists



Youth and Eeyouch should feel proud of their culture and identity.

On what defines our constitution



Cree Nation of Nemaska

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Clarence Jolly
2. Nancy Wapachee Sr.
3. James Wapachee Sr.
4. John Henry Wapachee
5. Steven Neeposh
6. Emma Wapachee

NOTETAKERS: BRENDAN FORWARD & STELLA MASTY

Nestled on Champion Lake, Nemaska is often referred to as “the Heart of the Cree Nation” due to its location at the centre of the Cree territory. In 1968, the plans for a large hydroelectric project threatened the traditional home of the Nemaskau Eenouch on the shores of Nemaska Lake. Two years later, the Hudson’s Bay trading post closed its doors.

As a result of those two events, many Nemaska Eenouch settled in Mistissini and Waskaganish. In 1980, the new village of Nemaska (Cree for Where the Fish are Abundant), was completed, prompting many community members to return.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. With climate change, the method of hunting has changed, how we hunt on once frozen waterways now requires us to hunt on open lakes and rivers.
2. We need to include how our history helped guide our constitutional development.
3. Greater consultation with the communities is key to improving working relationships

Current Chief:

Clarence Jolly

Clarence Jolly was elected as Chief of Nemaska in 2022. The Deputy Chief of Nemaska is Teddy Wapachee

Current Population:

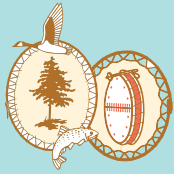
914

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

30.4

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 28.6



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



Question 1: What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Self Govt (JBNQA) Only one in Canada
2. Safeguarding the rights and freedoms of Cree in Canada and Quebec (Protect our language)
3. Policies/implementation
4. Strong and sound structure of government
5. Cree language/culture (unity) 95%
6. Power to make our laws & implementation
7. Regional entities for health and education
8. Eeyou Police Force
9. Cree Justice Department (use Cree judicial laws) & values of rehabilitation & healing)
10. Childcare is aligned with our values
11. Consensus on major agreements
12. Consultation process
13. A government with strong harvesting, trapping, and fishing rights
14. PILLARS: Transparency & Accountability



Question 2: What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Incorporate Cree Core Values (Fore front of everything) ADAPTATION OF WESTERN & EEYOU VALUES
2. Establish Fundamental and guiding principles
3. Ensure the transfer of knowledge to our youth (new generation)
4. More Cultural & Language programming
5. Adopt an amendment process (decade or two decades, etc.)
6. Integrate Constitution & History into the Cree Curriculum
7. Cree Rights, Laws & freedoms
8. Establish elite camps for youth (to learn Cree history, culture/language/constitution)
9. Ensure the survival of language/cultural values



Question 3: How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. CONSULTATION on decision process before agreements (Consensus-Unity-Strength)
2. COMMUNICATION IS KEY!!!!
3. DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY to reach target groups.
4. Symposium on sharing & distributing information on programs and services
5. CREE TV (A MUST) Cree programming NEWS
6. Newspaper/Newsletter
7. Adopt various communication strategies and methods (social media, email, radio, tik tok, snap etc.)



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Cultural Exchange programs
2. Increase long-term programming
3. More support for radio and communications infrastructure on the land
4. Access to the territory to include waterways and helipad creation
5. Ensure reporting breakdowns by community are included for program statistics
6. Reduce administrative overhead on existing programs
7. Increase availability of CTA workshops and instruction for traditional skills on a local level



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituun Governance?

Climate Change

1. Guidelines for sustainable land practices for climate change
2. Annual monitoring of climate change impacts (waterways, fire etc.)
3. Support for adapted hunting in response to climate change

Development in the Territory

1. Communication between communities on wildlife population surveys and monitoring
2. Guidelines to hunting outside of Eeyou Istchee for our people to be aware and respect rules and regulations in the south

Eeyou Ituun Governance

1. Collaboration between tallymen for access to the territory. Shared development of access infrastructure
2. Protect Cree hunting priority on a political level
3. Review of tallymen governance and structure



3: When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. **Meat:** depends on the moose, but try to share with:
 - Whole family, friends and community feasts (10-100+)
 - Just myself (1)
 - Share with the community (948+)
2. **Moosehide:**
 - Making sure not to waste the hide, sharing with family, sisters
 - Depending on the needs of the family
3. **Crafts:**
 - Sharing also includes, making moccasins and crafts as a part of hunting



We need to build strong links to traditional practices at an early age for our youth

On improving CTA programs at a local level



Cree Nation of Waskaganish

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Greta Cheechoo
2. Susan Esau
3. James Jonah Jr.

NOTETAKERS: ANTHONY MACLEOD, GILLES MATOUSH, ISAAC ISERHOFF

Founded in 1668 on the southeast end of James Bay, at the mouth of the Rupert River and the confluence of the Nottaway, Broadback, Rupert and Pontax Rivers, the Cree Nation of Waskaganish is generally believed to be the oldest Cree community in Eeyou Istchee.

In 2018, the community celebrated its 350th anniversary. Located near the site of Canada's original fur trading post, Waskaganish (Little House in Cree) was called Fort Charles when it was established. The name was later changed to Rupert House and eventually to Waskaganish.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Unity of our Nation while respecting individual realities of each community is what makes Cree Governance unique.
2. We need to train our people and find innovative tools to monitor climate change.
3. We need to broaden CTA programs to be inclusive of ISP and Non-ISP land users.

Current Chief:

Greta Whiskeychan-Cheechoo

Greta Whiskeychan-Cheechoo was elected Chief of Waskaganish in 2023. The Deputy Chief is Samson Wischee.

Current Population:

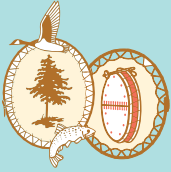
 **2,646**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **29.2**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 25.



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



Question 1: What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Sovereignty - Cree Nation
2. Taking our power back
3. Trust in our own people (Cree)
4. Strengthen Unity in our Nation
5. Eeyou Values
6. Cree Language, Traditions, and Wisdom
7. Eeyou Knowledge



Question 2: What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Eeyou Cree Language
2. Eeyou Laws – Traditions, Hunting
3. Eeyou Traditions & Values – School, Health, Government,
4. Restorative Cree Justice
5. Ancestral teachings and knowledge (traditional system)
6. Reintegration of traditional values



Question 3: How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. CNG – presence in the community & Eeyou Istchee
2. Improve the collaboration between – CNG, CHB, CSB, and Local Governments
3. Unity among our institutions
4. Empower our people
5. Communication between our Governments – governance, services, roles, community presentations



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land accessibility for all users + non ISP members 2. Co-partner on Land base programs related to Justice, Health, Education, and Elders 3. Traditional teachings on harvesting & preparation (sharing) 4. Youth programs – gun safety, hunting, travels, site and cabin preparation, Cree language | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Expansion on cabin program for non-ISP (eligibility) 6. Strategic partnership with Cree School Board – accredited programs 7. School of Traditional Knowledge – teachings, tool making, cree medicine etc 8. Services in access – landing, transportation |
|---|---|



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituuun Governance?

Climate Change

1. training & awareness
2. Ice monitoring using AI (Artificial Intelligence)
3. ease of access to the trapline - Transportation

Development in the Territory

1. early inclusion in the process
2. alternative camps and development of ponds

Eeyou Ituuun Governance

1. implementation of Cree hunting laws & guidelines
2. collaboration of local CTA and Regional CTA
3. define the role of the tallyman (Clear)



3: When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

-
1. Chief Greta Whiskeychan-Cheechoo – 50 families - (impact – Waskaganish/Wemindji, Moose Factory)
 2. Sharing is a community value



**Our relationship with the land, should be the
guiding principles to define the constitution.**

On the Cree Constitution



Cree Nation of Eastmain

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Raymond Shanoush
2. Johnny Tomatuk
3. Daniel Mark-Stewart
4. Linden Spencer
5. Edward Gilpin
6. Geraldine Weapincappo

NOTETAKER: TINA PETAWABANO

Originally located on the north shore of the Eastmain River, Eastmain was at the centre of the region’s fur trade more than 300 years ago. At the time, the Hudson’s Bay Company referred to the entire eastern shore of James and Hudson Bays as East Main. The fur trade thrived in the early 18th century.

As a result, more Crees settled in the area, leading to the establishment of Eastmain. Today, Eastmain is one of four Cree communities situated on the eastern shore of James Bay.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Eeyou Governance has been here a long time before we had agreements.
2. Cree Constitution should be defined on how our ancestors used to live and how the land has always taken care of us.
3. The Cree Nation Government needs to make time to visit all Cree communities

Current Chief:

Raymond Shanoush

Raymond Shanoush was elected Chief of Eastmain in 2023. The Deputy Chief is Daniel Mark-Stewart

Current Population:

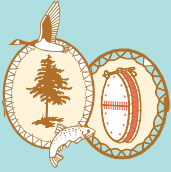
917

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

29.2

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 26.



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Cree Values- such as the CTA
2. Eeyou Governance existed before our Treaty
3. Eeyou Governance today is not unique, it is built to comply with provincial and federal governments. We govern with a foreign government system, not designed to serve all members.
4. Local Government only has power local Cat 1A land to govern.
5. We want to govern all Eeyou Istchee
6. It is only on the surface (title)
7. Our Culture and Language is strong, our values must come first.
8. Control over our resources: territory because Quebec has control over the land now.
9. Recognition of our connection to the land, spiritual connection to the land. These are important to protect.



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Our connection to the land, that is where we learned to govern ourselves. We need to write this to make sure that youth and future generations learn and protect our traditional way of governing ourselves.
2. We need to learn from our ancestors' ways. Traditional, Conservation laws etc. existed and were practiced prior to our treaty.
3. Cree way of life. Birth to death.... Rites of passage need to be defined. What are the meanings of these: walking out ceremony, snowshoe walking out.
4. These laws should be respected by external governments.
5. Life and all living things should define our constitution.
6. Our relationship with the land, should be the guiding principles to define the constitution.
7. We must look to our elders, who have the knowledge.
8. The youth are also important to be included



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. The CNG should look to the local government for guidance.
2. The CNG should be working with the Local Governments, walk around and meet the people.
3. The local members bring out the decision making.
4. The CNG should meet with the local Chief and council and members, so they can hear the people's concerns. Most meetings take place in the south.
5. CNG meetings should take place in the Cree communities.
6. Reduce the size of CNG, efforts should be made to decentralize some of the services/programs and bring them locally. For example, language, EEPF,
7. Look at ways to reduce the CNG services and bring some of these services to be managed locally. This could help serve the community better.



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Traditional hand Tools, for example: mit-skun, ice chisel
2. Teaching to clean/prepare and cook and how to eat traditional food;
3. Program to train teachers who will teach traditional activities;
4. Learn the eeyou names of our coastal camps.
5. Learning to make snowshoes
6. Program to teach the role and responsibilities of being a tallyman. Teaching future tallymen. How to be stewards of the land.
7. Cree dictionary, example Animal parts
8. Implement the Hunting Law



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituuun Governance?



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. Here in Eastmain, we share our moose meat with the community; no parts of the moose are wasted, every part is eaten. Same is done with the Bear.



The voice of the constitution should come from Eeyou and not be influenced by outside knowledge

On the Cree Constitution



**CREE NATION OF
WEMINDJI**



Cree Nation of Wemindji

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Christina Gilpin
2. Denis Georgekish
3. George Natawapineskum
4. Michael Mark
5. Stanley Shashaweskum
6. Billy Natawapineskum
7. Arden Visitor

NOTETAKER: STELLA MASTY

Wemindji, from the Cree word “wiimin uchii” meaning “ochre hills”, gets its name from the red pigment found in the geography surrounding it. This fairly new community comprises Cree families that originally lived at the trading post known in Cree as “Paakumshumwashtikw”, in French as “Vieux-Comptoir”, and in English as “Old Factory.” This trading post was founded in the 17th century and was alternately under British and French control. Old Factory Band, as it was called at first, was established in 1951 on an Island of Paakumshumwashtikw, 45 km north of the current location. In 1959, it was relocated at its present position.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Constitutional values should be derived from Cree Knowledge and values and aligned with our traditional way of life.
2. Reducing the number of meetings in the south to ensure CNG has the ability to meet with Chiefs, Councils and members of each community more often.
3. We need a long-term plan to address the access of hunting territory and cabins that are damaged by climate change.

Current Chief:

Christina Gilpin

Christina Gilpin was elected Chief of Wemindji in 2020. The Deputy Chief is Arden Visitor.

Current Population:

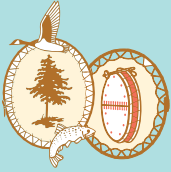
 **1,647**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **31**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 28.6.



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. CREE CULTURE

- Cree culture preservation.
- Cree language preservation.
- Eeyou occupy the land.

2. CREE WAY OF LIFE

Maintaining Cree traditions while adapting to modern way of life.

Traditional practices being passed down to one generation to another.

Ability to work collectively and maintaining unity as a nation.

3. EEYOU GOVERNANCE)

- Elections are democratic and fair.
- Agreements protect Cree rights and land.
- Able to pass laws and policies.
- Advisory committees, Elders council, Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee.
- Able to determine our own Cree constitution.
- Ability to create resources for future generations.
- Communities are able to maintain their own local authority.
- Able to separate the major sector (e.g. education, health, etc.)



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. CREE VALUES

- Traditional activities.
- Traditional knowledge.
- Acknowledge spiritual beliefs.

2. CONSTITUTION PRINCIPLES

The voice of the constitution should come from Eeyou and not be influenced by outside knowledge.

Cree identity is key and important.

Should be able to compliment and/or improve the current laws and agreements.



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. COLLABORATION

- Listen to the needs and input from communities.
- Community needs must be determined by the communities.
- It's the people who will lay out the foundation who will define the governance, it will come from the people. The mandate should come from the community. The community should define the agenda.-Consultation/visits should be equal.
- More education/awareness to the communities on programs and services offered by the Cree Nation Government (i.e. inform the processes in terms of applying, reporting, etc.)
- Committee/working group need to continue and report back to local communities

2. FUNDING ALLOCATION

- Funding should be based on needs and not by population ratio (e.g. infrastructure, housing)
- Give more power/economy to communities.



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Annie Whiskeychan day, more traditional competitions (Regional event)
2. More support and equal access to hunters and trappers and pass on traditional knowledge to youth, not many youth know the knowledge of the elders (hunters & trappers)
3. Address the concerns of the cabins (Develop a strategy to support traplines to support people and families who lost cabins (assess the access sites to see if the families can go back to the same site)
4. Address concerns for the loss of the hunting territory that burned
5. Acknowledge that being out on the land is a way of life, it is not just hunting or trapping or fishing, it's a place to find yourself and some have plans to retire on the land
6. Disconnection of the land, needs to be repaired and emphasized at all levels
7. Reconnect to the land, land heals, and helps with health & well being
8. We find our strength from the land, and our strength comes from the land
9. Leadership needs to connect back to the land
10. Occupy the land!!!!!!
11. More land-based programs for youth



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituun Governance?

1. Use elders' traditional knowledge of the land and the climate based on elders (hunters & trappers) skill
2. Hunting Safety, machinery, boat use and steps to take when traveling alone and precautions to take
3. Consultation & Information should always be provided to hunters/trappers of the exploration sites, and they should have a site for molting sites, spawning sites, ancestral sites, etc
4. Respect the land (consult the tallyman hunter & trapper if you hunt big game to ensure all the parts are taken, respected and harvested)
5. Do not over harvest (moose, goose, beaver, etc)
6. Limit use of minnow and worms (Fishing derbies are too many) maybe limit the derbies to protect the over harvesting of fish (yasinski, other traditional sites)
7. Conservation officers need to be more present
8. For tallyman to be on the land and not just a name on the trapline (they need to have the basic & in some cases extensive knowledge of the land and layout)
9. Hands on & visual learning is a must for youth (cree are visual learners)



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. Access to traditional food should be given priority to single families and elders
2. 2-3 families



Community engagement is key - proper open discussions with local government with the community members; decision-making process

On Improving Local Government and Cree Nation Government working relationships



Cree Nation of Chisasibi

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Daisy House
2. Charlie Sealhunter
3. Charlie Pepabano
4. Shayla Grace Napash
5. Josephine Sam
6. John Sam

NOTETAKER: NANCY BOBBISH

The Cree Nation of Chisasibi (which translates to Great River) was forced to relocate from their traditional land on Fort George Island in 1979-80 after construction of the James Bay hydro-electric project, which changed the flow and raised serious concerns of erosion along La Grande River.

Today, Chisasibi is located on the eastern shore of James Bay and along the south shore of La Grande River. Eight out of eleven Hydro-Québec reservoir projects in Eeyou Istchee are found in Chisasibi territory. Chisasibi's population is 5,189, making it the most populated Cree community in Eeyou Istchee.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Community engagement is the key.
2. Cree traditional knowledge and expertise need to drive the development of our Cree Constitution.
3. Shared guardianship and land-based programs are needed to preserve our traditional ways and language.

Current Chief:

Daisy House

Chief Daisy House was elected Chief of Chisasibi in 2020. The Deputy Chief is Mark Wadden.

Current Population:

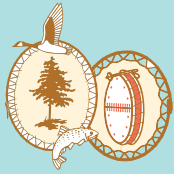
 **5,189**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **29.9**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 26.4



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Cree traditional knowledge and expertise
2. Cree custom, language, traditions
3. Customize it to our reality and culture
4. Kiniwhapmakin(ch)-tallyman(en); trapline governance
5. Oral tradition, respect, principles of our ancestors, understanding between the people
6. Resources – protection and ensure resources are there for the future/children
7. Open communication, transparency, consultation – we continue to decide what happens on our land – we decide what we want to do with our own garden
8. Self-governance
9. Evolve with the times and change it as needed
10. What makes it unique, its ours, reflects who we are as a Cree Nation



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Cree values, tradition and principles
2. Our ancestors had a way of governing and it is evolving over time
3. Avoid breakdown of communication – importance of continuous and transparent communication
4. Protection, conservation and preservation of our Eeyou rights, lands, animals, resources; protection of our hunting laws
5. Understanding where we came from, where we are, and define where we are going
6. We need to look at what is working and not working (Act, regional and/or local laws) – improvement



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. Communication – communication - communication
2. Open communication, understanding each other, listening to understand and not listen to respond
3. Community engagement is key - proper open discussions with local government with the community members; decision-making process
4. Visit the communities more/often; better understanding of the communities
5. CNG to have satellite offices in communities
6. Find creative ways to work together – which includes sharing of expertise
7. Define what needs to be shared between CNG and local governments, points of discussions (e.g., importance, priorities, mandates, finances)
8. CNG to share the right information with the local government
9. We have to understand that we are the same but different



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Shared guardianship of the land and stewardships with the users – traplines system; mechanism on how to maintain and preserve our way of life, e.g., ensure that people are not overharvesting – Cree expertise
2. Continue the subsidies; special rates for low income, adjust the rates for the double-income individuals
3. Harmony and respect between the harvester and harvested
4. Helicopter being used too early; no disruptions, quiet.
5. Who are making the decisions – use the expertise we have – e.g., when to close trails
6. Improve the transportation to the land/traplines – and ensure that people and family need to coordinate and plan better the use of transportation modes
7. Global warning and climate change – actions need to be taken
8. Land based programs – elders, youth, families
9. More opportunities for transfer of knowledge from experts
10. Working with other different stakeholders – collaboration with CSB and CBHSSJB – e.g., activities with elders and schools; being creative
11. Safety programs due to climate change – e.g., ice safety/monitoring, how to travel on the land/bay/reservoir
12. Monitoring program – e.g., ice conditions on lakes/rivers/bays
13. Support from CNG – working collaboratively with CNG, Niskamoon, etc. – e.g., caribou file



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Itun Governance?

1. Information on climate change – and impact studies: for all new development projects, ensure the assessment or projection of potential impacts on the environment/climate change (local climate change)
2. Programs: e.g., goose and caribou enhancement projects, moose yards, white birds eating areas
3. Each trapline is different, involve the tallymen and land users in decision making processes
4. Community-based app. for public notices – info. on the land, safety (e.g. Amber alert)



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. The art of sharing your harvest; share with everyone
2. Teaching of preparing the moose, etc.
3. Can easily feed 40+ families and share with the community





Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui

Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Robbie Kawapit
2. David Kawapit
3. Sandy Petagumskum

Located on the edge of the Arctic on the coast of the Hudson Bay and at the mouth of the Great Whale River, Whapmagoostui shares its isolated location with the Inuit village of Kuujjuarapik. Until the 1950s, Whapmagoostui (Cree for Place of the White Whales) was primarily a summer encampment. In the winter, inhabitants moved to small camps in the interior. Although a permanent settlement was established in 1955, many residents still head to their goose camps in the spring. Accessible only by air, Whapmagoostui is the northernmost Cree village.

NOTETAKER: ANTHONY MACLEOD / JULES MATOUSH

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Assistance with transportation needs for Whapmagoostui is key to accessing CTA programs
2. Cree Government Departments need to engage with the Cree communities to improve working relationships
3. Our ability to help each other, and practice our ceremonies and traditions is what makes our government unique.

Current Chief:

Robbie Kawapit

Robbie Kawapit was elected Chief of Chisasibi in 2020. The Deputy Chief is Rita Masty.

Current Population:

 **1,073**

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Average Age of the Population

 **28.9**

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 24.8



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Helping one another
2. Respect ancestor's teachings
3. Practice ceremonies/traditions
4. Elders teaching



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Cree teachings
2. Our history
3. Our language



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. Communication
2. More dialogue
3. More brainstorming sessions
4. More CNG/Departments emgagement with Cree communities



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. Assistance with transportation of materials
2. Purchase of transportation to hunting territories - bush planes and Air Creebec



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Itun Governance?

1. Transportation (skidoo, boat, plane) we have issues with that, there should be a solution for us to be able to get around.



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. We barely eat moose; we give a lot of it away when we do kill one.



Our constitution should be a collection of all 11 Cree Nation constitutions and values. A collective vision that represents us as a “whole” Nation

On Improving Local Government and Cree Nation Government working relationships





Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
2. Gloria Polson
3. Andrianna Trapper
4. Billy Katapatuk
5. Betty Trapper
6. Tasha Mowatt

NOTETAKER: ANDRIANA TRAPPER

In 2021-22, the Cree Nation Government continued to support the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi in its efforts to eventually construct a new village for its 500 members. Washaw Sibi members believe – as does the Cree Nation Government – that a new village for Washaw Sibi members is essential to their ongoing effort to preserve and celebrate their Cree language and culture. To advance that goal, in the past year Cree and federal representatives agreed to establish a special table under the aegis of the Cree-Canada Standing Liaison Committee to pursue exploratory discussions on the formal establishment and recognition of Washaw Sibi.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. We are led by our own people which provides a strong and stable structure.
2. We need to combine all constitutions from all 11 communities to represent the Cree Nation as a whole.
3. Safety training on the land and safety shelters are needed in case of emergency.



Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi

Current Chief:

Annie Mapachee-Salt

Annie Mapachee-Salt was elected Chief of Washaw-Sibi in 2023. The Deputy Chief is Adrianna Trapper.

Current Population:

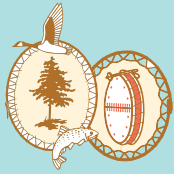
500

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Eeyou-Eenou Limited Partnership

Average Age of the Population

29.9

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 26.4



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Led by our own people
2. Provides strong and stable structure
3. First Nation people to have their own Government
4. Creates unity with other Nations
5. Opportunity to be role models for Future Generations
6. Governance their own Health care and Education system



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Cree Values and Traditional practices - Language & Territory
2. Our inherent rights
3. Combine all constitutions from all 11 Cree Communities, representing the Cree Nation as a “whole”



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. Recognizing Washaw Sibi, Self-governance status (Removing the observer status for Washaw Sibi and MoCreebec)
2. Communications, more involving with local communities
3. Continuing the local support, (CNG Tour)
4. Formally recognizing Washaw Sibi as the 10th community in the JBNQA
5. Empowering the future generation, creating youth leaders.



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. More involvement with youth.
2. More traditional practices, starting at a youth age
3. Involving Elders by sharing their knowledge
4. Promote youth and elder's gathering
5. Hands on training. Eeyou Etuun.
6. Land base programs.
7. Log cabin building/training.
8. Teaching and preparation of traditional cooking.
9. Clarifications on equipment subsidies



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Ituun Governance?

1. Traditional life skills training.
2. Safety shelters on the land in case of emergency.
3. Transportation to isolated camp sites.
4. Harvest management plan.



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. Families – elder's - extended families – single parents – community feast – tallymen - everyone.
Sharing is caring!

Equal opportunity for all the communities as a whole to govern.

On What Makes Eeyou Governance Unique





Delegation and Cree Cafe Participants:

1. Sheila Shanush
2. Kelley Kitchicappo
3. Trudy Sailors
4. Grace Delaney
5. Mary K
6. Harriet Kitchicappo

NOTETAKER: ANDRIANA TRAPPER

Members of MoCreebec trace their ancestry to the people along the East Coast of what is now known as James Bay, in the province of what is now Quebec. As in Ontario, these Cree people settled into communities because of the establishment of fur trading posts at various points around the bay. Many families from the east coast of James Bay were drawn to and settled in the Moosonee/Moose Factory region as it grew into a regional government and commercial centre. Employment, education, and health care were all major factors for the migration from ancestral territories.

On Nov. 22, 2017, the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government passed a resolution officially recognizing MoCreebec Eeyoud as the 11th community of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee.

Key Takeaway from the Cree Cafe

1. Eeyou Governance gives us the ability to have equal opportunity for all communities to govern.
2. More recognition for our community is needed to improve the working relationship.
3. We would like to learn more about traditional skills to help us reclaim our land and culture



Cree Nation of MoCreebec

Current Chief:

Allan Jolly

Allan Jolly was elected Chief of MoCreebec in 2022. The Deputy Chief is Kelley Kitchicappo

Current Population:

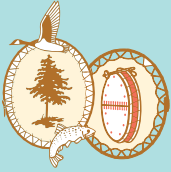
1,200

Based on the 2022-2023 Annual Report by the Eeyou-Eenou Limited Partnership

Average Age of the Population

35.3

Based on the 2021 Canadian Household Census Data with a median age of 32.8



Governance and Eeyou Istchee

Hosted by:

GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY AND DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF NORMAN A. WAPACHEE



What makes Eeyou Governance unique?

1. Equal opportunity for all the communities as a whole to govern.
2. Total control over our laws (natural laws).
3. We get to protect our values and traditions/culture and rights of the people of our nation.



What Should Define the Cree Constitution?

1. Demographics of your nation determines your vision for the future.
2. Roles and responsibilities to our future generations.
3. Educate the population with western education and traditional knowledge.



How do we improve the working relationship between Local Governments and the Cree Nation Government?

1. Include MoCreebec (recognize as a Cree First Nation to build a relationship).



Traditional Skills

Hosted by:

ARDEN VISITOR, PRESIDENT OF THE CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION



In the programs offered by CTA what improvements would you consider on improving and what new programs you would like to see?

1. MoCreebec needs to be fully included in all the programs and services of the CTA (right now it's only a small amount)



What services would you like to see to assist the hunter/trappers on climate change, development, and Eeyou Itun Governance?

1. No more dams... we need water
2. Reforestation for the animals to return, plus, the plant life
3. Adult/youth education for traditional activities



When you kill a moose, how many people do you share it with?

1. Elders, widows, single parents then family members
2. Donate to the "feasts" of all occasions



Cree Cafe Report

2023 Annual General Assembly

**Thank you to all the communities that
participated and provided the input that made
this document possible**