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ANNUAL REPORT 2024

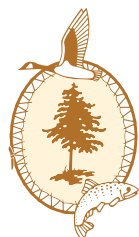
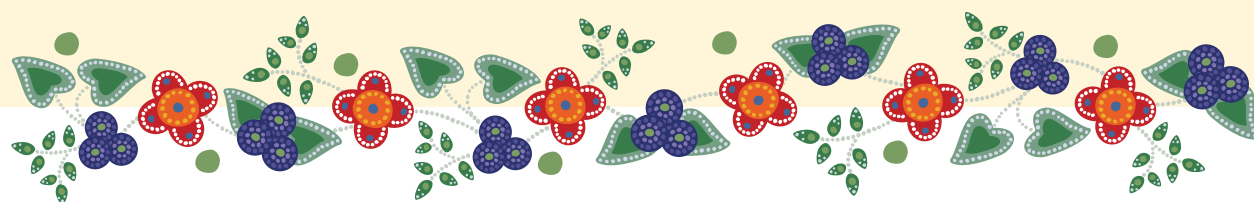


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MAAMUU Safeguarding our Legacy in Pursuit of Progress

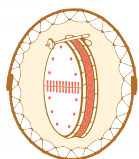


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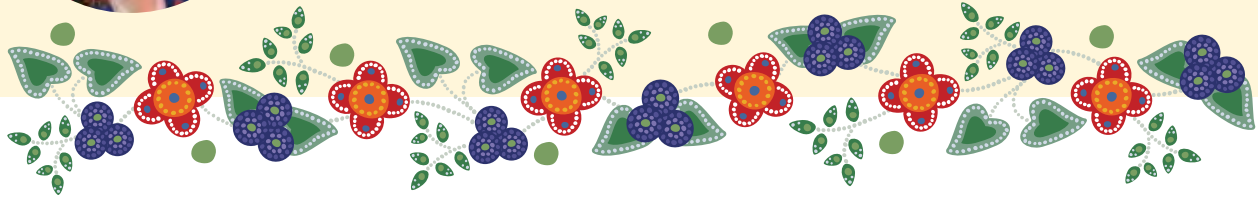
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MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND CHIEF/CHAIRPERSON

Mandy Gull-Masty



WACHIYA. IT IS ONCE AGAIN A PLEASURE TO REPORT TO THE CREE NATION MEMBERS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF MY OFFICE AND THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOARD COUNCIL.

2023 was filled with a lot of change, some that may not be so visible to the Cree Nation members, with a huge shift internally within the Cree Nation Government as we welcomed on board our new Executive Director, Davey Bobbish. A critical component of the work done by the Grand Council of the Crees is the implementation of the agreements under the Cree Nation Government, and it is important that there is strong and capable leadership at the helm and providing the services and carrying out the direction of the Board Council. We are pleased to work with him and his team in his new role.

2023 was marked by a historical event that impacted all communities of the Cree Nation and demonstrated the need for effective emergency management of the territory critical to working in collaboration and ensuring we kept our members safe. The devastation of the forest fires on the Cree territory was expansive but highlighted the close interconnectedness of the various levels of government within Eeyou Istchee. I would like to commend the work undertaken by the emergency management committees and public security officers as well as the local leadership collaborating with regional authorities and the partners of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government to ensure we keep our members safe during what was one of the greatest natural disasters to occur in our territory. The forest fires of summer 2023 not only had an impact on the Cree Nation, it was felt internationally. The immense amounts of smoke that travelled to the south throughout the United States, particularly affecting New York City and even reaching European countries, served as a stark reminder of the state of the climate crisis. The impact of the forest fires clearly illustrated the shifting of climate change and the direct connection to the reality of our changing environment and global landscape. Without the support of critical staff and neighbouring regions, our response would not have been as effective. I would like to also extend our deepest gratitude to towns in neighbouring regions that hosted communities during periods of evacuation.

In 2023, we have also seen the development of partnerships throughout our territory and beyond. The year started out with a commitment to five-year funding between Cree Nation Government, Cree Board of Health and Cree School Board and the Board of Compensation with a financial support pledge to the Office of the Commissioner of Cree Language to continue the important work of implementing the Cree Language Act. In a period of time where the increase of pressure on the Cree language is quite evident, we want to ensure we are appropriately supporting the measures and mechanisms required to protect our language –this work is undertaken, not only by different levels of government– but also requires the participation of our members. The implementation of actions to ensure that our children carry on our language is imperative and we must continue a whole Nation approach to support this important work.

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

The Energy Development Summit was convened on the development of energy in the northern territories hosted by the Cree Nation to look at the future energy needs of the province and the role that Indigenous communities will play in this process. At the forefront of concerns is reconciliation with impact on the territory, protection mechanisms for the environment and appropriate consultation methods. In collaboration with other Indigenous nations, such as the Inuit, Innu and Naskapi, dialogue and discussion were held to review the different impacts and needs of the province for critical energy development. Within the Cree Nation, discussions commenced with Hydro-Quebec on the upgrades of ageing infrastructure within our territory that will contribute to the common goal approach of enhancing electrification in the province. At the Board Council level, multiple discussions were held to have a common understanding of the expectations, partnership, governance and conservation required to undertake an approach for energy developments as our world shifts towards renewable energy resources.



MINING

A critical link to energy development is the mining sector. This year we have seen the enhancement of the Cree Nation Mining Policy, the goal of which is to inform and build standards within this development sector. This document is multifaceted, addressing the principles and recognitions of Cree rights, sharing resource benefits and the commitment to the creation of development process based on sustainability, respect to the environment and creating lasting benefits for communities. The Cree Nation continues to find additional support for policy and a Cree vision of development by presenting our vision within an international mining forum. The profile of the Cree Nation and the environmental protection mechanisms stated in Section 22 of the JBNQA require sustainable development, approach, participation, collaboration, and economic, and social development. We continue to partner with Quebec and Canada to ensure that the development of our territory is in line with the important work that is carried out by the Section 22 mechanism.

YOUTH

The Office of the Grand Chief also participated at the inaugural Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit by delivering an important message on Cree governance and the Cree Constitution, inviting our youth members to participate in our upcoming governance process. A highlight of this conference for my office was having the opportunity to host a workshop for the youth participants titled Navigating EEOU STCHEE: an in-depth process of analyzing the different rights and regulations attached to land categories throughout the territory and active political files that are being worked on at the leadership and governance levels. It was a pleasure to offer first-hand experience and teach the importance of understanding the rights of the JBNQA and the many files that are active and require input and supportive members to find a solution and an outcome in the best interest of our nation's members.



CREE NATION PARTNERSHIPS

My office would like to extend the deepest thanks to the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association for their partnership on the First Indigenous Women's Leadership Conference held in Montreal, Quebec, attended by all 11 Indigenous Nations. This event was created as a provincial forum to enhance working relationships and to create a space for a greater understanding of diverse Indigenous nation's positions and working with one another, as well as our counterparts at the provincial and federal levels. I

want to express my deepest thanks to the Mohawk Council for hosting us on their traditional territories and to the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak for her presence and for supporting the participants. A notable highlight of this event was the panels led by the female Cree Chiefs of Eeyou Istchee discussing their leadership roles and their experience in of governance and critical relationships. Additional thanks to Gookumnouch Advisory Paatakasuum for the presentation of cultural teachings, such as the history of the beaded veil and the



importance of recognizing the transition from being a child to womanhood. This event would not have been possible without the critical partnership of CWEIA, the HEC Institute and all of the support services that they provided in training women in areas of public speaking communication, leadership skills, and networking.

FEDERAL GOVERNANCE AND SENATE

The Cree Nation was invited to appear as a witness to the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples' study on the Canadian Human Rights Framework. The study has focused on the Call to Justice 1.7 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls which called on the governments to establish an independent National Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudsman and Tribunal. I presented a statement concerning the National Indigenous Human Rights Tribunal, supporting the recommendations and recognizing that the mechanism being reviewed would chart a new course and enhance the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the tribunal process. In particular with regards to Indigenous women and children, who experience significant barriers in reporting violence and accessing services.

Additional presentations were made regarding the establishment of a National Reconciliation Council, providing input on the necessary steps to ensure that the reconciliation process is defined not only by the federal government, but also all Indigenous Nations across Canada. This critical study was submitted by Senator Michèle Audette. It proposed a mechanism that would incorporate additional essential functional elements, such as adequate funding and whole-of-government approach, and not only for the work of the Council itself, but also in the advancement of reconciliation implementation measures.

INTERNATIONAL - UNITED NATIONS

The Cree Nation Government presented a coalition statement at the July 2023 session in Geneva of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples highlighting the impact of the climate crisis for Indigenous peoples. The statement directly spoke to the unprecedented impact the fires within our territory had, causing the evacuation of our communities, and displacing our people as climate crisis refugees. Furthermore, the coalition requested a thematic study on the matter of the increasing climate crisis in Indigenous territories, and the urgent need for redress and restitution.

In addition, a coalition statement was presented in April 2024 in New York with regards to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) with regards to Canada's progress in implementing a National Action Plan, and ensuring that Indigenous peoples are included in the development, cooperation and consultation. As we see progress at the federal level, there is still much work to be done at the provincial level to ensure that principles of UNDRIP are implemented with regards to Indigenous Nations of Quebec. The Cree Nation also hosted a multi-nation side-event that showcased the position of the inter-Indigenous nations and

collaboration for the expectations on the progress required for UNDRIP implementation within Quebec.

I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to Regional Chief Ghislain Picard of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), Constant Awashish Grand Chief of the Atikamekw Nation and Savana McGregor Grand Chief of the Algonquin Nation, for their participation on our leadership panel in New York City, discussing the challenges and capacities of various Indigenous Nations to collaborate and work with one another and our expectations of ensuring the possibility of other levels of government to benefit from the process of engaging with us.

The important work of representing the Cree Nation at different levels of international discussion cannot be done without the support of the Director of Justice, Donald Nicholls and his team, and we would like to thank our colleagues and partners for ensuring that our rights are represented and respected and part of the greater international discussion on the impact of Indigenous peoples.

Much work is undertaken with Cree Nation Government in collaboration with the Cree communities in the implementation of the many agreements that we have signed with various levels of government. As we continue this process, we are also looking at an internal reflection of how we operate and provide services while further building on the service delivery approach. I want to thank the staff from all the various departments for collaborating with my Office on the numerous files, too many to highlight in this annual report message, but detailed throughout the report itself. Their critical work and support allows us to continue collaborating and working with the various members, associations, entities and communities of Eeyou Istchee.

I also want to express my heartfelt thank you to the members of my staff who have provided all the support to undertake the mandate of the Office of the Grand Chief. As always, it is a huge learning experience in understanding and protecting the rights recognized by the JBNQA. This process, though challenging, is also a testament to the importance of your contributions. We would not be able to achieve the work that we are doing without your valuable input. My greatest appreciation to Richard Shecapio acting as the lead negotiator for the Cree Nation and pushing our files forward and continuing to enhance the relationship with communities. I would also like to thank a critical player on my team Kristen Moar, who has been a key support on the Office of the Grand Chief's administrative needs and communication with other departments.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Cree Nation for all of their support throughout this year, as well as the many messages of encouragement and prayers provided to me and my family as we continue to do this important work.

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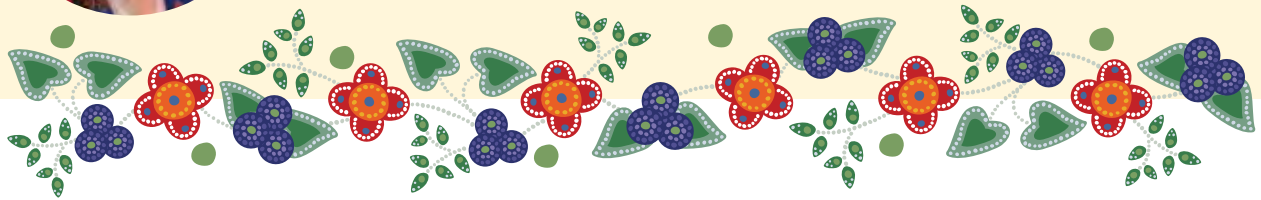
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Mandy Gull-Masty
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Grand Chief/Chairperson





MESSAGE DU GRANDE CHEFFE/PRÉSIDENTE

Mandy Gull-Masty



WACHIYA. C'EST À NOUVEAU UN PLAISIR QUE DE FAIRE RAPPORT AUX MEMBRES DE LA NATION CRIE SUR LES ACTIVITÉS DE MON BUREAU ET LE TRAVAIL ENTREPRIS PAR LE CONSEIL.

L'année 2023 a été bien remplie avec beaucoup de changements, dont certains ne sont peut-être pas aussi visibles pour les membres de la Nation crie, avec un énorme changement au sein du Gouvernement de la Nation crie alors que nous avons accueilli à bord notre nouveau directeur exécutif, Davey Bobbish. Un élément essentiel du travail effectué par le Grand Conseil des Cris est la mise en œuvre des ententes sous le Gouvernement de la Nation crie, et il est important qu'il y ait un leadership fort et compétent à la barre, pour fournir les services et assumer la direction de administrateurs du Grand Conseil des Cris. Nous sommes heureux de travailler avec lui et son équipe dans son nouveau rôle.

L'année 2023 a été marquée par un événement historique qui a touché toutes les communautés de la Nation crie et a démontré la nécessité d'une gestion efficace des urgences sur le territoire, essentielle pour travailler en collaboration et assurer la sécurité de nos membres. Les ravages causés par les feux de forêt sur le territoire cri ont été considérables, mais ils ont mis en évidence l'interdépendance étroite des différents niveaux de gouvernement au sein d'Eeyou Istchee. Je tiens à saluer le travail entrepris par les comités de gestion des urgences et les agents de la sécurité publique ainsi que par les dirigeants locaux qui ont collaboré avec les autorités régionales et les partenaires du Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee – Baie James pour assurer la sécurité de nos membres pendant ce qui a été l'une des plus grandes catastrophes naturelles survenues sur notre territoire. Les feux de forêt de l'été 2023 ont non seulement eu un impact sur la Nation crie, mais ils se sont fait sentir à l'échelle internationale. Les immenses quantités de fumée qui se sont propagées vers le sud à travers les États-Unis, affectant particulièrement la ville de New York et atteignant même les pays européens, ont rappelé brutalement l'état de la crise climatique. L'impact des feux de forêt a clairement illustré l'évolution du changement climatique et le lien direct avec la réalité de notre environnement changeant et du paysage mondial. Sans le soutien du personnel essentiel et des régions voisines, notre réponse n'aurait pas été aussi efficace.

Je voudrais également exprimer notre plus profonde gratitude aux villes des régions voisines qui ont accueilli des communautés pendant les périodes d'évacuation.

En 2023, nous avons également vu se développer des partenariats sur tout notre territoire et au-delà. L'année a débuté avec un engagement de financement sur cinq ans entre le Gouvernement de la Nation crie, le Conseil cri de la santé, la Commission scolaire crie et le Bureau de l'indemnité crie avec un engagement de soutien financier au Commissaire à la langue crie pour poursuivre l'important travail de mise en œuvre de la Loi sur la langue crie. Dans une période où la pression croissante sur la langue crie est évidente, nous voulons nous assurer que nous soutenons adéquatement les mesures et les mécanismes nécessaires pour protéger notre langue; ce travail est entrepris non seulement par différents niveaux de gouvernement, mais il nécessite en outre la participation de nos membres. La mise en œuvre d'actions pour assurer la pérennité de notre langue par nos enfants est impérative et nous devons poursuivre une approche nationale globale pour soutenir cet important travail.

DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'ÉNERGIE

Le Sommet sur le développement énergétique s'est tenu sur le développement de l'énergie dans les territoires du Nord; il a été organisé par la Nation crie en vue d'examiner les besoins énergétiques futurs de la province et le rôle que les communautés autochtones joueront dans ce processus. Au premier plan des préoccupations figurent la réconciliation avec l'impact sur le territoire, les mécanismes de protection de l'environnement et les méthodes de concertation adaptées. En collaboration avec d'autres nations autochtones, comme les Inuits, les Innus et les Naskapis, un dialogue et des discussions ont eu lieu afin d'examiner les différents impacts et besoins critiques de la province en matière de développement énergétique. Au sein de la Nation crie, des discussions ont débuté avec Hydro-Québec sur la modernisation des infrastructures vieillissantes sur notre territoire, lesquelles contribueront à l'approche



d'un objectif commun d'amélioration de l'électrification de la province. Au niveau du conseil d'administration du Grand Conseil, de multiples discussions ont eu lieu en vue de parvenir à une compréhension commune des attentes, du partenariat, de la gouvernance et de la conservation nécessaires pour entreprendre une approche de développements énergétiques alors que notre monde s'oriente vers des ressources énergétiques renouvelables.

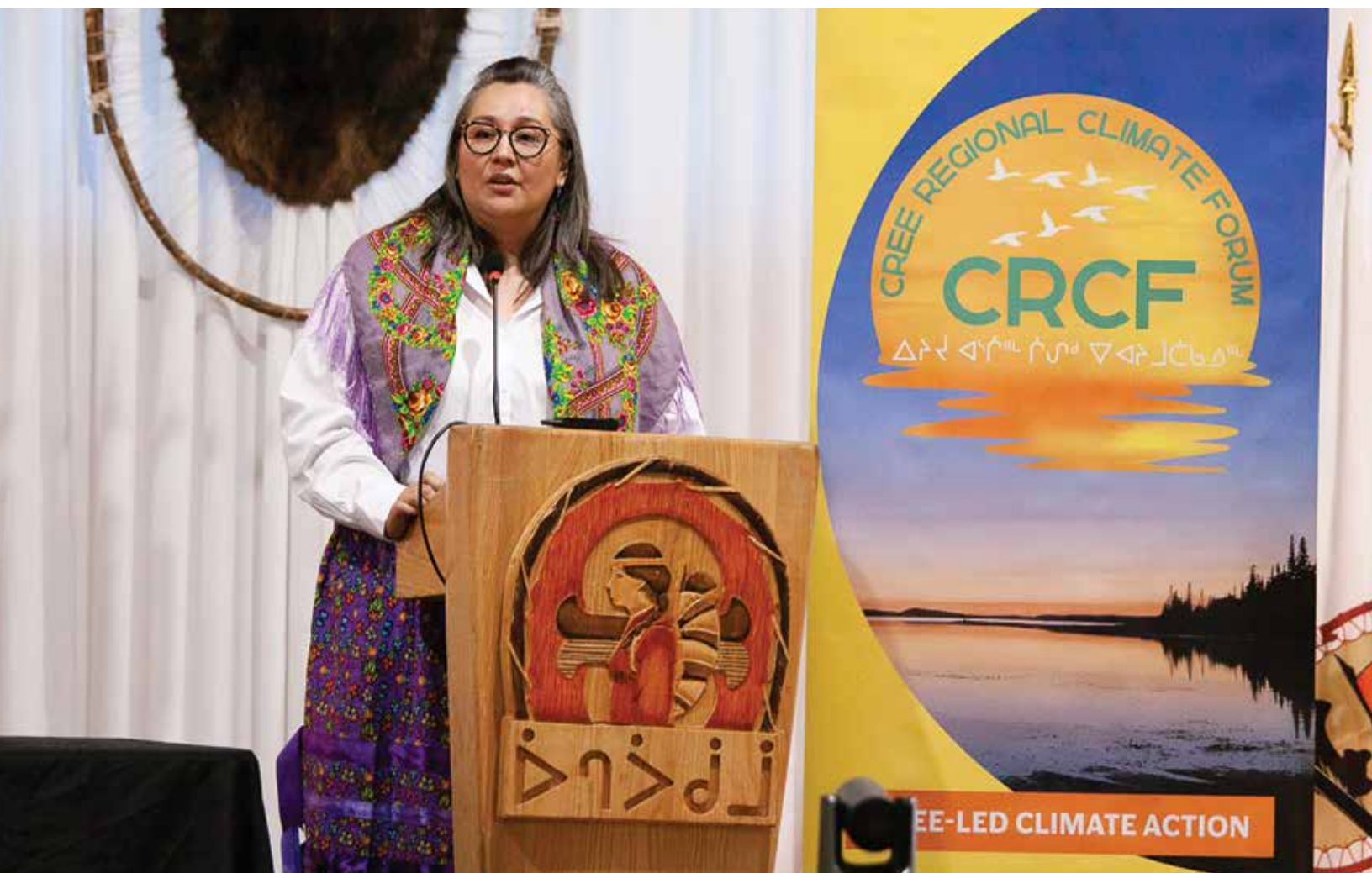
LES MINES

Le secteur minier constitue un maillon essentiel du développement énergétique. Cette année, nous avons assisté à l'amélioration de la Politique minière de la Nation crie, dont le but est d'informer et d'établir des normes au sein de ce secteur de développement. Ce document est multidimensionnel : il aborde les principes et la reconnaissance des droits des Cris, le partage des bénéfices des ressources et l'engagement à la création d'un processus de développement basé sur la durabilité, le respect de l'environnement et la création de bénéfices durables pour les communautés. La Nation crie a continué de trouver du soutien supplé-

mentaire pour sa politique et sa vision crie du développement en présentant sa vision au sein d'un forum minier international. Le profil de la Nation crie et les mécanismes de protection de l'environnement énoncés au chapitre 22 de la CBJNQ nécessitent un développement, une approche, une participation, une collaboration et un développement économique et social durables. Nous continuons de collaborer avec le Québec et le Canada pour nous assurer que le développement de notre territoire s'inscrit dans le cadre des travaux importants qui sont réalisés en vertu du mécanisme du chapitre 22.

LES JEUNES

Le Bureau de la Grande Cheffe a également participé au Premier Sommet des conseils des jeunes d'Eeyou Istchee en livrant un message important sur la gouvernance crie et la Constitution crie et en invitant nos jeunes membres à participer à notre prochain processus de gouvernance. Un des moments forts de cette conférence pour mon Bureau a été d'avoir eu l'occasion d'animer un atelier pour les jeunes participants intitulé Naviguer dans EYYOU ISTCHEE :



un processus approfondi d'analyse des différents droits et réglementations attachés aux catégories foncières sur l'ensemble du territoire et des dossiers politiques actifs qui sont en cours d'élaboration au niveau du leadership et de la gouvernance. Ce fut un plaisir d'offrir une expérience directe et d'enseigner l'importance de comprendre les droits de la CBJNQ et les nombreux dossiers qui sont actifs et nécessitent la contribution et le soutien des membres pour trouver une solution et un résultat dans le meilleur intérêt des membres de notre nation.

LES PARTENARIATS DE LA NATION CRIE

Mon Bureau tient à exprimer ses plus sincères remerciements à l'Association des femmes crie d'Eeyou Istchee (AFCEI) pour son partenariat dans le cadre de la Première Conférence sur le leadership des femmes autochtones tenue à Montréal et à laquelle ont participé les 11 nations autochtones du Québec. Cet événement a été créé comme un forum provincial en vue d'améliorer les relations de travail et créer un espace pour une meilleure compréhension des positions des diverses nations autochtones et afin de travailler les unes avec les autres, ainsi qu'avec nos homologues aux niveaux provincial et fédéral. Je tiens à exprimer mes plus sincères remerciements au Conseil Mohawk qui nous a accueillies sur son territoire traditionnel ainsi qu'à la Cheffe nationale de l'Assemblée des Premières Nations, Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, pour sa présence et son soutien aux participantes. Un point culminant notable de cet événement a été les panels animés par les femmes cheffes crie d'Eeyou Istchee, qui ont discuté de leurs rôles de leaders et de leur expérience en matière de gouvernance et de relations critiques. Des remerciements additionnels s'adressent au comité consultatif Gookum-nouch Advisory Paatakasuum pour la présentation des enseignements culturels, tels que l'histoire de la coiffe perlée et l'importance de reconnaître la transition de l'enfance à la femme adulte. Cet événement n'aurait pas été possible sans le partenariat essentiel de l'AFCEI, de HEC Montréal et de tous les services d'accompagnement qu'elles ont fournis dans la formation des femmes dans les domaines de la prise de parole en public, des compétences en leadership et du réseautage.

GOVERNANCE FÉDÉRALE ET SÉNAT

La Nation crie a été invitée à comparaître comme témoin dans le cadre de l'étude du Comité permanent du Sénat sur les peuples autochtones à propos du Cadre canadien des droits de la personne. L'étude s'est concentrée sur l'Appel à la justice 1.7 de l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées, lequel exhorte les gouvernements à établir un ombudsman et un tribunal national indépendant pour les droits des Autochtones et des droits de la personne. J'y ai présenté une déclaration concernant le tribunal national des droits des Autochtones et des droits de la personne, qui appuie les recommandations et reconnaît que le mécanisme en cours de révision tracerait une nouvelle voie et améliorerait la relation entre les peuples autochtones et le processus du tribunal. En

particulier en ce qui concerne les femmes et les enfants autochtones, qui se heurtent à des obstacles importants pour signaler les cas de violence et avoir accès aux services.

Des présentations additionnelles ont été soumises concernant la création d'un Conseil national de réconciliation, lesquelles fournissaient des commentaires sur les étapes nécessaires pour faire en sorte que le processus de réconciliation soit défini non seulement par le gouvernement fédéral, mais également par toutes les nations autochtones du Canada. Cette étude critique a été présentée par la sénatrice Michèle Audette. Elle propose un mécanisme qui incorporerait des éléments fonctionnels essentiels additionnels, tels qu'un financement adéquat et une approche pangouvernementale, et non seulement pour le travail du Conseil lui-même, mais également pour l'avancement des mesures de mise en œuvre de la réconciliation.

INTERNATIONAL - NATIONS UNIES

Le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a présenté la déclaration commune de la coalition lors de la session de juillet 2023 à Genève du Mécanisme d'experts sur les droits des peuples autochtones, laquelle soulignait l'impact de la crise climatique sur les peuples autochtones. La déclaration parlait directement de l'impact sans précédent des feux de forêt sur notre territoire, qui ont provoqué l'évacuation de nos communautés et le déplacement de nos populations en tant que réfugiés de la crise climatique. Une autre déclaration de la coalition a demandé une étude thématique sur la question de la crise climatique croissante dans les territoires autochtones et sur le besoin urgent de réparation et de restitution.

En outre, la déclaration commune de la coalition a été présentée en avril 2024 à New York concernant la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action national sur la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (DNUDPA) en ce qui a trait aux progrès du Canada dans la mise en œuvre d'un plan d'action national, et à la nécessité de veiller à ce que les peuples autochtones soient inclus dans le développement, la coopération et la consultation. Alors que nous constatons des progrès avancés au niveau fédéral, il reste encore beaucoup de travail à faire au niveau provincial pour garantir que les principes de la DNUDPA soient mis en œuvre concernant les Nations autochtones du Québec. La Nation crie a également tenu un événement parallèle multinational qui a mis en lumière la position des nations autochtones et la collaboration concernant les attentes quant aux progrès requis pour la mise en œuvre de la DNUDPA au Québec.

J'aimerais également exprimer mes plus sincères remerciements au Chef régional Ghislain Picard de l'Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador (APNQL), au Grand Chef Constant Awashish de la Nation atikamekw et à la Grande Cheffe Savana McGregor de la Nation algonquienne, pour leur participation à notre panel sur le leadership à New York, où nous avons discuté des défis et des capacités des différentes nations autochtones à collaborer et à travailler les unes avec les autres, ainsi que de nos attentes quant à la possibilité pour d'autres niveaux de gouvernement de bénéficier du processus de collaboration avec nous.





L'important travail de représentation de la Nation crie à différents niveaux internationaux de discussion ne peut se faire sans le soutien du directeur de la Justice, Donald Nicholls, et de son équipe, et nous tenons à remercier nos collègues et partenaires de veiller à ce que nos droits soient représentés et respectés et fassent partie du débat international plus vaste sur l'impact des peuples autochtones.

Il y a beaucoup de travail entrepris par le Gouvernement de la Nation crie en collaboration avec les communautés crie concernant la mise en œuvre des nombreuses ententes que nous avons signées avec différents niveaux de gouvernement. Au fur et à mesure de ce processus, nous voyons également à poursuivre une réflexion interne sur la manière dont nous fonctionnons et fournissons des services, tout en tirant davantage parti de l'approche de prestation des services. Je tiens à remercier le personnel de tous les différents départements qui collaborent avec mon Bureau sur les nombreux dossiers, trop nombreux pour être soulignés dans ce message du rapport annuel, mais qui sont présentés en détail tout au long du rapport lui-même. Leur travail et leur soutien essentiels nous permettent de continuer à collaborer et à travailler avec les différents membres, associations, entités et communautés d'Eeyou Istchee.

Je tiens également à exprimer un merci de tout cœur aux membres de mon personnel qui m'ont apporté tout le

soutien nécessaire pour entreprendre le mandat du Bureau de la Grande Cheffe. Comme toujours, il s'agit d'une formidable expérience d'apprentissage pour comprendre et protéger les droits reconnus par la CBJNQ. Ce processus, bien qu'exigeant, témoigne également de l'importance de vos contributions. Nous ne serions pas en mesure de réaliser le travail que nous accomplissons sans votre précieuse contribution. Mon plus grand témoignage d'appréciation va à Richard Shecapio, qui agit en tant que négociateur principal pour la Nation crie et qui fait avancer nos dossiers et continue d'améliorer les relations avec les communautés. J'aimerais également remercier une joueuse essentielle de mon équipe, Kristen Moar, qui a joué un rôle clé dans les besoins administratifs du Bureau de la Grande Cheffe et dans la communication avec les autres départements.

En terminant, je tiens à remercier les membres de la Nation crie pour tout leur soutien tout au long de cette année, ainsi que pour les nombreux messages d'encouragement et de prières adressés à moi et à ma famille alors que nous poursuivons cet important travail.

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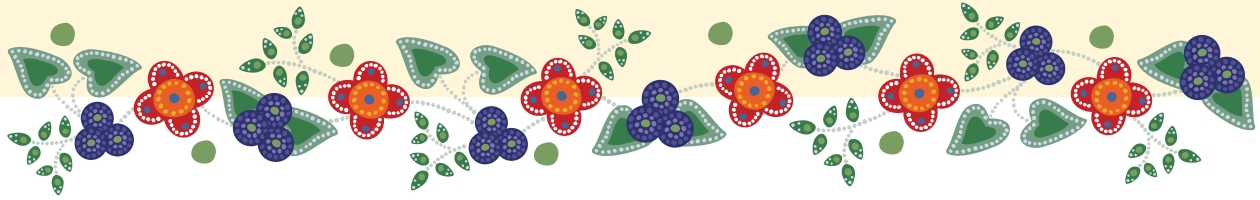
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Grande Cheffe / Présidente





MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF/ VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Norman A. Wapachee



IT IS A PLEASURE TO PROVIDE THE CREE NATION OF EYYOU ISTCHEE MEMBERS WITH AN UPDATE ON OUR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR.

Early in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, we encountered severe forest fires in Eeyou Istchee while at the same time dedicating considerable effort to promote and protect our rights and advancing new initiatives.

Since the birth of the Grand Council of the Crees, it has always been our mission to represent our Cree interest to protect our rights, promote Cree culture and language, and advance the well-being and prosperity of our people while fostering sustainable development for our Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee.

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CANADA/ QUEBEC AGREEMENTS

Since 1975, the Cree Nation has made significant efforts to uphold Cree rights and progress toward self-government for Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee. In modern-day Eeyou Istchee, we can always anticipate some challenges in upholding our nation-to-nation agreements with Canada and Quebec. Some challenges include balancing economic development with environmental protection; defining and maintaining the Cree Nation's jurisdictional rights and self-governance; sustainably managing land and natural resources due to climate change; and preserving/promoting Cree language, culture, and traditions in the face of modernization and influences.

Addressing these challenges will require ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and commitment from all parties involved to respect and uphold the spirit and intent of the nation-to-nation agreements between the Cree Nation, Canada and Quebec.

SUMMER 2023 FOREST FIRES

The 2023 forest fires in Eeyou Istchee had severe consequences, leading to the evacuation of our members from their communities to urban centers in the south. Our communities, especially our hunters and trappers, whose way of life depends on the lands and its natural resources for sustenance, were significantly affected. The fires devastated hunting grounds and wildlife habitats, destroyed many trappers' cabins, and disrupted cultural activities/traditions and means of living.

The long-term consequences of the fires on the Cree communities and hunters and trappers are profound. To address our losses, our concerted efforts are placed on recovering our losses, pulling our funds together, rebuilding infrastructures and restoring the affected campsites. Collaborative efforts between outside governments are essential to address the complex challenges posed by the fires and to ensure the resilience of our communities, hunters and trappers, and their way of life in the face of future natural environmental threats.

EYYOU MARINE REGION LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT (EMRLCA)

In the spring of 2023, I attended my first EMRLCA Implementation Committee meeting. The main mandate of the Implementation Committee is to oversee the implementation of the EMRLCA. This includes ensuring that the terms and provisions of the agreement are being carried out effectively, monitoring progress, addressing issues that may arise and working towards fulfilling the agreement's objectives. In brief, the primary objectives of the EMRLCA are an affirmation of Cree rights and title to traditional lands and waters, providing for the recognition of Cree governance and jurisdiction in the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) and establishing a framework for co-management and sustainable development.

Although the EMRLCA confirms collective ownership and a special harvesting regime, there are current challenges in the implementation such as co-management of wildlife (EMR Wildlife Board and CTA); EMR Land Use Planning and Development (EMP Planning Commission and Impact Review Board) and other matters including compensation, protected areas, overlaps with Nunavik Marine region and the fact it does not touch on Coast Guard, and search and rescue.

Addressing these challenges will require strong collaboration, ongoing dialogue, and a commitment from all parties to work together toward the goals of sustainable development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection in the EMR. Nonetheless, the EMR allows for the creation of the National Marine Conservation Area for the eastern side of Winebaahk and Che-Winebaahk.



NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA (NMCA)

Last year, the NMCA Steering Committee for the creation of a national marine conservation area played a crucial role in providing guidance and leadership throughout the planning and establishment process. The Cree Nation Government (CNG) and Parks Canada developed an overall strategic plan that included defining goals, objectives, and timelines. In the implementation of key plans, CNG and Parks Canada engaged in extensive information/consultation sessions with coastal Cree communities, tallymen, land users, elders, youth, and focus groups to gather coastal Cree views to ensure Cree interests are reflected in the future of the NMCA.

The recent information and consultation session with the coastal Cree communities regarding the feasibility study for an NMCA in eastern James Bay was a success. Community members participated, bringing forth a wealth of traditional knowledge and modern perspectives. Their deep connection to land and water was evident in the discussions and thoughtful suggestions. These sessions fostered a sense of unity and collaboration among the attendees, highlighting a shared vision for environmental stewardship and conservation efforts. Overall, the consultation sessions set a promising course for the establishment of an NMCA in Winepaahk and Che-Winepaahk.

In the next steps, the Steering Committee will be advancing toward the establishment of the NMCA. As part of the Steering Committee's commitment, the establishment of the NMCA will be done in a strategic, collaborative and effective manner.

EYYOU PLANNING COMMISSION (EPC)

Under the Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement, the EPC was established to oversee land use planning in Category II Lands in Eeyou Istchee and this mandate includes harmonization of all activities within Categories I and III Lands. I must say that there are challenges in developing land use plans and reviewing, approving and monitoring development projects to ensure they align with the land use plans and environmental protection measures due to a high turnover of human resources within the EPC Unit and a lack of operative planning tools.

As Chairman of the EPC, last year, our EPC Unit focused on establishing a high-level Land Use Planning Advisory Committee that would engage in intergovernmental collaboration with Quebec. Their objective is to acquire specific powers from Quebec to ensure that our land use plans are not merely theoretical, but endowed with Cree authority to





enforce policies and regulations within designated areas of our land use plans.

In addition, our team focused on developing a strategic approach to ensure that land use plans are well-coordinated and harmonized, encompassing both land and sea. This effort is particularly important in the context of agreements such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement.

Overall, the EPC plays a crucial role in ensuring that land use planning and development activities are ongoing within Eeyou Istchee and are carried out in a sustainable and culturally sensitive manner, and align with the governance agreement between the Cree Nation and the Quebec government.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The recommendations, consultations and representation in the report submitted to Quebec by a panel of scientific experts still do not adequately include the interests of the Cree and the realities of our northern communities. The report proposes a coherent approach to accelerate Quebec's adaptation to climate that needs to be implemented immediately. It includes 5 strategic priorities for climate adaptation: managing natural ecosystems, protecting health and safety, adapting infrastructure, facilitating economic adaptation and supporting stakeholder action. It provides recommendations, and actions to address these strategic priorities that would accelerate Quebec's adaptation to the accelerating reality of climate change. The report emphasizes the importance of science-based decision-making that would guide public policy development.

Before the publication of the report, the Cree Nation stressed the importance of meaningful consultations and integration of Cree communities and traditional knowledge holders into the process. Our CNG team voiced the need to consider carbon rights in the context of Cree-led conservation finance and similar to hunting and fishing rights under Section 22 of the JBNQA; improve forestry practices inspired by the Paix des Braves agreement while acknowledging wildlife directives; address mental health and intergenerational trauma as communities on the frontlines of climate change; ensure coherence and collaboration across all provincial government ministries; provide funding support and proper infrastructure considerations in policymaking, such as energy and zero-emission vehicles, and energy autonomy for resilience to weather extremes; and connect Whapmagoostui to the grid with road access to enhance energy efficiency and facilitate travel and emergency evacuations and response.

The Cree Nation Government must develop a thoughtful strategy to enhance our involvement, participation and impact in addressing climate change from an Eeyou/Eenou standpoint.

HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING COORDINATING COMMITTEE (HFTCC)

The main mandate of the HFTCC under the JBNQA is to oversee and coordinate the management of hunting, fishing, and trapping activities within Eeyou Istchee. This includes ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources, protecting traditional rights and promoting conservation efforts.

Last year, it was the Cree Nation's turn to chair the HFTCC; therefore, I was assigned to chair. During that time,



we successfully advanced initiatives that were important to us and our fellow Indigenous parties. At times, it can be very challenging to balance traditional practices with modern conservation needs to ensure that wildlife we depend on for sustenance such as moose, caribou, and other species of wildlife are protected in highly industrialized areas where development is incompatible with the Cree way of life.

This year, the challenge was the decline of the caribou population. The HFTCC made significant efforts to safeguard the boreal caribou. Last winter, Quebec attempted to take some caribou from the northern parts of Lake Abenak and relocate them to a designated area in Val-d'Or without consulting the Cree. This unilateral action was strongly opposed by the Cree party. After several attempts, Quebec refrained. Quebec must increase efforts to safeguard the caribou populations and their habitats from commercial activities such as logging and road construction within the region. This principle must also apply to moose and moose habitats south of the northern limits.

In addition, the process of collecting, compiling and organizing relevant information on commercial leases for outfitters' camps has been complex. Under JBNQA, the process of buying an outfitting camp within Eeyou Istchee involves specific provisions that touch on the rights of first refusal for the Cree Nation. This means that if a property within the territory is put up for sale, the Cree Nation may have the right to purchase it before it is offered to others. This right allows the Cree Nation to have the first opportunity to acquire properties within their traditional territory that help them to better preserve their cultural and economic interests. However, the collection and organization of relevant documents before transfers and recommendations are made by the HFTCC is a complex issue. The HFTCC appointed members to a Working Group to streamline this process.

I must say that HFTCC continues to play a crucial role in managing natural resources in Eeyou Istchee while facing various complex challenges that require careful consideration and collaboration among stakeholders.

CREE NATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CNRI)

As Chairman of the CNRI Working Group, I am very pleased to report that the CNRI Working Group hired Vincent Gautier-Doucet to coordinate the CNRI file last fall. In the few months following his engagement, we were able to complete the internal consultations with CNG's Environment and Remedial Works; Cree School Board; Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, Aanischaaukamikw, and other external Indigenous partners such as Attaniuvik (Nunavik) and the Abenaki. In addition, we were able to have our first historic forum on research in Eeyou Istchee in March just before the closing of the year.

Drawing from the consultations and the results of the research forum, three primary mandate proposals were put forth for consideration:

1. Coordination of Cree research review processes between Cree communities and Cree regional organizations to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines and methodologies aligned with Cree ways of doing;

2. Address Eeyou data governance and access within the Eeyou Istchee, emphasizing data sovereignty and protection of Cree knowledge, and;
3. Focus on enhancing regional research capabilities and research reviewing processes within the Cree Nation through training, education, and funding programs.

The steps towards the official establishment of the CNRI are underway. It will involve the creation of an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of all the Cree communities and organizations that are involved in research; a smaller Steering Committee will be formed to oversee the work of the CNRI staff and implement the three initial mandates. All this work will be done collaboratively with all Cree stakeholders. In close collaboration, we can build the Cree Nation Research Institute into a renowned institution for Indigenous research and governance.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EYYOU ISTCHEE

The Rights of Eeyou Istchee Initiative is close to my heart. Building upon 'Let Us Give Our Land a Voice', this project aims to acknowledge the inherent value and rights of Eeyou Istchee as a primary guardian of Eeyou/Eenou identity, cultural heritage and welfare in a highly industrialized world.

Currently, urbanization and modernization have led us to slowly disconnect from Eeyou Istchee.

Our ancestors' wisdom teaches us that we are not owners of Eeyou Istchee, but rather its stewards, entrusted with the duty to protect and preserve all beings and natural resources from overexploitation. Upholding the rights of Eeyou Istchee involves honouring its inherent worth, interconnected nature, and mutual bond with our water sources, boreal forests, wildlife, and marine ecosystems. It echoes the connection our grandparents shared with Eeyou Istchee before urbanization and modernization.

This exciting project is still under development. Our goal is to collaborate with Eeyou/Eenou elders who maintain a deep connection with the lands and rivers in promoting the rights and responsibilities of Eeyou Istchee. We aim to use this legal tradition and transform it into law or potentially into a section of the Cree Constitution and use it as a legal instrument to safeguard Eeyou Istchee from overexploitation. In turn, it safeguards our identity, culture and heritage, and reminds the children/youth of our historical relationship with Eeyou Istchee.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the CNG senior staff, directors, managers, middle management and support staff for their committed teamwork and dedication in advancing the leadership's initiatives for the prosperity of the Cree Nation. Your commitment and collaborative efforts are truly commendable, and I am grateful for your contributions towards our shared goals.

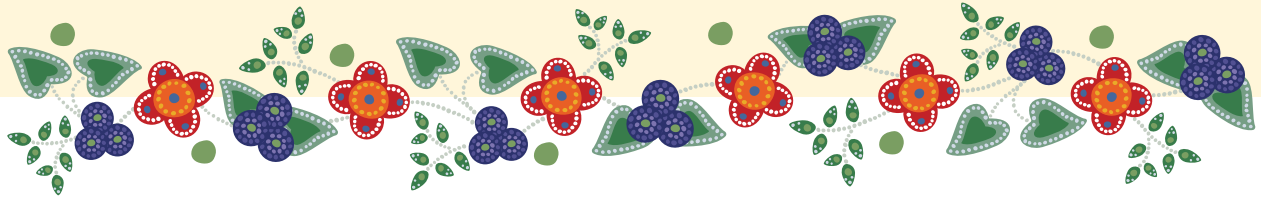
Norman A. Wapachee
Deputy Grand Chief





MESSAGE DU GRAND CHEF ADJOINT/ VICE-PRÉSIDENT

Norman A. Wapachee



C'EST AVEC PLAISIR QUE NOUS PRÉSENTONS AUX MEMBRES DE LA NATION CRIE D'EYYOU ISTCHEE UNE MISE À JOUR SUR NOS ACTIVITÉS ET NOS RÉALISATIONS AU COURS DE L'EXERCICE 2023-2024.

Au début de l'exercice 2023-2024, nous avons fait face à de graves feux de forêt en Eeyou Istchee, tout en consacrant des efforts considérables à la promotion et à la protection de nos droits et à la promotion de nouvelles initiatives.

Depuis la naissance du Grand Conseil des Cris, notre mission a toujours été de représenter nos intérêts cris afin de protéger nos droits, de promouvoir la culture et la langue cris et de faire progresser le bien-être et la prospérité de notre peuple tout en favorisant le développement durable de nos communautés cris d'Eeyou Istchee.

LES DÉFIS DE LA MISE EN APPLICATION DES ENTENTES CANADA/QUÉBEC

Depuis 1975, la Nation crie a déployé des efforts considérables pour faire respecter les droits des Cris et progresser vers l'autonomie gouvernementale des communautés cris d'Eeyou Istchee. Dans l'Eeyou Istchee d'aujourd'hui, nous pouvons toujours nous attendre à faire face à des défis pour de qui est du respect de nos ententes de nation à nation avec le Canada et le Québec. Certains défis concernent l'équilibre entre le développement économique et la protection de l'environnement; la définition et le maintien des droits juridictionnels de la Nation crie et l'autonomie gouvernementale; la gestion durable des terres et des ressources naturelles en raison des changements climatiques; et la préservation et la promotion de la langue, de la culture et des traditions cris face à la modernisation et aux influences.

Relever ces défis nécessitera un dialogue, une collaboration et un engagement continus de la part de toutes les parties concernées pour respecter et faire respecter l'esprit et l'intention des ententes de nation à nation entre la Nation crie, le Canada et le Québec.

FEUX DE FORÊT DE L'ÉTÉ 2023

Les feux de forêt de 2023 en Eeyou Istchee ont eu de graves conséquences en entraînant l'évacuation de nos membres de leurs communautés vers les centres urbains du sud. Nos communautés, en particulier nos chasseurs et nos trappeurs, dont le mode de vie dépend du territoire et de ses ressources naturelles pour leur subsistance, ont été si-

gnificativement affectés. Les feux ont dévasté les territoires de chasse et les habitats fauniques, détruit de nombreuses cabanes de trappeurs et perturbé les activités/traditions culturelles et les modes de vie.

Les conséquences à long terme des incendies sur les communautés cris ainsi que sur les chasseurs et les trappeurs sont profondes. Pour faire face à nos pertes, nos efforts concertés visent à récupérer nos pertes, à rassembler nos fonds, à reconstruire les infrastructures et à restaurer les campements touchés. Les efforts de collaboration entre les gouvernements extérieurs sont essentiels pour relever les défis complexes posés par les incendies et pour assurer la résilience de nos communautés, des chasseurs et des trappeurs, ainsi que leur mode de vie face aux futures menaces environnementales naturelles.

ACCORD SUR LES REVENDICATIONS TERRITORIALES DE LA RÉGION MARINE D'EYYOU (ARTRME)

Au printemps 2023, j'ai assisté à ma première réunion du comité de mise en application de l'ARTRME. Le mandat principal du Comité de mise en application est de superviser la mise en application de l'ARTRME. Cela implique de s'assurer que les termes et les dispositions de l'entente sont appliqués efficacement, de faire le suivi des progrès, de résoudre les problèmes qui peuvent survenir et de travailler à la réalisation des objectifs de l'entente. En bref, les principaux objectifs de l'ARTRME sont l'affirmation des droits et titres des Cris sur les terres et les eaux traditionnelles, la reconnaissance de la gouvernance et de la compétence des Cris dans la région marine d'Eeyou (RME) et l'établissement d'un cadre de cogestion et de développement durable.

Bien que l'ARTRME confirme la propriété collective et un régime de récolte spécial, il existe actuellement des enjeux dans la mise en application, tels que la cogestion de la faune (Bureau de la faune de la RME et Association des trappeurs cris - ATC); aménagement et développement des terres de la RME (Commission de planification du PGE et Commission d'examen des répercussions) et d'autres questions, notamment l'indemnisation, les zones protégées, les chevauchements avec la région marine du Nunavik et le fait que cela n'implique pas la Garde côtière, ni la recherche et le sauvetage.



S'attaquer à ces enjeux nécessitera une collaboration étroite, un dialogue continu et un engagement de toutes les parties à travailler ensemble pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable, de préservation culturelle et de protection de l'environnement dans la RME. Néanmoins, la RME permet la création de l'Aire marine nationale de conservation pour le côté est de Winebaahk et Che-Winebaahk.

AIRE MARINE NATIONALE DE CONSERVATION (AMNC)

L'année dernière, le Comité directeur de l'AMNC pour la création d'une aire marine nationale de conservation a joué un rôle déterminant en fournissant des orientations et en assumant un leadership tout au long du processus de planification et d'établissement. Le Gouvernement de la Nation Crie (GNC) et Parcs Canada ont élaboré un plan stratégique global qui comprenait la définition des buts, des objectifs et des échéanciers. Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre des principaux plans, le GNC et Parcs Canada ont participé à de vastes séances d'information et de consultation auprès des communautés crient côtières, des maîtres de trappe, des utilisateurs des territoires, des aînés, des jeunes et des groupes de discussion afin de recueillir les points de vue des Cries côtiers et de faire en sorte que leurs intérêts soient reflétés dans l'avenir de l'AMNC.

La récente séance d'information et de consultation auprès des communautés crient côtières concernant l'étude de faisabilité d'une AMNC dans l'est de la Baie-James a été un succès. Les membres de la communauté ont participé en y apportant une richesse de connaissances traditionnelles et de perspectives modernes. Leur lien profond avec la terre et l'eau était évident dans les discussions et les suggestions réfléchies. Ces séances ont favorisé un sentiment d'unité et de collaboration entre les participants, en mettant en évidence une vision commune des efforts de gestion et de conservation de l'environnement. Dans l'ensemble, les séances de consultation ont tracé une voie prometteuse pour la création d'une AMNC à Winepaahk et Che-Winepaahk.

Au cours des prochaines étapes, le Comité directeur fera progresser la création de l'AMNC. Dans le cadre de l'engagement du Comité directeur, la création de l'AMNC se fera de manière stratégique, collaborative et efficace.

COMMISSION EYYOU DE PLANIFICATION (CEP)

En vertu de l'Entente sur la gouvernance Crie-Québec, la CEP a été créée pour superviser la planification de l'utilisation des terres dans les territoires de catégorie II en Eeyou Istchee et ce mandat comprend l'harmonisation de toutes les activités sur les territoires des catégories I et III. Je dois dire qu'il existe des enjeux dans l'élaboration de plans d'aménagement du territoire et dans l'examen, l'approbation et le suivi des projets de développement en vue de faire en sorte qu'ils s'alignent sur les plans d'aménagement du territoire et les mesures de protection de l'environnement, et ce, en raison d'un roulement élevé des ressources humaines au sein de l'unité CEP et d'un manque d'outils de planification opérationnelle.

Alors que j'étais président de la CEP, l'année dernière, notre unité CEP s'est concentrée sur la création d'un comité consultatif de haut niveau sur l'aménagement du territoire et devant s'engager dans une collaboration intergouvernementale avec le Québec. Son objectif est d'acquérir des pouvoirs spécifiques du Québec pour faire en sorte que nos plans d'aménagement du territoire ne soient pas simplement théoriques, mais dotés du pouvoir de l'appliquer les politiques et les règlements dans les zones désignées de nos plans d'aménagement du territoire.

De plus, notre équipe s'est concentrée sur l'élaboration d'une approche stratégique pour faire en sorte que les plans d'aménagement du territoire sont bien coordonnés et harmonisés, en englobant à la fois la terre et la mer. Cet effort est particulièrement important dans le contexte d'ententes telles que la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois (CBJNQ) et l'Accord sur les revendications territoriales de la région marine d'Eeyou (ARTRME).

Dans l'ensemble, la CEP joue un rôle crucial en faisant en sorte que les activités d'aménagement et de développement du territoire se poursuivent en Eeyou Istchee et sont menées de manière durable et culturellement sensible, et conformément à l'entente de gouvernance entre la Nation crie et le Gouvernement du Québec.

CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Les recommandations, les consultations et les représentations dans le rapport soumis au Québec par un panel d'experts scientifiques n'intègrent toujours pas adéquatement les intérêts des Cries et les réalités de nos communautés nordiques. Le rapport propose une approche cohérente pour accélérer l'adaptation du Québec au climat, laquelle doit être mise en œuvre immédiatement. Elle comprend 5 priorités stratégiques pour l'adaptation climatique : gérer les écosystèmes naturels, protéger la santé et la sécurité, adapter les infrastructures, faciliter l'adaptation économique et soutenir l'action des parties prenantes. Le rapport formule des recommandations et des actions pour répondre à ces priorités stratégiques qui accélèreraient l'adaptation du Québec à la réalité de plus en plus rapide des changements climatiques. Le rapport souligne l'importance d'une prise de décision fondée sur la science, laquelle guiderait l'élaboration des politiques publiques.

Avant la publication du rapport, la Nation crie a souligné l'importance de consultations significatives et de l'intégration des communautés crient et des détenteurs des connaissances traditionnelles dans le processus. Notre équipe du GNC a exprimé la nécessité : de considérer les droits sur le carbone dans le contexte du financement de la conservation dirigée par les Cries et similaire aux droits de chasse et de pêche en vertu du chapitre 22 de la CBJNQ; d'améliorer les pratiques forestières inspirées de l'entente de la Paix des Braves tout en respectant les directives fauniques; d'aborder la santé mentale et les traumatismes intergénérationnels en tant que communautés en première ligne des changements climatiques; d'assurer la cohérence et la collaboration entre tous les ministères du gouvernement provincial; de fournir un soutien financier et prendre en compte les infrastructures appropriées dans



l'élaboration des politiques, telles que les véhicules énergétiques et zéro émission, et l'autonomie énergétique pour la résilience aux conditions météorologiques extrêmes; et de relier Whapmagoostui au réseau avec un accès routier afin d'améliorer l'efficacité énergétique et faciliter les déplacements ainsi que les évacuations et les interventions d'urgence.

Le Gouvernement de la Nation Crie doit élaborer une stratégie réfléchie pour accroître notre implication, notre participation et notre impact dans la lutte contre les changements climatiques d'un point de vue Eeyou/Eenou.

COMITÉ DE COORDINATION DE LA CHASSE, DE LA PÊCHE ET DU PIÉGEAGE (CCCPP)

Le mandat principal du CCCPP en vertu de la CBJNQ est de superviser et de coordonner la gestion des activités de chasse, de pêche et de piégeage en Eeyou Istchee. Cela implique de garantir l'utilisation durable des ressources naturelles, de protéger les droits traditionnels et de promouvoir les efforts de conservation.

L'année dernière, c'était au tour de la Nation crie de présider le CCCPP; par conséquent, j'ai été nommé président. Pendant cette période, nous avons fait progresser avec succès des initiatives qui étaient importantes pour nous et nos collègues autochtones. Parfois, il peut être très difficile d'équilibrer les pratiques traditionnelles avec les besoins modernes de conservation afin de faire en sorte que la faune dont nous dépendons pour notre subsistance, comme l'orignal, le caribou et d'autres espèces sauvages, soit protégée dans des zones hautement industrialisées où le développement est incompatible avec le mode de vie des Cris.

Cette année, l'enjeu était le déclin de la population de caribous. Le CCCPP a déployé des efforts importants pour sauvegarder le caribou boréal. L'hiver dernier, Québec a tenté de prélever des caribous des parties nord du lac Albanel et de les déplacer vers une zone désignée à Val-d'Or sans consulter les Cris. Cette action unilatérale a rencontré une vive opposition de la part de la partie crie. Après plusieurs tentatives, Québec s'est abstenu. Le Québec doit intensifier ses efforts pour protéger les populations de cari-



bous et leurs habitats face à des activités commerciales telles que l'exploitation forestière et la construction de routes dans la région. Ce principe doit également s'appliquer à l'original et à ses habitats au sud des limites nord.

De plus, le processus de collecte, de compilation et d'organisation de l'information pertinente sur les baux commerciaux des camps de pourvoiries a été complexe. Dans le cadre de la CBJNQ, le processus d'achat d'une pourvoirie en Eeyou Istchee comporte des dispositions particulières qui touchent au droit de premier refus de la Nation crie. Cela signifie que si une propriété située sur le territoire est mise en vente, la Nation crie peut avoir le droit de l'acheter avant qu'elle ne soit offerte à d'autres. Ce droit permet à la Nation crie d'avoir la première occasion d'acquérir des propriétés sur son territoire traditionnel qui l'aident à mieux préserver ses intérêts culturels et économiques. Cependant, la collecte et l'organisation des documents pertinents avant que les transferts et les recommandations ne soient faites par le CCCPP sont un problème complexe. Le CCCPP a nommé des membres d'un groupe de travail pour rationaliser ce processus.

Je dois dire que le CCCPP continue de jouer un rôle crucial dans la gestion des ressources naturelles d'Eeyou Istchee tout en faisant face à divers défis complexes qui nécessitent une réflexion approfondie et une collaboration entre les intervenants.

INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE DE LA NATION CRIE (IRNC)

À titre de président du groupe de travail de l'IRNC, je suis très heureux de vous annoncer que le groupe de travail de l'IRNC a embauché l'automne dernier Vincent Gauthier-Doucet pour coordonner le dossier de l'IRNC. Dans les quelques mois qui ont suivi son entrée en fonction, nous avons pu compléter les consultations internes auprès du service Environnement et travaux de remédiation du GNC; de la Commission scolaire crie; du Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James, d'Aanischaukamikw et d'autres partenaires autochtones externes tels qu'Attanniuvik (Nunavik) et les Abénakis. De plus, nous avons pu tenir notre premier forum historique sur la recherche en Eeyou Istchee en mars juste avant la fin de l'exercice 2023-2024.

À partir des consultations et des résultats du forum de recherche, trois principales propositions de mandat ont été mises de l'avant pour examen :

1. Coordonner les processus d'examen de la recherche crie entre les communautés cries et les organisations régionales cries pour s'assurer de l'adhésion aux lignes directrices éthiques et aux méthodologies s'harmonisant avec les façons de faire des Cries;
2. Aborder la gouvernance et l'accès aux données eeyou au sein d'Eeyou Istchee, en mettant l'accent sur la souveraineté des données et la protection du savoir crie; et
3. Mettre l'accent sur l'amélioration des capacités de recherche régionales et des processus d'examen de la recherche au sein de la Nation crie au moyen de programmes de formation, d'éducation et de financement.

Les démarches en vue de la création officielle de l'IRNC sont en cours. Elles impliquent la création d'un Comité

consultatif composé de représentants de toutes les communautés et organisations cries engagées dans la recherche; la formation d'un Comité directeur plus restreint chargé de superviser le travail du personnel de l'IRNC et de mettre en œuvre les trois mandats initiaux. Tout ce travail se fera en collaboration avec tous les intervenants cries. En étroite collaboration, nous pouvons faire de l'Institut de recherche de la Nation crie une institution renommée en matière de recherche et de gouvernance autochtones.

DROITS ET RESPONSABILITÉS D'EYYOU ISTCHEE

L'Initiative sur les droits d'Eeyou Istchee me tient à cœur. S'appuyant sur « Donnons une voix à notre territoire », ce projet vise à reconnaître la valeur inhérente et les droits d'Eeyou Istchee en tant que principal gardien de l'identité, du patrimoine culturel et du bien-être Eeyou/Eenou dans un monde hautement industrialisé.

Actuellement, l'urbanisation et la modernisation nous ont amenés à nous déconnecter lentement d'Eeyou Istchee.

La sagesse de nos ancêtres nous enseigne que nous ne sommes pas les propriétaires d'Eeyou Istchee, mais plutôt ses intendants, investis du devoir de protéger et de préserver de la surexploitation tous les êtres et toutes les ressources naturelles. Défendre les droits d'Eeyou Istchee implique d'honorer leur valeur inhérente, leur nature interreliée et leur lien mutuel avec nos sources d'eau, nos forêts boréales, notre faune et nos écosystèmes marins. Cela fait écho au lien que nos grands-parents partageaient avec Eeyou Istchee avant l'urbanisation et la modernisation.

Ce projet passionnant est toujours en développement. Notre objectif est de collaborer avec les aînés Eeyou/Eenou qui entretiennent un lien profond avec les terres et les rivières en faisant la promotion des droits et responsabilités d'Eeyou Istchee. Nous visons à utiliser cette tradition juridique et à la transformer en une loi ou potentiellement en un article de la Constitution crie et à l'utiliser comme instrument juridique pour protéger Eeyou Istchee de la surexploitation. En retour, ce projet sauvegarde notre identité, notre culture et notre patrimoine et rappelle aux enfants et aux jeunes notre relation historique avec Eeyou Istchee.

En conclusion, j'exprime ma sincère gratitude aux cadres supérieurs, aux directeurs, aux gestionnaires, aux cadres intermédiaires et au personnel de soutien du GNC pour leur travail d'équipe engagé et leur dévouement à faire avancer les initiatives des dirigeants pour la prospérité de la Nation crie. Votre engagement et vos efforts de collaboration sont vraiment louables et je vous suis reconnaissant pour vos contributions à nos objectifs communs.

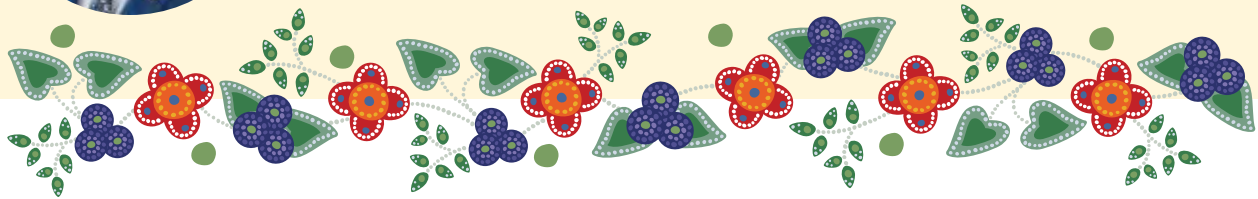
*Norman A. Wapachee
Grand Chef adjoint*





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Davey Bobbish



THIS IS MY SECOND ANNUAL REPORT AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT. I WISH TO THANK THE CREE LEADERSHIP FOR CONFIRMING MY ROLE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND ONCE AGAIN FOR THE TRUST THEY HAVE PLACED IN ME TO ASSUME THIS KEY POSITION WITHIN THE CREE NATION.

This year, I had the opportunity to present my main priorities as Executive Director to the Cree Leadership and Senior Management. These involve working closely with the Cree leadership to protect Cree rights and prepare for the upcoming renewal of key agreements, as well as to strengthen the relationship with our communities and key partners. I am also personally committed to building a strong team within the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government.

During the past year, we have made great progress on all these priorities. In particular, we have further strengthened our support to Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty as she works to protect our Cree rights, defend our interests, revitalize our language and culture, and ensure the well-being of our members, including our youth and elders.

As technology continues to evolve and the world becomes increasingly interdependent, the importance of adaptability, resilience, and a collective desire to protect and promote our rights, identity, and traditional way of life is increasingly vital. Rising consumption and increased resource use by a growing world population are putting tremendous pressure on our planet's biodiversity and natural resources. They are also exacerbating the impacts of the climate crisis, as we saw at firsthand in last summer's forest fires.

As individuals and as an organization, we have always navigated change. As the pace of change accelerates, we must embrace it and adapt to these new realities even faster while protecting and maintaining our rights and our traditional way of life.

Over the years, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government have helped the Cree Nation and the Cree communities chart a new course and navigate a seismic transformation. The Cree Nation has come a long way since the signing of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* almost fifty years ago. The *Paix des Braves* in 2001 and the *Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement* in 2008 marked a turning point in our relationship with Quebec and Canada. These Agreements strengthened our relationship with both Governments

and settled many outstanding implementation, governance and fiscal issues. They enabled the Cree Nation to assume greater responsibility and autonomy for the governance of our own affairs, including for our community, social and economic development. They paved the way for the Cree Nation to take on more responsibility in many areas that directly affect the well-being of our citizens and communities, including health, education, police, justice, traditional activities, and the protection of the environment.

We are now approaching another important juncture in our relationship with Canada as we prepare for the renewal of the *Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement* and other key Agreements in 2028. We expect formal discussions with Canada on their renewal to begin in less than two years. The renewal of these Agreements will be essential in ensuring the protection of Cree rights and the well-being of our members, our communities, and future generations.

During the past year, we took every opportunity to sensitize federal officials on the history, context and importance of the JBNQA and related Agreements, such as the *New Relationship Agreement*. The Grand Chief delivered a noteworthy presentation to deputy ministers and senior officials from key federal departments and agencies on the importance of our special bilateral nation-to-nation and treaty relationship. I continued to consolidate my relationship with key federal officials, including Heather McLean, the current Assistant Deputy Minister for the Implementation Branch at Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Lead Federal Representative on the Standing Liaison Committee. We re-established the Cree-Canada Operational Table, which, along with the Standing Liaison Committee, will further strengthen the relationship with Canada at an operational level.

Along with working with federal officials, I have emphasized the need for the Cree Nation to share an understanding of the importance of the *New Relationship Agreement* and other key Agreements and that we work together to best prepare for the fast-approaching renewal discussions with Canada.



During the last year, I continued to further strengthen our relationship and collaboration with the Cree First Nations, both directly and through various channels like the meetings of “Directors General and Treasurers.” These quarterly meetings have become an essential part of the collaborative working relationship between the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities, and they also provide an excellent exchange forum among the communities themselves. I wish to thank all the Directors General, Treasurers and other community capital planning personnel for their commitment to making this happen.

I continued to build and maintain a strong team within our organization so that we can better support the Cree Nation and our Cree communities. We have a great team

of directors, coordinators, and dedicated employees. I will continue to strive to ensure that everyone feels included and that each contribution is valued.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank all the directors and employees of the Cree Nation Government, as well as our advisors and other professionals, for their great work and continued dedication to our Cree Nation.

I am honoured to serve our Cree Nation under our current Cree leadership.

Chininaaskumitinaawaau,

Davey Bobbish
Executive Director

THE CREE NATION OF WASHAW SIBI

During the 2023-24, the Cree Nation Government has proudly continued to provide funding to the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi for our tenth Cree community to continue the important work of establishing a physical community which reflects the very long-held vision of the people of Washaw Sibi.

The focus of the work of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi has been the securing of a suitable site for constructing the future village. We are pleased to report that the members of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi have selected an area adjacent to the Town of Matagami which addresses many of the concerns that have been present with previously selected sites. The area is suitable for construction purposes, it addresses concerns raised by neighboring Indigenous communities, and it holds out significant opportunities for important future economic development possibilities.

The site, that has been overwhelmingly approved by the Washaw Sibi members, also presents important opportunities for collaboration with the Town of Matagami. Discussions have begun to take place regarding the potential for sharing a range of services—from basic infrastructure for water and sewers, to recreation facilities, firefighting services, and potentially education and health services.

The members of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi have re-elected Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt and have elected a Council to build on the momentum which has been created and will continue to make progress in this particularly important Cree Nation initiative.

The leadership of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi has secured critical support for the establishment of the new community near the Town of Matagami from key players within the region including the Town of Matagami itself, and la Société de Développement de la Baie James (SDBJ). The Chief and Council look forward to solidifying this regional support from other key players within the region in the coming fiscal year.

To address the key role that will be played by the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, the Cree Nation Government has appointed Dr. Abel Bosum to join the effort to move the Washaw Sibi initiative forward. His negotiating experience with all levels of government, in addition to his understanding of the circumstances of the Washaw Sibi people, based on his experience with

Ouje-Bougoumou, will be an important contribution to the progress of Washaw Sibi.

While the critical steps related to the establishment of the future Washaw Sibi village continue, the leadership continues to ensure that the community takes advantage of opportunities for employment and contracting for its members through engagement with mining companies conducting various exploration activities within the Cree traditional territory. Washaw Sibi continues to collaborate very closely with Waskaganish in addressing the activities of the Wall-bridge Mining Company in the context of a Pre-Development Agreement concluded among the parties. This relationship has been positive and holds out important opportunities for both Washaw Sibi and Waskaganish as this project unfolds. Similarly, both Washaw Sibi and Waskaganish continue to work in close collaboration with NorthX Nickel Corp (formerly Archer Mining Company) as this project develops.

Looking ahead to the 2024-25 fiscal year, the leadership of Washaw Sibi will continue its efforts to solidify support for the selected site for the future village. The leadership anticipates further discussions with the Governments of Quebec and Canada that will eventually lead to the setting aside of this site so that it can become Category I lands pursuant to the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*, and looks forward also to securing commitments from each level of government to enter into discussions leading to the incorporation of Washaw Sibi into the JBNQA.

Also, the leadership, together with support from the Cree Nation Government Department of Capital Works and Services, will be carrying out further technical studies to identify the site more precisely, within the general area that has been selected, for the planning and construction of the future Washaw Sibi community to take place. In general, the leadership will continue to lay the groundwork for the important technical work required for the planning phase for the new community.

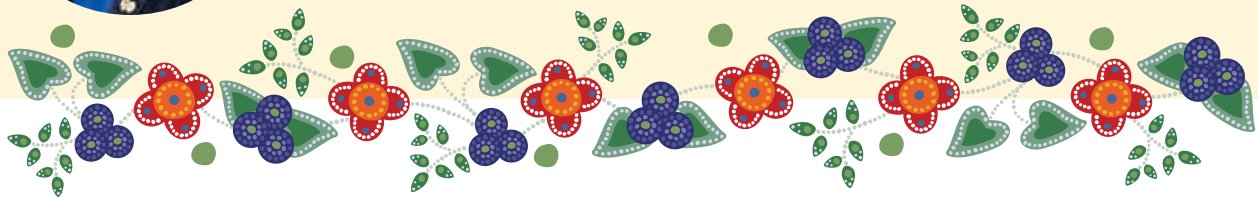
The Cree Nation Government continues to support the efforts on the part of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi to realize their long-held vision of having their own village where they will not fear the loss of their Cree culture and language.





MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Melissa Saganash



AS FOR MANY ACROSS EYYOU ISTCHEE, THE FOREST FIRES OF SUMMER 2023 WERE A STARK REMINDER OF THE EVER-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE LIVE. THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE UNDENIABLE AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON OUR DAILY LIVES. BUT WE ARE A RESILIENT PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF ONE ANOTHER. EVERYONE WHO COULD, DID THEIR BEST TO HELP IN ANY WAY TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBOURS. THE COLLABORATION WE HAD WITH COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER WAS, DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SOMETHING I WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL FOR. GETTING TO KNOW THE MANY LOCAL EMERGENCY TEAMS AND SEEING THE PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE WITH WHICH THEY OPERATED WAS IMPRESSIVE.

 **33**
EMPLOYEES

Sadly, many camps were lost to the fires across the territory. Many families will need to rebuild so they may continue to enjoy the land and pursue traditional activities as they always have. To help with these devastating losses, the Cree Trappers' Association, Niskamoon Corporation and the Cree Nation Government have created a one-time special relief fund to help rebuild cabins. Activities for this initiative should take place during the summer of 2024. We look forward to seeing the results of this special project.

Given this new reality for which we must be prepared, we have begun developing a Regional Emergency Management Plan in collaboration with local emergency teams to ensure its efficiency, with the understanding that local teams are the experts on the ground and that we must deploy the proper support to them when needed.

The forest fires were evidently challenging for many, especially when evacuations temporarily displaced community members, including some employees of the Cree Nation Government, to other regions. Our Human Resources department did their best to ensure that staff who were affected could focus on their safety and that of their families. Our communications team also worked in the background collecting and preparing important updates on our social media pages. Timely and accurate information in times like

these is critical to ensuring safety. I'd like to sincerely thank the staff who helped in many different ways and continued to provide services throughout the summer.

This year has also seen the advancement of the Cree Nation Research Institute file led by Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee, who has included me in the working group tasked with developing a plan for research capacity development and Cree research governance in Eeyou Istchee. The input gathered from a forum held in Ouje-Bougoumou with participants from across Eeyou Istchee is essential to this mission. I also sit on the Management Committee of the Cree Nation Government and have been named to participate in other committees and boards such as the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment, Eeyou Communications Network and recently as a board member of Société du Plan Nord.

In my role as Deputy Executive Director, I continue to assist Davey Bobbish who is now in his second year as our Executive Director, in the management of our departments and services delivered. I have the responsibility to manage and help coordinate strategic operational activities in collaboration with the Directors of the following departments.

- Government Support Services
- Apatisiwin Skills Development Department
- Department of Commerce and Industry
- Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiwin (formerly Child and Family Services)
- Social and Cultural Development Department

We have much to look forward to as our departments evolve with the needs of the Cree Nation. Our collaborations with the Quebec and Federal governments, as well as the bonds we are strengthening with neighbouring First Nation and Inuit governments remain essential to our growth. It is





Photo: Jessica Otter



through our many tables where we find solutions to challenges that sometimes require the perspective of others.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of my colleagues. Our perseverance and dedication to providing community members with quality services and programs and help build the thriving communities we see today is something we must take pride in. I look forward to continuing the collaborations with you and supporting you wherever I can. Here's to another great year ahead!

Following are some highlights of the various divisions under Government Support Services from 2023-2024.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Enhancing IT Skills and Support Capabilities

Our team remains dedicated to improving our internal skills and support capabilities to provide superior services to all our customers. We understand that the competence and proficiency of our team members are fundamental to delivering exceptional support and solutions. Therefore, we are committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development.

Through targeted training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, we empower our staff to stay updated on the latest industry trends, technologies, and best practices. By investing in their growth and educa-

tion, we ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to address the diverse needs and challenges of our customers effectively.

The IT Technicians within our team along with a few from the band offices were invited to participate in a 14-week training session given by a professional trainer. Here are some of the topics that were presented in the training:

Hardware, Operating Systems, Software Troubleshooting, Networking, Troubleshooting, Security, Mobile Devices, Virtualization and Cloud Computing, Operational Procedures.

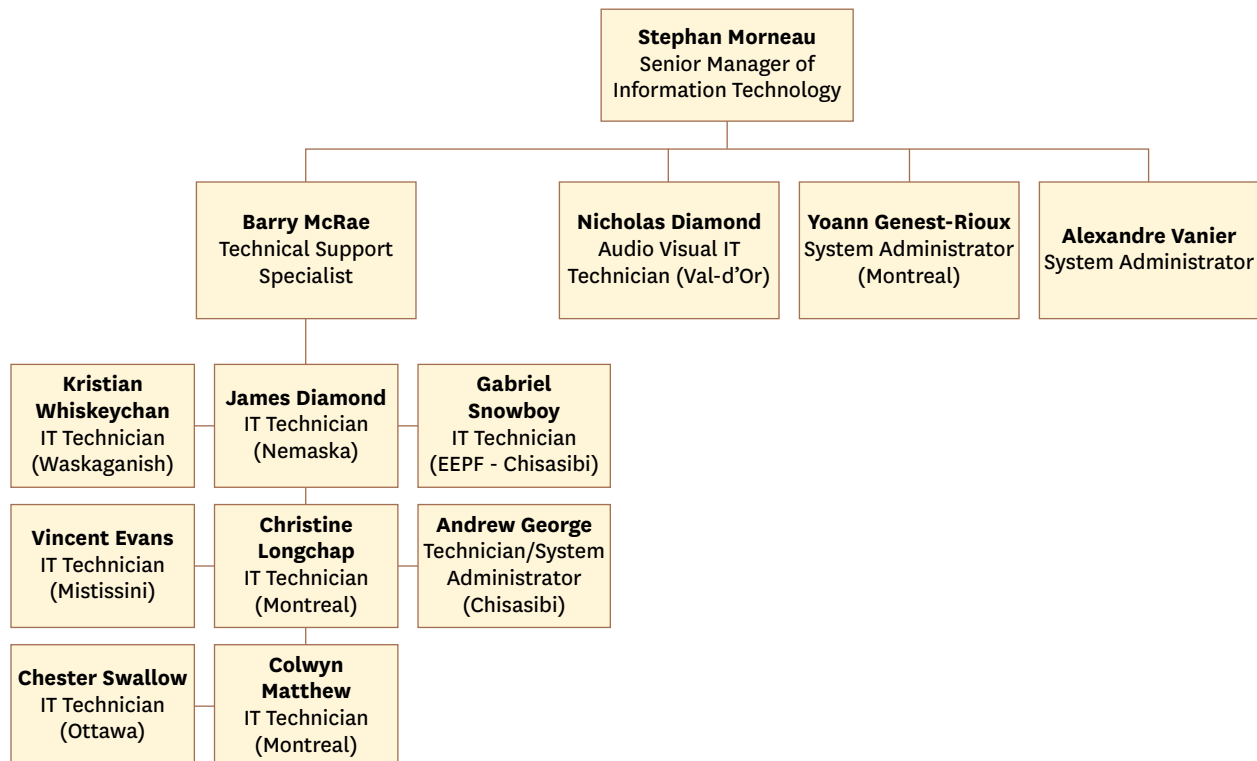
Training for the Cree Nation Government

We have actively provided personalized IT training courses on various software at varying skill levels to the organization to enhance user comfort with these technologies and improve organizational efficiency. Over 125 instances of participation have been recorded for these classes, which have been very well received, with feedback being overwhelmingly positive. To support this effort, we have hired a highly skilled instructor who has previously collaborated with our IT technicians over the past year.

Infrastructure and Management

Our infrastructure and number of services are continually expanding to meet the rising demand for technology

Figure 1. The organizational structure for the Information Technology Department



and security. We anticipate a similar growth trend in the coming year. To accommodate this growth, our team is also expanding to meet the ever-increasing demand for support and maintenance of our systems.

Here's some numbers to illustrate the support level.

- 4,150 user requests, 31% increase from last year
3,167 in 2022-2023, 69% increase from previous year
2,448 in 2021-2022
- 650+ user profiles
- 550+ infrastructure equipment
- 240 mobile phones
- 78 partners
- 46 internet connections
- 45 offices supported
- 24 service providers
- 13 communities / cities

Key Focus Areas

1. **Cybersecurity:** Cybersecurity has been one of our main priorities, as we have faced increasing threats and challenges in the online environment. We have enhanced our infrastructure security and provided training sessions to staff and managers on how to protect their data and devices from cyber-attacks. We have also developed a cybersecurity policy and a contingency plan to ensure the safety and continuity of our operations.
2. **Service Levels:** Our commitment to maintaining high service levels remains unwavering. Despite the significant increase in ticket requests, we are seeing improved efficiency and effectiveness in our responses, as our team gains more experience. We continually monitor and refine our processes to ensure swift and effective responses, aiming to uphold and improve our standards even further in the coming year.
3. **Internal Projects:** We have experienced an increase in internal projects due to technological advances, organizational changes, and evolving needs.
4. **Recruitment and Staff Development:** Our priority is to nurture the talents of Cree individuals through comprehensive training programs and professional development opportunities. This commitment enhances our team's skills and capabilities, leading to improved service delivery. As our team gains experience and expertise, we continue to see improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, ultimately benefiting the entire organization and the communities we serve.

Our organization has prioritized the professional development of our team members by actively recruiting new talent, providing comprehensive training opportunities, and cultivating a positive workplace. Our department is always on the lookout for new resources and talent, prioritizing and focusing on Cree people and talents, including both professionals and students.

This year, we hired three summer students: Chester Swallow, Tristan Beauregard, Colwyn Matthew.

We are pleased to welcome as permanent employees: Vincent Evans (Mistissini IT Technician), Nicholas Diamond (Val-d'Or Audiovisual Technician), Chester Swallow (Ottawa IT Technician) and Colwyn Matthew (Montreal IT Techni-

cian) and Benoit Eclache (Montreal Project Manager)

We are proud of our accomplishments and remain committed to ongoing improvement. We recognize that there is always room for growth and are aware of our current limitations and challenges. Our focus remains on delivering top-notch service to the Cree Nation Government and the Cree Nation. Moving forward, we will work diligently to address these issues and make significant improvements in our customer service. Striving for excellence to meet and surpass expectations will continue to be our primary goal.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM) PROJECT

The Records and Information Management (RIM) team reports significant advancement for the RIM project over the year. 2023-2024 marked another year of implementation for the RIM Project, where great strides have been made towards optimizing document management practices across the Cree Nation Government.

Antès Business Design Update

Antès is a company that specializes in Business Design with strong expertise in defining the optimal use and structure of information within organizations. This marks the fifth year of the RIM team working with Antès Business Design on the Records and Information Project at Cree Nation Government.

The past fiscal year has been dedicated to deploying the RIM Project across multiple departments, as well as finalizing some of our earlier candidates.

Using the 6-step process designed by Antès in conjunction with the RIM team, we have been working with several departments such as the Cree Language Commission, Ottawa Embassy, Commerce and Industry, Social and Cultural Development and the Corporate Services Office in designing and implementing a new document management process leveraging the SharePoint platform. Additionally, we have begun implementing a new photo management solution for the Communications team to facilitate secure, organized and easy access to collections of active photos.

As the project has evolved, Antès and the RIM team have been looking to review some of the documentation created in previous years. We have begun reworking our Document Management Guides to ensure their usefulness for departments as well as bridging said documents with physical objects or records in need of classification.

As the project continues its deployment, Antès and the RIM team have readdressed some of the specificities surrounding document management for departments that were targeted in previous years. This year the focus was on streamlining and remodeling different processes and information structures to meet the changing needs of our departments. This is done with the aim of ensuring sustainability in the performance of our new data management system.

In the coming year, we plan to create an information architecture for all active departments. There are an additional 4 departments targeted for 2024-2025, namely, Environment and Remedial Works, Forestry, Quebec Indigenous Relations and Miyuuhpichinaasuwin Apatisiwin. Further-



more, completion of records and information management policies and procedures is targeted.

Another exciting milestone is forecasted for the coming year as we have defined the future archiving platform that will be used for the Cree Nation Government. During the upcoming year, we will design the needed architecture required to start the archiving process, this entails defining the objectives, future audience and framing what fonds should be created.

This project will have a lasting impact on the Cree Nation Government by improving document management practices across the organization and facilitating sharing, collaboration, and accessibility of information for all. Project deliverables set the foundation for future archives management by leveraging the SharePoint platform to constitute the basis of organized and compliant documentation. Subsequently, these foundations enable us to create and implement a centralized system that encompasses both active and archival records management, therefore, benefiting the Cree Nation Government as a whole.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications team is the primary contact point for media and public relations requests for the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government (GCC(EI)/CNG). Under the Deputy Executive Director, Melissa Saganash, the team is comprised of our Manager of Communications, Joanne Ottereyes, our Web Communications Specialist, Brendan Forward and our Multimedia Communications Specialist, Jamie Pashagumskum. Apart from the requests received internally by staff and directors, questions and requests from the public also come in through direct messages on our GCC(EI)/CNG Facebook page. Messages, questions and requests are answered in a timely manner where the public is directed to the proper department. The general public can also reach us using our contact page of the GCC(EI)/CNG website.

Communications is also tasked with the maintenance and upkeep of the GCC(EI)/CNG website. The site is monitored for any glitches and updates and fixes are done by our Communications Web Specialist. The team also works in collaboration with Cree Nation Government departments to update content, share events, news and issues related to departmental programs, services and initiatives.

The communications team is also available for any tasks in assisting any and all GCC(EI)/CNG department personnel with communications needs such as copy-editing documents, writing and reviewing reports and the formatting of new forms and policies.

Through social media platforms, the communications team regularly reaches out to the general public through social media posts. The GCC(EI)/CNG are currently on five main platforms, Facebook, Instagram, X (formally Twitter), LinkedIn and YouTube but are open to expanding to other platforms. The department regularly assists the Human Resources (HR) Department with new jobs with the GCC(EI)/CNG. Social media posts advertise the job, give a short description and readers are linked directly to the HR posting site where they can immediately apply online.

Of utmost importance to public safety and health in recent years have been urgent updates and notices issued through the GCC(EI)/CNG social media sites. Where in past years, it was greatly needed pandemic updates, keeping the public safe from forest fires marked the summer of 2023. During the emergency, the public was informed through our social media sites of any road closures, dangerous areas to avoid and of any declared state of emergencies and evacuations.

The team also distributes press releases on behalf of the Grand Chief, Deputy Grand Chief and the GCC(EI)/CNG and is available to assist all other GCC(EI)/CNG departments with the release of information to the public. Press releases are released online through social media platforms and the GCC(EI)/CNG website. Annual holidays, office closures and holiday wishes are also posted to social media accounts as well as days of observance such as National Indigenous day, Orange Shirt Day and Red Dress Day honoring our lost Indigenous sisters.

To engage the public and bring our vast Nation closer together the communications team regularly issues special features of programs or inspirational people in the Cree Nation, such as language preservation experts, Youth and Elders and Cree Culture advocates.

Also, the GCC(EI)/CNG social media post analytics are regularly collected, and records are kept to tweak and adjust media outlet posts to maximize exposure.

A new project for this year was the reintroduction of the GCC(EI)/CNG Newsletter. This mandate came directly from the Grand Chief and is aimed at a younger generation. The first edition of the newsletter was released in March. In line with the year of Strategic Enhancement of the Eeyou Economy, a space will be dedicated in each issue featuring youth who are making a living for themselves and contributing to the Cree economy. The first issue featured a successful Cree Youth Entrepreneur with an inspirational story and a strong, empowering message to other Cree Nation youth. The newsletter also has sections for government news, such as important meetings and conferences, a cultural section featuring wildlife, Cree ceremonies and practices and Cree language features.

Additionally, at the request of the Grand Chief was to enhance communications with the communities, which led to a Communications Needs Assessment and the reintroduction of the Eeyou Istchee Regional Communications Meeting. The Communications Needs Assessment aimed to provide us with valuable insights to streamline our communication processes and better inform the population across Eeyou Istchee. The Regional Meeting was an annual event which, along with many other things, took a hiatus during the pandemic. The meeting was held in Montreal and was a great success attended by members of the Cree Nation Government, Cree Board of Health and Cree School Board communications departments. Each entity gave presentations featuring their own structures and operations and everyone benefitted from a day of communications training. In response to the great interest in the meeting, the group has decided to meet 3 times a year with the next meeting scheduled for the summer of 2024.





Eeyou Istchee
Regional
Communications
Meeting,
February 2024

SOCIAL/WEBSITE STATISTICS 2023-2024

WEBSITE STATISTICS



Global Audience
42,000
unique viewers

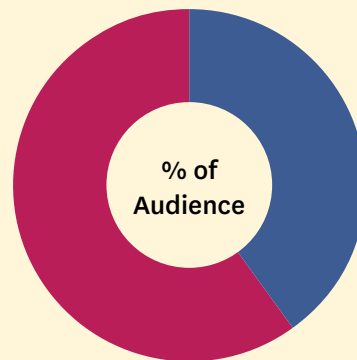
Number of Visits: **243,621**
New Users / Visitors: **4,700**

AUDIENCE SOCIAL STATISTICS



LinkedIn: **2,817** (Increase **617**)
Facebook: **10,633** (Increase **582**)
X: **2,957**
Instagram: **1,249**

SOCIAL MEDIA CROSS-PLATFORM AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS



● Male ● Female

45% between the age of 25-40

BROADCAST STATISTICS



12 Broadcasts
between April 1- March 31



EYYOU ISTCHEE LAND KEEPERS PROGRAMS/ WILDLIFE PROTECTION ASSISTANTS (EILK/WPA)

The Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Program (EILK), led by Program Coordinator Benoit Longchap currently has four regular full-time Land Keepers/Wildlife Protection Assistants who are stationed in Mistissini and Chisasibi. We continue to support this important initiative that contributes to the oversight and collaborative management of our traditional lands.

The Land Keepers will not only have certain responsibilities and enforcement powers under Quebec legislation but will also integrate cultural responsibilities to promote traditional practices and values. Their responsibility is to provide support to the tallymen, communities, and collaborate closely with the Québec Wildlife Protection Officers, also stationed in Eeyou Istchee, in the monitoring, management and building of awareness to ensure continued respect for the land, animals, traditional values and practices.

The Land Keepers are equipped with patrol vehicles, snowmobiles and boats and other tools necessary to their daily activities in the territory. Their presence is essential to the proper monitoring of land use and ensuring compliance with regulations and guidelines. For example, the Land Keepers have been vigilant and conducted increased patrols in Zone 17 following the closure of the moose sport hunt for non-natives. They also patrol fishing areas to ensure that proper licenses are held by people enjoying our lakes and rivers. They may also be asked to collaborate with a community or Wildlife Officers to capture and relocate wildlife that may have gotten too close to town. Upon request, they may intervene when tallymen require assistance of a third party in mediating a challenging situation on the land.

Part of their work also includes training and learning about new technologies related to their activities. In addition to their yearly refresher training with Quebec Wildlife Officers, they attended a workshop on bioacoustics and will be learning to operate drones to monitor hard-to-reach areas. The Land Keepers are also always open to invitations from local schools to share with students what their work entails and promote the importance of careers in wildlife protection.



MISSION AND VISION

Building capacity and empowering the Cree Nation to improve surveillance, protection, monitoring and management of ancestral lands according to traditional ways and values and building from Cree and western knowledge.

With the increase of protected areas and the accessibility of our territory, we need to have the ability to patrol and monitor wildlife and the environment throughout the region thus the importance of supporting their work and expand this team. You may have crossed paths with them on the Billy Diamond Highway or Route du Nord during their regular patrols – feel free to greet them and ask them about their recent activities!

Background of the EILK/WPA Program

In March 2019, the Cree Nation Government signed a two-year funding agreement with Quebec to conduct a pilot project that would initiate a program for the training and hiring of Wildlife Protection Assistants resources in Eeyou Istchee. The newest funding agreement will cover the period from 2024-2026. Discussions with the Quebec government are maintained with an objective to increase funding to allow for the hiring of additional Land Keepers to assist in the mission and vision of this important program.

Mista mikwec
Melissa Saganash
Deputy Executive Director



About the Role of the EYYOU ISTCHEE LAND KEEPER WILDLIFE PROTECTION ASSISTANT

The role of the Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper/Wildlife Protection Assistant (EILK/WPA) is to patrol, monitor, report and provide management, stewardship and awareness support for the protection and respect of the land, water and animals of Eeyou Istchee. The Land Keeper works in close collaboration with the tallymen, communities and Wildlife Protection Officers in the surveillance and protection of the territory. Some responsibilities include:

- Patrol, monitor and demonstrate a presence on lands and waters of Eeyou Istchee;
- Support and promote the role of the tallymen and the respect of the traditional management system and practices;
- Assist the Wildlife Protection Officer in their operations and implementation of the Wildlife protection and operational plans while ensuring the integration of concerns of the tallymen and communities;
- Assist in the monitoring and promote compliance for the implementation of Wildlife management plans by local or regional authorities;
- Educate, build awareness and work with the communities and general public to ensure that laws, regulations, guidelines, best practices, policies, protocols and/or traditional practices and values related to lands, water and wildlife are respected;
- Collect data and provide reports on all activities and observations that impact.



CREE-CANADA RELATIONS



SPECIAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

The Cree-Canada relationship is of critical importance for the Cree Nation, and has proved to be positive, resilient and beneficial for both parties. The Cree Nation stands in a special Nation-to-Nation and treaty relationship with the Government of Canada by virtue of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). This relationship has been further developed and consolidated through the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement (2008) and the Cree Nation Governance Agreement (2017).

The JBNQA is the first modern Indigenous treaty and land claims agreement in Canada, and this treaty continues to serve as the living and evolving foundation of Cree treaty rights and modern Cree self-government. The JBNQA marked the beginning of a new era of modern treaties, which has required the Government of Canada to develop a much more comprehensive relationship with treaty partners.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Deputy Grand Chief Norman Wapachee, together with the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government, are responsible for providing political direction for relations between the Cree Nation and Canada. They are supported by Davey Bobbish, Executive Director; Melissa Saganash, Deputy Executive Director; and Tina Petawabano, Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations.

FORUM OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL LEADERS

In May last year, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty met, along with First Nation, Metis, and Inuit leaders from across the country, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in a meeting of Modern Treaty and Self-Government (MTSG) Partners. The Crees represent an important part of the MTSG groups, and we helped shape the agenda and the key messages to the Prime Minister.

The Grand Chief addressed the meeting on the framing of our relationship between MTSG Leaders and the Prime Minister. The Grand Chief stated that we need a truly effective, “on-the-ground” whole-of-government approach and systemic change within the federal government. We also need a broad, generous and purposive approach to the interpretation of our modern treaties and self-government agreements. These principles are the foundation of our relationship and partnership with Canada, and they should never be taken for granted. Their implementation can contribute to advancing reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous Peoples and will help to make meaningful progress

in remaining areas, such as language, culture, health, education, and social and economic development.

DEPUTY MINISTERS’ OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

On February 21, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, Executive Director Davey Bobbish and Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations Tina Petawabano attended a meeting of the Deputy Ministers’ Oversight Committee (DMOC). The DMOC provides direction, coordination and oversight on Canada’s obligations under modern treaties and is responsible for carrying out a whole-of-government approach with modern treaty partners. It was created along with the Modern Treaty Implementation Office following the adoption in 2015 of a new Cabinet Directive on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation.

The DMOC meeting on February 21 was chaired by Ms. Valerie Gideon, Deputy Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). The meeting was attended by over twenty (20) other deputy ministers and senior officials from key federal departments and agencies. The meeting was an opportunity for the Cree Nation Government to convey to Canada’s highest-level officials the importance of our special bilateral Nation-to-Nation and treaty relationship and of promoting the implementation of the JBNQA and related agreements. The Grand Chief delivered a solid presentation, which was very well received.

STANDING LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Cree-Canada Standing Liaison Committee established by the New Relationship Agreement continues to serve as the clearing house for relations between the Crees and Canada. It provides an ideal forum to strengthen relations and to address issues and resolve differences as they arise.

Over the years, the Standing Liaison Committee has presented an opportunity to develop and maintain a strong working and administrative relationship between the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government, as represented by the Executive Director, and a senior federal official of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), at the Assistant Deputy Minister level, as intended under the New Relationship Agreement. Executive Director Davey Bobbish is the Lead Cree Representative on the Standing Liaison Committee. His counterpart and Lead Federal Representative on this Committee is Assistant Deputy Minister Heather McLean for the Implementation Sector of CIRNAC.





Photo: Katherine Dehm



OPERATIONAL TABLE

Cree and federal representatives have re-established the Cree-Canada Operational Table. This Table presents an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the Cree Nation and Canada at an operational level, which will become increasingly important as we approach the renewal of key agreements with Canada in 2028. During the past year, the Operational Table already addressed several operational and technical matters between the Crees and Canada, and has helped to coordinate arrangements for other Cree-Canada Tables and technical discussions on MoCreebec, the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement and the modernization of the Land Registry System.

NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT (2008)

The New Relationship Agreement marked a turning point in Cree-Canada relations. One of the main purposes of the New Relationship Agreement was to establish the basis for a new relationship between Canada and the Cree Nation, and to improve the implementation of our JBNQA Treaty.

The implementation of the JBNQA has not always been easy, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s when many disputes arose over treaty implementation and resource development in Eeyou Istchee. Disputes gave rise to legal proceedings against Quebec and Canada. Legal proceedings against Quebec were mostly resolved in 2002 with

the signing of the Paix des Braves. Those against Canada were mostly resolved in 2008 with the signing of the New Relationship Agreement.

Under the New Relationship Agreement, the Cree Nation Government assumes, during the 20-year term of that Agreement and with funds provided by Canada, certain federal responsibilities contemplated in the JBNQA. These “Assumed Federal JBNQA Responsibilities” include certain aspects of Cree community and economic development, and certain federal aspects of the administration of justice for the Crees.

This very unique approach to implementing our JBNQA Treaty was without precedent, and no one knew at the time how this experiment would unfold. Over the years, the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities have had to plan and manage large scale capital projects, and they have developed the capacity and the means to determine and implement their own priorities and strategies.

We regularly report to Canada on how we implement the New Relationship Agreement, and we continue to build and maintain a strong bilateral relationship with senior federal officials through the Standing Liaison Committee and other bilateral mechanisms with Canada. Last year, we presented a comprehensive report to federal officials providing details of how the Cree Nation has prioritized the allocation of funds, particularly to fulfil the assumed federal JBNQA responsibilities since 2008. We also presented a virtual “tour



Photo: Katherine Dehm



of the communities” with pictures of the main facilities built with funds under the New Relationship Agreement.

There are less than four (4) years before the end of the New Relationship Agreement and other major agreements with Canada, and there are less than two (2) years before we expect to begin formal discussions with Canada to renew these Agreements. We are taking every opportunity to sensitize federal officials on the history, the context and the importance, for both the Crees and Canada, of the JBNQA and related Agreements like the New Relationship Agreement. It is important to ensure that federal officials understand and appreciate the special Treaty and Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Cree Nation and Canada. It is equally important that, within the Cree Nation, we all have the same understanding of the importance of these Agreements, and that we work together to best prepare for these renewal discussions with Canada.

CREE NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

The Cree Nation Governance Agreement is the product of many years of negotiations with the Government of Canada and it represents the implementation of a key element of the New Relationship Agreement. The New Relationship Agreement and the Cree Nation Governance Agreement have settled most of the outstanding implementation, governance and fiscal issues between the Crees and Canada.

Land Registry System

During the past year, Cree and federal representatives have agreed to establish a technical Table to explore options to modernize the current Land Registry System and to make it more efficient and easier to use, particularly to facilitate the development of a private housing market in the Cree communities.

The current Land Registry System for Category 1A lands was first created in 1984 under the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*. In 2017, the provisions related to the Land Registry System were incorporated into the Cree Nation Governance Agreement without any substantive change. Consequently, these provisions have remained essentially unchanged since 1984, and they are well overdue for modernization.

CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

During the past year, the Cree Nation Government has continued to work collaboratively with the Cree communities to implement the various components of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, particularly the social and private housing programs. The Cree Nation Housing Strategy offers very significant potential for unlocking wealth for Cree individuals and for stimulating the economies of the Cree communities while, at the same time, creating employment and solving a number of persistent social issues related to overcrowded housing.

Social Housing Program

Since 2021, the Cree Nation Government has successfully negotiated new funding from the Government of Canada,

which represents a very significant federal investment in the Cree Nation Housing Strategy. Combined with other sources of funding and efforts, this investment offers the potential to address the current needs for social housing in the Cree communities.

A significant portion of this funding is intended to enable the Cree communities to build at least 750 new social housing units for low-income Cree individuals and families without having to incur new debt. The Cree communities are required to build these new social housing units in accordance with the Community Social Housing Program, which the Cree Nation Government developed in collaboration with the Cree communities and approved in March 2022.

In March 2023, the Cree Nation Government approved a multiyear plan to support the operation and maintenance and capacity needs for the new 750 social housing units to be built over the next five years. It also approved a multi-year housing renovation plan to support the renovation of existing social housing units in the Cree communities.

Private Housing Program

In May 2020, the Cree Nation Government established the Private Housing Program. Under this Program, the Cree Nation Government can provide subsidies to eligible Cree individuals who wish to build a new home in accordance with the terms and conditions of that Program. To be eligible to receive a subsidy, the applicant must, among other things, meet the relevant credit criteria, as determined by a financial institution, and provide, among others, a commitment letter from a financial institution to provide a “mortgage loan” for the balance of funding required to build the house.

So far, certain financial institutions have agreed to provide long-term mortgage loans for Cree applicants to purchase a new home in the Cree communities, but only once the house is fully built and appraised, and not to finance the construction of the house. The Cree Nation Government is pursuing discussions with financial institutions in order to find a long-term solution and to ensure that they provide to Crees comparable financial products and benefits as elsewhere in Quebec.

In the meantime, the Cree Nation Government has put in place interim measures to ensure the viability of the Private Housing Program and to help those who have already started the process of building their homes. As part of these interim measures, the Cree Nation Government has approved a new program to support Cree individuals who wish to build their own private home in a Cree community and who need a “bridge loan” until they can secure a mortgage loan for the long-term financing of their new home. This new Program is intended to complement the Private Housing Program and to encourage more Cree individuals to build their own home in the Cree communities.

Discussions with CMHC

The Cree Nation is working with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) since the 1980’s. Initially, CMHC’s investment has been primarily through the “Section





95 Program”. In recent years, CMHC has made additional investments to support the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, including through their Rapid Housing Initiative and National Housing Co-Investment Fund.

As part of our comprehensive Cree Nation Housing proposal previously tabled with Canada, the Cree Nation is seeking to develop a “New Relationship” with CMHC and a new approach that is more consistent with our existing Nation-to-Nation relationship with Canada. Following the Grand Chief’s presentation at the Deputy Ministers’ Oversight Committee (DMOC) earlier this year, we reached out to CMHC’s senior management to pursue high-level discussions on that part of our Cree Nation Housing proposal involving CMHC. One of the objectives is to develop special arrangements between CMHC and the Cree Nation that better reflect and recognize the status and capacity of the Cree Nation Government and Cree First Nations as mature and accountable governments and partners, particularly in terms of funding requirements, reporting and oversight.

MOCREEBEC AND WASHAW SIBI

Last year, Cree and federal representatives established a special Table under the aegis of the Standing Liaison Committee and began exploratory discussions on MoCreebec, in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Canada in 2022. Cree representatives explained to federal officials that the MoCreebec issue is very unique. It is an outstanding issue flowing from the JBNQA Treaty, which requires a pragmatic approach and creative and practical solutions that will most likely be outside of existing federal policies.

Washaw Sibi will require a different approach given its unique context and the Cree-Canada New Relationship

Agreement, which provides for a more limited role of Canada at this point in the implementation of any option for Washaw Sibi.

AMENDMENT OF SECTION 22 JBNQA – ENVIRONMENT

Cree and federal representatives are continuing discussions to amend Section 22 of the JBNQA, as a way of securing Cree participation in “external” federal assessments of projects in the JBNQA territory. These discussions are based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concluded with Canada in February 2022.

Prior to the MOU, in June 2019, the Cree Nation Government, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada had already concluded the *Agreement under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 Concerning the Environmental Assessments of the Rose-Lithium – Tantalum and James Bay Lithium Mine Projects* (Rose-Lithium Agreement). This Agreement established a framework for the parties to collaborate in completing the federal impact assessment processes applicable to the Rose Lithium – Tantalum mine project and the James Bay Lithium mine project.

In May 2022, the same parties concluded the *Agreement concerning the Troilus External Federal Assessment Process under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Impact Assessment Act* (Troilus Agreement). This Agreement established another framework, this time for the parties to collaborate on the federal impact assessment process applicable to the Troilus gold mine project.

Each of these agreements specified, among other things, that the parties would form a joint committee with equal





Photo: Katherine Dehm

membership from the Cree Nation Government and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, and that this committee would carry out the activities required to complete the assessment process.

During the past years, the parties have discussed the proposed amendment to Section 22 of the JBNQA. Through an exchange of letters of December 2022 and January 2023, the parties have agreed that:

- a) the discussions on the co-development of the amendment options should be guided by the special relationship between the Crees and Canada, the spirit and terms of the JBNQA Treaty and the precedents already negotiated;
- b) in these discussions, the representatives of the parties at the table have expressed support for an external assessment process (i.e. non-JBNQA process) that is flexible and responsive, and that best meets the interests of the parties and reflects the special status and involvement of the Crees in external federal impact assessment processes; and the parties have discussed several options in this regard;
- c) the respective teams have agreed to continue to concentrate their efforts on the development of wording for proposed amendments between December 2022 and June 1, 2023, for approval by the parties as soon as possible thereafter and, at the latest, during the fall of 2023;
- d) the timeline contemplated in the MOU is extended to December 1, 2023.

Although the parties were unable to meet the deadlines mentioned above, they agreed to extend the period for discussions to April 2025. In the meantime, the parties made progress and federal representatives tabled proposed

amendments to the legislation in view of the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Reference re Impact Assessment Act* (2023 SCC 23), which is under review by the Cree Nation Government.

Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement

Ten-Year Review of Implementation

Cree and federal representatives have collaborated on the preparation of Canada's report on the review of the first ten years of implementation of the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement. The report was tabled in the House of Commons and was presented to the Standing Committee of Indigenous and Northern Affairs on December 7-8, 2023.

Renewal of EMR Implementation Plan

Cree and federal representatives are pursuing bilateral discussions to renew the EMR Implementation Plan for a subsequent ten-year planning period (2025-2035). The EMR Implementation Plan was amended to extend the initial planning period to March 31, 2025, to provide the required time to renew the Implementation Plan and determine the amounts of funding that Canada shall provide to implement the EMR Agreement in the subsequent ten-year planning period. The Cree Nation Government is developing, in collaboration with Canada, a communication strategy to inform and consult all stakeholders in due course.

Nunavut Devolution Agreement

The Government of Canada carried out further consultations on a proposed Final Nunavut Devolution Agreement. This Agreement contemplates the eventual devolution or transfer to the Government of Nunavut of the administra-



tion and control of “public lands” and related water rights in Nunavut.

Since 2019, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government have reviewed several drafts of the proposed Nunavut Devolution Agreement and related agreements. They have proposed certain changes to strengthen the protection of Cree treaty rights, which have all been accepted by Canada in subsequent drafts. In short, the final Nunavut Devolution Agreement and related agreements should have no material impact on Cree treaty rights in the EMR. The only public lands (Crown lands) in the EMR are North Twin Island and a portion of South Twin Island. The Devolution Agreement does not affect Cree Lands, which are privately owned by the Cree Nation Government on behalf and for the benefit of the Cree Nation.

In any case, the EMR Agreement already contemplates such devolution of powers and responsibilities to the Government of Nunavut. Moreover, the EMR Agreement is a constitutionally protected treaty and land claims agreement which will have precedence over the Nunavut Devolution Agreement in case of any conflict or inconsistency. The Nunavut Devolution Agreement and related transfer of powers to the Government of Nunavut should not affect our discussions with Parks Canada over the possible establishment of a National Marine Protected Area (NMCA) in the EMR.

CANADA’S MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION POLICY

Canada has developed a new Modern Treaty Implementation Policy, which is intended to guide Canada’s approach to implementing modern treaties, and to provide additional direction to federal departments and agencies. In particular, the new Policy highlights the need for a “whole-of-government” and Nation-to-Nation approach, and for a broad and generous interpretation and implementation of modern treaties. It is intended to advance a systemic shift in the federal public service’s institutional culture, and to support the full, effective, and timely implementation of all modern treaties.

The Policy recognizes that the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) is an authoritative interpretive source for Canadian law and informs the implementation of modern treaties. It also recognizes that rights and principles affirmed in the Declaration constitute minimum standards. The Policy is meant to strengthen, and not to replace or modify existing treaties and arrangements. It is intended to have precedence over other federal policies.

COMMISSIONER OF MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

As part of implementing the new Modern Treaty Implementation Policy, Canada has developed a proposal to create an independent Commissioner of Modern Treaty Implementation. The independent Commissioner would report directly to Parliament and would act as an oversight mechanism to hold the federal government accountable for federal implementation of modern treaties.

The Commissioner would have full independence to undertake reviews and performance audits of any activity carried out by the Government of Canada that relates to

the implementation of modern treaties and their related self-government agreements.

The proposed Commissioner should not affect existing bilateral mechanisms for Cree-Canada relations, such as the Standing Liaison Committee, and it should complement, rather than replace or duplicate, the mandate of the Cree-Naskapi Commission and other existing mechanisms or processes.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE UN DECLARATION

On June 21, 2021, Canada adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* as a legislative framework to advance the implementation of the UN Declaration at the federal level. The purpose of this Act is to affirm the UN Declaration as an international human rights instrument that can help interpret and apply Canadian law.

Under the Act, the Government of Canada must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the UN Declaration. The Government must also prepare, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, an Action Plan and Annual Progress Reports.

Canada released a first Action Plan on June 21, 2023, which contains 181 measures aimed at implementing the UN Declaration at the federal level.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

First Nations Drinking Water and Wastewater Act

Bill C-61, the *First Nations Drinking Water and Wastewater Act*, is now at second reading in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation affirms the inherent right of First Nations to self-government, which includes the power to make laws in relation to water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on, in and under First Nation lands. It also provides for the government to make regulations and adopt minimum standards in respect of water services and the quality of drinking water.

The proposed legislation is intended to apply to all First Nations. However, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing (MTSG) groups, like the Crees of Eeyou Istchee, will continue to be governed primarily by the provisions of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Cree Nation Governance Agreement, and those would prevail, to the extent of any inconsistency or conflict, over any provision of the proposed legislation or of any regulation made under such legislation.

National Council for Reconciliation

The *Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation* (previously Bill C-29) received royal assent on April 30, 2024. The Act provides for the establishment of a National Council for Reconciliation as an independent, nonpolitical, permanent and Indigenous-led organization. The Council is intended to provide oversight and monitor progress on reconciliation across Canada. The Council’s core mandate is to advance reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians.



Through this legislation, the Government reaffirms its commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as part of the preamble for the Act. This new legislation also helps to implement Calls to Action 53-56 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As part of its review of Bill C-29, the Standing Senate Committee invited Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty to appear as a witness on May 9, 2023. In her opening statement, the Grand Chief stated that the Cree Nation supports Bill C-29 and the establishment of a National Council for Reconciliation, provided that it is properly funded, and that it remains relevant and representative for all Indigenous groups, so that it can bring about real change.

FINAL LAND DESCRIPTIONS AND RECONFIGURATION OF LAND

As reported previously, Cree, federal and Quebec representatives have established two tables to address land descriptions and land reconfiguration issues:

- a table to determine the final land descriptions of Cree Category I and II lands with a view to incorporating such final descriptions into the JBNQA and related legislation;
- a table established pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves* for the reconfiguration of the Category I lands of Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Nemaska following the

abandonment of the N.B.R. Complex, with the possible subsequent addition of Chisasibi for the reconfiguration process.

The intention is for final territorial descriptions of the Cree Category I lands to be given effect through changes to Section 4 of the JBNQA and related legislation. The parties' recent focus has been on the land reconfiguration of Waswanipi and Waskaganish and, to some extent, Nemaska pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves*. The parties expect to finalize these land reconfigurations as a first step in order to include them in the final territorial descriptions of Section 4 of the JBNQA. The experience of the Ouje-Bougoumou/Mistissini land transfer can provide a model to achieve these land reconfigurations and final descriptions.

Waswanipi

Cree, federal and Quebec representatives have exchanged proposals for a reconfiguration agreement for Waswanipi. A transitional agreement was signed in 2022 in order to secure the upcoming opening of a new waste management site, as well as the infrastructure located in front of the community of Waswanipi, which would eventually be located in Category IA lands, once the reconfiguration is completed.

In addition, the Cree party has requested that priority be given to the reconfiguration of a small block of lands located in front of the community, identified as Block A12.



Photo: Katherine Dehm





Photo: Jessica Otter

The plan of agreement for the Waswanipi Reconfiguration has been signed by the Waswanipi Cree First Nation, the Waswanipi Landholding Corporation, the Cree Nation Government, and the Governments of Quebec and Canada at the beginning of 2024.

Waskaganish

Discussions over the land reconfiguration of Waskaganish have provided an opportunity to address issues related to the so-called “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” as well as other enclaves such as the “Maloney-Watt Lands”. During last year, the Cree party held discussions regarding these issues with federal and Quebec representatives.

A deed of transfer was executed between Waskaganish and the Amos Diocese in June 2023. An agreement between Cree entities that occupy the land was signed shortly thereafter, and discussions with Québec and Canada are advancing in order to secure an agreement to the effect that some of the enclaves will become Category IA lands.

Another deed of transfer was executed between Waskaganish and Sydney Georgekish-Watt in May 2024 regarding the “Maloney-Watt Lands”.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration also provides the opportunity to address the issue of the so-called “Hud-

son’s Bay Lands”, now partially occupied by the North West Company and its Northern Store. Discussions have begun with a view of regularizing the situation for the lands to become Category IA lands.

Eastmain

Eastmain also has to deal with the so-called “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” and so-called “Hudson’s Bay Lands”. The experience in Waskaganish has helped pave the way for the conclusion of a deed of transfer with the Amos Diocese.

Ouje-Bougoumou Recognition and Mistissini Lands

Complementary Agreement No. 22 of the JBNQA and the Final Agreement related to the recognition of Ouje-Bougoumou came into force during the 2012-2013 financial year. These agreements formally established Ouje-Bougoumou as a Cree First Nation, subject to a transitional period required for the transfer of lands and the coming into force of an amendment of the then *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*. This amendment came into force in May 2014, when land was formally set aside by the Governor in Council as Category IA land for the exclusive use and benefit of Ouje-Bougoumou. Like the other Cree First Nations, Ouje-Bougoumou was formally constituted as a corporation under



the then *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*, and continued as a Cree First Nation and as the same legal entity under the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement of 2017*.

In 2013, the GCC(EI), the Cree Nation of Mistissini and Quebec signed a *Final Settlement Agreement related to the Transfer of certain Lands from Mistissini to Quebec*. This Agreement provided for a specific process and schedule, which would result in the adjustment by Mistissini of certain Category I and II lands in consideration of the allocation by Quebec of an equivalent area of lands to Ouje-Bougoumou through Complementary Agreement No. 22 and in consideration of financial provisions. The said Agreement does not contemplate or affect in any way the claim in respect of the Mistissini hunting territories lying to the east of the Height of Land.

Certain delays occurred in the adoption by Quebec of the required Orders-in-Council, and the adoption by Canada of the reciprocal Order-in-Council, which are required to give effect to these land transfers.

The situation has considerably evolved during fiscal year 2021-2022 in view of the adoption of various decrees and orders-in-council by Québec and Canada, as well as the adoption of the Bill 16 – *An Act to amend various legislative provisions to implement Complementary Agreements No. 22 and No. 27 to the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*.

By virtue of the decrees adopted by Québec during fiscal year 2021-2022, the new Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini Category II lands have been definitively described, Québec has approved the transfer by letters patent of the new Mistissini Category IB lands to the Mistissini Landholding Corporation and Québec has transferred the new Mistissini Category IA lands to Canada.

By virtue of an order-in-council adopted by Canada during fiscal year 2021-2022, Canada has accepted the transfer of the new Mistissini Category IA lands. Canada has formally set aside the new Mistissini Category IA lands for the exclusive use and benefit of Mistissini.

On April 26, 2023, Québec adopted the decree authorizing the issuance of the letters patent to the new Ouje-Bougoumou landholding corporation and the transfer the Ouje-Bougoumou Category IB lands to the Ouje-Bougoumou Landholding Corporation.

CREE LAND AND HARVESTING RIGHTS IN ONTARIO

The traditional territory of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee – the lands that we and our ancestors have used and occupied since time immemorial – extends across the many watersheds that flow into eastern and southern James Bay. More than a century ago, however, the imposition of the Quebec-Ontario boundary divided the watershed of the Harricana River, arbitrarily severing one portion of Eeyou Istchee from the rest of our territory.

Canada and Ontario have relied upon this artificial colonial line to deny and interfere with the exercise of Cree rights in what is now Ontario. Our members have continued to use and occupy these lands in Ontario, but have faced many challenges in securing recognition of their rights and interests in these lands. Colonial laws and enforcement activities have negatively affected the Cree communities

of Washaw Sibi, Waskaganish and MoCreebec Eeyoud, and these impacts continue to this day.

This is why the Cree Nation is working to obtain proper recognition of Cree land and harvesting rights in the portion of Eeyou Istchee located in Ontario.

In 2016, we filed an action in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to obtain recognition of the Cree Nation's Aboriginal title and Aboriginal rights over lands in northeastern Ontario. The Cree Nation's action in Ontario acknowledges that other Indigenous peoples have used and occupied these lands along with the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, both historically and today. Although we are committed to not affecting the rights that other Indigenous peoples have in these lands, some First Nations in that territory have joined the litigation.

On May 29, 2023, Moose Cree First Nation delivered a statement of defence and counterclaim in relation to the Cree Nation's Ontario claim. This step by Moose Cree First Nation brought renewed attention to formal litigation steps in the action. On April 30, 2024, the governments of Canada and Ontario filed their statements of defence, and on May 30, 2024, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation (formerly Wahgoshig First Nation) filed its statement of defence. All defendants have denied that the Cree Nation, the Cree plaintiff communities or any of their ancestors have any rights over lands in Ontario, or any historical or ongoing usage of these lands.

The Cree Nation disagrees with the arguments advanced by the defendant parties, and we will respond to them in due course. We strongly believe that our real dispute regarding the historical and ongoing denial of our rights in Ontario lands is with the provincial and federal Crowns, and not with other First Nations. We will continue in our efforts to engage with Moose Cree First Nation, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation and others, to seek to build respectful dialogue about these issues and to explain that our efforts to obtain recognition of the Cree Nation's rights in Ontario will not negatively affect the rights that other Indigenous peoples have in these lands.

Legal, anthropological, and historical research on behalf of the Cree Nation in support of the Ontario action will continue in the coming year. This research aims to document Cree land use in the Harricana watershed and surrounding territory, and to show how the governments of Canada and Ontario created hardships by the imposition of colonialism in this area. This body of comprehensive research will also be of long-term benefit to the Cree Nation, providing a rich resource for our collective knowledge base about our history, cultural practices, land, people and communities.

In addition to this litigation, we continue working to protect Cree rights by insisting that the Cree Nation, and especially the particularly impacted communities of Washaw Sibi, Waskaganish and MoCreebec, must be consulted about resource development activities occurring on these lands in Ontario, including the operations at the Detour Lake Mine. The Cree Nation Government also continues to monitor Ontario's consultation determinations regarding mineral exploration and mining projects occurring in the area over which the Cree Nation asserts Aboriginal rights, and has successfully raised objections when Ontario has not included the Cree Nation within consultation processes for these projects.



CREE-QUÉBEC RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The Cree Nation continues to develop its relationship with the Government of Québec in a wide range of sectors. This relationship is based on the Nation-to-Nation collaboration and partnership established by our treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), and strengthened by subsequent agreements, including the *Paix des Braves* (2002), the *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement* (2012) and *La Grande Alliance* (2020). The Cree-Québec relationship is of critical importance for the Cree Nation, and has proved to be positive, resilient and beneficial for both parties.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee, together with the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government, are responsible for providing political direction for relations between the Cree Nation and Québec. They are supported by Davey Bobbish, Executive Director, Melissa Saganash, Deputy Executive Director, Richard Shecapio, Cree-Québec Negotiator, and Nadia Saganash, Director of Cree-Québec Relations and Indigenous Relations.

CREE-QUÉBEC STANDING LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee established by the *Paix des Braves* continues to serve as the clearing house for relations between the Cree and Québec. It provides a forum to resolve potential difficulties as they arise and helps to strengthen relations between the Cree and Québec. The Cree representatives are Davey Bobbish, Paul John Murdoch, Melissa Saganash, Richard Shecapio and Nadia Saganash.

Patrick Lahaie serves as Associate Secretary General of the Indigenous Affairs Secretariat (SAA). Me Marie-José Thomas, State Administrator, has a long and successful track record in Cree-Québec relations. She is responsible for Strategic Projects and reports directly to the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. Dominique Savoie, formerly Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, now serves as Secretary General, the first woman to occupy this position.

The Standing Liaison Committee met six times in 2023-2024. It focussed on certain priority issues, including the following, some of which are discussed in greater detail below:

- (a) Sector tables:
 - i. Forestry;
 - ii. Cree Trappers Economic Security Board;
 - iii. Protected areas;

- iv. Land reconfiguration (Chisasibi and Waswanipi);
- v. Cree Nation Housing Strategy;
- vi. Childcare;
- vii. Youth Protection;
- (b) Section 24 of the JBNQA issues:
 - i. Negotiation on Outfitting Regime in Category III;
 - ii. Wildlife Protection Resources;
 - iii. Woodland Caribou;
 - iv. Moose Management;
- (c) Section 28 JBNQA issues, including contracting and tendering procedures, Cree priority in contracting, definition of “Cree enterprise”;
- (d) *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement*
 - i. Review of Governance Agreement;
 - ii. Representation on Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government;
 - iii. Renewal of funding arrangements for Cree Nation Government.

CREE – QUÉBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT (2012)

Implementation continues for the *Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory* signed with Québec on July 24, 2012 (“*Governance Agreement*”).

Cree Nation Government

The Cree Nation Government is intensifying efforts to implement its governance functions on Category II lands and is adjusting its organizational and human resources in light of these responsibilities. In consultation with the Cree First Nations and other Cree stakeholders, the Cree Nation Government continues to put in place the structures, personnel and processes needed to assume its governance responsibilities and to enable Cree leaders to assume their new functions both on the Cree Nation Government and on the Regional Government.

The Land Use Planning Unit of the Cree Nation Government Department of Environment and Remedial Works is advancing the work on land and resource use planning for Category II lands. This work includes consultation with the Cree communities on draft policies, principles and objectives, which will be submitted to the Cree Nation Government for approval.

The *Governance Agreement* provides for a special collaborative process between Québec and the Cree Nation Government for the development by Québec of a Public Land Use Plan (PATP) proposed for Category II and III lands. The PATP sets out the Government’s orientations for the use and protection of public land.





Photo: Katherine Dehm





Photo: Brendan Forward

The Cree Nation Government has submitted detailed comments and proposed amendments to Québec regarding its proposed PATP for Category II and III lands. The comments of the Cree Nation Government were received positively by Québec.

Funding

Funding for the Cree Nation Government in relation to the Governance Agreement is addressed in paragraph 11.3.17 of the JBNQA and in section 73 of the Governance Agreement. These provisions state that Québec shall fund the Cree Nation Government in accordance with five-year funding agreements.

On March 25, 2024, the Cree Nation Government and Québec concluded the renewal of the funding foreseen under the Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory, providing for annual payments of \$5 million from Québec to the Cree Nation Government for the financial years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, which may allo-

cate the funding as it deems appropriate to the different components provided for the Cree Nation Government in Chapter VI of the Governance Agreement.

Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government

The primary mission of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government under the Governance Agreement is to serve as a partnership between the Crees and Jamésiens in the governance and development of Category III lands. To meet this objective, the Regional Government has jurisdiction over municipal management, regional development and land and resource use planning on Category III lands.

On January 1, 2024, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty commenced a two-year term as Chair of the Regional Government. The previous Chair, Madame Manon Cyr, Mayor of Chibougamau, now serves as Vice-Chair.

Officials of the Cree Nation Government, under the direction of the Grand Chief, are working with officials of the Regional Government to clarify its roles and responsi-



bilities under the Governance Agreement for governance and regional development on Category III lands. This exercise takes into account the respective responsibilities of the Cree Nation Government on Category II lands and of the James Bay Regional Administration with respect to the Jamésiens.

This clarification has taken on increased importance due to two factors. The first is the requirement in the Governance Agreement for the review of the representation and voting rights of the Crees and Jamésiens on the Council of the Regional Government. This review is to be based on resident population in accordance with a formula to be agreed by the Crees and Québec based on democratic principles and demographic realities.

The second factor is the emerging role of the Cree Nation in shaping the future of development in Eeyou Istchee. Both factors emphasize the need to strengthen communications and collaboration between the Crees and Jamésien partners in the Regional Government with a view to raising awareness of the benefits of the partnership for both populations.

Review

The Governance Agreement mandates a review five years after its commencement on July 24, 2012. However, the initial review has been delayed due to the focus on establishing necessary institutions and processes. In the funding agreements of March 30, 2021, and March 30, 2023, the Crees and Québec agreed to begin discussions on the review, covering topics such as representation and voting rights, energy on Category II lands, planning processes on Category II and III lands, and other implementation issues. This review is still pending, with preparatory work needed from Cree and Jamésien representatives.

Cree-Jamésien-Québec Working Group

During the March 2023 EIJBR Council meeting, two working groups were established to address key issues: governance and operation of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG), and land use planning. The Governance and Operation Work Group was tasked with recommending enhancements to regional governance and operational efficiency. Their mandate includes prioritizing common issues for the EIJBRG, evaluating current administrative practices, examining the implications of Section 37 of the governing Act, refining the Executive Committee's role and authority, and suggesting necessary legislative adjustments. Meanwhile, the Land Use Planning Work Group was charged with recommending appropriate planning tools relevant to the current context, meeting the needs of both Cree and Jamesian parties, and establishing robust governance frameworks to foster sustainable development across the territory. This includes a harmonized planning approach between Category II and III lands, integrating traditional knowledge, and addressing funding mechanisms.

Moderated by representatives of the Québec Secretariat of First Nations and Inuit, the Work Group includes elected officials from Cree and Jamesian communities, namely Chief Daisy House (Chisasibi), Chief Michael Petawabano (Mistissini), Alain Poirier (Councillor, Chibougamau),

Réné Dubé (Mayor, Matagami), Guy Lafrenière (Mayor, Lebel-sur-Quévillon), and Sébastien Lebrun (President, Localité de Radisson). The work group also includes Québec officials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. Representatives from the Cree Nation Government and Regional Government of Eeyou Istchee James Bay act in support of the mandates and discussions. Both groups held meetings in January and May to discuss their respective mandates and plan the next steps, including drafting initial recommendations and planning further consultations with stakeholders.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

La Grande Alliance (LGA) refers to the joint initiative by the Cree Nation and Québec governments, formalized through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on February 17, 2020. This agreement established the Cree-Québec Sustainable Infrastructure Development Program in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Region. Traditionally, development projects are imposed on communities, leaving them with limited options but to react. This reactive approach complicates land use planning, strategic infrastructure development, and investment security for communities, government officials, public utilities, and project promoters. LGA aims to change this dynamic by involving communities in the planning, design, consideration, and evaluation of energy and transportation infrastructure. This participatory approach empowers communities, providing long-term predictability and stability for the region. It facilitates easier growth planning, efficient resource deployment for environmental and wildlife protection, more certain land use planning, and more secure investment.

In 2023, the La Grande Alliance (LGA) initiative continued to make significant strides in fostering sustainable development and infrastructure improvements in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Region. Building on the foundation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2020 between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec, LGA has prioritized community engagement and collaboration. This year saw an increase in awareness and understanding of LGA among community members, as evidenced by recent surveys. Efforts were focused on enhancing transportation networks, energy infrastructure, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that the voices of the Cree communities were integral to the planning and implementation processes. Notably, engagement activities increased substantially, with over 40% of respondents participating in LGA initiatives. Moving forward, LGA remains committed to its mission of empowering communities, promoting sustainable growth, and ensuring the protection of our natural and cultural heritage.

CHARTER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE (BILL 96)

In May 2021, the Government of Québec introduced Bill 96, which later became Law 14, aimed at reinforcing French as the sole official and common language of Québec. The Bill proposed several amendments to the Charter of the French Language, including new requirements



for English-language colleges that could potentially impact the access and success of Cree students. Specific concerns included the necessity for a certificate of eligibility to prioritize admission, a French proficiency exam for graduation, and additional French courses, which would disproportionately burden Cree students for whom French is often a third language.

In response, the leadership of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, led by Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, expressed serious concerns to the Québec government about the potential infringement on Cree rights and the negative impact on the Cree Nation's development. While acknowledging the importance of protecting the French language, the Cree Nation emphasized that these measures should not erode Cree treaty rights, compromise their socio-economic development, or hinder educational opportunities. Despite assurances from the Québec government and a subsequent regulatory exemption for the French proficiency exam for certain Indigenous students, significant obstacles remain, particularly regarding the certificate of eligibility for English-language Cegeps and additional French course requirements. The Cree Nation continues to seek further accommodations to ensure their students can access and succeed in higher education without undue barriers.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Legislative Review

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) is undergoing a legislative review to revise its governing Act (Chapter S-5) to better reflect Cree self-governance in health and social services as outlined in Section 14 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). The review aims to modernize the Act by incorporating Cree language and culture, integrating traditional healing practices, and developing a special youth protection program adapted to Cree culture. This initiative is led by Chairperson Bertie Wapachee with the support of key Cree Nation representatives, and Health Minister Christian Dubé has shown commitment to pursuing discussions that could lead to the Act's revision.

Funding Framework for Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay for periods 2019-2024 and 2024-2031

The CBHSSJB is implementing a five-year Health Agreement and Funding Framework with the Government of Québec (2019-2024), which provides significant funding to enhance services in Cree communities, including specialist services and the incorporation of traditional Cree healing practices. The agreement also funds new health facilities and information technology assets. The CBHSSJB is continuing work on the new Strategic Regional Plan for 2023-2030. It will identify key strategic orientations and objectives to guide the CBHSSJB in the coming years, and it will also serve as the basis of discussions with the Government of Québec for the next Health Agreement and Funding Framework for the period 2024-2031. Preparations are underway now for these discussions.

Awash-Uschiniichisuu Shikascheimuun Task Force and Commissioners

In 2021, the CBHSSJB Board of Directors established the Awash-Uschiniichisuu Shikascheimuun (AUS) Task Force, composed of CBHSSJB personnel. The Task Force is mandated to collaborate with the Cree Nation Government, the Cree School Board, and other Cree entities on youth protection and youth criminal justice matters in Eeyou Istchee. With support from the Cree Youth Protection Commission and Commissioners Bella M. Petawabano and Lorraine Spencer, the Task Force aims to identify concerns in these areas and propose ways to adapt services to better reflect Cree culture, values, needs, and realities.

In April 2023, the Commissioners initiated internal consultations among CBHSSJB employees, followed by public consultations in Mistissini in September 2023, inviting interested Cree members to participate. These consultations, expected to conclude in spring 2024, seek input from other Cree entities to better adapt CBHSSJB services to Eeyou Istchee and inform the development of a special Cree youth protection program. The results will be presented to the CBHSSJB Board of Directors in fall 2024 and subsequently made public.

EDUCATION

Legislative Review

The Cree School Board has initiated a review of its governing legislation, the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons, particularly focusing on modernizing its provisions for the Cree community. Originally established in 1978, the Act has seen minimal updates specific to Cree needs and the Cree School Board's role in self-governance within education. The aim is to ensure that the legislation better accommodates Cree language instruction, reflects Cree cultural values, and enhances the autonomy of the Cree School Board as a distinct educational institution.

In November 2021, an agreement was reached between the Grand Chief and the Chairperson of the Cree School Board with Québec to establish a Special Joint Table for reviewing and modernizing the Cree School Board's governing legislation. Led by negotiators from both sides, including Abel Bosum and Québec's representatives under Mme Marie-José Thomas and Mme Marie-Josée Blais, this Joint Table has been actively meeting. Discussions have included Québec's preference to amend the legislation comprehensively rather than in phases, emphasizing the importance of educational standards and student preparation for further studies. The Cree School Board has proposed an Agreement on a new Education Act for the Crees, intended to replace the existing legislative framework, ensuring alignment with Section 16 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) and granting the Board greater autonomy in its internal affairs.

Moving forward, the next steps involve finalizing the proposed Agreement on a new *Education Act for the Crees* between Québec and the Cree Nation Government/Cree School Board. This agreement aims to formalize commitments to replace the current Education Act with a revised framework that better reflects Cree identity, treaty rights under Section



16 of the JBNQA, and specific educational needs. Negotiations will continue to ensure alignment between the new Act and existing structures while granting the Cree School Board increased responsibility and flexibility in managing educational affairs. Upon reaching an agreement, tabling the new Education Act for the Crees at the National Assembly will be part of the process. Concurrently, discussions will focus on amending Section 16 of the JBNQA to maintain consistency with the new legislative framework. This process will involve ongoing collaboration and negotiation between Cree representatives and Québec officials to finalize and implement the updated Education Act.

Budgetary Rules

The Cree School Board successfully concluded negotiations with the Governments of Québec and Canada on the Budgetary Rules covering school years 2019-2020 to 2023-2024. These negotiations, conducted under provisions of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), involved collaboration between the Cree School Board and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government due to their impact on Cree treaty rights. The resulting Budgetary Rules not only protected the base funding of the School Board but also secured significant increas-

es for Adult Education, Information Technologies, Students with Special Needs, and the Cree Teacher Training Program.

Currently, the Cree School Board is in discussions with Québec's Ministry of Education (MEQ) and Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada for the renewal of Budgetary Rules for school years 2024-2025 to 2028-2029. Progress in these discussions is reportedly positive, continuing the effort to enhance educational resources and support for the Cree community.

ECONOMIC SECURITY PROGRAM FOR CREE HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS

It has been agreed with Québec to establish a negotiating table with representatives of the Ministry of Labour, which is responsible for the administration of the Income Security Program for Cree Hunters and Trappers. The negotiations would address two potential questions. The first relates to raising the cap on the total number of remunerated person-days, and hence the maximum amount payable, under the Income Security Program under the JBNQA.

The second important objective would be to examine the possibility entrusting the administration of the Income Security Program to the Cree Nation Government. While the program is efficiently administered, an issue exists in that



Photo: Brendan Forward



participants are penalized through “clawbacks” of amounts received from programs to compensate them for damage done to their traplines. Cree administration of the program could be explored as a way to better honour the pursuit of the traditional way of life as a critical element in protecting and maintaining Cree culture, rather than treating it as an alternative welfare program.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

A multi-year *Child Services Agreement* was signed by the Cree and Québec in 2014, providing a greater governance role for the Cree Nation Government, more delegation of powers from the Ministry of Families and increased, stable funding to account for the Cree context. The increased funding helped to implement northern allowances to attract and retain qualified and competent childcare personnel in Eeyou Istchee.

A new 7-year Cree-Québec Childcare Agreement was signed in 2022 for the period of 2019-2026, with a projected value of almost \$140 million. This Agreement continues to build on the previous one, including a further delegation of powers from the Ministry of Families, more regional support for Cree childcare centres and enhanced funding mecha-

nisms for salary increases of Cree childcare personnel.

This new Agreement also addresses retroactive salary increases that were an outstanding issue for the previous period and represented an important question of fairness for the Cree Nation Government. The funding mechanisms in the new Agreement will help to attract and retain qualified and competent childcare personnel for Cree childcare centres in the years to come.

CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

A clear relation exists between housing and economic, social and community development. The Cree Nation Government is now working with the Cree First Nations on the Cree Nation Housing Strategy. This strategy will propose concrete, specific actions to increase the supply and quality of housing in the Cree communities. It will take into account the *Cree Economic, Social and Community Development Plan* as it advances.

The Grand Chief has raised with Premier Legault the desirability of a Cree-Québec partnership to implement the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, with special reference to the housing needs of Cree elders and persons with disabilities or special needs.



Photo: Katherine Dehm



CONTRACTING AND TENDERING

The tender and contracting rules imposed under Québec legislation conflict at times with the Cree priority in contracts and employment provided for in Section 28 of the JBNQA. They also do not take account of the special status and autonomy of the Cree Nation under the JBNQA and of the special northern context of Eeyou Istchee.

The Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec have established a special Working Group of Cree representatives and procurement officials of the Québec Treasury Board to address this matter under the Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee. Its mandate is to develop a proposal to adapt public contracting rules to the realities and needs of the Cree communities, the CBHSSJB and the Cree School Board, taking into account the Cree priority provisions of Section 28 of the JBNQA.

This Working Group has discussed possible means to implement Section 28 of the JBNQA by means of a special contracting regime, with special reference to priority for Cree enterprises and workers in procurement for entities such as the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services.

Discussions with Treasury Board have been positive; it appears open to Cree prioritization under the draft *Cree Nation Free Trade Agreement* for companies that invest in a Cree community, local human resources have a real connection to the communities of Eeyou Istchee, regardless of their legal status or structure: corporation, joint venture, partnership and so on.

QUÉBEC CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

In 2014, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government, the Commission de la Construction du Québec (CCQ), and the Baie James Regional Administration formed a Working Group to integrate local workers from the Eeyou Istchee James Bay region into the CCQ regime. This group aimed to address long-standing concerns about workforce integration. In November 2020, the group produced a comprehensive report with various measures and actions, which gained support from the Board/Council by the end of the year. Despite some administrative measures being agreed upon and an action plan expected from the CCQ, the key measure of harmonizing the CCQ's James Bay referral and mobility region boundaries with the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory remains in discussions. This measure aims to ensure local construction workers receive necessary CCQ-related services.

Currently, the Eeyou Istchee James Bay region is divided into three CCQ mobility and referral regions: James Bay, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. There is a request to redefine the “James Bay” region to include all Cree communities, ensuring compliance with the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the 2012 Agreement on Governance. Positive progress has been made in negotiations with the CCQ, with the harmonization measure to be presented to the CCQ Board of Directors in May 2024.

The GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government submitted a brief addressing Bill 51, *An Act to modernize the construction*

industry, to provide comments and recommendations. The brief highlights the historical shortcomings of the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ) regime under Act R-20 in addressing the needs of Cree communities and promoting a qualified Cree workforce, and reiterates the need for the establishment of a new CCQ mobility and referral region to represent the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Region, improving regional hiring practices, mobility rules, and collaboration with Cree institutions. The GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government emphasizes the importance of these changes to comply with the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) and the 2012 Agreement on Governance, ensuring fair employment opportunities and services for the Cree communities. The Cree Nation Government continues to advocate for boundary harmonization and related CCQ regime services to support local workers, emphasizing the importance of these changes for fair employment opportunities in Cree communities.

ENERGY

The Cree Nation Government is following closely the orientations of the Government of Québec and Hydro-Québec regarding energy development in Northern Québec, including the effects of proposed energy exports to New England and New York. Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty has met with the new CEO of Hydro-Québec, Michael Sabia, who has also visited a Board/Council meeting in Nemaska on May 29, 2024. Mr. Sabia outlined Hydro-Québec's new orientation for “economic reconciliation” and for wind energy partnerships with First Nations.

On January 21, 2024, the Board/Council adopted Resolution 2024-026 to approve the *Ayimihituunaanuwich* between the GCC(EI)/CNG and Hydro-Québec to establish a Joint Process to assess the technical, environmental, social and cultural aspects of the potential La Grande Upgrades. The *Ayimihituunaanuwich* was signed by the Grand Chief and Michael Sabia, the CEO of Hydro-Québec, on February 21, 2024.

EYYOU COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Eeyou Communications Network (ECN) is a non-profit telecommunications corporation serving Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee and municipalities of the James Bay region. As of June 1st, 2024, ECN employs 30 staff members, including seven Crees, situated across various locations such as Waskaganish, Wemindji, Ouje-Bougoumou, Chibougamau, Chapais, Val-d'Or, and Montréal.

ECN has successfully implemented an “open-access” model, expanding its network infrastructure to include a new reseller, ID-Logic in Chibougamau. This initiative enhances consumer choice, potentially offering better rates and services. Additionally, ECN has bolstered its network robustness by establishing a second point-of-presence (POP) in Montreal at Cologix's MTL-4 facilities, complementing its existing POP at MTL-3 downtown.

The network underwent significant upgrades, demonstrating robust performance in 2023, even during partial outages. Challenges like forest fires underscored the need for improved network redundancy. Despite cable damage



disrupting services, ECN maintained critical communications through strategic redundancies, including a microwave link between Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou. ECN collaborated with Cree First Nations, municipalities, and telecom partners during emergencies, supporting essential services and establishing emergency connections.

Looking ahead, Eeyou Mobility, an ECN initiative, completed its Phase 1 build, extending services to Matagami in 2023. Plans for 2024 include constructing 46 cellular sites along highways and community roads, enhancing coverage from Chisasibi to Waskaganish. Scheduled for completion by early 2026, this project aims to bolster safety and connectivity across Eeyou Istchee's transportation routes.

FORESTRY

Forestry Harmonization Agreement

The Forestry Harmonization Agreement (FHA) was negotiated over several years in response to Québec's new Sustainable Forest Development Act (SFDA) which took effect in 2013. Approved by Decree No. 817-2017 on August 23, 2017, and finalized by both parties on February 20, 2018, Amendment No. 6 aimed to align the Adapted Forestry Regime (AFR) governing the Agreement territory with Québec's new Forest Regime. This harmonization ensured continuity of forestry activities under new legislative frameworks, integrating traditional Cree practices and sustainable development principles. Amendment No. 6 was formally published in the Gazette officielle du Québec on December 11, 2019. One remaining action is for the Cree Nation Government to secure Québec's approval and enactment of the proposed amendments to the Sustainable Forest Development Act (SFDA) to fully implement the provisions of Amendment No. 6.

Amendment No. 6 also underlines significant economic components aimed at enhancing Cree involvement in forestry activities within Eeyou Istchee. It introduces measures such as prioritizing Cree enterprises for forestry contracts, based on their performance and participation criteria outlined by the Ministry. The amendment ensures annual mechanisms are in place to identify eligible Cree enterprises for contract opportunities, specifically targeting 15% of non-commercial forestry silvicultural work budgets. Moreover, it establishes the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council (CCQEF) to promote economic opportunities and oversee the implementation of economic provisions, fostering sustainable economic growth and empowerment within the Cree communities. With respect to Cree employment and contracts in forestry, the Cree Nation Government and the five (5) forestry communities signed in June 2022 the *Aah Nuutahtikwaaniwich Nisituhtimuwin* Memorandum of Understanding to establish a protocol in regard to discussions to be held by the Cree First Nations affected by forestry and the Cree Nation Government.

Collaborative Forestry Management Regime

The Cree-Québec Governance Agreement establishes a collaborative management regime for forestry resources on Category II and III lands within the territory governed by Chapter 3 of the Paix des Braves. This regime involves

Québec and the Cree Nation Government collaborating to develop integrated forestry management plans. Key objectives include incorporating Cree interests, setting local sustainable development goals for forests, and harmonizing land use measures following consultations with Cree tallymen and stakeholders.

Implemented in two five-year phases, the agreement initially grants Québec primary responsibility for forestry planning and management, with support provided to the Cree Nation Government for enhancing its forestry planning and management capacities. In the subsequent phase, the Cree Nation Government assumes primary responsibility, supported by Québec financially and technically.

Under the Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement, Québec funds the Collaborative Forestry Management Regime. Since 2021, discussions have been held between the Cree Nation Government, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit (SRPNI), and the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF) to discuss the funding renewal. Simultaneously, Québec and the Cree Nation have engaged in multiple meetings of the Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee under Chapter 11 of the Paix des Braves to resolve delays in the funding renewal.

Following extensive efforts, in March 2024, the Cree Nation Government and Québec reached an agreement on the implementation of the Forestry Management Collaborative Regime from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2028 (Collaborative Regime Agreement). This agreement aims to enhance Cree capacity in forest planning and management and establishes a partnership defining roles, responsibilities, financial assistance, implementation mechanisms, and reporting requirements similar to those in the Cree-Québec Governance Agreement.

On March 27, 2024, the Cree Nation Government approved the Collaborative Forestry Regime Agreement, followed by the Québec Council of Ministers' approval on April 17, 2024, through Order in Council 757-2024. The newly established Forestry Department of the Cree Nation Government will oversee forestry planning and management activities as outlined in the collaborative agreement.

Wildlife Directives

Amendment No. 6 also reiterates the preparation of Wildlife Habitat Directives aiming to guide the forest development planning process in order to foster the protection and development of wildlife habitats. The development of these directives has been a long-standing issue raised by the Cree since the *Paix des Braves* back in 2002. The primary challenge identified was the lack of margin within the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) to accommodate the implementation of the Wildlife Habitat Directives. Additionally, there was ambiguity regarding the obligations imposed by the directives on forestry companies and the extent to which they are required to adhere to them.

The Standing Liaison Committee included this issue as part of the Collaborative Forestry Regime negotiations. The matter was discussed, and Québec made some commitment to expediate the development of the Wildlife Directives through a task force while ensuring the involvement of the Chief Forester.





Photo: Brendan Forward



Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement

The Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement provides that Québec and the Cree Nation Government shall each make annual contributions under the Agreement regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement concluded on July 11, 2013 for the five-year period 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. They are to work together to develop guidelines concerning eligible uses and activity reports in respect of the funding provided for under the Enhancement Agreement. The Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement provides that the parties are also to negotiate by April 1, 2020 a successor agreement to the Enhancement Agreement, taking into account the average funding level provided for in previous years.

The Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec renewed in 2022 the Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement for the 2021-2026 period. In order to implement the Enhancement Agreement, the Cree Nation Government adopted the Forestry Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program Law at its March 2023 meeting. In accordance with the Enhancement Agreement, Québec was consulted on the text of the Law before its approval and was satisfied with it. Among other things, this Law establishes the Cree Forestry Traditional Activities Enhancement Committee, on which the Cree Nation Government has designated the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director and the Treasurer as its representatives.



Photo: Katherine Dehm



PADF Agreement

The Cree Nation Government and the Minister of Forest, Wildlife and Parks signed in early 2018 the Delegation Agreement for Management of the Sustainable Forest Development Program of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs in the Nord-du-Québec Region (PADF Agreement) for the period 2015-2018.

The purpose of the 2015-2018 PADF Agreement was to delegate to the Cree Nation Government the management of the PADF program, and to provide it with related funding. The Cree Nation Government has concluded with Québec similar agreements for the periods 2018-2021 and 2021-2024.

SECTION 24 OF THE JBNQA

The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regime established under Chapter 24 of the JBNQA includes the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC), which advises governments and local Native authorities on all related matters. This committee reviews, manages, and, in certain cases, supervises and regulates these regimes. It also participates in wildlife species management within the Territory, primarily as a recommending body, but holds decisional power for species like Moose, Caribou, and Black Bear, including setting upper limits on kills. The HFTCC's mandate is detailed in sections 24.4.27 to 24.4.38 of the JBNQA.

Outfitting Regime and the Right of First Refusal Negotiations

The Right of First Refusal (RFR) process, established in Section 24 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), prioritizes Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi communities in establishing outfitting operations. While outfitting development on Category II land is exclusive to native communities, Category III land follows an RFR process where native people have priority in taking over outfitting operations. The JBNQA guarantees this right, which can be exercised 7 out of 10 times, overseen by the Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC).

The initial RFR period was set to expire in November 2015, but it was extended for six years through Complementary Agreement No. 25, allowing negotiations between Québec, the Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi to continue beyond 2021. Negotiations began in 2017 but have progressed slowly, leading to the need for another three-year extension. A complementary agreement has been drafted and approved, extending the RFR until 2024 to provide sufficient time for negotiations to be completed based on past experience and future needs.

Since 2022, these negotiations have stalled due to changes and reorganization within Québec's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the lack of appointment of a new Québec negotiator. This issue was brought to the Standing Liaison Committee's attention, and it was subsequently confirmed that the Ministry of Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks (MELCCFP) would be responsible for the outfitting regime negotiation.

Following recent exchanges between the MELCCFP and the HFTCC, discussions finally resumed between the

native parties and MELCCFP via Julie Rodrigue, Director of Relations with First Nations and Inuit. Discussions are now beginning focusing in priority on another amendment and the drafting a complementary agreement to extend the expiry date for another five years (2024-2029).

Wildlife Protection in Eeyou Istchee

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), the Cree-Québec New Relationship Agreement (CQNRA), and more recently the Cree-Québec Governance Agreement establish specific regimes and obligations related to wildlife protection resources in Eeyou Istchee. Since these agreements were signed, various challenges have delayed the implementation of wildlife protection provisions. In response, the Cree Nation Government initiated discussions with Québec through the SLC to address these issues, including:

- Establishing a wildlife protection office in Chisasibi
- Recruiting and training Cree Wildlife Protection Officers
- Training and hiring 19 Cree Wildlife Protection Assistants and securing related funding
- Adapting training programs for Cree Wildlife Protection Resources
- Ensuring adequate presence on the territory to respond to increasing pressures

As outlined in the Cree-Québec Governance Agreement, the Cree and Québec must negotiate the terms and conditions allowing the CNG to train and hire 19 Wildlife Protection Assistants. The current funding provided by Québec is limited, constraining operations across the territory. In anticipation of Québec's 2024 budget exercise, the CNG submitted a proposed five-year budget to Québec to support the hiring of 19 WPAs over the next five years. Unfortunately, no new funding was allocated in Québec's 2024 budget. However, the current funding was guaranteed over the next two years (2024-2026), totaling a budget of \$1,048,500. The CNG is now awaiting the draft funding agreement from Québec, and more discussions will be needed to secure longer-term funding. Meanwhile, the CNG, under its Government Services, continues to run the Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper/Wildlife Protection Assistant Program, which began in 2020. Benoit Longchamps was recently appointed Coordinator of Operations for the program and leads a team of four Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers/Wildlife Protection Assistants.

In the past year, the Cree Nation also participated in developing the training program for Cree Wildlife Protection Officers. This program, financed by ECCC and developed by Cegep Saint-Félicien in collaboration with the CTA and the CNG, is now finalized and in the student recruitment phase, scheduled to begin in September 2024. One challenge that remains is securing the involvement and support of Québec to ensure the recruitment and employment of Cree students who have succeeded the program, including planning for their specialized training at the *Centre de formation et de perfectionnement de la protection de la faune* in Duchesnay.

Recently, discussions have resumed with MELCCFP representatives, facilitated by Julie Rodrigue, Director of Relations with First Nations and Inuit. These matters will



be addressed in these discussions. The Cree Nation will continue to pursue a solution to improve surveillance and monitoring of the territory, including a longer-term solution which may involve delegating greater wildlife protection responsibility to the Cree Nation, aligning with trends since the JBNQA and Paix des Braves agreements.

Moose Harvest Management

In February 2021, a survey by the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife, and Parks (MFFP) and the Cree Nation Government (CNG) documented a significant 35% decline in the moose population across zone 17 and southern zone 22 since 2009, with 1036 moose counted. This decline prompted the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee to set an Upper Limit of Kill (ULK) of 104 moose for Zone 17, falling short of the Cree's guaranteed harvest of 158 moose, leading to the Cree receiving the entire allocation with sport hunting closed. In response, the Cree Nation established strict moose harvest guidelines, such as limiting harvest to 2 moose per trapline in Zone 17, mandatory reporting, and requiring consent from tallymen before hunting. Recommended guideline for Zone 22 guidelines were also proposed and include a one-moose limit per hunter/family, tallyman consent, and local reporting. Concerns persist over forestry impacts on moose habitats and discussions are ongoing, including the potential allocation of moose to non-Native sport hunting under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, managed by a committee involving Cree, Québec, and Jamésiens representatives. Due to the 2023 forest fires and anticipation of the next aerial survey in 2025, the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC) recommended maintaining the Upper Limit of Kill (ULK) for the 2024 moose harvest season. The Cree Nation Government (CNG) remains committed to implementing Cree moose harvest guidelines and enhancing the harvest registry. Although improvements were made to the registry, data quality still requires enhancement, prompting the Cree Moose Technical Committee to propose a mandatory registry using a traditional Cree moose harvest tag system with support from local authorities. Additional resources for Wildlife Protection Assistants will be needed to monitor this system and were expressed to Québec.

Caribou Harvest Management

The decline of migratory caribou herds continues to be a concern for the Cree Nation and other nations that rely on them. The Cree Nation have continued discussions with the Innu Nation to renew the *Maamuu Nisituhtimuwinn* (*Traditional Mutual Understanding on the Harvest of Caribou*) for the winter 2023-2024. This agreement allows Innu communities to hunt caribou in Cree traditional territory under tallymen and elder-guided terms promoting sustainable harvest, respect for tradition, and rigorous monitoring by Cree guides and Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers/Wildlife Protection Assistants. Given the 2023 summer fires it was recommended as a precaution that harvest be reduced to

alleviate the added pressure on the herd who will need to adapt to the drastic changes in their environment and food accessibility. Considering this, the Cree and Innu agreed to a symbolic harvest of 50 caribou. The Understanding was signed on January 10, 2024 in Chisasibi.

Québec's Woodland Caribou Habitat Management Strategy

Québec's Woodland Caribou Strategy has faced significant delays over the years. The Cree Nation continues discussions with Québec regarding their strategy within Eeyou Istchee and the adapted forestry regime territory. In 2022, Québec proposed a new scenario that included temporary protection measures prohibiting forestry harvest activities south of the commercial limit. In response, the Cree presented an alternative scenario in April 2023 and have since been awaiting a response.

Recently, the Québec government initiated a public consultation on pilot projects for the forest caribou populations in Charlevoix and the mountain caribou populations in Gaspésie, accompanied by proposed regulatory amendments. These pilot projects will rely on legal and regulatory frameworks aimed at enhancing designated wildlife habitats and managing these areas according to conservation objectives. Key consultation topics include habitat conservation tailored to caribou needs and strategies for population management.

The Cree continue to raise concerns about harmonizing Québec's strategy and proposed regulatory amendments with the adapted forestry regime at the SLC. A recent meeting with MELCCFP's Associated Deputy Minister, Jacob Martin-Malus, featured the presentation of a revised partial strategy and recent proposed regulatory amendments for the Charlevoix, Gaspésie, and Val-d'Or herds. Regarding Eeyou Istchee, Québec has committed to resuming work at the Cree-Québec technical table on Woodland Caribou, which will review proposed measures and provide recommendations for their application or adaptation to the territory of Eeyou Istchee.

EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Funding

On November 26, 2018, the Cree Nation Government, Québec, and Canada established a tripartite agreement for the operational funding of the Eeyou Eenu Police Force (EPPF) from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2028, in line with Section 19 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). However, more time was needed to discuss various financial matters, including major capital funding and the transport of accused persons, with an initial target to reach an agreement by March 31, 2019. Despite missing this deadline, the parties achieved an agreement in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. This amended the tripartite agreement to include separate funding for major capital infrastructure projects for the EPPF from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2025. The agreement maintained the parties' respective positions on funding for the transportation of accused persons.





Modalities Agreement, Court Security, Education and Special Constables

Cree-Québec discussions took place regarding the renewal of the Modalities Agreement, which relates to the EEPF's primary jurisdiction, the level of its police services and hiring requirements of its police officers; and certain training components for future officers as well as other issues, such as the provision of Court security.

In the meantime, and further to a joint Cree-Québec effort, various special constables have been appointed in view of certain retention and recruitment issues. These special constables are in addition to the members of the EEPF who are full-fledged police officers.

Efforts are also ongoing in order to address, with Québec and the education institutions, the recruitment and retention issues of the EEPF. An agreement was reached with the École Nationale de Police during fiscal year 2021-2022 in this respect.

There has been some delay in implementing these agreements which led to Cree-Québec discussions and exchange of correspondence during fiscal years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. It is expected that a joint table of Cree and Ministry of Public Security representatives will meet on a regular basis in 2024-2025 to advance the various policing files.

In 2022, the Sûreté du Québec was requested to provide certain services to the Cree communities for the sole purpose of ensuring round-the-clock patrolling services, in view of recruitment and retention problems.

CREE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION AND YOUTH PROTECTION

Following changes to Québec law to clearly reflect the legal effects of Indigenous customary adoption and guardian-

ship, in January 2019, the Board/Council of the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government designated the Cree Nation Government to act as the Cree competent authority to certify certain Cree customary adoptions and guardianships. This is to be done in collaboration with local committees set up by interested Cree First Nations.

The Québec Registrar of Civil Status included the Cree Nation Government in its register of Indigenous competent authorities in November 2019. This allows the Cree Nation Government to officialise an existing Cree customary adoption or guardianship, on request, if the relevant local committee has been set up and the adoption or guardianship meets the requirements of the Cree certification process. The Cree Nation Government will collaborate with the CBHSSJB as part of this certification process.

The Cree Nation Government has finalized the administrative implementation documents, and several Cree communities have now established their local committees. Members of these communities with a local committee who have carried out a Cree customary guardianship or customary adoption may apply to the Cree Nation Government to have the customary guardianship or adoption certified, to make it easier to recognize legal effects, for the benefit of Cree children, families and communities. The Cree Nation Government continues to work with other communities with a view to also allowing their members to have Cree customary adoptions and guardianships certified, if they chose.

RECONFIGURATION AND FINAL LAND DESCRIPTIONS FOR CREE COMMUNITIES

A few tables have been established with Québec and Canada concerning Cree land issues. The intention is for changes to Section 4 of the JBNQA and to other related provisions of the



JBNQA to be made in order to incorporate the final territorial descriptions of the Cree Category I lands. The recent focus has been on the land reconfiguration of Waswanipi and Waskaganish, and to some extent, Nemaska pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves*, as well as Chisasibi and Eastmain. The plan is to finalize some of these land reconfigurations first in order to include them in the final territorial descriptions of Section 4 of the JBNQA.

Drafts of a proposed Waswanipi reconfiguration agreement have been exchanged between Cree, Canada, and Québec representatives, with a transitional agreement signed in fiscal year 2022-2023 to secure a new waste management site and infrastructure for the community, which will be Category IA lands after reconfiguration. Efforts are ongoing to prioritize reconfiguring Block A12. The final reconfiguration agreement was signed in early 2024. In Waskaganish, reconfiguration discussions have regularized areas like the “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” and “Maloney-Watt Lands,” with deeds of transfer completed in June 2023 and May 2024, respectively. Discussions also aim

to regularize the “Hudson’s Bay Lands.” Similar issues in Eastmain involve the “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” and “Hudson’s Bay Lands,” with hopes to follow Waskaganish’s example. In Chisasibi, discussions focus on reconfiguring Category I lands related to the transportation corridor.

OUGE-BOUGOUMOU RECOGNITION AND MISTISSINI LANDS

In 2017, Ouje-Bougoumou was continued as a Cree First Nation under the Cree-Canada Governance Agreement. In September 2013, a Final Settlement Agreement related to land transfers from Mistissini to Québec was signed, allowing for land adjustments and financial provisions. By fiscal year 2021-2022, various decrees and orders-in-council by Québec and Canada, and the adoption of Bill 16 *An Act to amend various legislative provisions to implement Complementary Agreements No.22 and No.27 to the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, facilitated the land transfers. Québec described the new Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini



Photo: Brendan Forward



Category II lands, transferred new Mistissini Category IA lands to Canada, and authorized the issuance of letters patent to the Ouje-Bougoumou Landholding Corporation for the transfer of Category IB lands.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH MINING COMPANIES

Newmont/Goldcorp – Éléonore Project

The Opinagow Collaboration Agreement, signed on February 21, 2011, between Les Mines Opinaca (a Goldcorp subsidiary) and the Cree Nation of Wemindji, along with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority (now the Cree Nation Government), aimed to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial operations for the Éléonore Project. This agreement was pivotal in safeguarding Cree traditional activities while facilitating employment, business opportunities, and training programs for the community. It set forth comprehensive measures to adhere to environmental sustainability and comply with the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). Opinaca projected significant job creation throughout the project's phases, estimating 75 to 100 jobs during exploration, 200 to 600 jobs during development and construction, and 300 to 600 jobs during operational stages, with a potential project lifespan of 15 to 20 years, potentially extendable pending successful future exploration efforts.

Following Goldcorp's merger with Newmont Mining Corp. on April 18, 2019, and subsequent rebranding to Newmont Corp. in early January 2020, the company became the largest gold-mining entity globally. By May 2023, Newmont Corp. solidified its position further through the acquisition of Australian gold miner Newcrest Mining Ltd., consolidating its status as the largest U.S. producer of gold and copper by market capitalization. This strategic move received approvals from shareholders and regulatory bodies by late 2023, marking a significant expansion and consolidation within the global mining industry.

Stornoway Diamond Corporation – Renard Project

The Mecheshoo Agreement, signed on March 27, 2012, between Stornoway Diamonds (Canada) Inc. and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, along with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority, established a framework for collaboration throughout the life of the Renard Diamond Mine project. This agreement emphasized Cree involvement in the mine's development through employment opportunities, business ventures, and educational initiatives. It also ensured financial benefits for the Cree community via profit-sharing mechanisms and other forms of compensation. Committees like the Renard Committee were formed to oversee the agreement's implementation, meeting regularly to address operational and community-related matters. Stornoway's initial financing package in April 2014 kickstarted construction, though subsequent financial challenges necessitated a restructuring under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) in 2019.

Following the 2019 restructuring, which saw assets transferred to creditors, Stornoway faced ongoing market

challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a downturn in diamond prices. Operations at the Renard Mine were temporarily halted in March 2020 due to pandemic-related restrictions but resumed gradually later in the year. Despite these efforts, Stornoway encountered further financial difficulties by 2023, prompting a second CCAA filing. Issues included a sharp decline in diamond prices, exacerbated by market corrections and trade restrictions in key markets like India, affecting Stornoway's customer base significantly. The Superior Court of Québec issued successive stays under the CCAA, allowing for ongoing monitoring and seeking potential buyers or investors to sustain operations. On April 4, 2024, the Court issued an order approving a Call Option Agreement entered between Stornoway and Winsome Resources Limited ("Winsome"), pursuant to which Winsome may elect to exercise a call option. If exercised, the transaction would allow the Renard mine site and the supporting infrastructure to be repurposed by Winsome and could potentially lead to employee's retention as well as potential for regional development.

BlackRock Metals Inc. – BlackRock Project

Recent developments surrounding BlackRock Metals Inc. have been characterized by significant financial restructuring and strategic shifts. Following court proceedings under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) in late December 2021, BlackRock underwent a thorough restructuring process aimed at stabilizing its operations amidst financial difficulties. This included a Sale or Investor Solicitation Process (SISP), which ultimately led to the acquisition of all issued shares by Investissement Québec (IQ) and Orion, a New York-based private equity firm. The restructuring plan, approved by the Québec Superior Court in May 2022 and finalized in June 2022, involved the assumption of existing agreements, notably the BallyHusky Agreement, ensuring continuity in commitments to the Cree Nation and other stakeholders.

A significant milestone in BlackRock's recent history was its acquisition by Strategic Resources Inc. in December 2022 through a reverse takeover, which closed on March 31, 2023. This transaction involved issuing common shares to the Cree Nation Government, recognizing their pivotal role in guiding social acceptability and environmental stewardship initiatives. As part of their commitment to partnership and acknowledging previous financial support, the Cree Nation Government subsequently transferred a portion of the acquired shares to the Administration régionale Baie-James (ARBJ) and the Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ), maintaining collaborative ties forged prior to BlackRock's financial restructuring. These developments underscore ongoing efforts to navigate challenges while honouring commitments to community engagement and sustainable resource development.

Nemaska Lithium Inc. – Whabouchi Project

In recent developments, Nemaska Lithium Inc. has undergone significant restructuring and ownership changes. Following financial difficulties, the company filed for protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA)



in late December 2019. After a rigorous Sale or Investor Solicitation Process (SISP), a restructuring plan was approved by the Court, resulting in the formation of a “new” Nemaska Lithium equally owned by Investissement Québec and Québec Lithium Partners (QLP). QLP, in turn, is jointly owned by Livent, a prominent player in lithium technology for electric vehicles and energy storage, and a subsidiary of Pallinghurst Investment Fund, emphasizing battery materials.

In a pivotal move in May 2022, Livent announced the acquisition of Pallinghurst’s subsidiary’s interest in QLP, making QLP a wholly-owned subsidiary of Livent. Consequently, Livent now holds a 50% stake in Nemaska Lithium, alongside Investissement Québec. This transaction, finalized in June 2022, solidifies Livent’s position in the company and underscores its commitment to advancing the Whabouchi Project’s development and production of lithium hydroxide and carbonate. Importantly, through the restructuring process, the “new” Nemaska Lithium has assumed all obligations under the Chinuchi Agreement, reaffirming its commitments to the Cree Nation of Nemaska and ensuring continuity in its agreements and operations.

Critical Elements Lithium Corporation – Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project

In recent developments, Critical Elements Corporation (CEC) has made significant progress with its Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project located near the Cree community of Eastmain in Eeyou Istchee. CEC has conducted extensive exploration for spodumene and tantalum, essential for lithium production, on Category III lands under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. Currently, CEC is actively engaged in the environmental impact assessment process for the project.

Key to advancing the project, the Pihkuutaau Agreement was negotiated and signed in July 2019 between CEC, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), the Cree Nation Government, and the Cree Nation of Eastmain. This agreement outlines comprehensive provisions for employment, training, business opportunities, social and cultural considerations, environmental responsibilities including progressive rehabilitation and closure, and financial commitments throughout the project’s lifecycle.

In regulatory milestones, CEC achieved significant approvals in 2021 and 2022. In August 2021, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued a favorable decision with conditions for the Rose Project, affirming that the project is unlikely to cause significant adverse environmental impacts with proper mitigation measures. Subsequently, in October 2022, CEC successfully completed the provincial permitting process, receiving a certificate of authorization from Québec’s Ministère de l’Environnement, which complements the federal approvals and paves the way for advancing towards construction and commercial production phases of the Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project.

Arcadium Lithium – Galaxy Project

Recently, Galaxy Lithium Canada Inc. (GLCI), a subsidiary of Arcadium Lithium, has made significant strides in advancing the Galaxy project situated in Eeyou Istchee, near

the Cree community of Eastmain. Following negotiations and consultations with the Cree Nation of Eastmain and other stakeholders, GLCI finalized the Kapisikama Agreement on December 14, 2023. This agreement addresses various crucial aspects such as employment, training, business opportunities, environmental responsibilities including rehabilitation and closure, and financial commitments. It also establishes structured processes to manage these matters effectively throughout the project’s lifecycle.

In regulatory developments, GLCI achieved a milestone on December 27, 2023, by obtaining a certificate of authorization from Québec’s Ministère de l’Environnement, completing the provincial permitting process. This followed earlier federal approvals in January 2023 under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). However, facing a downturn in lithium prices in February 2024, Arcadium Lithium decided to scale back near-term capital spending on the Galaxy project. Despite this adjustment, GLCI remains committed to advancing pre-construction activities and continuing its efforts to secure necessary permits. The company anticipates readiness to proceed with full construction once market conditions improve, pending a Financial Investment Decision (FID) from the Arcadium Lithium Board.

Other Mining Projects

In recent years, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government and various Cree communities have signed several predevelopment agreements with other mining companies, which should lead to discussions to conclude IBA’s. However, like other regions, Canada and Québec have seen a slowdown in mining investment owing to the global decline in commodity prices. As a result, these discussions have either slowed or been temporarily suspended, pending a more favourable economic climate. These discussions include:

- (a) the Windfall Lake project (gold) of Osisko Mining in the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi;
- (b) the Fenelon project (gold) of Wallbridge Mining Company Ltd. in the territories of the Cree First Nation of Waskaganish and the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi;
- (c) the Moblan project (lithium) of Sayona North Inc. in the territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini;
- (d) the Troilus Extension project (gold and copper) of Troilus Gold in the territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini; and
- (e) the Montviel project (rare earths) of GeoMega Resources in the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi.

QUÉBEC POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The Cree Nation Government (CNG) has also been actively engaged in consultations and discussions contributing to shaping Québec policy and legislative developments. Under the coordination of the Québec Relations Director and Senior Advisor on Policy and Legislation, alongside several dedicated CNG departments staff, the CNG has ensured comprehensive involvement and input on various initiatives ensuring that Cree perspectives are integrated into Québec’s policy and legislation. Some of these initiatives include;



An Act to ensure the responsible governance of energy resources and to amend various legislative provisions: Bill 69

Québec Energy Minister Pierre Fitzgibbon introduced Bill 69, a 56-page legislation aimed at advancing the provincial government's energy production objectives. The bill, titled "An Act to ensure the responsible governance of energy resources and to amend various legislative provisions," lays out plans for an integrated energy management strategy as Québec moves towards carbon neutrality by 2050. Fitzgibbon emphasized that the goal is to accelerate green energy production, citing current delays in project completion and the risk of losing Québec's competitive edge in clean energy. Key provisions include removing tender requirements for Hydro-Québec to expedite projects like wind farms and new hydroelectric stations. The bill also proposes changes to Québec's energy regulator, the Régie de l'énergie, allowing for more frequent electricity rate reassessments and introducing incentives for peak consumption reduction. Additionally, it would enable direct sale of renewable energy between adjacent industrial sites and establish a fund to mitigate residential electricity rate increases beyond three percent annually, reflecting ongoing discussions and potential improvements before final adoption.

The CNG has been actively involved in consultations regarding the Act on development of clean energies in Québec, and will be providing its comments.

Future of Forests Reflection on the Future of Québec's Forest

At the "Feux de forêt 2023 - Bilan et constats" event, held on November 17, 2023, Minister Maïté Blanchette Vézina announced that the "Tables de réflexion sur l'avenir de la forêt" would take place in winter 2024. This initiative aimed to address climate change and other challenges by rethinking forest management to ensure long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

From February 13 to April 12, 2024, public consultations and regional meetings were held to develop a collective vision for Québec's forests. The focus was on four themes: Sustainable Management and Forest Productivity, Wood Supply, Land Use Conciliation, and Economic Development and Regional Benefits. Indigenous partnerships were also addressed. In the context of the Future of Forests reflection with the MRNF, the CNG participated to the consultation process and provided a brief on the consultation theme. A bilateral meeting between the Minister and Grand Chief was recently held. The CNG will continue to follow the development of this file closely.

Québec International Action Policy Consultation

Québec is currently engaged in international actions and is in the process of drafting a new policy. Ongoing consultations aim to shape a policy that addresses present and future



Photo: Katherine Dehm



challenges, adapting to evolving international relations dynamics. This upcoming policy, the sixth in Québec's history, is scheduled for release in 2025 and seeks to fully integrate the economic shifts in Québec's international relationships outlined in the Québec International Vision of 2019.

The Cree Nation Government (CNG) has been invited to contribute to this process through participation in policy development sessions led by the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie. The CNG is preparing its responses for forthcoming meetings, underscoring its commitment to ensuring Indigenous perspectives are integral to Québec's international and intergovernmental policies.

Modernization of the Mining Act: Bill 63

On May 28, 2024, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forests presented Bill 63 to the National Assembly to amend the Mining Act and other provisions. This 176-article Bill aims to consolidate Québec's mining sector by promoting harmonious development and responsible management of mineral resources. Key measures include strengthening transparency and predictability, reconciling land uses, regulating exclusive exploration rights, raising environmental standards, maximizing benefits from extracted minerals, and increasing industry efficiency. The conference will detail the Bill's provisions and include a question period.

The CNG has been actively reviewing Bill 63, and an initial brief and comments is being prepared for submission. The CNG will be presenting its analysis and findings at the July 2024 Board/Council meeting.

Nature Plan 2030: Engagement on \$30 Million Envelope for Indigenous Actions

In 2022, Premier François Legault committed at COP-15 to develop an ambitious Plan Nature 2030 to conserve Québec's natural heritage and meet global biodiversity targets, including conserving 30% of Québec's territory by 2030. This plan involves concrete measures to preserve natural environments, support Indigenous conservation initiatives, and address biodiversity threats while promoting access to nature for all Québécois.

To achieve these goals, the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks (MELCCFP) launched a consultation in February 2023, engaging various levels of government, Indigenous representatives, NGOs, and business and research sectors.

On May 29, 2024, a meeting was held with the Cree Nation Government (CNG) to discuss Plan Nature 2030 and funding guidelines, focusing on the \$30 million allocated for 2023-2027. Key topics included governance issues, funding priorities for the Cree Nation, and the need for funding agreements. MELCCFP emphasized flexibility and adaptation, support for Indigenous-led programs, and the importance of Cree governance in project management. Follow-up meetings are planned to discuss specific project priorities and a funding agreement.

Québec Boreal Caribou Strategy

Québec's woodland caribou habitat protection strategy has faced significant delays. Initially slated for release in June 2023, the strategy was postponed due to forest fires,



pending an AAC review. Despite nearly \$60 million allocated and numerous reports emphasizing urgent needs, the government has yet to finalize its approach. In early May 2024, Québec finally announced a strategy focusing solely on the Val-d'Or, Gaspésie, and Charlevoix regions, sparking concerns about its limited scope for all Québec herds. Public consultations on this partial strategy have been launched, featuring pilot projects in these regions. These projects aim to enhance designated wildlife habitats under the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife, managing them according to specified conservation objectives.

The Cree Nation Government (CNG) is currently reviewing these regulatory changes in preparation for discussions with Québec on the boreal caribou herd in Eeyou Istchee. The consultation period for these pilot projects has been extended until October 31, 2024, as the CNG continues to assess Québec's legislative amendments.

CONCLUSION

The Cree Nation Government values its longstanding partnership with the Government of Québec, crucial for our self-determination and effective governance over our lands and resources. Since the historic signing of the Paix des Braves in 2002, our collaboration has brought remarkable benefits, including significant investments in healthcare, social services, education, policing, justice, and childcare. The Adapted Forestry Regime and the 2012 Cree-Québec Governance Agreement have solidified our

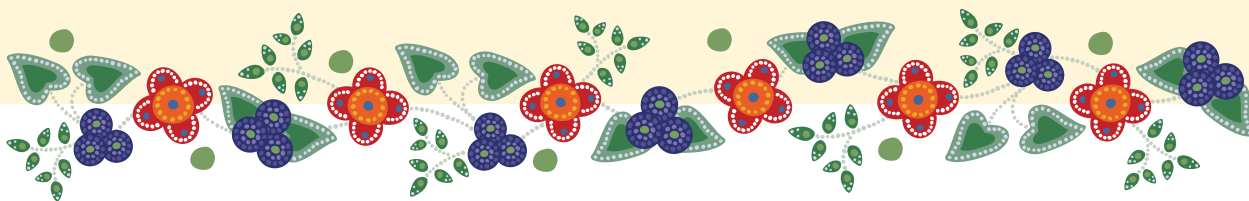
governance, granting us unprecedented authority over Category II lands and establishing equal partnership in managing Category III lands.

The signing of La Grande Alliance in February 2020 marked a pivotal moment in our journey towards self-determination, recognizing the Cree Nation Government as a full partner in planning infrastructure and resource development while ensuring environmental protection. Despite recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 forest fires, our resolve remains steadfast. In response, the Cree Nation Government has taken decisive action, coordinating efforts with Québec authorities to support communities and manage crises effectively. These difficulties have underscored the critical need for a resilient governance framework and emphasized our role in managing and protecting our territories.

Remaining informed about Québec's policies is vital to align our strategies and influence policy development, ensuring our community's needs are met. This proactive approach strengthens our self-determination and governance, safeguarding our lands, promoting our culture, and securing the well-being of our people. Our relationship with Québec is central to the political, social, and economic development of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. Committed to sustainable development, environmental protection, and cultural preservation, we will continue to strive for a partnership that respects our traditions, fosters prosperity, and secures a sustainable legacy for future generations.



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS



The Cree Nation Government continues to engage directly with Indigenous groups across the country to share its experiences and the history of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. We do this out of a sense of responsibility, and to assist other Indigenous groups in securing recognition of their rights. More specifically, we see the importance and benefits for all involved in maintaining and strengthening our relations with our Indigenous neighbors and with whom there are a wide range of issues of common concern. Our approach in this initiative is to strengthen and to build new relationships based on our shared Indigenous histories and values, and to conclude arrangements that are in keeping with our cultures and traditional ways of relating to one another.

CREE-NASKAPI-INUIT RELATIONS

As signatories to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) of 1975 and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (NEQA) of 1978, the Cree, Inuit and the Naskapi's past and current leaders have held several discussions and exchanges to address common issues and to identify ways to resolve them. As a result, a memorandum of understanding for the creation of a Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Forum was developed and signed on April 22, 2022. The Permanent Forum will promote cooperation and coordination between the parties and establish and advance nation-to-nation collaboration. The parties have agreed to review several priority topics for further discussion which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- JBNQA and NEQA modernization
- Wildlife Management
- Protected Areas
- Housing
- Implementation of inquiry report recommendations
- UNDRIP and self-governance
- Regional Economic Development
- Land Use Planning
- Language and Culture
- Territorial Overlaps

CREE-INNU OF PEKUAKAMIULNUATSH NATION RELATIONS

Our joint efforts to implement the Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement, which was signed in 2018 between the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Nation and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, continues to identify potential solutions to addressing issues of mutual concern, including land title, forestry management, economic development, wildlife

management, protection of the environment and the promotion of our respective languages and cultures. The committees established to address wildlife management, economic development, and forestry have continued their dialogues and exchanges throughout the year. Their efforts to complete their respective mandates are ongoing, including work on an agreement on traditional and wildlife activities, work on an agreement on a new forestry regime with the provincial government in the Peschitaskau common area and work to develop a memorandum of understanding on economic development.

This treaty promotes positive inter-Indigenous relations, and at the same time, serves as a model for future discussions with other Indigenous groups.

CREE-INNU NATION RELATIONS

The decline of the migratory caribou herd populations continues to be a challenge throughout the territory. Over the recent years the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and the Cree Trappers' Association have held discussions with the Innu Nation in Quebec, concerning their request to access caribou. Our joint efforts to find an acceptable solution to enable access to caribou while ensuring that any actions ensure and prioritize the health of the herds and the respect of Cree rights and interests resulted in the renewal of the 3rd *Maammu Nisituhtimuwin-Traditional Mutual Understanding on the Harvest of Caribou in Cree Traditional Territory of Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee* between the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and the Innu Nation in Quebec January 2024. The caribou harvest for the Winter 2024 was another success, thanks to the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, the concerned talymen and other representatives involved in the successful implementation of our agreement based on our mutual traditional understanding.

The second Cree-Innu Leadership meeting was held in Chisasibi on January 10th, 2024. The

leaders reiterated their commitment to joint discussions and addressing the nations common issues. The leaders also agreed to kickstart the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table (UPCART), which brings the nations together to act for the preservation of the declining caribou resources.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) promoting an open dialogue between the Cree and Innu Nation of Quebec was presented with the intent to have a final version before the next leadership meeting. The next meeting will be hosted by the Innu Nation of Quebec.



CREE-MOOSE CREE NATION RELATIONS

The Grand Chief and Chief Peter Wesley of the Moose Cree Nation met on March 1st, 2024. Their discussions included an exchange on our histories and relations. The leaders agreed to continue this important dialogue to find solutions by understanding one another and to work with one another. The leaders committed to having future meetings to continue the exchanges.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INDIGENOUS GROUPS

The Cree Nation Government is committed to developing positive and mutually beneficial relations with other Indigenous groups with whom we have begun exchanges in recent years. We look forward to ongoing discussions leading to the development of further positive Indigenous-to-Indigenous relations.



1st Indigenous Women Leadership Conference

Montreal, Quebec | March 8-9, 2024



The Cree Nation Government and the Office of the Grand Chief were proud to sponsor the 1st Indigenous Woman Leadership Conference 2024 working alongside the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association. The conference was held in Montreal at the Fairmount Queen Elizabeth Hotel on March 8-9, 2024.

It was an extremely successful networking and empowering event open to all Indigenous women of Quebec where participants could take part in healing and empowering workshops, listen to dynamic panel discussions and engage in meaningful networking activities.

A wide range of workshops were offered in side-panels throughout the event providing guidance in self-healing and empowering attitudes to providing women with tools for success. Among others there were workshops on women's Leadership by the HEC Montreal First Nations Executive Education, Communication and Media by Shushan Bacon of APTN News and a special workshop featuring a ceremony honouring Indigenous women leaders.

Engaging panels were held featuring prominent female leaders from Quebec including Grand Chief Mandy Gull Masty, Chief Christina Gilpin and Cree School Board Chairperson Dr. Sarah Pash. Audiences were treated to interesting discussions and advice on overcoming boundaries, balancing important and busy schedules with family life, and role models and mentors.

Motivational and empowering speeches were also given by prominent Indigenous women leaders like Mohawk Council of Kahnawá:ke Grand Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec Manon Jeannotte and Elder Irene House.

Of also great importance were the many opportunities for Indigenous women to network and bond whether it was in healing workshops, during meals and health breaks or at the dinner gala held on International Women's Day. The dinner event featured entertainment from Cree women musicians and singer/songwriters ending with a well-received performance by David Hart.





FORUM ON RESEARCH IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

Ouje-Bougoumou, Eeyou Istchee | March 18-19, 2024

The Cree Nation Research Institute (CNRI) project started in 2022 at the initiative of the Deputy Grand Chief and has made significant strides towards building a collective Cree vision for research capacity development and Cree research governance in Eeyou Istchee. This year, the consultation phase of the CNRI project was completed, and a comprehensive report describing consultation activities within the Cree Nation and a roadmap for the establishment of the CNRI will be published in 2024.

A comprehensive two-part consultation strategy was employed to ensure the CNRI's alignment with the needs and aspirations of the Cree Nation. The first part involved pre-consultation meetings with the Cree First Nations and regional Cree organizations to gather their perspectives and experiences with research, as well as their input on what the CNRI should do and how it should be governed. Building on the input collected during these meetings, the Forum on Research in Eeyou Istchee was held in Ouje-Bougoumou on March 18 and 19, 2024. This event provided a platform to consult the



Photo: Manuan Lafond





same stakeholders on three proposed mandates for the CNRI and to plan for the next steps, ensuring a collaborative approach to its development. Looking ahead, the next step of the CNRI project will be the creation of an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of all Cree First Nations and all Cree organizations involved in research. From this group, a smaller Steering Committee will be formed to oversee the work of the CNRI staff and implement the three initial mandates.

The CNRI is not just a project, but a cornerstone of Cree self-determination in research. Its establishment will mark a pivotal step towards modelling research, so it benefits Eeyouch, developing tools to protect Cree collective knowledge and strengthen Cree data sovereignty, and develop regional research capacity to address Cree priorities in research. As foundational work progresses, partnerships grow, and research programs develop, the CNRI is positioned to become a leader in Indigenous research and research governance.



Photo: Manuan Lafond





CREE-INNU LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee | January 9-10, 2024



At the second summit in Chisasibi on January 9-10, 2024, leaders of the Cree and Innu Nations reaffirmed their agreement allowing Innu hunters to hunt caribou on Cree traditional territory. The Maamuu nisituhimuwin/Matinueu-mashinaikan atiku euauinakanit agreement, signed in 2022, originally permitted an annual harvest of 300 caribou. Due to the impact of 2023 forest fires on caribou populations, this year's quota has been reduced to 50, based on recommendations from the Chisasibi tallymen to support conservation efforts.

Chisasibi Chief Daisy House highlighted the need to conserve the caribou population amidst climate challenges. The summit also addressed management strategies for the George River and Leaf River caribou herds as part of the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table (UPCART) strategy. UPCART, established in 2013, fosters collaboration among the Cree, Innu, Naskapi, and Inuit of Quebec.

Chief Mike McKenzie of Uashat mak Mani-utenam emphasized the agreement's role in reinforcing relationships through mutual aid, sharing, and respect.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty praised the memorandum for promoting dialogue and cooperation, strengthening ties between the Cree and Innu Nations.

The summit underscored the importance of collaborative efforts to address environmental challenges and preserve cultural heritage.



Photo: Katherine Dehm



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In my
opinion,
without
the
judgement
of Justice
Malouf
you
would not
have the
JBNQA.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KANATEWAT DECISION

November 15, 2023

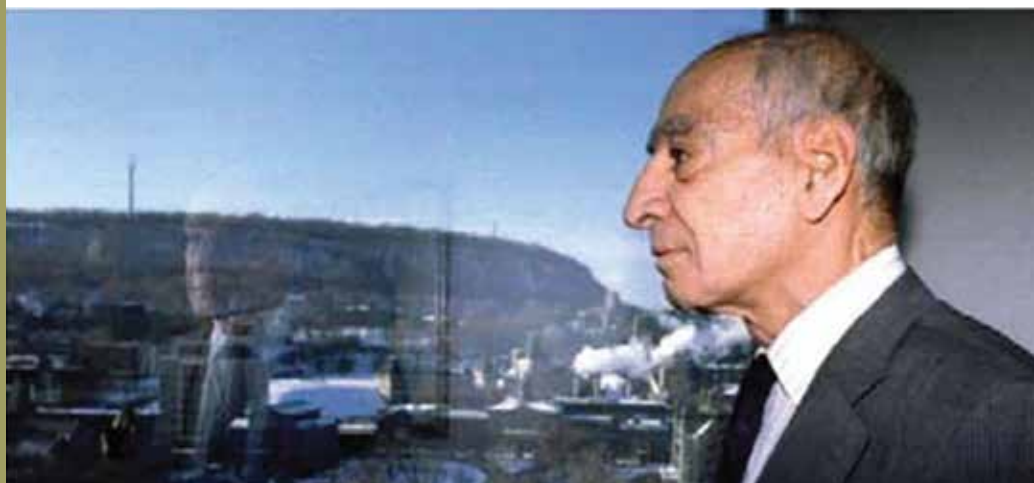
This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the historic Kanatewat Decision, named after Robert Kanatewat who was instrumental in the legal dispute that led to the halting of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project in 1973. This landmark decision laid the groundwork for the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the first modern land claim agreement for the Cree people of Eeyou Istchee.

On November 15, 1973, the Quebec Superior Court issued a ruling in favor of the Cree and Inuit, recognizing their rights to the land and halting the James Bay Project. This decision was a significant victory for Indigenous rights in Canada, as it acknowledged the necessity of consulting and negotiating with Indigenous peoples before undertaking major development projects on their lands.

In his decision, Justice Malouf determined that the Quebec government's plans to proceed with the massive hydroelectric development without consulting the Cree and Inuit communities violated their rights. The ruling effectively recognized the importance of Indigenous land rights and required the government to halt the project until proper negotiations and agreements were made with the affected Indigenous groups.

Learn More:

1) Court Judgement 11-15, 1973: <https://www.cngov.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/1973-11-15-malouf-judgment-kanatewat-v-jbdc-et-al.pdf>



Bourassa to appeal injunction blocking James Bay project

By HUBERT GENDRON

Premier Bourassa said last night the James Bay Development Corp. will appeal the Superior Court injunction which yesterday ordered an immediate halt of all work on the \$5.8 billion James Bay power project.

In a two-paragraph statement, the premier also said that the development corporation and its subsidiary, the James Bay Energy Corp., will ask the Quebec Court of Appeal to delay the application of the injunction until the appeal is completed.

His statement said both steps will be taken "as soon as possible." Law-

yers for the development and energy corporations were in conference last night and unable to say when the steps would be taken.

The injunction, granted by Justice Albert Malouf after more than six months of testimony, states that the Indians and Inuits of James Bay have never surrendered their rights there and that the project interferes with their exercise of those rights.

Consequently, Justice Malouf ordered the corporations to "immediately cease, desist, and refrain from carrying out works, operations and projects in the territory . . . includ-

Other stories on James Bay are on Page A-8.

ing the building of roads, dams, dikes, bridges and connected works."

It also orders the corporations to "desist and refrain from interfering in any way with petitioners' (Indians and Inuits) rights, from trespassing in the said territory and from causing damage to the environment and the natural resources of the said territory."

Lawyers and officials of the companies involved met late into the night

deciding how they would cope with the order to stop work. It is estimated that \$200 million already has been spent on the project.

A spokesman for James Bay Energy Corp., Fernand Kerozac, said: "We just don't know now what the decisions are going to be."

He added: "If our lawyers find reasons to appeal the decisions, then what do we do with our equipment, our men? We have to go on feeding them. Do we pay them? All these things are up in the air."

He said there are 18 inches of snow in the James Bay region and air

transportation has been hampered.

"If we are talking in terms of evacuation, how are we going to do it? There are at least 700 men working for us, living in the camp right now. We can't start moving them and dismembering the plant until we find out just exactly what the terms of the court decision are."

The injunction also orders Hydro-Quebec to stop all work outside the James Bay territory connected with the development of the La Grande power project.

The injunction covers the territory granted by provincial legislation to

the James Bay Development Corp., which has since been incorporated as a municipality.

The 133,377-square-mile territory is bounded on the north by the 55th parallel, on the south by the 49th parallel, the west by the Ontario border and the east by the height of land dividing the Hudson's Bay and St. Lawrence watersheds.

In his 178-page judgment, Justice Malouf recognizes — but does not define the Cree Indians' and Inuits' rights in the territory.

See PROVINCE, Page A-2



Robert Livack, lawyer for the Inuit in legal battle over James Bay project, serves beer from a keg at party in his home to celebrate court victory. At right of him is Indians' lawyer, James O'Reilly.

3,000 workers already idle

By JAMES STEWART
Star Staff Reporter

MATAGAMI, Que. — Three thousand men working on the James Bay power project are idle today along with their trucks, construction equipment, planes and helicopters.

The James Bay Development Corp., the prime authority here, has all but frozen travel in the 1,338,000-square-mile area, one-fifth of the entire province.

Local officials said the shutdown of work and the travel restrictions, which followed closely on the stop-work injunction issued by Justice Albert Malouf of Superior Court in Montreal yesterday, will continue until further notice.

The people of this town are fearful

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I have never forgotten him either. To this day I am thankful to that judge for rendering in our favour.

James O'Reilly



Tribute to WILLIE ISERHOFF



By Bill Namagoose, former Executive Director,
Cree Nation Government

I met Willie early in early days of the Grand Council of the Crees and Cree Regional Authority (CRA now Cree Nation Government). I recall we got introduced at the CRA office then located in the shopping mall. We were so very young and ready to take on the world. He was the Director of Traditional Pursuits. I was recently hired as the Band Manager in Waskaganish.

He talked and explained about the Cree traditional way of life and that there was an undertaking in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement to preserve and enhance it. I was aware of the Cree traditional way of life of hunting, fishing, and trapping being preserved in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. I was perplexed by how it could be described in legal text and what the bureaucracy would look like to protect and enhance the Cree traditional way of life. I thought this would be difficult to stitch together and wondered if it was at all possible.

Willie was an expert and practiced the Cree traditional way of life and his description and his lesson on how the bureaucracy required would look like to implement it really opened my eyes. I always thought there was no connection between bureaucracy and the Cree traditional way of life. I always thought they were totally separate. He described how the committees and organizations like the Cree Trappers' Association, Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee, the Cree Hunters and Trappers Income Security Program, Section 24 and Section 22 of the JBNQA would function.

He explained the compatibility and intricacy of a bureaucracy to protect the Cree way of life. This discussion also compelled me to get a deep understanding of our Rights and how to protect and use in delicate negotiations on many aspects of protecting and enhancing the Cree traditional way of life and getting community development underway. His teachings continued throughout my career as the Executive Director of the Cree Nation Government.

Ten years later, I became his boss. He gave his trademark chuckle and congratulated me. He welcomed me as the new Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees. He supported me in this new position of great responsibility and I always felt comfort and support from him. He always had my back.

Willie was a spiritual person who often led us in prayer when we opened our internal meetings. Willie was a family man and deeply proud of his family.

Willie was one of the early trailblazers in our Nation's path to building and asserting our Rights. The defense of the Cree way of life was the backbone in our endeavors to push back Governments efforts to marginalize our people.

Rest in Peace Willie. You fought the good fight, and now you rest.

Willie will be missed but he left a legacy we stand on to this day.



Traditional Pursuits Agency

Message from the Director of Traditional Pursuits Agency

I, the Director of Traditional Pursuits Agency for the past five years, the honor of this opportunity to address an annual report to the members of the Cree Nation is a great privilege. The position of director is a challenging one: the work and the responsibility are increasingly demanding. I am grateful by working together and understanding one another, it is easier to focus on the right decision and to achieve progress.

You'll see in our report that each project contains a summary reflecting a general account of project activities. The mandate of the Agency is clear, but adjustments are required to better determine and understand functions and roles at the administrative level. I am confident however, that as another year approaches we will again have your support to continue to pursue the



Hanon. Therefore, as a final comment, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the staff of the Agency and dedication they have shown. They have been of invaluable service to the Cree Nation. To all of you Métis, Inuit, and First Nations, I thank you for your support to continue to pursue the high goals of the north.

William Beaulieu



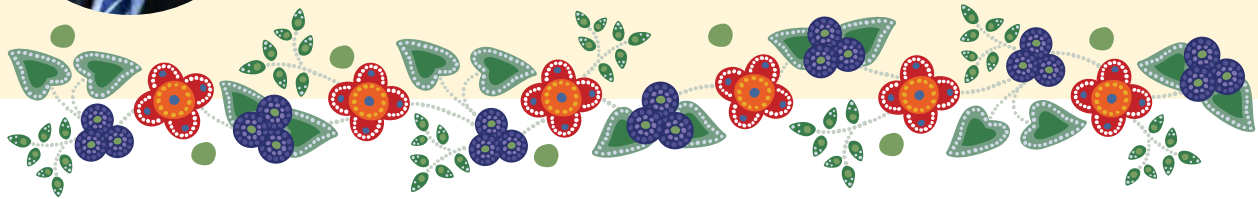


Photo: Jessica Otter



FINANCE AND TREASURY

Message from the Treasurer **Matthew Swallow**



THE CREE NATION HAS ALWAYS FACED MANY CHALLENGES AND THOSE WHICH WERE DRIVEN BY THE PANDEMIC REQUIRED INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND DEDICATED TEAMS REGIONALLY AND LOCALLY TO MEET THE NEEDS RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATION'S FINANCES AND THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES WHICH WERE THE RESULT OF THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES THE WORLD WAS FACED WITH THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC AND POST PANDEMIC PERIOD.

 **14**
EMPLOYEES

On the strength of our long-term financial arrangements, and in consideration of the breadth of financial programs provided by both Canada and Quebec during these periods, the Cree Nation has been capable of continuing to build on our financial successes and to recognize important new administrative efficiencies possible as a result of the new ways we found to undertake our tasks and meet our mission objectives required during the pandemic period.

The Cree Nation Government continued to pursue important financial discussions with the Government of Canada during this period and particularly over the past year. An important focus of these discussions is related to continued implementation of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy. Including new arrangements negotiated last year, we have now secured a total funding of \$514M.

The Cree Nation Housing Strategy addresses certain of the needs for social and private housing. The cost of the plan exceeds \$1.3B and requires the support of many partners and the prioritization of all local communities and individuals who will either participate as private individuals building and financing their own homes or, will be required to pay an economic rent to ensure the viability of social or government sponsored projects.

The economic effects of the important inflationary environment we have all had to live in over the past three years have had a significant impact on Cree Nation capital expenditures. This has impacted many of our new initiatives relating to housing and infrastructure development as the costs and financing now require far greater resources

relative to our original estimates. We are working with all communities and the Governments of Canada and Quebec to find innovative solutions to address our ambitious housing plans.

I am also pleased to report that the Cree Nation Government successfully secured new funding allocations from Canada to support certain operation and maintenance funding needs. This funding is intended to be provided for the balance of the current period of the Operations and Maintenance Funding Agreement to March 31, 2028, and will help ensure that communities can address various needs particularly related to water and waste water systems.

The Cree Nation Government continues our efforts to work with all Departments of the Government of Canada to streamline funding arrangements to respect the Cree Canada Governance Agreement. The Cree Nation Government has now made a second presentation to the Deputy Ministers Oversight Committee (DMOC) where we expressed the need for a whole-of-government approach to the implementation of special treaty rights and agreements. These representations have opened the door to new discussions and hopefully new ways of doing business which will impact our financial relationship with Canada in relation to the implementation of our Treaty and other regular funding programs.

We have come a long way in having Canada and Quebec recognize our rights of self-government and how we must manage our affairs consistent with those rights and responsibilities. These efforts are becoming ever more important as we move towards the last phase of the implementation of the Cree Canada New Relationship Agreement and the start of renewal discussions which will commence in 2026.

For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Council/Board of the Cree Nation Government allocated \$547,995,441 for various programs, services, and responsibilities either under its administration or under the administration of other



entities established pursuant to the JBNQA and related entities. These funds are exclusive of the budgets for the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services as well as several other Cree entities.

The following graphs also provide a general review of how the Cree Nation Government has allocated funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

As a final note, I wish to express my continuing appreciation to all staff of the Department of Finance and Treasury

who devote their time and extensive efforts to ensuring that we can meet the significant responsibilities entrusted to us by our leadership. Your commitment and efforts are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Matthew Swallow
Treasurer

An Overview of certain of the Funding flowing through the Cree Nation Government including funds allocated by the Cree Nation Trust and Eenou-Eeyou Limited Partnership

The Cree Nation Government and the Eenou-Eeyou Limited Partnership act as Recipients of Funding pursuant to many agreements with Canada and Quebec. Pursuant to the New Relationship Agreement with Canada all payments, to the exclusion of the Community Specific Agreements, are made to the Cree Nation Trust which provides annual disbursements to

the Cree Nation Government which is entrusted with the implementation of the Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities. The Cree Nation Government has also negotiated many funding agreements for the Cree Nation where the funding flows to the Cree Nation Government, which then reallocates the funds in favor of the local communities and/or in conformity with Agreement guidelines.

The following summarizes certain of these arrangements for 2023-2024:

Government of Canada	
Cree Act Operation and Maintenance Funding	\$118,886,984
Supplemental Funding to support Operation and Maintenance Needs	\$8,330,493
Federal Base Funding for Capital	\$21,892,537
Supplemental Capital Funding for Housing Related Investments	\$109,251,082
Agreement respecting the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and Related Services	\$8,045,716
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Funding Agreement	\$1,600,770
Canada / Quebec Joint Funding	
Policing Services Agreement	\$31,723,846
Government Of Quebec	
Agreement Concerning a New Relationship - Annual Payment	\$108,961,644
Agreement Concerning the Administration of Justice	\$24,383,983
Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee Territory	\$5,000,000
Cree Nation Trust	
Implementation of Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities	\$109,918,386



In addition to the funding described in the table, both Canada and Quebec provide funding in relation to Cree Education to the Cree School Board and Quebec provides funding for Health and Social Services to the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. Many other program funding arrangements exist

between Canada, Quebec and the Crees to implement other special and regular program funding arrangements.

The following series of graphs provides a general overview of the allocation of certain funding arrangements and provides information as to the distribution amongst the various communities and other Cree Entities:

NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT CANADA

Figure 1. New Relationship Agreement CANADA | Funding Allocation 2023-24 by Program | \$109.9 Million

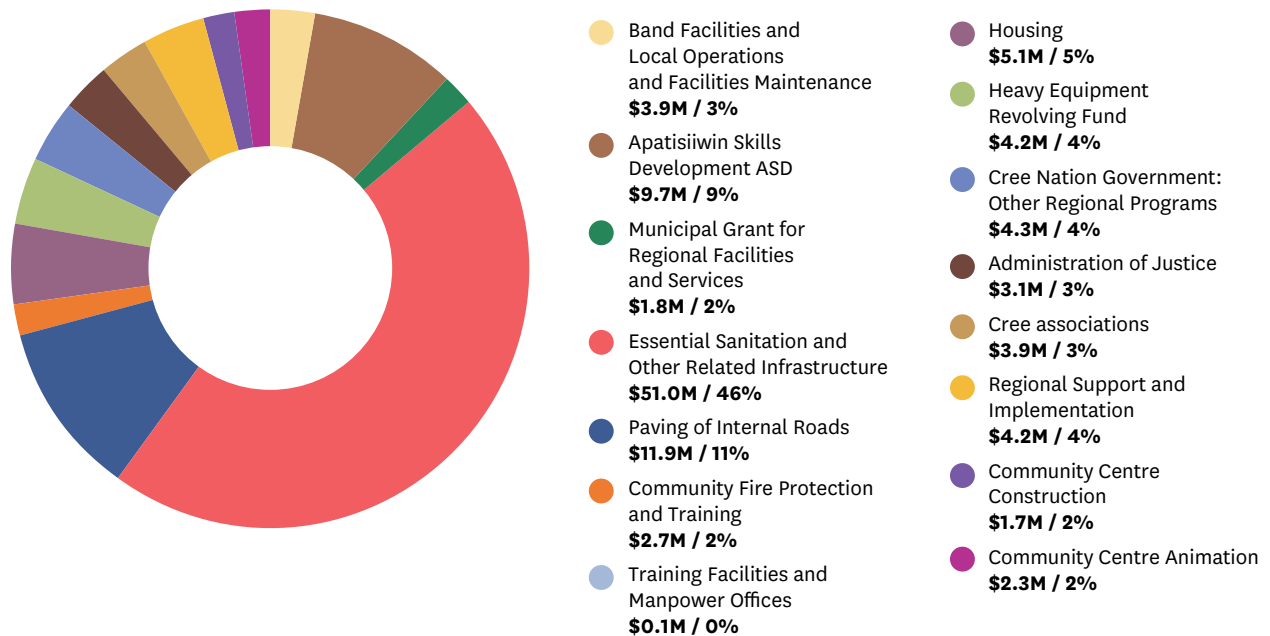
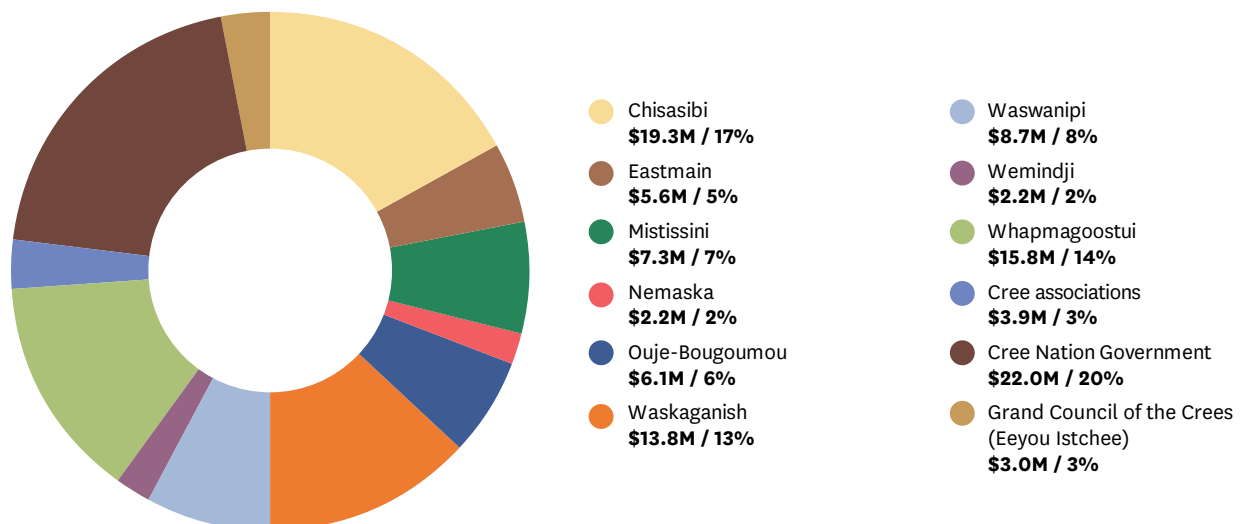


Figure 2. New Relationship Agreement CANADA | Funding Allocation 2023-24 | \$109.9 Million



NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT QUEBEC

Figure 3. New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC | Funding Allocation 2023-24 by Program | \$109.0 Million

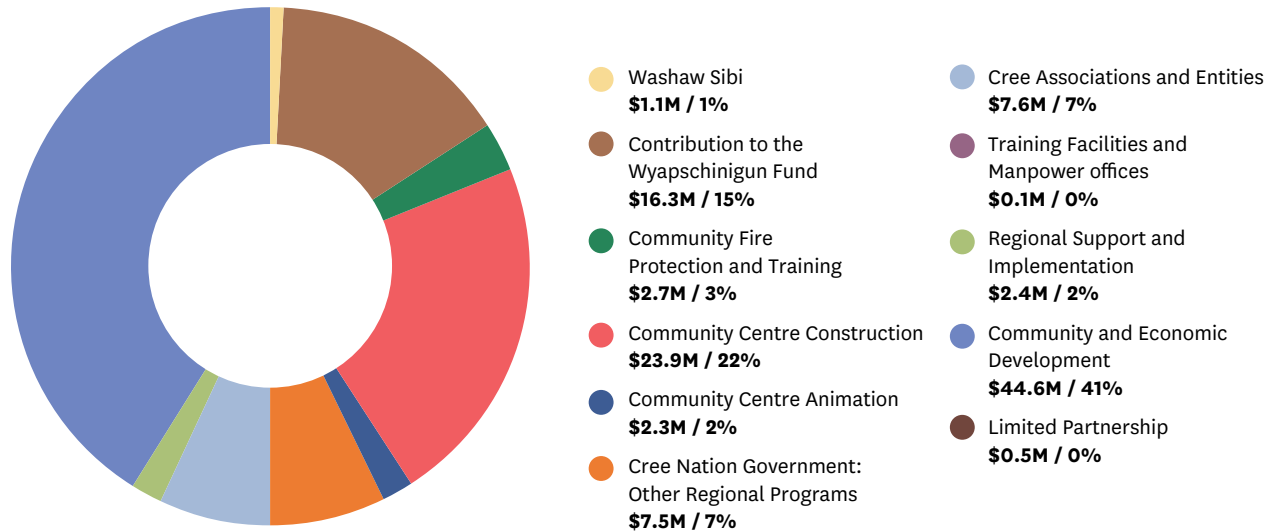
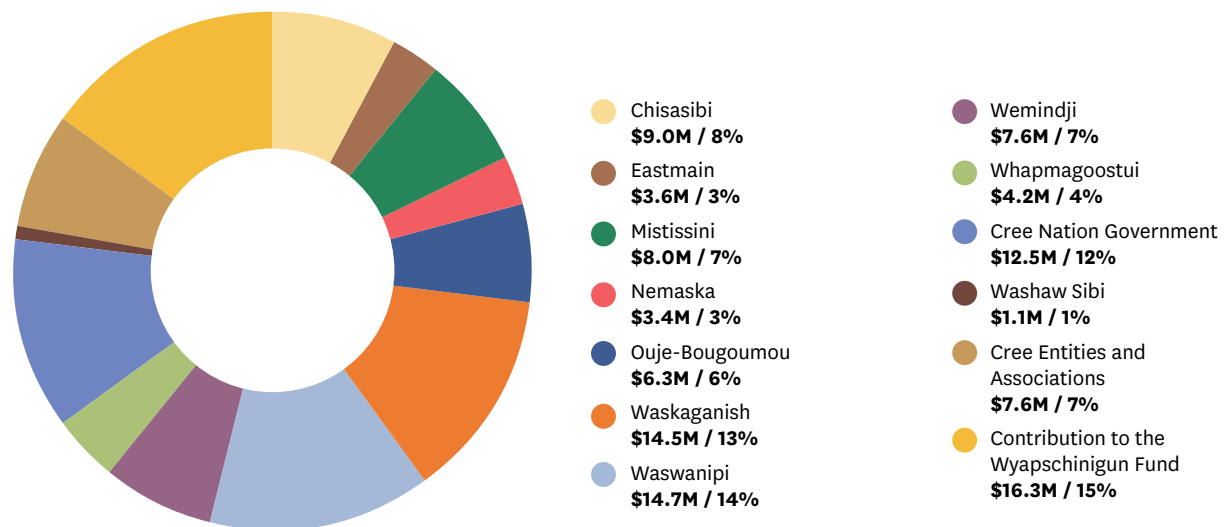


Figure 4. New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC | Funding Allocation 2023-24 | \$109.0 Million



O&M AND CAPITAL FUNDING ALLOCATION

Figure 5. O&M Funding Allocation 2023-24 | \$118.8 Million

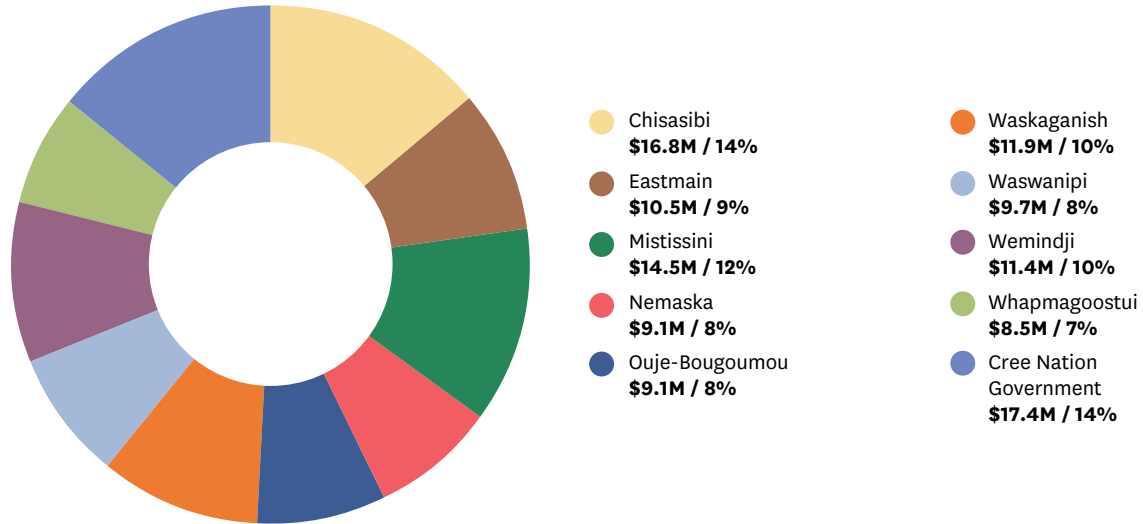
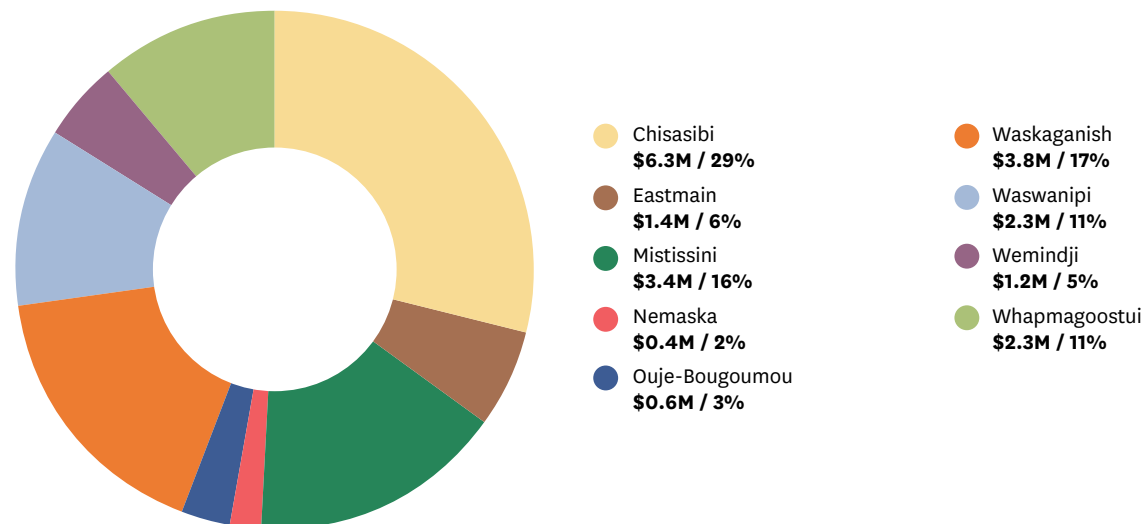


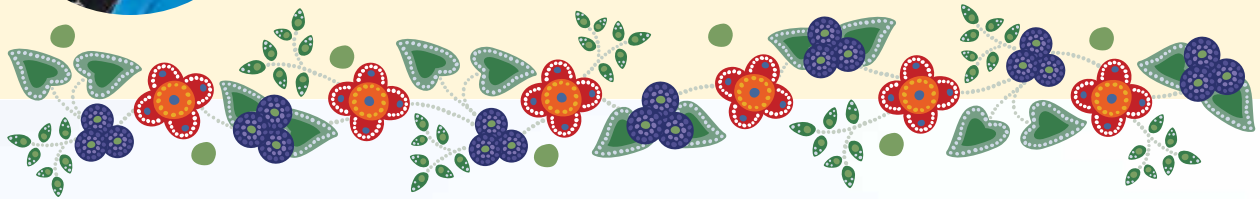
Figure 6. Capital Funding Allocation 2023-24 | \$21.8 Million





HUMAN RESOURCES

Message from the Director Nancy Bobbish



AS I REVIEW THE PAST YEAR, I'M REMINDED OF HOW MUCH THE HR TEAM HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH. I ALSO FEEL IMMENSELY GRATEFUL TO BE PART OF THIS HARD-WORKING AND SERVICE-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION.

 **14**
EMPLOYEES

We have been able to make significant progress toward the objectives identified in our action plan. Our initiatives contribute to healthy and welcoming workplaces, and help build capacity within our government.

To better support the Eeyou Eenuo Police Force, we created a new Manager of Human Resources position to support its human resources activities. One of our priorities was to enhance support for mental well-being for our Police Officers. Our human resources professionals created

access to new mental health support services and implemented new initiatives.

Language is more than just words; it's a window into our communities' way of life. Safeguarding our Cree language is one of our priorities. Our new Manager of Training and Development has developed and launched our new Cree language program accessible to all our employees.

I invite you to read about these accomplishments and more highlights in our annual report. I am so proud to showcase the work of our human resources team, who continue to seek out thoughtful solutions to enrich the workplace experiences for our employees and drive progress for our government.

Kindest regards,

Nancy Bobbish
Director of Human Resources



MEET OUR TEAM

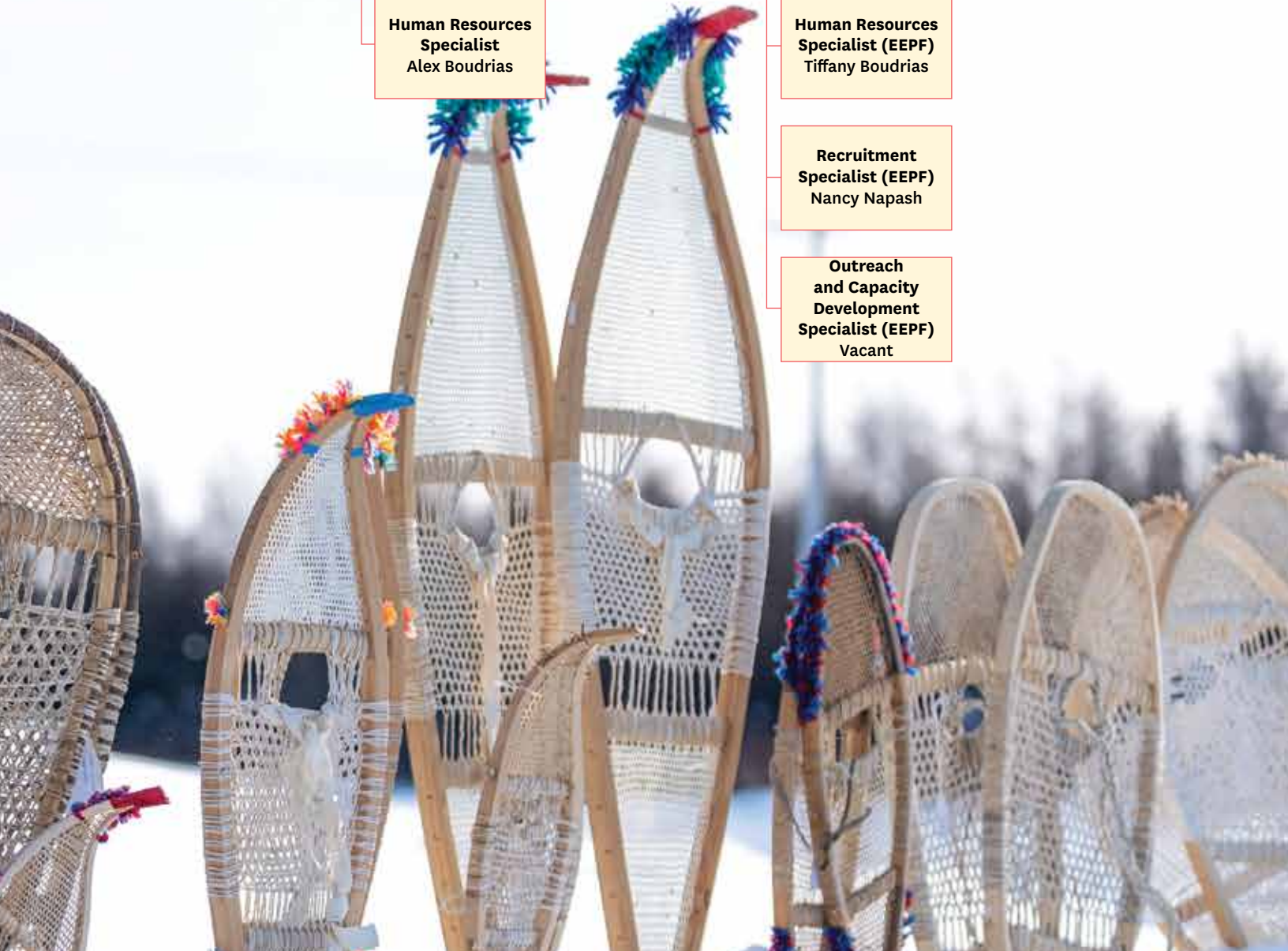


Photo: Jessica Otter

NUMBER OF ACTIVE EMPLOYEES PER DEPARTMENT

32 
APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

2 
EXECUTIVE OFFICE

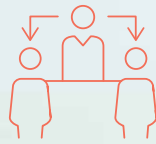
16 
MIYUHPICHINAAUSUWIN
APATISIIWIN

33 
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
SERVICES

5 
GRAND COUNCIL

14 
HUMAN RESOURCES

55 
CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

2 
CORPORATE SERVICES





26 
**ENVIRONMENT AND
 REMEDIAL WORKS**

78 
**JUSTICE AND
 CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

14 
FINANCE AND TREASURY

13 
FORESTRY

17 
**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
 DEVELOPMENT**

9 
**COMMERCE AND
 INDUSTRY**

66 | **32** 
 non-civilians | civilians
EEOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

 **414**
TOTAL EMPLOYEES



WORKFORCE AND RECRUITMENT

Throughout the 2022-2023 reference year, the Cree Nation Government maintained a workforce consisting of 414 permanent employees distributed across multiple departments. To access detailed information on the average count of active employees throughout the reference year, please refer to Figure 1.

The department has conducted a series of interviews; we successfully appointed 8 contractual officers to join EEPF team. Moreover, we have hired 56 civilian employees across the Cree Nation Government to contribute to various roles. This includes filling 50 vacant permanent positions and 6 contractual positions lasting six months or more. As illustrated in Figure 2.

Furthermore, the team efficiently handled 28 casual contracts and 21 short-term replacement contracts.

Our civilian employees are located in: Amos (1), Chisasibi (60), Eastmain (11), Mistissini (67), Montreal (55), Nemaska (37), Ottawa (8), Ouje-Bougoumou (14), Quebec City (3), Val d'Or (20), Waskaganish (21), Waswanipi (25), Wemindji (16) and Whapmagoostui (10) as illustrated in Figure 3.

EEPF had 106 approved positions which are distributed between the nine communities, our Officers are primarily based in Chisasibi (28), Mistissini (19), Waskaganish (16), Eastmain (6), Nemaska (6), Ouje-Bougoumou (6), Waswanipi (9), Wemindji (7), Whapmagoostui (7) and Amos (2) as illustrated in Figure 4.

Table 1. Number of employees per department

Department	Number of Employees
Apatisiwin Skills Development	32
Capital Works and Services	55
Commerce and Industry	9
Eeyou Eenou Police Force	98 (non-civilian: 66 and civilian: 32)
Environment and Remedial Works	26
Executive	2
Finance and Treasury	14
Forestry	13
Government Support Services	33
Grand Council	5
Human Resources	14
Justice and Correctional Services	78
Miyuuhpichinaasuwin Apatisiwin	16
Office of Corporate Services	2
Social and Cultural Development	17

Figure 1. Number of employees per department

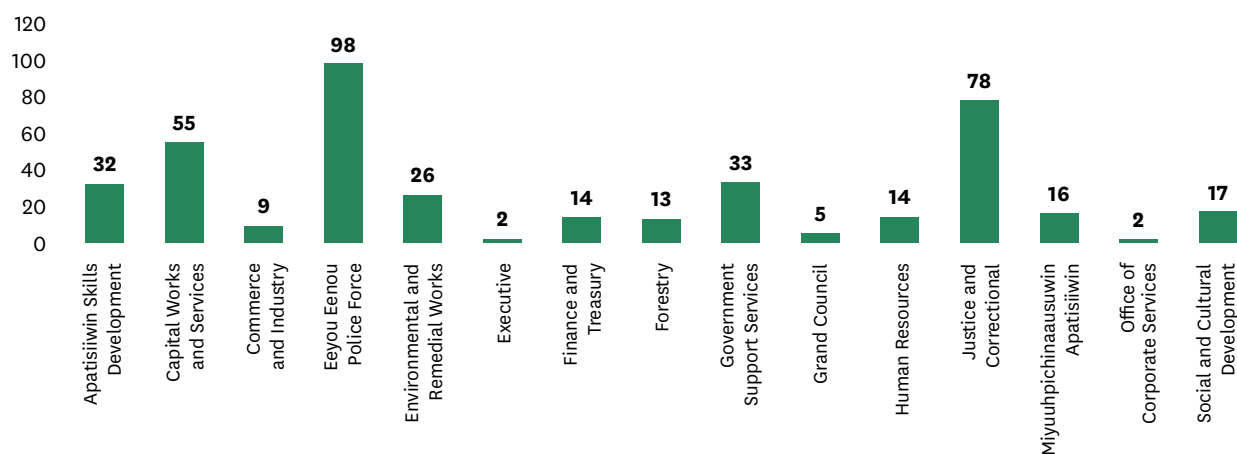


Figure 2. Recruitment Permanent vs Contractual per Department (Civilians and Non-Civilians)

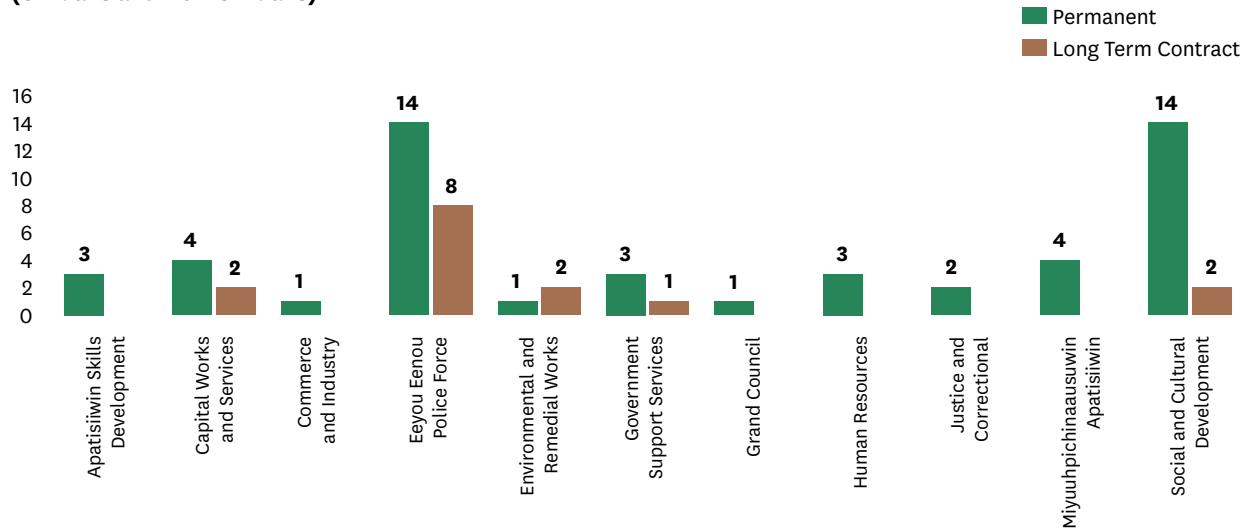


Figure 3. Distribution of Employees Location of work (Civilian employees)

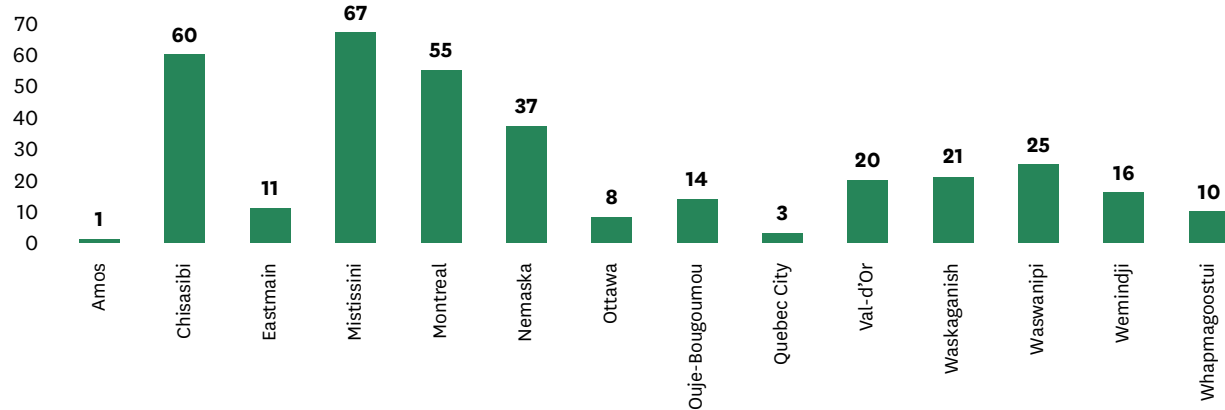


Figure 4. Distribution of Officers (Non-Civilian Employees)

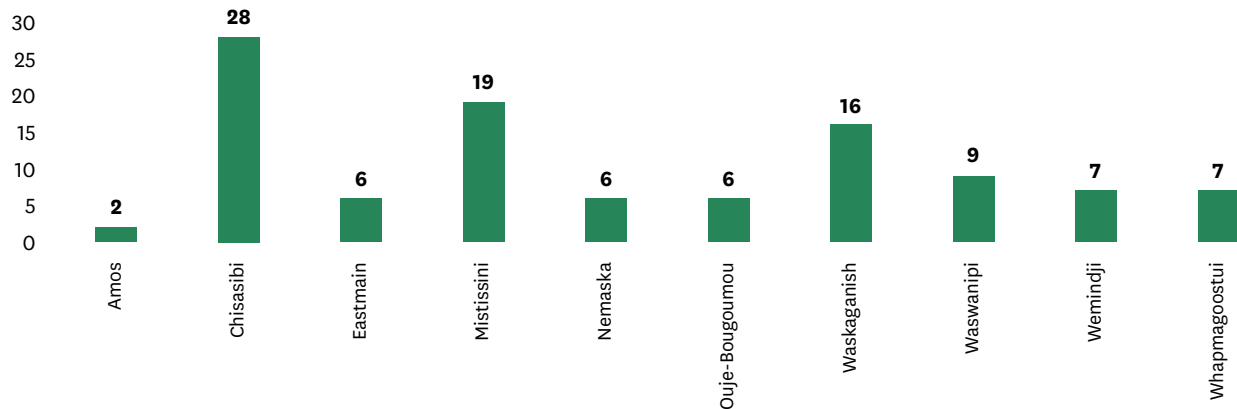


Figure 5. Gender Distribution Civilian Employees

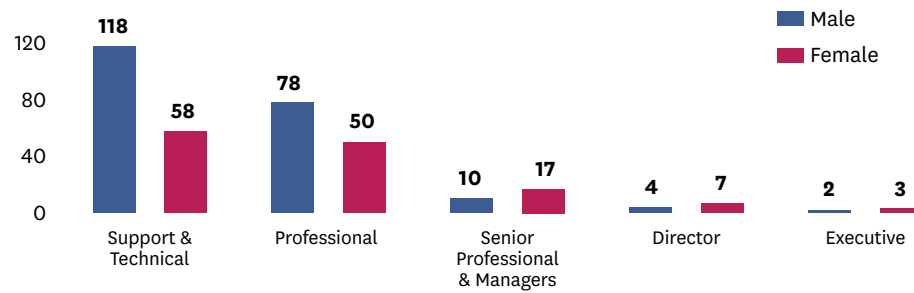


Figure 6. EEPF – Gender Distribution Non-Civilian Employees

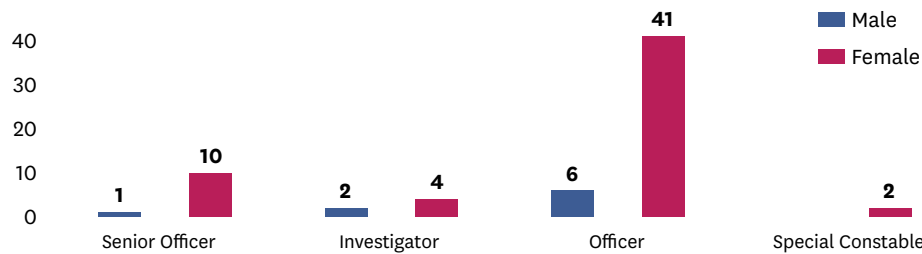


Figure 7. Ethnic Demographic (Civilian Employees)

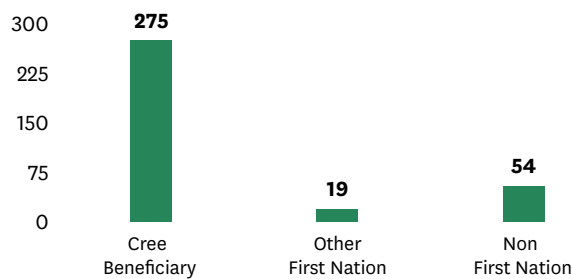
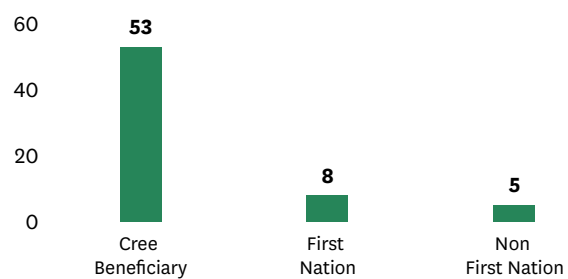


Figure 8. Ethnic Demographic (Non-Civilian Employees)



From the 348 civilian employees, 58 represent male employees and 118 represent female employees in Support/ Technical positions. Professional & 1st Level Manager roles are held by 50 male individuals and 78 female individuals. Senior Professional & 2nd Level Manager roles are held by 17 males and 10 females, Director roles 7 males and 4 females, Executive roles are held by 3 males and 2 females as illustrated in Figure 5.

As illustrated in Figure 6, the gender distribution among our employees at EEPF is reflected by 57 male employees and 9 female employees occupying various positions.

The majority of civilian permanent employees are Cree Beneficiaries (275). The remainder of employees comprise First Nation (19) and Non-First Nation (54) as illustrated in Figure 7.



The majority of non-civilian permanent and contractual Officers are Cree beneficiaries (53), followed by First Nation (8) and Non-First Nations (5), as illustrated in Figure 8.

A funding agreement was approved through Apatisiwin Skills Development to hire summer students. We were able to provide summer employment to twenty-two (22) students.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

This year, we successfully finalized the renewal of the 5-year Collective Agreement between the Cree Nation government and the Association des policiers et policières de d'Eeyou Eenu Police. This agreement reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring fair practices and enhancing the professional environment. It further strengthens our established base of trust and collaboration, fostering a positive and supportive workplace aligned with our strategic goals. Additionally, we offer extremely competitive advantages and compensation, ensuring that we attract and retain Police Officers.

EEPF OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Our outreach and recruitment initiatives have played a vital role in nurturing skilled and dedicated Cree Officers within EEPF. Here are the major highlights:

- We participated in various recruitment events, including five (5) career fairs, two (2) youth events organized by the Cree Nation Youth Council, one (1) event organized by the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Services, and the annual recruitment event at l'École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ) to recruit contractual officers.
- Six (6) Cree students graduated from the 8th Policing Cohort in December 2023.
- We organized a "Selection Camp" at the Cegep of L'Abitibi-Temiscamingue in August 2023, accepting eleven (11) students into the 9th Policing Technology Cohort.
- We organized regular visits with the students enrolled into our Policing Program. Ensuring a proactive involvement with their development and support to increase graduation rates.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

In the past year, we have prioritized the mental well-being of our Police Officers by implementing comprehensive support initiatives. These include:

- Conducted a survey to improve mental health services. This survey served as a crucial tool in shaping future mental health services tailored to the department's unique needs.
- Launched a dedicated "Mental Health Month" in October. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about mental health issues in the workplace and promote a culture of openness and support.

We are committed to making our workplace healthy and supportive of all members of the Eeyou-Eenu Police Force.

HYBRID INITIATIVE

Our government has adopted a flexible approach by introducing hybrid work arrangements, allowing eligible employees to work from home twice a week within a 5-day schedule. Currently, we are in a trial period to evaluate the effectiveness of hybrid work for individual employees, specific roles, or entire teams.

The hybrid work schedule is designed to ensure that work performance, productivity, and the quality of services provided to our community members and stakeholders remain uncompromised. Over the reference year, we have successfully implemented these arrangements across various departments, supported by a comprehensive policy.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Training and Development initiative plays a central role in encouraging growth among our employees, both in their current roles and in the organization at large. In July 2023, we welcomed a new Training and Development Manager, filling a new position in our team. Upon assuming the role, the new manager conducted a thorough internal assessment.

Highlights from this evaluation included:

- The top three requested types of instruction:
 - 1) Computer skills
 - 2) Managerial
 - 3) Administrative
- Online training emerged as the preferred mode of delivery.
- Training sessions typically spanned 2 to 5 days.

This Learning and Development analysis now serves as one of the foundational pieces for developing a semi-centralized support structure for our employees.

Another key accomplishment in 2023-2024 was the launch of the Cree Language Learning project, offering virtual Cree language lessons to our workforce. Our first 11-week session began in March 2024, made possible through generous funding from Apatisiwin Skills Development. This project not only enriches our employees' linguistic skills but also nurtures a deeper understanding and appreciation of our Cree culture.

Looking ahead, our focus includes building a robust Training and Development framework and governance driven by prioritization and strategic thinking. Our aim is to cultivate a dynamic learning culture within the CNG, empowering employees to thrive in their current roles and prepare for future opportunities within our organization.

IN CLOSING

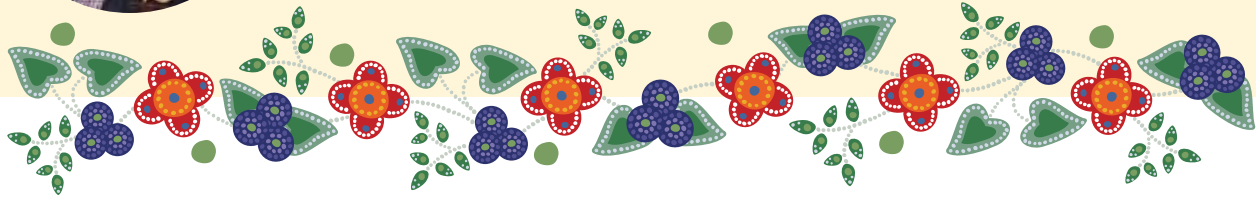
We are committed to supporting a work environment which promotes inclusive excellence and operational efficiency in all we do, while delivering on HR strategic priorities. We thank you for being part of this journey.





APATISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director Abel J. Trapper



IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO PRESENT TODAY THE APATISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023-2024.

 **34**
EMPLOYEES

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my team for their unwavering support and hard work this year. Inspired by the overarching goal of our department's Strategic Plan 2023-2026, our actions are now guided by timely and accurate labour market research, our divisions are working together harmoniously, and our department's operations are more streamlined and digital than ever.

Equipped with a new Policy on Programs that offers three streams of interventions — Youth, Capacity Building, and Workforce Strategy – our Program Development Officers are now responsible for a specific territory/community. They are expanding their knowledge of all aspects of the labour market and initiating multiple partnerships.

Services are progressing towards their objective of being known as an employment center deeply rooted in the community and skillfully delivering a portfolio of measures. Employment Counsellors use their in-depth knowledge of the clients and organizations in their community to initiate harmonious relationships and partnerships.

Now fully staffed, the Finance and Administration Division expertly manages our departmental budget, which includes human resources, employment services, and program operations. It ensures that payments are delivered rigorously and fluently.

We are also very proud to announce the upcoming publication of an up-to-date socioeconomic profile of our territory, entitled *A Dynamic Portrait of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Based on the Canadian Censuses of 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021, From a Skills Development Perspective*. This landmark study provides an invaluable perspective on the progress made by the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee in the last twenty years, which inspires future courses of action based on priorities such as the importance of promoting education for our youth.

This year, we are proud to share the success of our improved Cree Bursary Program. This program now provides better support to individuals enrolled on a full-time basis in a post-secondary program or a vocational training program leading to an accredited degree. We now offer these students a bursary for each semester of their studies. The overwhelming success of this new measure is a testament to the positive impact we are making in our community.

As we look back at this year's accomplishments, we are reminded of the importance of our clients. They set a destination for our organization and are the guiding light of how to get there. Even more so, our clients inspire how we behave on our journey.

Thank you.

Abel J. Trapper
Director of Apatisiwin Skills Development

OUR MISSION

Help build a qualified and professional workforce to fill any employment need in Eeyou Istchee. We are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of future generations.

OUR VISION

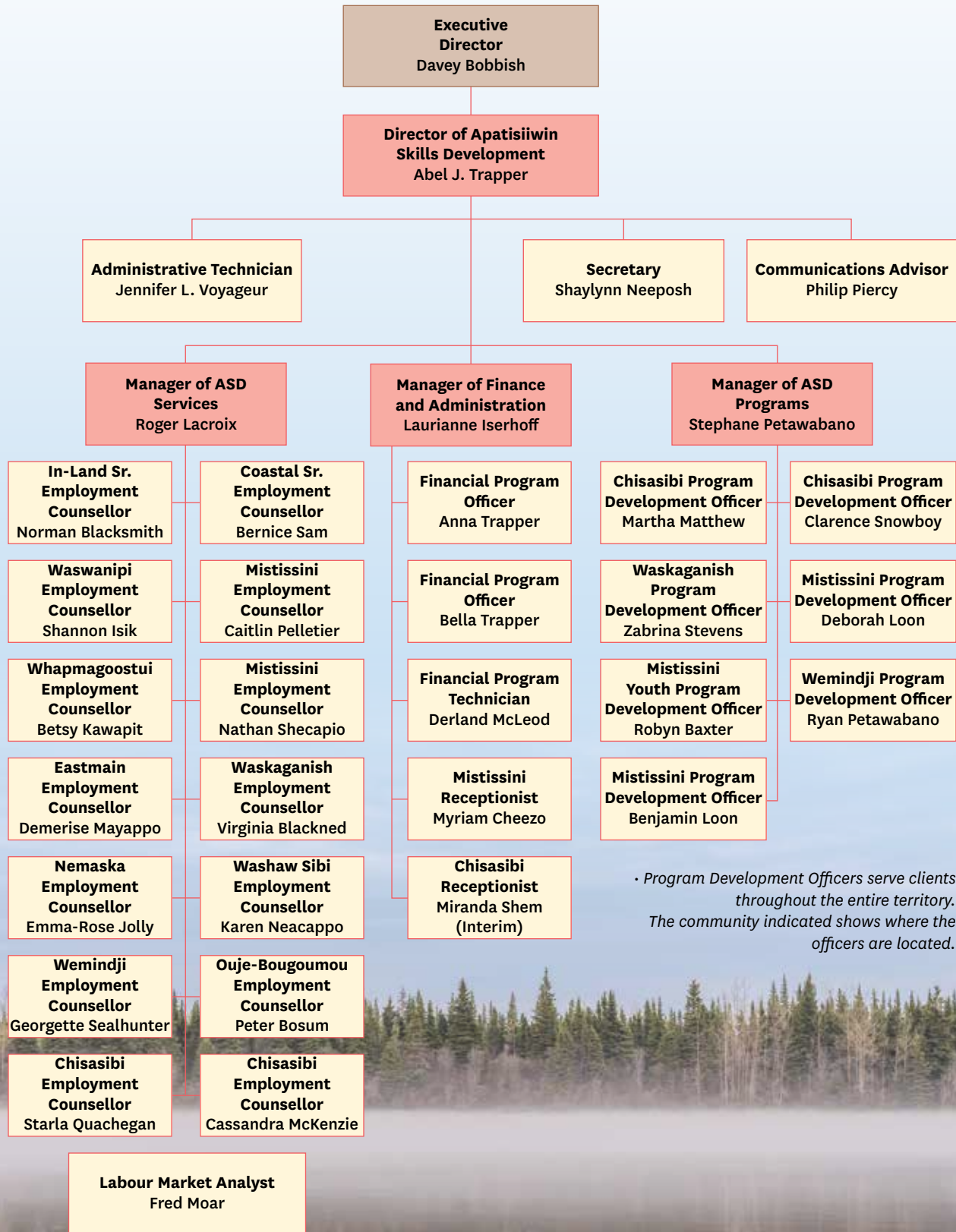
To equip and empower individuals with the skills and knowledge to achieve meaningful and sustainable employment and personal success.

OUR VALUES

ASD is committed to working together in providing excellent services to Eeyou Istchee based on integrity, trust, fairness, and respect. ASD values its investment in the personal success of our people.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Our communities are our greatest asset.

Apatisiwin Skills Development exists to help and support the people of Eeyou Istchee and to aid individuals in their search for sustainable employment and career development. We prepare them through skills development, job readiness programs, training, and special projects that increase our people's employability. Our communities and the people that live within the Eeyou Istchee are our greatest assets. Their success is also our success as a department.

ASD's mandate is:

- To help provide skills development, training programs, and services in the Cree communities and throughout the territory.
- To provide support and financial assistance to help individuals improve their job skills, gain work experience, upgrade their skills and vocational education, start their own business, and encourage employers to hire them.
- To support employers in creating opportunities for Cree and non-Crees in the Cree communities and throughout the territory.

ASD TEAM

Apatisiwin Skills Development operates with a team of 34 dedicated professionals who are responsible for the efficient implementation and management of both local and regional programs and services. These programs and services cater to job seekers and potential employers throughout Eeyou Istchee. The organization's primary focus is to provide effective employment solutions to clients by identifying their needs and offering custom-tailored services that enable them to achieve their goals.

The ASD organization operates from twelve offices, including one each in the ten Cree communities and one located outside the region in Ottawa. These offices provide comprehensive training, employment programs, and services to individuals seeking assistance.

ASD SERVICES

ASD Employment Counsellors extend their services to clients throughout the territories. The organization operates ten offices, five in the inland regions and five along the coast. Their services include needs assessments, skills development support, and job preparation, all designed to assist clients in achieving their career goals.

The Senior Counsellors, Norman Blacksmith, and Bernice Sam are providing guidance to both inland and coastal offices. Their expertise is utilized in developing client action plans, resume building, job applications, and employment insurance support for communities that lack a Service Canada branch. Their extensive knowledge and experience are valuable assets for the organization.

Our team of Employment Counsellors are dedicated to equipping our clients with the skills and resources necessary to secure employment opportunities in Eeyou Istchee. We take pride in our commitment to providing personalized support and guidance to every client, ensuring they are fully prepared to succeed in their job search.

Additionally, ASD Employment Counsellors are aligned with our strategic priorities by leveraging their in-depth knowledge of clients and organizations within their communities to foster harmonious relationships and partnerships.

The Services Division is also focused on advancing and securing an archival system for digital and printed client files, ensuring all documents are kept up-to-date. Furthermore, we are actively developing a comprehensive plan to transition our operations to a paperless office, providing necessary training and support to our employees to achieve this goal.

ASD PROGRAMS

Based on accurate labour market research, ASD provides programs in three essential categories.

Youth Programs

Create summer employment opportunities to gain valuable work experience for secondary and post-secondary students and allow students to gain experience through part-time jobs when studying. Develop life skills and provide work experience to better shape their future.

List of programs:

- Youth Initiative
- Summer Work Experience
- Science and Technology
- Career Promotion and Awareness
- Co-Operative Education Placement
- Mentored Work Placement

Capacity Building Programs

These programs are intended to strengthen the Eeyou Istchee workforce by facilitating career upgrading programs and assisting graduates during their studies and when they seek to integrate into the job market. In addition, capacity Building programs aim to fill skilled positions and provide broader opportunities for those starting their professional careers.

List of programs:

- Cree Bursary
- Cree Graduate
- Career Advancement

Workforce Strategy Programs

To encourage employers to hire and train new personnel in a specific job position. To provide productive employment for unemployed persons by creating jobs that would not otherwise exist and offering them the opportunity to maintain or increase their skills. To assist individuals seeking to secure self-employment through implementing a business by providing them with financial assistance support throughout their entrepreneurial process.

List of programs:

- Competencies and Skills
- Job Creation
- Persons with Disabilities
- Self-Employment
- Research and Development





Photo: Katherine Dehm

The key priorities of the strategic plan include the following: Program Development Officers collaborate closely with the Employment Counsellors in their assigned territories to track client progress and aid in project management. Additionally, the Program Division is working on establishing an advanced and completely secure archival system for digital and printed program files to ensure that all documents are appropriately archived and up to date. Furthermore, the Program Division is developing a plan to transition its operations to a paperless office and is providing training and support to employees for its implementation.

ASD FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The administration team is responsible for day-to-day operations in all department offices, providing administrative and technical support in utilizing Laserfiche (the electronic filing system), SharePoint, and electronic travel claims.

The finance team is responsible for administering and monitoring financial activities. The Financial Program Technicians process the recipient's claims by assessing

their report and supporting documents in compliance with Schedule A of the contribution agreement. They also ensure that all relevant information is compiled in the Database.

The department has implemented DocuSign to sign contribution agreements electronically and SharePoint to upload documents as a sharing network to all the offices within Apatisiwin Skills Development.

COMMUNICATIONS

We continue to focus on getting our information online through our social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn. With weekly social media posts of potential employment opportunities within the Eeyou Istchee and other events and opportunities for future employment and growth. We have shifted our focus to a more digital and paperless presence in our external and internal communications, with digital surveys, digital PDF forms, and social media posts.

We are thrilled to announce that we have revamped our website, Apatisiwin.ca, to provide you with comprehensive



information about the programs we offer at Apatisiwin Skills Development. Our website now features detailed descriptions of all our programs, categorized into three sections: Youth Programs, Capacity Building Programs, and Workforce Development Programs.

Youth Programs: Designed for young people, these programs include career exploration, mentoring, and job readiness training.

Capacity Building Programs: Intended to strengthen the Eeyou Istchee workforce, these programs facilitate career upgrading and assist graduates during their studies and integration into the job market.

Workforce Development Programs: Focused on providing job-specific training to help individuals acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen careers.

Looking forward, we are exploring additional ways to enhance our communication and engagement with clients. Future projects may include the development of a client portal system to provide easy access to information, applications, progress tracking, and direct communication with our team. Such initiatives aim to streamline our interactions and offer our clients a more efficient and user-friendly experience.

We believe that the updated website will make it easier for individuals to learn about our programs and how we can help them achieve their goals. We invite you to visit our website and learn more about our programs at Apatisiwin.ca.

ASD POLICY PROGRAMS

Amendments to the Policy establishing the conditions applicable to our new Programs were finalized and approved, effective as of January 2023. The review of the Policy and Programs was conducted with the objective to better reflect the needs of employers and individuals' clients in accessing funding for their projects and ensure it meets the evolving needs regarding skills development, training programs and services, employment insurance services in the Eeyou Istchee.

PLANNING SESSIONS

ASD has successfully conducted two planning sessions over the last year. These meetings, held bi-annually, ensure that the team can collaborate effectively and that all staff members are well-informed of any updates or new initiatives that have been discussed or implemented. They aim to establish a shared direction within the department and foster a deeper connection with the team. These meetings play a crucial role in promoting team synergy and enhancing the efficiency of our department.

Summer Planning Session

During this Summer Planning Session, we introduced a new approach. The management team decided to have two separate planning sessions with each of the divisions. The programs division had its planning session on August 1-3, 2023, and the services division held their planning session

on August 22-24, 2023. Both sessions were hosted at the National Art Center in Ottawa, Ontario.

Program Division Planning Session August 1 – 3, 2023:

The planning session began with opening remarks from ASD Director Abel Trapper. This was followed by presentations from management, including Programs Manager Stephane Petawabano, Services Manager Roger Lacroix, and Finance and Administrative Manager Laurianne Iserhoff. Pascal Chadronnet, CNG Senior Manager of Finance, also gave a presentation. Robert Langlois was also present to present the Strategic Plan for 2023–2026. There was a discussion about new programs and updates on the Cree Bursary.

The second day started with an update on the database presented by Robert Langlois and Denis Lafabrve, followed by updates on Travel Claims and team building. The CNG Commerce & Industry Department was invited to present the programs and services they offer within the Eeyou Istchee.

On the third day, the planning session concluded with information about ordering office supplies and SharePoint tips. The session closed with closing remarks and a prayer.

Services Planning Session August 22 – 24, 2023:

The planning session kicked off with opening remarks from ASD Director Abel Trapper. Following this, management presented their plans, including Programs Manager Stephane Petawabano, Services Manager Roger Lacroix, and Finance and Administrative Manager Laurianne Iserhoff. Pascal Chadronnet, CNG Senior Manager of Finance, also gave a presentation. After this, Alex Boudrias and Tiffany Bourdrias from CNG Human Resources Recruitment presented.

On the second day, the managers presented the 2023-2026 strategic plan to the services division, followed by travel claims information for participants and employees. CNG Justice Department was invited to give a presentation about its department and the services it offers within the Eeyou Istchee.

On the third day, the planning session concluded with information about ordering office supplies, followed by presentations from the Commission de la Construction de Quebec and Services Canada. Finally, the session was closed with closing remarks and a prayer.

Winter Planning Session

The Winter Planning Session took place on December 13 and 14, 2023, at Hilton Lac-Lemay in Gatineau, Quebec. The session began with Director Abel Trapper's opening remarks and prayer. The CNG I.T. Department provided a presentation outlining their services to the Cree Nation Government, followed by presentations from the Manager of Programs, Stephane Petawabano, and the Manager of Finance and Administration, Laurianne Iserhoff. The staff dinner took place the following evening, during which awards were presented to the staff.

On the second day, the Manager of Services, Roger Lacroix, presented his presentation to the staff, followed by an open staff team discussion for the upcoming year. The communications team provided an update on the ASD website and how it has been improved to better serve clients. The session concluded with closing remarks and prayer.



CONFERENCES

Our commitment to professional growth and knowledge-sharing extends to our staff's active participation in conferences and industry events throughout the year. These conferences serve as vital platforms for our team members to expand their expertise and spread awareness of our organization's mission and initiatives. By engaging with peers and industry leaders at these events, our staff effectively communicates our organization's values and achievements, contributing to a broader understanding of our work. This proactive approach enhances our visibility within industries and fosters valuable connections that benefit our organization's growth and impact.

CANNEXUS

Canada's Career Development Conference (CANNEXUS) is an annual event designed to promote the exchange of information and explore innovation approaches in the areas of career counselling and workforce development. This year January 29 - 31 was held both in-person and virtually.

Post-Secondary Student Conference

The Post-Secondary Student Services Conference 2023, from Friday, April 21 to Sunday, April 23, 2023, offers our current post-secondary students a platform to forge valuable connections and opportunities. Students can build a network of peers, meet potential employers, and streamline their academic path toward future employment. Cree organizations and entities were invited to engage with the students and other partners, aligning efforts to build capacity in Eeyou Istchee. The conference features panel discussions with previous graduates, networking opportunities, a Friday evening Meet and Greet, and a banquet dinner on Saturday with dancing. The career fair-style employer engagement and keynote speakers ensure a gathering focused on development, growth, and empowerment.

Eeyou Iskwau/Iskweu Cree Women Business Conference

Zabrina Steven, our Program Development Officer, represented our organization at the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association Business Conference in Chisasibi on May 26th & 27th, 2023. Her presence at this event highlighted our commitment to supporting and collaborating with the Cree community. Through participation in this essential conference, Zabrina contributed to meaningful discussions and strengthened our organization's ties with the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association.

2023 Annual Conference: Forging A Path Forward

The Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance held the "Forging A Path Forward," a two-day event held at Forestel Hotel, Val-d'Or, Quebec, on November 14-15, 2023. This event brings community leaders and local entrepreneurs together with regional economic entities, business leaders, and elected municipal and regional officials to understand our respective activities in the region, explore possibilities for strengthening relationships, deepen awareness of economic development opportunities,

and chart a path forward to take full advantage of available opportunities at both the local and regional levels in a way that respects Cree rights and interests.

Quebec Mines + Energy

Québec Mines + Énergie is an event of synergy and exchange of scientific knowledge in the mining and energy sectors.

Its high-calibre program includes training, conferences, and networking opportunities to enrich your knowledge. The pooling of different expertise multiplies the possibilities for the benefit of new avenues.

The aim of the Québec Mines + Énergie congress is to promote and develop Québec's rich mining and energy potential from a sustainable development perspective. Gathering professionals from all sectors, Québec Mines + Énergie is a space for synergy and exchanges while putting geoscience knowledge and innovation at the forefront.

Through our active participation in conferences, we enhance our knowledge, expertise, and connections within various industries and communities. Our staff attends relevant conferences to expand our network, stay updated on industry trends, and contribute meaningfully to career and sustainable development discourse. This underscores our commitment to growth, collaboration, and community empowerment.

TEAM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Business Analysis Essentials

ASD's Program Development Officers, in collaboration with The Department of Commerce and Industry, is the Business Analysis Essentials. Robyn Baxter, Zabrina Stevens, and Stephane Petawabano have successfully completed the program. This cohort-based initiative offers a hands-on training program that delivers core knowledge and skills essential for success in the field of business analysis.

UQAT – Microprogram in Employment and Career Development

The ASD employment counsellors have undertaken a significant initiative by embarking on the Undergraduate Microprogram in Employment and Career Development in the Aboriginal Context at the university. This program concluded in December 2023, with five Employment Counsellors completing all the requirements. The anticipated graduation date for these students is June 2024, and they will be eligible to become part of the prestigious Order of Human Resources Professionals of Quebec.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that plans are in place for a fruitful collaboration with UQAT. This partnership aims to develop more innovative and impactful programs in the future, furthering our shared mission of empowering individuals in the Aboriginal Context.

Commission de la construction de Québec

The ASD Services department is currently working in collaboration with the Communities of Eeyou Istchee by providing information sessions in the communities along with several CCO staff members to meet the needs of the community members who want to have their journeymen recognition and cards.



Currently, ASD has four invigilators whom CCQ trained to be able to supervise the CCQ exams in the communities of Eeyou Istchee. Nathan Shecapio, Shannon Isik, Starla Quachegan, and Roger Lacroix followed and completed the training provided by CCQ.

PARTNERSHIPS

Cree School Board

Cree School Board—Youth, SAES, PSSS, and Higher Learning have agreed to establish a sustainable partnership to enhance collaboration at all levels and better meet the needs of students and clients. This partnership aims to offer an aligned approach to external stakeholders (students/clients, bands, employers), providing simple, effective, and consistent processes and services by avoiding duplications and contradictions, particularly in data and information requests.

Building on this momentum, the Cree School Board's Sabtuan Adult Education Services (SAES) formalized a partnership agreement last December. This agreement is a testament to our commitment to strengthen collaboration and support students in accessing employment opportunities. It outlines clear processes and standards for information sharing, confidentiality, consultation, and community relations, ensuring a seamless and beneficial partnership for all involved.

Similarly, another partnership agreement with the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services (PSSS) is being developed to maximize the resources and assistance offered to PSSS students transitioning to the Eeyou Istchee Labour market.

Choosing a hands-on approach, ASD has contacted employers to discuss their workforce needs and contacted post-secondary students to gather information on their fields of study and interest in pursuing internship opportunities. ASD prioritizes creating partnerships with other entities, communities, and educational institutions.

Both SAES and PSSS recognize the pivotal role of open communication in our future projects and collaborations. Our open communication policy is a cornerstone of our partnership, fostering transparency, ensuring mutual understanding, and facilitating ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders. This commitment to communication is key to the continuous improvement and success of our joint initiatives.

Cree Nation Government Department Collaboration

Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) made considerable progress in advancing the Capacity Building Framework for Eeyou Istchee.

Early in 2021, under the direction of the office of the Deputy Executive Director, four departments of the Cree Nation Government formed a working group on Capacity Building

The departments of Commerce and Industry, Justice and Correctional Services, Social and Cultural Development and Apatisiwin Skills Development joined forces to reflect on Capacity Building collectively and coordinate their efforts, within their respective mandates, to work on Capacity Building model for the future.

ASD is actively participating in this working group and has recently awarded service contracts to two experienced economists who will conduct a socioeconomic study of Eeyou Istchee, at a regional and community level, for the development of a Capacity Building Framework.

Service Québec, Service Canada and Canada Revenue Agency

For the past four years, ASD has been actively partnering with Services Quebec to improve service delivery to all the communities of Eeyou Istchee. Two years ago, we embarked on a journey to broaden our range of services by forging collaborations with various provincial and federal government departments, including Services Canada, Revenue Canada, and Revenue Quebec. Our ongoing commitment is to expand our reach and ensure that by the conclusion of fall 2024, we will have visited and provided services to every community.

Commission de la Construction de Quebec (CCQ)

The Director of the Apatisiwin Skills Development Department, Mr. Abel Trapper, is an active member of the Advisory Committee for a Collaborative Approach for the inclusion of First Nations and Inuit in the construction industry.

In December 2023, the CCQ Board of Directors adopted measures of the Construction Action Plan for the Inclusion of First Nations and Inuit (CAPFNI) that fall under the CCQ's responsibility. Furthermore, in February 2024, measures under the responsibility of external partners were presented to the CCQ Board of Directors.

Work continues on developing specific measures affecting Crees, Inuit, and Indigenous women, in addition to measures under the responsibility of employers and union associations. These measures, the CAPFNI target, and indicators for these measures will be presented to the next Board of Directors in August 2024.

The twenty (20) official measures of CAPFNI are categorized into ten (10) key orientations.

1. A Proactive Industry
2. Attractiveness of construction-related career choices
3. Client experience
4. Access to Training
5. Entrepreneurship
6. Building Bridges Between the Workforce and the Businesses
7. Access to the Industry
8. Workforce Inclusion
9. Retention and Professional Development
10. Shared Responsibilities

We are eagerly anticipating the launch of CAPFNI in fall 2024, a significant milestone in our collective journey towards a more inclusive and diverse construction industry.

CREE-CANADA RELATIONS

Under the terms of the New Relationship Agreement with Canada, and with funding provided under that Agreement, the Cree Nation Government, through Apatisiwin Skills Development, assumes Canada's responsibilities under





Photo: Jessica Otter



Section 28 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement for training courses, job recruitment, and placement related to the “territorial programs” and “enhanced delivery structure.”

As part of the conditions to assume these federal JBNQA responsibilities, Canada must continue to provide to the Cree Nation Government additional funding for training programs and facilities, and job recruitment and placement services on terms reasonably comparable to those in place at the time of signing the New Relationship Agreement.

In 2019, the Cree Nation Government and Canada agreed on long-term arrangements until 2028 in regard to the additional funding that Canada must provide. Under these arrangements, the additional federal funding to support Apatisiwin Skills Development for the period 2019-2028 is provided to the Cree Nation Government as a “grant,” which provides greater flexibility and reduces administrative requirements. However, the indexation of such additional federal funding remains an outstanding matter. Consequently, these arrangements provide that the federal funding levels for the entire period of the New Relationship Agreement (2008-2028) remain an outstanding matter and that the parties maintain their respective positions as to whether such funding levels comply with section 4.12 of the New Relationship Agreement, the whole without prejudice to Cree rights and claims.

Formal discussions to renew the New Relationship Agreement will begin in 2026. The way in which the Cree Nation Government implements the New Relationship Agreement and carries out the assumed federal JBNQA responsibilities up until the start of these discussions in 2026 will largely determine what the renewal of this Agreement will look like in 2028.

In 2019, the Cree Nation Government and Canada have also concluded a companion contribution agreement for Employment Insurance funding for the period 2019-2029. Federal funding to support childcare is provided through this contribution agreement until such funding is transferred through the new ASD funding arrangements mentioned above. Cree and federal representatives are pursuing discussions in this regard.

Cree and federal representatives are pursuing discussions regarding additional funding to support the Crees living in MoCreebec, who no longer received their share of federal funding to implement their skills and employment development programs. This federal funding had been administered and managed on their behalf through third-party organizations in Ontario for the past several years. Cree representatives had initially secured with Canada a short-term solution on behalf of MoCreebec, pending discussions on longer-term funding arrangements.

ASD COMMITTEES

Two committees were established to review the Officer’s assessment and make recommendations to the ASD on all projects reviewed. Their mandate is determined as follows.

- A) Technical Group: for projects under \$25,000.
- B) ASDAC: for projects of \$25,000 and over.

Technical Group

The Technical Group consists of the Coordinators and meets at least once a month.

ASDAC

The Apatisiwin and Skills Development Advisory Committee (ASDAC) consists of one representative from each of the following organizations:

A) Voting members

- 9 members appointed by the Chief and Council of each of the 9 communities of Eeyou Istchee
- Cree Nation Government
- Cree Nation Youth Council
- Cree School Board

B) Non-voting members

- Director of ASD
- Washaw Sibi appointed member
- Canada representative

The ASDAC meets typically quarterly or at any other time deemed necessary thereafter during the financial year concerned.

The ASDAC has the following mandate:

- A) ensure that the proposals promote employment for Cree beneficiaries and other residents, where applicable, including training for the purpose of enhancing development of work skills necessary to support employability of the client;
- B) ensure that proposals promote, as much as possible, full-time employment as criteria priority;
- C) ensure that the increasing of the employment rate of the Cree population be monitored and promoted through all projects supported;
- D) respect the monitor process and implementation of the ASD training plan when recommending projects;
- E) monitoring of annual programs initiative targets and target results such as eligible clientele, eligible enterprises, job integration, and meeting of program objectives and funding components when recommendations are determined;
- F) support in addressing and promotion of issues to be addressed to Canada for support of client analysis and skills development in regard to all programs managed by ASD.

Other committees that ASD staff have contributed to within the past fiscal year are the Mining and Training Development with organizations like Stornoway, Newmont Eleonore, and Wallbridge to help better understand and train their employees that would work in the mining industry.

Local Employment Committees staff members work with local communities that focus on local training and employment opportunities for community members currently looking for training or employment within the Eeyou Itschee.



SUCCESS STORIES

Cree Bursary Program

APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



APATISIIWIN ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Apatisiwin Skills Development is committed to breaking down barriers to education for JBNQA beneficiaries by providing crucial financial assistance through the Cree Bursary program. This program awards a \$1,000 bursary each semester, empowering individuals to pursue post-secondary and vocational education, thereby promoting capacity building within the

communities. In the 2023-24 program, out of a total of 617 participants, the majority focused on fields such as education, law, social, community, and government services (277), with the following highest numbers pursuing health occupations (34) and business, finance, and administration (96).

Self-Employment Program

CHISTAPITIN

The Self-Employment program by Apatisiwin Skills Development is dedicated to empowering Cree beneficiaries in Eeyou Istchee to pursue entrepreneurship and create thriving businesses. We believe in self-employment's potential to provide economic independence and community growth. Through our support initiatives, including subsidies like the one recently granted to a local hardware store in Chisasibi, we aim to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools, resources, and opportunities needed to succeed. Together, we're building a more robust private sector and fostering a culture of innovation and self-reliance within our community.



"I appreciate your support for the last 3 years was really helpful for financial assistance and creating employment for the youth to learn work experience. Thanks again"

- Sydney Chewanis



ASD ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS
Projects and Participant Training Interventions / All ASD Programs



APATISIIWIN ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

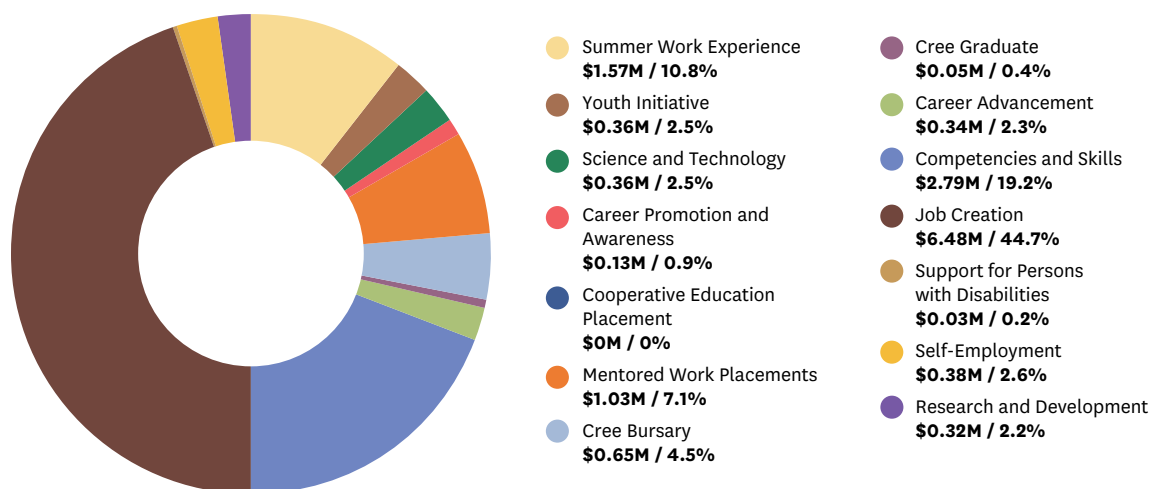
Apatisiiwin Skills Development (ASD) in collaboration with Cree nation authorities, institutions and employers continues promoting partnerships creating employment opportunities throughout Eeyou Istchee. The department maintains its focus on helping individuals prepare for, find and keep employment through its programs delivered throughout the Territory.

ASD received several projects submissions in 2023-2024. A total of 450 projects receiving support from ASD carried out training activities throughout the communities and territory during the fiscal year.



For more details

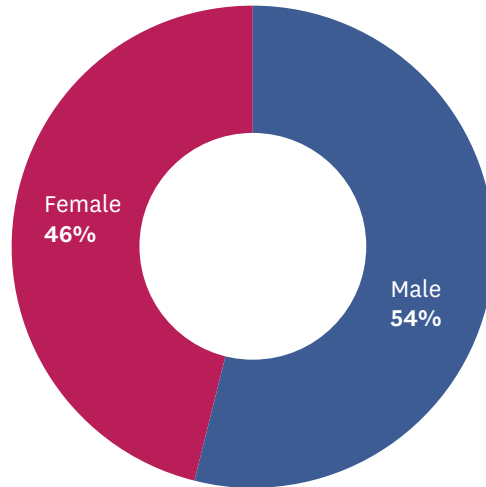
Total Disbursement of Project Funds



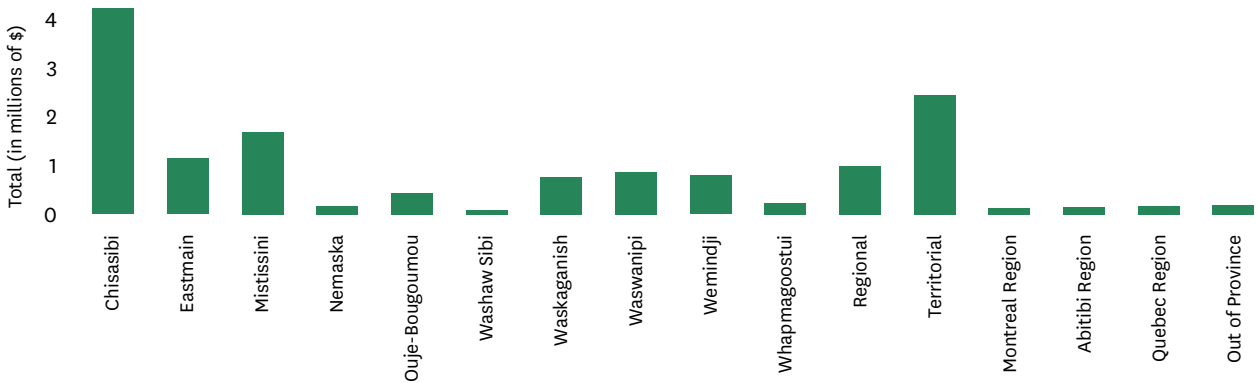
	Number of Projects	Participant Interventions	Total Disbursements
Summer Work Experience	13	479	\$1,570,831.00
Youth Initiative	18	127	\$364,260.00
Science and Technology	2	10	\$360,032.00
Career Promotion and Awareness	4	9	\$125,362.00
Cooperative Education Placement	-	-	\$0
Mentored Work Placements	11	142	\$1,034,197.00
Cree Bursary	20	630	\$653,500.00
Cree Graduate	6	9	\$53,837.00
Career Advancement	18	221	\$337,308.00
Competencies and Skills	73	640	\$2,785,374.00
Job Creation	144	704	\$6,483,675.00
Support for Persons with Disabilities	4	17	\$28,174.00
Self-Employment	27	59	\$377,375.00
Research and Development	10	52	\$320,144.00
Total	350	3099	



Male and Female Participants in all Programs



Total Disbursement by Community



Location	Total Disbursement
Chisasibi	\$4,215,947.00
Eastmain	\$1,144,975.00
Mistissini	\$1,682,894.00
Nemaska	\$170,501.00
Ouje-Bougoumou	\$431,700.00
Washaw Sibi	\$82,770.00
Waskaganish	\$774,095.00
Waswanipi	\$871,570.00

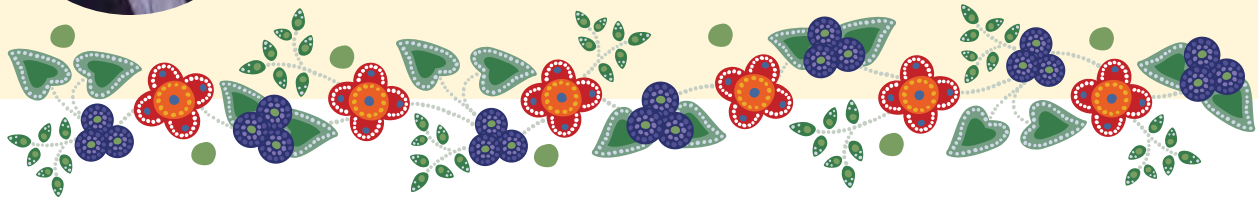
Location	Total Disbursement
Wemindji	\$798,013.00
Whapmagoostui	\$237,043.00
Regional	\$985,800.00
Territorial	\$2,449,931.00
Montreal Region	\$136,382.00
Abitibi Region	\$149,246.00
Quebec Region	\$174,213.00
Out of Province	\$188,989.00





COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Message from the Director **Anthony MacLeod**



IN 2023-2024, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DCI) OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO BUILD INTERNAL CAPACITY AND WORK ON IMPROVING THE RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. AT DCI, WE ARE HOME TO MULTIPLE FUNDING PROGRAMS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO HELP DEVELOP PRIVATE-SECTOR BUSINESSES AND EXPAND OUR CREE ECONOMY. THE GROWTH IN OUR ECONOMY IS NOT JUST A STATISTIC; IT'S A TESTAMENT TO OUR REGION'S RESILIENCE AND THE SUCCESS OF OUR INITIATIVES. AS OUR POPULATION CONTINUES TO SHOW GROWTH, WE ARE REASSURED THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED NEW SOURCES OF PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE GROWING CREE WORKFORCE.

The Commerce and Industry Department is committed to delivering key services to members across Eeyou Istchee through our Financial Services Officer, Data Analyst, and Consumer Protection Officer. These DCI employees, with their unwavering dedication, have not just been doing their jobs but have been promoting and delivering their services with excellence. Their efforts deserve our appreciation.

We continue to support the Cree communities in various sectors, with support in the key areas of mining, forestry, energy, and telecommunications. We have made significant contributions to developing specific sectoral agreements, with participation and expertise in sitting councils such as the Cree Quebec Forestry Economic Council (CQFEC), and the Evaluating Committee (COMEV) and the Provincial Review Committee (COMEX), to name a few. We continue to work closely with many mining and exploration companies in our region. This year, we successfully assisted in the negotiations of the Kapisikama Agreement between the Cree Nation of Eastmain, the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government and Galaxy Lithium (Canada) inc. This year also marked an important milestone with the adoption of the updated "Cree Mining Policy," a significant achievement for the DCI.

The Department continues to develop its Business Registry and Buy Local applications. These initiatives are completing the final phases of development, with testing currently underway. We will fully launch these projects in 2024-2025.

As Director, I would like to recognize the DCI staff for their commitment to high-quality standards of program and service delivery and thank them for their hard work throughout the year. The department staff is our most important resource, and the team had another outstanding year.

Anthony MacLeod
Director, Department of Commerce and Industry



OUR MANDATE

To diversify and stimulate economic growth in Eeyou Istchee.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

To take on a strategic role in the development and implementation of economic initiatives throughout Eeyou Istchee. To support the economic growth and well-being of Eeyou Istchee so all Eeyouch and Eenouch may benefit from this prosperity without compromising our culture and values.

OUR PILLARS

The DCI is driven by 3 economic pillars:

1. Local Enterprises
2. Natural Resource Development
3. Cooperative and Sustainable Economies



Department Movement

Tin September 2023, Joshua Blacksmith joined the DCI team as the Sectoral Officer. The department created this position to work specifically on Mining Exploration and Outfitting files within Eeyou Istchee.

Gilles Matoush, Business Services Officer, has decided to leave the department on March 8, 2024, to pursue his own business in Mississauga. We want to extend our best wishes to him for success in his future endeavours.

The Cree Nation Business Registry required a position to collect data on businesses in Eeyou Istchee. Cody Petawabano held the Registry Information Clerk position from May to November 2023, and Judith Shecapio, who was a summer student in 2024, held it since January 2024.

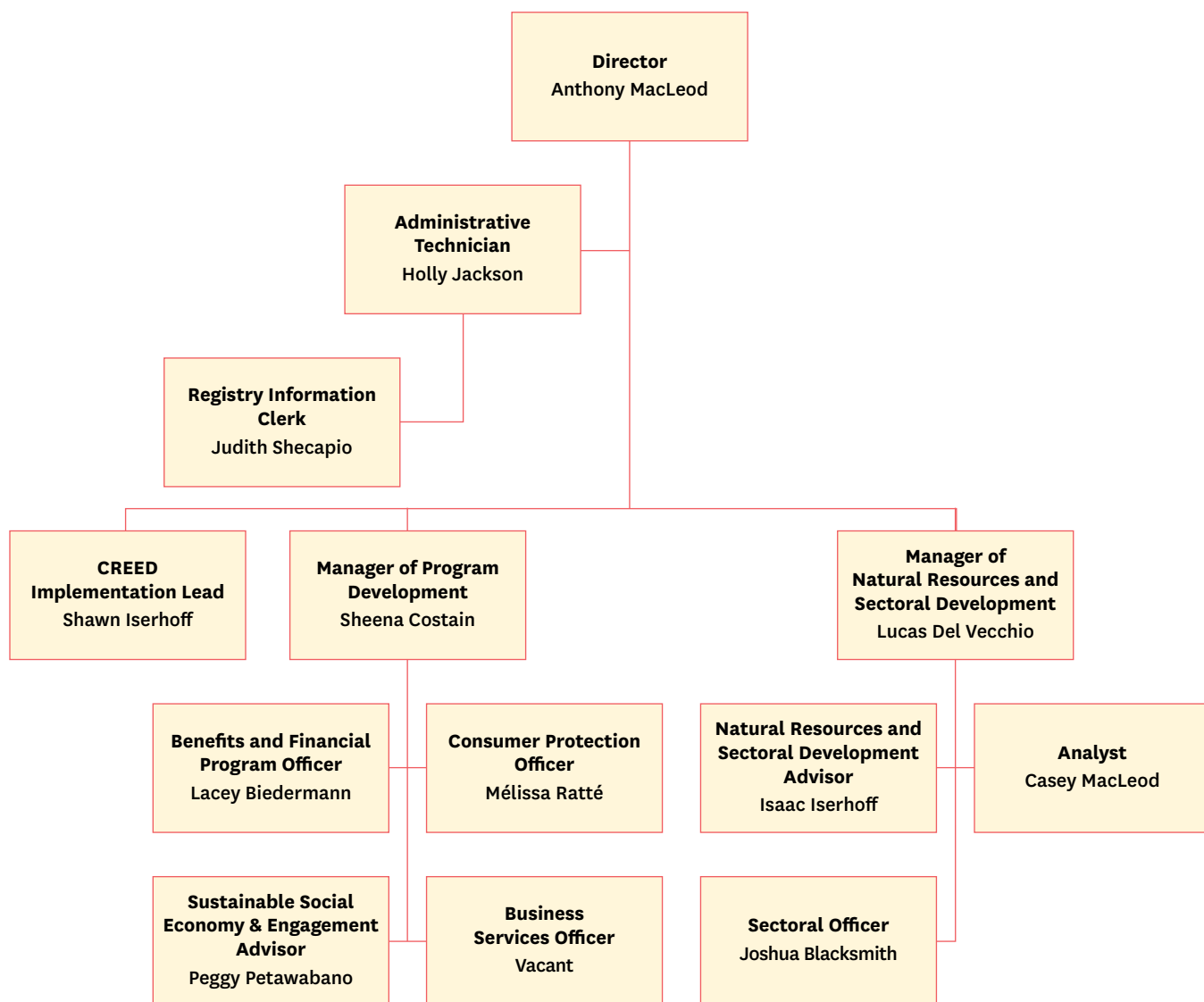
NATURAL RESOURCES AND SECTORAL OVERVIEW

Mining

During the last fiscal year, the team regularly met with mining companies and the Cree First Nations affected by mining. We continued to assist in overseeing the implementation of several Impact and Benefit Agreements as representatives on the Implementation Committee. We also continued to support local economic development by helping communities with Business Opportunity/Economic Development committees related to mining projects and the Impact Benefit Agreements and Pre-Development Agreements that have been signed.

The DCI team continued to coordinate the internal working group that assembled the representatives of DCI, Apatisiwin Skills Development and the Department of Environment and

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE



Remedial Works. The three departments are all involved in the same mining projects, and there was a need for increased internal coordination. We are looking forward to continuing this initiative and continuing the intra-departmental collaboration so that we can all better serve the Cree First Nations.

Cree Nation Mining Policy

The Cree Nation Mining policy, which has been under review for several years, was approved by the Board/Council on March 20th, 2024. Built upon the foundation of the original mining policy, the updated version outlines the framework in place in Eeyou Istchee, the different stages of the mineral development cycle, and the Crees' expectations for responsible mineral development in Eeyou Istchee. The policy was approved with a revision clause, where DCI will be responsible for presenting an updated version every two years.

Mining and Exploration Toolkit for Communities

To address some issues regarding exploration within our territory, DCI has developed toolkits for communities, land users, and administrators to use throughout the information process, with the proponents planning impact-causing exploration work in the territory. Engaging with the impacted community directly is crucial because they may have some important insight into their traditional pursuits and anything related to culture and language.

Mining Exploration Toolkit

The exploration toolkit is a comprehensive solution that addresses the early stages of mining and serves as an effective communication tool for companies. It provides in-depth information about the community, tallyman, and trap lines and establishes a communication channel for the proponent and community implementation. The toolkit is a testament to our unwavering commitment to sustainable development on our traditional trap lines, outlining a secure and responsible approach to mining activities.

Key components:

- Prospecting
- Exploration
- Discovery
- Pre-Construction

Mining Operation Toolkit

Aligned closely with the mining policy, this toolkit is not just a resource, but a guide that is designed to assist communities in the mining implementation process and provide information on mining operations in the territory. It will help lead up to the signing of an Impact Benefit Agreement, ensuring you are on the right track.

Lucas Del Vecchio and Anthony MacLeod presenting the Cree Nation Mining Policy at Board/Council on March 20 in Chibougamau.



Key components:

- Training and employment
- Business
- Social and cultural
- Environment matters
- Rehabilitation and closure/monitoring

Outfitting

The Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Coordinating Committee, with its quarterly meetings, has been a platform for discussing various topics within the Cree, Naskapi and Inuit territory. A key figure in these discussions is the Sectoral Officer, whose primary mandate is to assist in the outfitting regime. This includes crucial tasks such as helping Cree outfitters renew their outfitting permits and leases, which were overdue, and ensuring the necessary reporting for maintaining valid outfitting permits. The Sectoral Officer also played a pivotal role in resolving some internal issues through meetings with the entrepreneur and the community to recognize the significance of a historical outfitter.

Outfitting working group mandate

MRNF commercial and vacation leases

- I. The lease and permit review and recommendation process within the MRNF and the MELCCFP
- II. Communication and collaboration between MRNF and MELCCP
- III. Monitoring of wildlife activities of commercial leaseholders and vacation leaseholders
- IV. The conversion of outfitting leases into vacation leases.
- V. The status of commercial leases following the cessation of outfitting activities

The discussions with the working group, initiated in October 2023, were aimed at resolving the issues identified by the HFTCC prior to 2021. As a result of these discussions, we now have a template for the lease and permit review and recommendation process and a better understanding of the process. This progress is expected to facilitate the movement of the file in the future.

Forestry

Nachiskaatutaa nesht waachemitutaa - minaahuudaa wiiischihitkw

Forestry Meet-and-Greet

The Department of Commerce and Industry, Forestry Department, and Apatisiwin Skills Development, in conjunction with the Cree-Quebec Forestry Economic Council (CQFEC), collaborated to organize a Forestry Meet-and-Greet. The CQFEC is mandated to support and improve opportunities for Cree people to participate in the regional forestry industry and connect entrepreneurs in timely discussions regarding the Forestry Salvage Plans for Fall 2023. The event took place in Chibougamau on August 15, 2023. With over twenty (20) Cree businesses and entrepreneurs in attendance, it was a valuable opportunity to network with companies from the region's forestry industry.

Ronald Brizard, Chairman of the Cree-Québec Forestry Board, spoke briefly about the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council and its mandate to promote the devel-



Forestry Meet-and-Greet, Chibougamau

opment of business opportunities for the Cree and help maximize the economic spin-offs.

The event was enriched by insightful presentations from the region's main forestry companies: Chantiers Chibougamau Ltée, Produits Forestiers Résolu, Interfor, and Barrette-Chapais Ltée. These companies shared their current business opportunities, providing a wealth of information for Cree businesses and entrepreneurs.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty provided closing remarks. The Grand Chief emphasized how the Cree Nation is continuously striving to harmonize or find a balance between economic development and the Cree way of life. This is possible following a new approach under the era of the Paix des Braves that involves working with regional partners in mutually beneficial ways to ensure economic growth for all.

Data Insights and Analysis

As we concluded the 2022-2023 fiscal year, a pivotal step was taken within our department. We established a new position, that of an Analyst, dedicated to delving into our internal mining, forestry, funding programs, and the Cree Nation Economy. This strategic move is aimed at fostering an evidence-based approach to our services in Eenu-Eeyou Istchee. The insights we generate will not only steer our efforts more precisely but also furnish us with a comprehensive understanding of the economic landscape in Eenu-Eeyou Istchee.

- Our efforts during this first year were centred around:
- Collecting, cleaning and analyzing internal data on mining, forestry and from our funding programs database.
 - Establishing a Cree Nation Economy Working Group to help interpret data and guide our efforts.
 - Locating reliable data sources regarding the economy in Eeyou-Eenu Istchee (Cree Nation Economy).
 - Building partnerships with various data holders to better understand how they collect it.
 - Requesting tailored reports from Statistics Canada.



Although data analysis can be arduous, our team has successfully established a partnership with Statistics Canada. This partnership has already yielded high-quality data from 9 of the communities (2011, 2016, 2021 Census) on a long list of demographics including (but not limited to):

- Educational Attainment
- Household and Individual Employment Income
- Population
- Labour Force Status
- Industry, Occupation and Work Activity
- Total Income (Household and Individual)

Organizing, cleaning, and analyzing data will continue, and some preliminary reports will be produced during the next fiscal year.

PROGRAMS

Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF)



The Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF) provides grants for new Cree business start-ups and funding for existing Cree businesses to expand, modernize, and upgrade their equipment and operations. The purpose of the investments is to support one of the key economic pillars for Eeyou Istchee: Cree-owned local enterprises. The program also invests in developing businesses, allowing Cree entrepreneurs to gain experience and realize new services for the communities and region. The circulation of funds and the trickle-down effect of small businesses is essential throughout Eeyou Istchee. Transport, retail, and construc-

tion-type businesses are among the highest requests for funding through the CEAF Funds.

In this fiscal year, we're thrilled to unveil the new CEAF logo, marking a significant milestone in the continuous development of our department's branding. Our commitment at DCI is to enhance the visibility of our programs and services, a strategic move aimed at distinguishing the CEAF as a beacon of support for entrepreneurs. The logo's contemporary and streamlined design encapsulates our dedication to propelling Cree businesses ahead. It mirrors the progressive ethos of DCI and is crafted to motivate, as well as to raise our profile as we steadfastly nurture and back both existing and future project leaders.

This year, we celebrated the approval of thirteen (13) projects for funding through the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (see Table 1).



Sajewabin Transport, Mistissini

Table 1. Projects Approved under CEAF

Proponent	Community	Sector
Wakutan	Eastmain	Construction
Eenou Reno	Mistissini	Construction
Cree Nord Excavation	Mistissini	Construction
Petawabano Transport	Waskaganish	Construction
Chipstand 144	Mistissini	Retail & Resto
Piipuupiiyuu Repair Shop	Eastmain	Services
Eeyou Prints	Eastmain	Services
Neeposh Enterprises	Mistissini	Services
Matoush Tire Shop	Mistissini	Services
Kathy's Transport	Mistissini	Services
Cree Automotive Repair Shop (CARS)	Waskaganish	Services
Big Boy Trucking	Chisasibi	Transport
Sajewabin Transport	Mistissini	Transport
		Total: \$725,383

Table 2. CEAF projects currently under review

Community	Sector
Construction	Construction
Retail & Resto	Construction
Services	Services
Transport	Construction
Transport	Construction
Construction	Construction
Retail & Resto	Retail & Resto
Services	Services
Transport	Services
Transport	Retail & Resto



Regional Development Fund (RDF)

The Regional Development Fund (RDF) is dedicated to financing economic diversification and regional development projects that bring tangible benefits to the Eeyou Istchee territory. The RDF was established to foster the growth of Cree economies within Eeyou Istchee and has a track record of supporting large-scale projects that have made a significant difference.

There were three new RDF projects this past year:

1. Chisasibi Tower
2. James Bay Cree Communications Society for the Cree TV Studio
3. CNG - Social & Cultural Department for the Regional Adaptation of Elders

Cree Social Economy Regional Table (CSERT)

The Department of Commerce and Industry oversees the Social Economy funding agreement between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec. The funding supports enterprises with social aims, promoting

traditional Cree activities and culture. The Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) is the provincial resource hub for social economy, informing regional organizations about resources and activities. Eeyou Istchee is represented by the "Cree pole." Additionally, CSERT funded five projects this fiscal year to enhance Eeyou Istchee.

Figure 1. Projects Under the CSERT

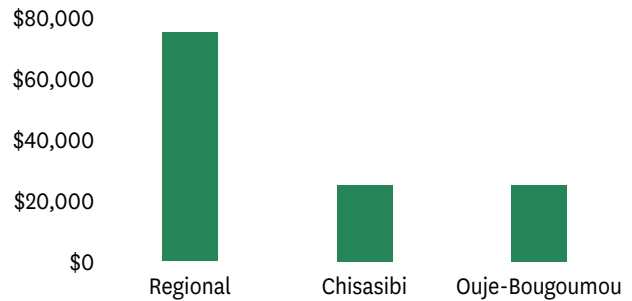


Table 3. Projects Under the CSERT

Project	Community	Approved Amount
1st Cree Women Business Conference	Regional	\$ 25,000
Chisasibi Greenhouse	Chisasibi	\$ 25,000
JBCCS Cree TV Studio	Regional	\$ 25,000
Mianscum Solidarity	Ouje-Bougoumou	\$ 25,000
Cree Summer Games	Regional	\$ 25,000



CERRI Geodesic Dome, Chisasibi





Regions and Ruralty Fund (RRF)

The Cree Native Arts and Craft Association (CNACA) proudly announces the inauguration of the Wachiya Store, an entirely Cree-owned new venture that provides a distinctive retail experience dedicated to genuine Cree Indigenous arts and crafts. Situated at 79 St Paul Street East within the charming Old Montreal district, the store is poised to become a magnet for tourists and residents searching for exceptional items that honour the rich Cree Indigenous heritage.

CNACA is actively pursuing funding opportunities to establish this retail outlet and broaden its online presence. The goal is to amplify the visibility of Eeyou Istchee’s arts and crafts. The anticipated funding will enable Wachiya to diversify its product range and enhance marketing strategies to captivate a broader demographic.

Furthermore, we eagerly anticipate updates on several initiatives made possible through the generous financial backing of the Regions and Ruralty Fund. These include the CWEIA conference that champions Women’s Entrepreneurship, the pioneering efforts of the Cree Trappers’ Association Community Freezer program, and the innovative CNG/DCI Business Registry project.

CREED

The Cree Real Estate Entrepreneurship Development (CREED) Program is DCI’s newest grant fund. It supports business start-ups and expansions in renovations, construction of private homes, and commercial real estate projects. The CREED Program is in direct alignment with the Cree Nation Government’s Housing Strategy by maximizing social and economic opportunities for our people through entrepreneurship.

In March, DCI was pleased to hear about the adoption of the Private Real Estate Law in Mistissini. This significant development will allow entrepreneurs from that community to access CREED funding for private real estate opportunities in relation to rental leasing. We are optimistic that more communities will soon follow suit, providing another avenue for Cree entrepreneurs to contribute towards new housing for its members, a prospect that inspires hope and progress.

Below is the list of projects under CREED for this fiscal year. We are excited to report that Mehekin Construction’s project has moved forward and that funds have been released.



Table 4. Funding under the CREED Program

Project	Community	Project Cost	Status
Mehekin Construction	Chisasibi	\$75,000	Approved
J. Masty Maintenance & repair	Whapmagoostui	\$21,250	Under Review
DK Renovation	Chisasibi	\$25,000	Under Review



SERVICES

JBNQA Beneficiary List

Over the last fiscal year, the regional membership clerk has received 61 requests, significantly fewer than the previous year. Specifically, these requests consist of electoral lists, statistics, JBNQA confirmations, and membership lists.

Over the last four years, JBNQA members have risen for every community (see Table 5).

Table 5. JBNQA Beneficiaries

Community	Year 2024	Year 2023	Year 2022	Year 2021
Chisasibi	5,192	5,132*	5,045	4,949
Eastmain	947	941	925	913
Mistissini	4,385	4,330*	4,242*	4,160*
Nemaska	948	947	946	924
Ouje-Bougoumou	1,024	1,014*	1,002*	984*
Waskaganish	3,263	3,211*	3,172	3,131*
Waswanipi	2,633	2,616*	2,585*	2,551*
Wemindji	1,668	1,657*	1,628*	1,607*
Whapmagoostui	1,117	1,100*	1,075*	1,061*
TOTAL	21,177	20,970	20,632	20,287
% Change from previous year	1.09%	1.59%	1.66%	NA
% Change over 5 years	4.42%			

* These amounts have been updated from last year due to corrections.

Table 6. Distribution of the active beneficiaries by nation, group of age and sex on March 31, 2024.

Group of age	Male	Female	Total
0 - 4	726	732	1,458
5 - 9	935	934	1,869
10 - 14	994	982	1,976
15 - 19	1,123	1,027	2,150
20 - 24	980	864	1,844
25 - 29	864	831	1,695
30 - 34	825	811	1,636
35 - 39	653	655	1,308
40 - 44	600	614	1,214
45 - 49	636	646	1,282
50 - 54	627	607	1,234
55 - 59	499	507	1,006
60 - 64	371	391	762
65 - 69	272	309	581
70 - 74	178	215	393
75 et +	328	441	769
TOTAL	10,611	10,566	21,177

Business Registry

We collect data from businesses within Eeyou Istchee for the Cree Business Registry and Opportunities web application. This innovative platform will provide information on their business profiles. This will help businesses, regional entities, and individuals doing business within the nine communities of Eeyou Istchee and open up a world of opportunities, all of which will be posted on the platform.

The platform currently allows businesses and opportunity providers to create accounts and manage opportunities, but businesses cannot update their profiles. DCI has been working with Nventive, the registry developer, to update the user experience, which should be launched in June 2024. There will be a self-serve registration and annual renewal for Cree Community-based Certification.

This past year, we focused on collecting business data from all nine (9) Cree communities: Mistissini, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji, and Whapmagoostui. Community outreach is still ongoing. As part of this process, we have finalized 243 businesses on the Business Registry.

Cree Nation Economic Prioritization Agreement

The Cree Nation Economic Prioritization Agreement (CNEPA) is pivotal for our collective economic and social development. The Board/Council approved the Agreement in December 2022.

The Prioritization Agreement, rooted in the JBNQA's sections 28.10.3 and 28.10.4, is a cornerstone for the economic and social development of the communities of Eeyou Istchee. This Agreement not only regulates access to business and employment opportunities within Eeyou Istchee but also provides an effective multilateral framework for coordinating procurement processes. Doing so paves the way for the liberalization and expansion of Cree trade, bringing numerous benefits to our communities.

To date, DCI continues to promote the Agreement to the Cree community Leadership. Due to many factors, such as changes in community leadership, we are still working diligently to have all communities sign on to the Agreement. This underscores the need for our continued engagement with the communities to realize full participation in the Prioritization Agreement. Presentations were delivered at several meetings with Chiefs and Councils, Director Generals, and Treasurers. DCI continues to work towards 100 percent community participation in the Agreement.

Consumer Protection

In January 2023, the newly hired, Consumer Protection Officer (CPO) embarked on a mission to enhance consumer awareness and safeguard the residents' rights in Eeyou Istchee.

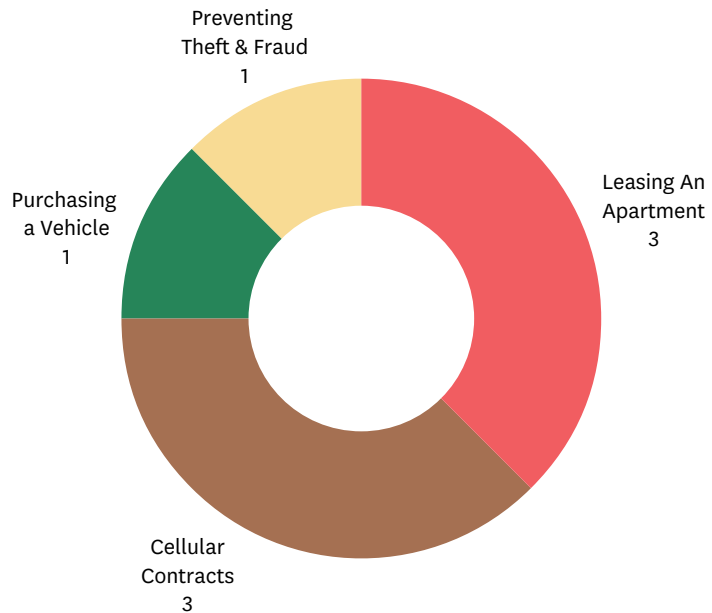
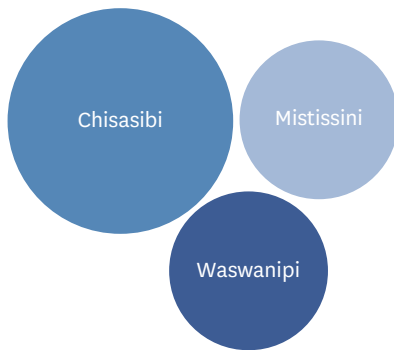
Initial Weeks

- **Information Gathering and Training:** The officer dedicated her initial weeks of gathering relevant information and undergoing training in collaboration with Option Consommateur.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

This fiscal year, the Consumer Protection Officer conducted eight (8) workshops for several communities. Additional workshops are currently being designed to address the specific needs of our people.



Workshops for Young Adults

- **Empowering the Youth:** Recognizing the importance of educating young adults, the officer designed a workshop on consumer protection laws.
- **Workshop Topics:**
 1. Leasing 101: Understanding the laws related to leasing apartments outside of the communities, and empowering future tenants to protect themselves.
 2. Cellular Contracts: Demystifying phone contracts and helping participants understand what they're truly paying for.
- **Workshop Locations:**
 1. Presented Leasing 101 and Cellular Contracts workshops twice at Chisasibi High School.
 2. Conducted an online workshop for the Mistissini High School.
 3. Organized a workshop on Learning the financial impact of purchasing a vehicle for the public of all ages.

Identity Theft Workshop

- **Protecting Against Scams:** The CPO hosted a workshop on safeguarding against identity theft, addressing the prevalent scams in today's digital landscape.
- **Career Fair Participation:**
 1. Presented the identity theft workshop at the Career Fair in Waswanipi in February 2024.
 2. Approximately 10-20 people attended the workshop.

Social Media Presence

- **Keeping the Community Informed:** The CPO maintained an active social media presence.
- **Posts Covered Various Topics:**
 1. Vehicle Theft
 2. Christmas Returns
 3. Product Recalls

Impactful workshops, community engagement, and a commitment to consumer protection marked the years 2023-2024. The Consumer Protection Officer's effort contributed to the well-being of Eeyou Istchee.

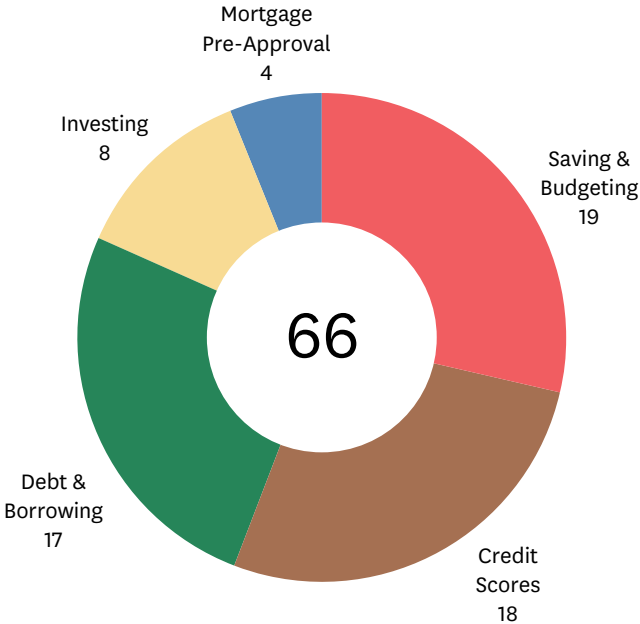
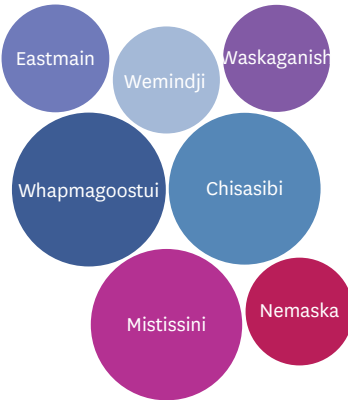
Benefits and Financial Program Officer

The Benefits and Financial Program Officer (BFPO) completed the Business Analyst Essential Course at Algonquin College, completing seven modules to earn her Business Analyst Essentials Certificate. Additionally, the BFPO actively participated in three housing conferences throughout the fiscal year, each providing unique insights. The events hosted by CNG in Gatineau and the First Nation Housing Conference in Thunder Bay broadened her understanding of housing issues on a larger scale. On the other hand, her presentation at the Waskaganish Housing Conference allowed her to gain valuable, localized insights into rental housing in Waskaganish, which she can now apply in her work.



FINANCIAL LITERACY

Throughout this fiscal year, the Cree Nation saw a noticeable demand for financial literacy. To address this need, the Benefits and Financial Program Officer organized workshops in seven (7) communities.



Furthermore, the BFPO demonstrated her versatility and adaptability by delivering workshops to a diverse range of audiences. She presented to secondary 4 and 5 students in Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Mistissini, and Nemaska, as well as engaged with post-secondary students at the PSSS Conference. She also conducted workshops for the band council in Eastmain and Wemindji. Over the fiscal year, an impressive total of 66 workshops were delivered, catering to the unique needs of the members of the Cree Nation community.

COLLABORATION

EDO & DCI Collaboration

The first meeting between our department and the Economic Development Officers (EDOs) took place on July 11 and 12, 2023. Paul John Murdoch presented comprehensive briefings on our offerings, the Cree Business Registry, and the Cree Nation Economic Prioritization Agreement. In August, a virtual meeting was facilitated by Francesca Menassa-Plourde from CNG, covering a Microsoft Teams tutorial and a briefing on the upcoming Forestry Meet & Greet. Another online meeting in September featured project updates, a discussion of new opportunities, and information about the Social Economy Funding program. In November, a monthly collaborative session was held in Val d’Or. The January and March 2024 meetings included briefings by the EDOs and DCI team, along with presentations on funding prospects, new financial aids for Northern Quebec’s organizations, and various youth programs and scholarships.



Conferences

The (DCI) has partnered with multiple departments within the organization to enhance the visibility of our programs and services collectively. Additionally, the DCI has been actively engaged in attending and contributing to a wide array of conferences aimed at championing our initiatives. These conferences serve as invaluable platforms for learning and networking, enabling us to stay current on the latest industry developments and best practices.

- **1st Eeyou Iskw/Iskeu Cree Women Business Conference (CWEIA)** - The two-day conference featured keynote speakers and panellists to encourage, inspire, and support women entrepreneurs in Eeyou Istchee.
- **Indigenomics on Bay Street Conference** - Indigenous leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals with representatives from the finance and investment sectors to explore opportunities for Indigenous economic development
- **Forging the Path Forward Conference** - The objective was to reflect on and enrich the content of the Strategy collectively. Reflection focused on key pillars such as quality of life, culture, identity and environmental protection.
- **Cree School Board Post-Secondary Student Services Conference** - A valuable opportunity for post-secondary students to establish a network of peers, connect with potential employers, and streamline their academic path toward future employment. DCI successfully recruited two summer students at this conference, showcasing the tangible benefits of participation.
- **Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Conference** - The largest mining conference in Canada regrouping between 26,000 participants from 130+ countries to take part in educational programming, showcases of best practices and networking.
- **XPLOR** - A gathering focused on exploration and mining, where industry professionals, investors, and stakeholders convene to discuss the latest developments, technologies, and investment opportunities in the exploration and mining sectors.
- **CNYC Youth Summit** - The event brought together most community youth councils, along with numerous presenters.
- **Quebec Mines Conference** - A leading event in Quebec's mining and energy sectors, uniting industry stakeholders, government representatives, researchers, and investors to delve into the latest advancements, challenges, and opportunities in mining and energy development. The conference covers a wide range of topics, including mineral exploration, sustainable mining practices, renewable energy, and regulatory frameworks, providing a comprehensive overview of the industry's current landscape.





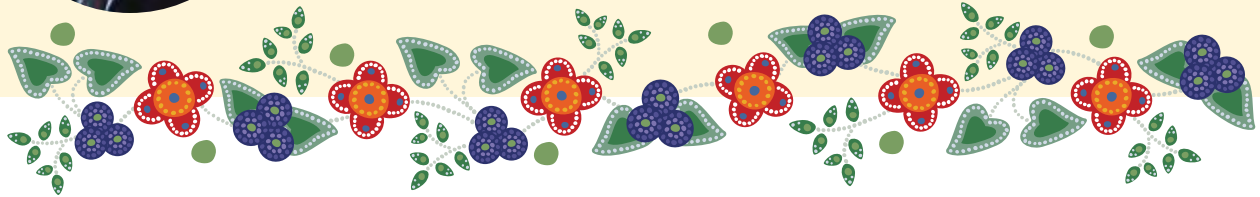
The Cree Nation Government Booth at Quebec Mines Conference 2023





ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS

Message from the Director Isaac Voyageur



AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS, I AM PLEASED TO OFFER THIS REPORT ON OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-2024.

 **32**
EMPLOYEES

I begin by honouring my predecessor, Willie Iserhoff, who passed away at home with his family in Mistissini in March 2024. Willie headed, before me, the Traditional Pursuits Department of the Cree Nation Government. He played an important role in implementing key chapters of the JBNQA — in particular, the Income Security Program and the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee. Like Henry Mianscum before him, Willie helped to build and shape the Environment and Remedial Works Department which we know today and which I am proud to continue to grow.

Much of this year was spent addressing the sobering aftermath of the 2023 forest fires, which caused repeated evacuations, cost millions in damages, depleted 23 of our protected areas, and burned 3.8 million hectares of our territory. Fittingly, this was the first official year for my Department's Climate Change Unit. We began implementing our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to lower emissions; we finalized priorities for new weather stations; and we collaborated on regional, provincial, and national strategies to build our resilience. We are now preparing for the 2024 Cree Regional Climate Forum and the newly invigorated goal to rally communities for unprecedented Cree-led climate action.

Despite delays caused by the fires, we were able to complete several collaborative initiatives in 2023-2024. Our Wildlife Unit conducted a third tour of the communities

before finalizing the historic Cree-led *Threat Management Plan* for Lake Sturgeon/Nameu (ᓇᓴᓴᓴ)/Nimaau (ᓄᓴᓴᓴ). Sixty community members graduated from training provided by our Community Environmental Services Unit and its partners. Our Protected Areas Unit began work with coastal communities on the Feasibility Assessment for Wiinipaakw National Marine Conservation Area. And our Environment and Social Impact Assessment Unit assessed 35 projects proposed for the territory.

The Cree response to Quebec's Public Land Use Plans for Eeyou Istchee was submitted in 2024, thanks to the work of our Land Use Planning Unit. Boundary reconfiguration surveys for Waswanipi should be done in 2025, thanks to the work of our Land Regime Unit. Our Mining team joined the 8th Environmental Committee formed under Impact and Benefits Agreements in the territory this year. And our GIS Unit began implementing the Geospatial Strategy to build Cree capacity at all levels.

As the smoke clears, this Department is growing, planning, and mobilizing. Our dedication to protecting the lands and waters of Eeyou Istchee has never been stronger.

Meegwetch.

Isaac Voyageur
Director of Environment and Remedial Works



INTRODUCTION

The Environment and Remedial Works Department (ERWD) is responsible for implementing Sections 4, 5, 8, 22, 24, and 30A of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (JBNQA), pertaining to lands and land management, hydroelectric development, environmental policy and impact assessment, and wildlife management. It is our mission to protect the air, lands, and waters of Eeyou Istchee for the benefit of all Cree people, today and tomorrow. The Department's growing staff of 32 work mainly from the Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Montreal offices. Our team includes biologists, analysts, engineers, administrators, technicians, planners, project coordinators and management specialists, supported by our administrative assistants, Nicole Jackson and Sharon P. Matoush, and our new Communications Officer, Sarah Mudrosky.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (ESIAs)

The Department's ESIA Unit participates in the assessment and review of all projects submitted to the ESIA procedure established by Section 22 of the JBNQA. We maintain the Cree Nation Government's ESIA Secretariat, and we produce the necessary analyses for the Cree-appointed members on the Evaluating Committee (COMEV), the Provincial Review Committee (COMEX), and all Cree-Canada Joint Assessment Committees (JACs). Throughout these processes, we maintain continuous communications with community representatives.

The ESIA Unit includes our ESIA Coordinator, Graeme Morin, and two Environmental Analysts, Eva-Maria Hanchar and Anna Krupa. We serve on the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment, and we represent the Cree



Photo: Unsplash



Nation Government on all Environmental Committees created under Impact and Benefits Agreements (IBAs) signed with project proponents and Cree First Nations. Our work relies on the collaboration of our departmental colleagues, the contributions of regional organizations, the cooperation of the federal and provincial governments, and the support of the Cree communities.

Projects under Section 22 ESIA Review in 2023-2024

We assessed 18 projects in the first stages of the ESIA Procedure (Preliminary Information & Directives) for COMEV this year (see Table 1). Four projects were exempted from ESIA; two were recommended for exemption; four were given a Directive to begin an ESIA study; one was sent a recommendation to undergo the ESIA process; six remain under analysis (questions issued for proponents); and two projects are no longer under evaluation at the request of the proponents. Detailed information is available on the COMEV website (comev.ca).

We assessed a further 17 projects requiring work at the later stages of the ESIA Procedure (Impact Statement Review & Follow-up) for COMEX this year (see Table 2). Two projects received their certificate of authorization; two requests for modification were approved; six projects are being monitored for follow-up on conditions; three modification requests remain under review; one project has stopped

operations; one project is working on the ESIA study; and two ESIA studies are under review. Detailed information is available on the COMEX website (comexqc.ca).

ESIA Project Highlights

Mont-Sorcier Mine

Since the directive was issued in 2022, the proponent has been gathering information on water and air quality, wildlife, and Cree land use to produce ESIA for the federal and provincial procedures. These are expected by the end of 2024. A water management workshop was held in March 2024 in Montreal with hydrologists and Cree experts to discuss the deviation of the Bibou stream, west of the mine site.

Rose Lithium-Tantalum Mine

Since Critical Elements Corp received federal and provincial authorizations for the project in 2021 and 2022, we have collaborated on numerous plans and studies to address the conditions that must be met before mine construction may begin, including plans and monitoring programs for fish and fish habitat and wetlands.

James Bay Lithium Mine

The project was authorized in 2023 and provincial approval was granted this year for the locations of four proposed waste rock piles. We are now reviewing the pro-

Table 1. Select Projects (12 of 18) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEV in 2023-2024

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community Traditional Territories
Chibougamau Hub & Spoke gold mine	Doré Copper Inc.	Directive sent	Ouje-Bougoumou
Mont Sorcier mine	Voyager Metals Inc.	Directive sent	Ouje-Bougoumou
Troilus gold and copper mine	Troilus Gold Inc.	Directive sent	Mistissini
Thermal plant and sawdust silos	Barrette Chapais Inc.	Exempted	Ouje-Bougoumou
Waskaganish Lagoon Cell	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Questions sent to proponent	Waskaganish
Ecocenter proposal	CNG – Capital Works Department	Questions sent to proponent	Whapmagoostui
Corvette lithium mine	Patriot Battery Metals	Recommended for ESIA	Chisasibi
Construction of access road	Lithium Winsome Adina Inc., Winsome Resources	Directive sent	Mistissini
Installation of cement plant	Excavation Michel Paradis Inc.	Questions sent to proponent	Eastmain
Quarry expansion & sand pit	Ministère des Transports du Québec	Recommended for exemption	Waswanipi
Road maintenance (Billy Diamond & Chisasibi Roads)	Société de Développement de la Baie-James	Questions sent to proponent	Wemindji, Chisasibi
440 km Quarry on Billy Diamond Hwy	Blais & Langlois inc.	Questions sent to proponent	Wemindji



posed monitoring plans, which must be approved prior to construction. In December 2023, the Kapisikama Agreement was signed by the Cree Nation Government, Galaxy Lithium, and the Cree Nation of Eastmain to solidify the sustainable operation of the mine.

Other ESIA Unit Highlights

Every year, we collaborate with the Cree communities, other governments, project proponents, and scientific experts on research and policy initiatives that inform ESIA processes and mitigate impacts on the ground. In 2023-2024, for example:

- We began work to support geological research at the site of the proposed Corvette lithium exploration mine;
- We continued work on the *iTrackDNA Project* to create standards for using environmental DNA to detect the presence of wildlife in any habitat;
- We extended the Contribution Agreement for *Assessing the Effectiveness of Fish Compensation Habitat in Eeyou Istchee: Cree and Scientific Perspectives*;
- We provided training and presentations to LEAs on mining exploration, infrastructure projects, and ESIA processes; and
- We advanced Cree-Canada efforts to establish monitoring procedures for ESIA projects in the post-decision phase.

MINING

The Department supports Cree communities impacted by mining activities by monitoring projects under ESIA processes, serving on Environmental Committees derived from Impact and Benefits Agreements (IBAs) between Cree First Nations and project proponents, and actively collaborating on the restoration of abandoned sites and exploration sites. The recurrent theme in our mining work in 2023-2024 was mine closure and restoration.

IBA Environmental Committees

Under the Environmental Committees derived from IBAs, we develop mine closure plans collaboratively with impacted communities and project proponents.

In February 2024, our Mining team participated in the workshop, “Indigenous Exchange Forum: Transitions in Mine Closure” at the University of Queensland (Australia) to support the Opinagow Committee’s development of a closure plan for the Eleonore Mine.

In December 2023, the Kapisikama Agreement was signed by the Cree Nation Government, Galaxy Lithium, and the Cree Nation of Eastmain to guide the sustainable operation of the James Bay lithium mine. This agreement launched the eighth Environmental Committee formed under IBAs, following those for the Whabouchi, Eleonore,

Table 2. Select Projects (12 of 17) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEX in 2023-2024

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community Traditional Territories
Rose lithium-tantalum mine	Critical Elements Corp.	Conditions follow-up	Eastmain, Nemaska
Dewatering of pits J4/87 (Troilus site)	Troilus Gold Inc.	Modification approved	Mistissini
Quarry >3ha for La Grande-3 Mtce	Hydro-Québec	Certificate of Authorization issued	Chisasibi, Wemindji
Quarry expansion (Eleonore mine)	Newmont Inc.	Modification approved	Wemindji
Whabouchi mine	Nemaska Lithium Inc.	Reviewing request for modifications	Nemaska
Construction of forest access roads	Matériaux Blanchet Inc.	Reviewing request for modification	Waswanipi
Renard diamond mine	Stornoway Inc.	Notification of cessation	Mistissini
James Bay lithium mine	Galaxy Lithium (Canada)	Certificate of Authorization issued	Eastmain, Waskaganish
Windfall mine	Osisko Inc.	ESIA under analysis	Waswanipi
Whapmagoostui landfill	Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui	Conditions follow-up	Whapmagoostui
Iron-vanadium exploitation	BlackRock Metals Inc.	Waiting on ESIA study from proponent	Ouje-Bougoumou
Wemindji new landfill	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Reviewing request for modification	Wemindji



Renard, Rose, Moblan, and BlackRock mines, and the East-main diversion project.

Principale Mine Closure

Due to forest fires, community consultations planned for June 2023 in Chibougamau and Ouje-Bougoumou on the abandoned Principale mine site were moved to January 2024. The consultations provided updates on the restoration work and forthcoming plans for the site. This year's work focused on structure demolition, site stabilization, and the acquisition of permits and technical engineering specifications.

AMES Clean-Up

The implementation of the Agreement for the clean-up of abandoned mining exploration sites (AMES) is a collaboration of the Cree Nation Government and the Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. Our Mining Restoration Engineer, Aurora Hernandez, sits on the Agreement's Steering Committee and participates in internal planning, and our AMES Clean-Up Specialist, Adario Masty, works with community members, tallymen, and land users to restore abandoned sites.

This year, 20 sites were characterized and 6 sites were cleaned from traplines M29A, M39 and M24A. Waste extracted from the sites included full and empty oil drums, motor oil, propane bottles, oil stoves, hoses, buckets, a variety of scrap metals, and a lot of garbage. Another 9

sites are expected to be cleaned this year, and another 13 characterized.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Department Director, Isaac Voyageur, is the Regional Environmental Administrator for Category I lands, assisted by our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, our Environmental Advisor, Kristy Franks, and our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn. We coordinate and support the Local Environmental Administrators (LEAs) in nine Cree communities. We assist in the remediation of contaminated areas, coordinate Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, provide community trainings and capacity building, and support waste management initiatives in collaboration with the Capital Works and Services Department.

Mid-Canada Line Clean-up

The Mid-Canada Line (MCL) is a series of abandoned military communication sites and fueling stations along the 55th parallel, including 42 sites in Quebec. A pilot project is underway to clean up 7 of these sites, including 4 allocated to Cree responsibility. In September 2023, teams from Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi conducted assessments and inventories at 3 of the sites. Throughout the winter, teams organized trainings and created workplans for the clean-up to begin in Fall 2024. See coverage of the project in the March 16th issue of The Nation (<http://nationnews.ca/community/restoration-of-abandoned-mid-canada-military-sites-reaches-eeyou-istchee/>).



Debris collected in the AMES clean-up, Mistissini, 2023





Top photo: Members of the Whapmagoostui MCL work team determine a clean-up plan, September 2023



Bottom photo: Members of the Chisasibi MCL work team received Wilderness First Aid training, February 2024



Hydro/SEBJ-James Bay Region Site Clean-Up

Clean-up plans for former Hydro-Québec/SEBJ sites were put on hold in Summer 2023 due to forest fires. Some sites were not safe to visit, and helicopter availability was sparse due to the reassignment of aircraft. Work should resume in 2024.

Building Community Environmental Capacity

In partnership with the BEAHR Program/Eco Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and Apatisiwin Skills Development, we trained representatives from seven Cree communities in Core Environmental Skills (13 graduates) and Waste Management Coordination (11 graduates) in Fall 2023. In Winter 2024, we

offered a second set of courses, with support from the same partners in addition to The Challenge Fund, on Core Environmental Skills (21 graduates) and Environmental Monitoring (25 graduates), with representatives from nine Cree communities.

Reducing Waste through Composting

Representatives from almost all Cree communities attended the Composting: Let's get started! event in Kahnawà:ke in March 2024, hosted by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke.

Photo on the right: Taralyn Weistche from Waskaganish receives her graduation certificate in Environmental Monitoring from Vincent Rain (Trainer), Norman A. Wapachee (Deputy Grand Chief) and Isaac Voyageur (ERWD Director), Mistissini, March 2024

Photo below: Building on skills acquired in the 2024 Environmental Monitoring Course in Mistissini, trainees from 9 Cree communities aim to develop a regional environmental monitoring initiative in Eeyou Istchee



Environmental Monitoring March 2024



Bottom photo: Speakers from Mistissini, Waskaganish, Wemindji, and Chisasibi, and an MC from Whapmagoostui, discuss "Composting, Gardening, Greenhouses, Waste Reduction, and Food Security in Eeyou Istchee," Kahnawà:ke, March 2024



LAND REGIME

The Department is responsible for land regime issues that arise while implementing the JBNQA and subsequent agreements with Quebec and Canada. This work is led by our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn and our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, in collaboration with the Cree First Nations and the federal and provincial governments, with Gowlings as our legal advisor.

We continue to work with Waswanipi, Waskaganish, Nemaska, and Quebec on the review and reconfiguration of territorial boundaries originally defined by the Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR) hydroelectric project. In 2023-2024, this work concentrated on including Némiscau Lake and the Jolliet Lakes within the Category II boundaries, and working to set aside Category IB lands at the site of the former trading post (Old Nemaska). The boundary reconfiguration surveys for Waswanipi should take place by 2025, following completion of the Environmental Site Assessment.

Discussions are underway to settle outstanding Waskaganish land issues involving the transfer to Canada of lands held by the Roman Catholic Church, the Hudson Bay Company, and the estate of Madame Maud Watt.

We continue to work on land regime issues relevant to other Cree First Nations, including the replacement of Section 4 of the JBNQA with texts based on surveys and Quebec Orders-in-Council.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Our Climate Change Unit was established in 2023 to address the pressing challenges of climate change and to build resilience, secure resources, and leverage traditional knowledge to make the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities climate future-ready. This work is led by our Manager of Climate Change, Olivier Kölmel (replacing Pernilla Talec, who is on leave), and our new Climate Change Coordinator, Killian Abellon.

Strategic Planning

Our strategic plan for 2023-2027 outlines five priorities:

1. **Strategy & Action Plan:** Lower GHG emissions by implementing climate initiatives aligned with community needs and reduction targets;
2. **Community-Based Monitoring:** Expand our network of weather stations and build capacity to maintain, monitor, and interpret climate-related data;
3. **Regional Adaptation Plan:** Develop a comprehensive plan identifying

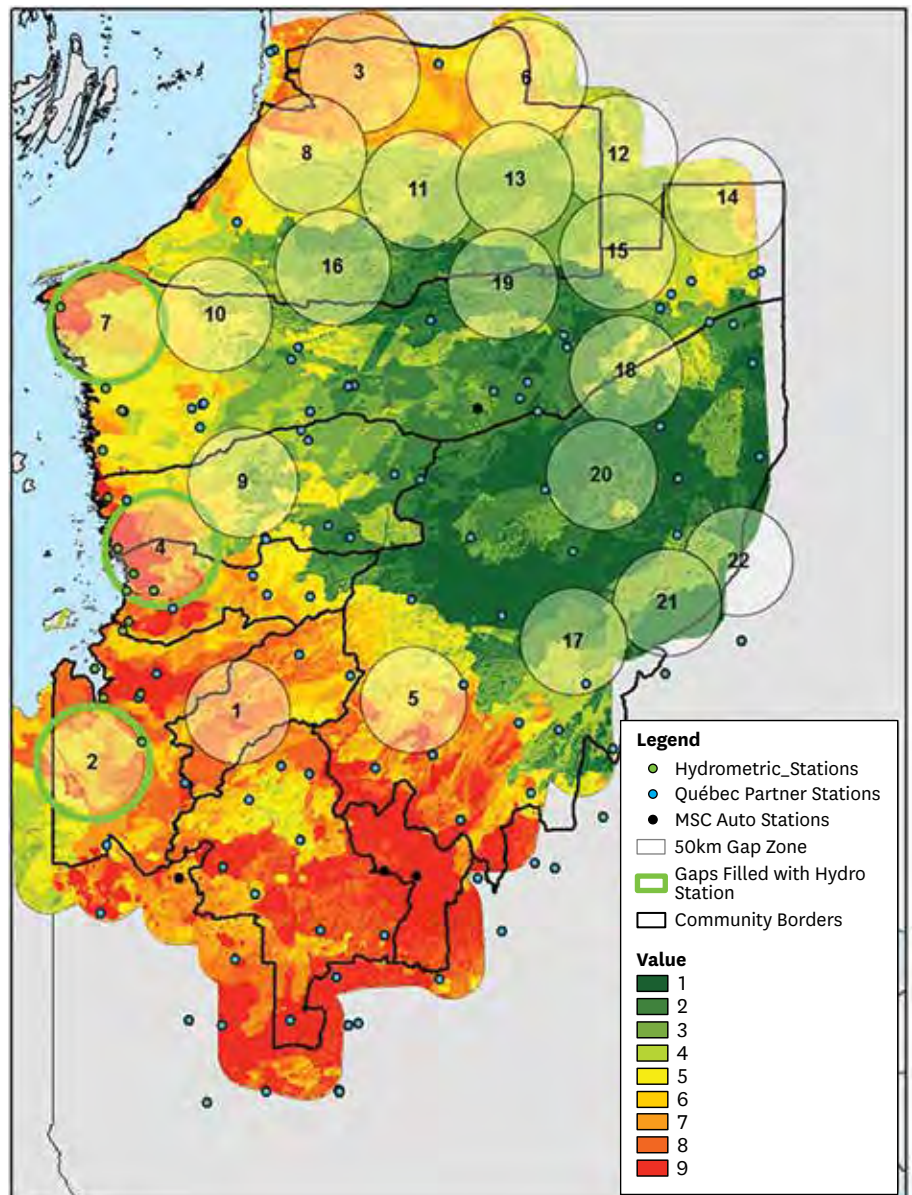
risks and opportunities, engaging with stakeholders, and monitoring progress;

4. **Indigenous-Led Conservation Finance:** Create revenue streams supporting climate initiatives by leveraging the Cree way of life and conservation measures;
5. **Knowledge Hub:** Build an archive of traditional knowledge and western science to ensure cultural continuity and inform research.

Climate Change Projects

Weather and Climate Monitoring Stations

This year, we finalized the comprehensive gap analysis to determine priority areas for new weather stations in Eeyou Istchee. Prioritized installations in Nemaska, Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui will address historic gaps in climate data coverage. Community consultations, permitting, and installations are forthcoming.



The Climate Monitoring Needs Index Map





Documenting Ice Safety and Wildfires in Mishigamish, February 2024



In the 2023 forest fire map, PAs are in green, fires are red, and fires within PAs are orange

Documentary on Wildfires and Ice Safety

In February 2024, we visited Waswanipi to document, with local land users and tallymen, the social impacts of the 2023 wildfires and to record educational clips on ice safety. Videos will be released in 2024.

Wildfires and Climate Change

The 2023 wildfire season was a stark reminder of the increasing threat posed by climate change. As global temperatures rise – and northern territories heat up at twice the global average – the frequency and intensity of wildfires escalate, releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide which further accelerate global warming.

In Eeyou Istchee, the 2023 wildfires were the most devastating of the last half-century, releasing 374 MtCO₂e, or 27% of all wildfire-related emissions in that period. (See details of the destruction in the list and map above.)

Discussions are underway to enhance emergency preparedness, initiate restoration efforts, secure relief funding, and plan climate adaptation measures essential to build resilience in Eeyou Istchee.

Provincial and National Policy

We are engaged in legislative talks on Quebec’s energy reform, clean energy development, and zero-emission vehicles legislation. We collaborate on national climate



strategies with 90 other First Nation and Inuit communities, through the First Nations Climate Leadership Steering Committee. On all levels, we advocate for policies that align with climate-resilient practices and carbon rights and which support the Cree way of life.

Community Engagement

Maamuu Uhpikaapuutaa Summit 2023

At the CTA Summit in Chisasibi, our Coordinator of Climate Change engaged with tallymen and land users as part of a panel discussing climate impacts on coastal communities.

Adaptation Futures Conference

We lead the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), which includes representatives from the 9 Cree communities. With other CCAC members, we attended the Adaptation Futures 2023 conference in Montreal to gain insight into the latest adaptation science and Indigenous-led initiatives around the globe.

Community Knowledge Exchange

We play a key role in numerous regional committees to enhance collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the Cree communities. In 2023-2024, for example, through the *CNG-CBHSSJB Joint Committee on Access to Nutritious Food in Eeyou Istchee*, we facilitated exchange between gardening and greenhouse project proponents across Eeyou Istchee, to help communities build both climate resilience and food sovereignty.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) SERVICES

The Department's GIS Unit supports all our files and assists other departments, Cree entities and Cree communities with mapping and GIS data management needs. The GIS Unit includes our Coordinator of GIS, Jonathan Elkhoury, our GIS Analyst, Maxine Mark-Stewart, and our GIS Technician, Maverick Loon-Swallow.

The Geospatial Strategy

In 2023-2024, we began implementing the Cree Nation Government's 3-year Geospatial Strategy, an inter-departmental initiative that aims to improve GIS services at the organizational scale.

- Following a thorough assessment of the existing GIS workforce structure and service delivery, we finalized our recommendations on how the Cree Nation Government can best meet the growing demand for GIS services.
- We developed a GIS Governance Charter to provide a governing structure and clarify reporting responsibilities, and we developed objectives for the priority areas of Data Stewardship, Data Usage, and Training and Development.
- We held 4 workshops on GIS data-management best-practices, as a first step to establish a central data repository and portal through which all departments can search and view trusted Cree spatial datasets and related information.
- We developed terms of reference for a GIS Community of Practice that will become a forum for stakeholders and

GIS staff to share knowledge of GIS needs and initiatives across Eeyou Istchee.

- We developed a GIS Training Plan for dedicated GIS staff to help departments optimize productivity and collaboration, and to increase capabilities within the ArcGIS environment.

Capacity Building

The GIS unit developed a custom ArcGIS Online training this year to meet the specific needs of ERWD staff and our collaborators. ArcGIS Online is a user-friendly, cloud-based GIS tool to view, create, analyze and share geographic information across the Cree Nation Government and with the Cree communities and Cree entities.

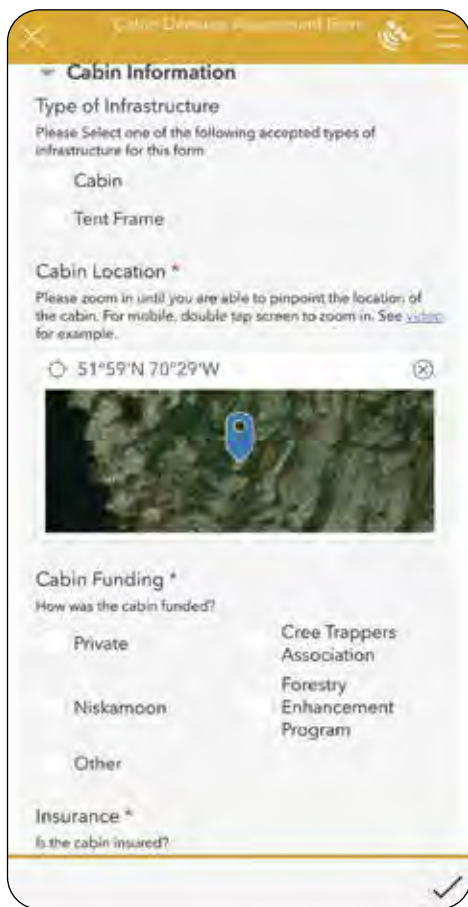
Mapping and Analytics

Every year, we conduct a range of mapping and analytics to support the files of this Department, other departments and Cree entities, and the Cree communities. In 2023-2024, for example, we provided mapping support to the Protected Areas Unit for a consultation tour with coastal communities on the feasibility of establishing a national marine conservation area in the Eeyou Marine Region. We developed a series of maps for this tour, including Cree Cultural Features, Cree Occupancy, Wildlife Hot Spots, Cree Geographic Place-names, and Travel Routes.



GIS Analyst, Maxine Mark-Stewart, and GIS Technician, Maverick Loon-Swallow, at the ESRI (GIS software company) user conference in San Diego, July 2023





Screenshot from the Cabin Damage app created in response to the 2023 forest fires

Web-GIS and App Development

Each year, we develop web-based solutions for a range of Department files. In 2023-2024, we supported the AMES Clean-up by developing GIS tools that allow for the validation of site locations, characterization of sites, tracking of cleanup progress for each site, and generation of automatic reports. And we developed a Cabin Damage Assessment Form and app to collect essential data following the Summer 2023 forest fires.

LAND USE PLANNING

The Department's Land Use Planning (LUP) Unit serves as Secretariat for both the Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) and the Land Use Planning Advisory Committee (LUPAC). We provide technical and strategic support to the Cree Nation Government, the EPC, and LUPAC in relation to the development of land use planning tools to guide development activities on the territory.

In 2023-2024, the Unit included Jessica Labrecque, our Manager of Land Use Planning, Sarah-Anne Brochu-Hébert (until December 2023) and Rosanna Wisden as Land Use Planners, Merlin Whiskeychan as Land Use Planning Officer, and Drew Hannan as Land Use GIS Analyst (until October 2023).

The EPC

Composed of Commissioners and Alternates from the Cree communities, the EPC works to develop a planning vision for Eeyou Istchee, to develop a land use plan for Category II lands, and to collaborate with other planning jurisdictions to ensure that land use in the territory reflects the collective vision and aspirations of the Crees.

The LUPAC

In March 2023, the Cree Nation Government established the Land Use Planning Advisory Committee (LUPAC) to provide high-level support for the EPC's objectives. Composed of the Deputy Grand Chief, the Deputy Executive Director, the Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations, the Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations, the Director of Forestry, our Director of Environment and Remedial Works, and a Negotiator (Richard Shecapio), the LUPAC facilitates strategic decision-making and coordination across departments in relation to planning files.

Quebec's Public Land Use Plans

In July 2023, Quebec submitted its Public Land Use Plans for Eeyou Istchee and Kativik to the Cree Nation Government for a six-month consultation period. The LUP Unit worked with legal counsel and LUPAC to develop Cree comments and proposed revisions. These were approved by Council/Board in December 2023 and submitted to Quebec in January 2024. We continue to work with the Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations to reach an agreement on the final content of the Plans.

Land Use Planning in Kativik

We represent the Cree Nation Government on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee for the development of the Kativik Master Plan and By-Law, north of the 55th parallel. This year, we worked with the Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations towards a constructive dialogue with the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), and with other Nations affected by the Plan and draft By-Law which the KRG is attempting to advance.

Land Use Planning in the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR)

The EPC Secretariat and the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (EMRPC) continue to work closely to harmonize land use planning processes across Eeyou Istchee's terrestrial and marine territories, as the implementation objectives in both the EMR Land Claims Agreement and Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement become clearer.

Entry and Access Permits

The LUP Unit administers the Cree Nation Government's Entry and Access Permitting Process for project proponents applying to work on offshore islands in the EMR. This process does not apply to Cree traditional activities, but only to research projects, development projects, etc. The permitting process allows opportunity for Cree governments to not only address legal issues but to ensure social acceptability by impacted Cree communities.



PROTECTED AREAS

The Department's Protected Areas (PA) Unit consists of Chantal Otter Tetreault, Protected Areas Manager; Robin Campbell, Conservation Program Officer; John Shecapio, Environmental Program Officer; Sarah Biron, Financial Program Officer; Allen Matoush, Cultural Conservation Officer; and Christopher Beck, Coordinator of Marine Conservation. We work with the Cree communities, Cree entities, federal and the provincial governments, and other partners to develop and implement protected areas and other conservation initiatives in the territory.

Sadly, in 2023-2024, several of our activities were carried out with difficulty due to the devastation of forest fires that delayed or cancelled community visits.

Terrestrial Protected Areas

This year, we were successful recipients of Canada's Indigenous-Led Area-Based Conservation funding to support our work on the PA network. We continued working with Quebec to obtain permanent, legal status for the 23 new Territories Reserved for the Purposes of a Protected Area (TRPPA) in Eeyou Istchee, as well as developing new proposals for conservation initiatives and new Cree models for PA management and operation.

A robust workplan will be carried out through 2026 with the communities, focused on the following objectives:

1. Assess community satisfaction with the process that led to the current definition of protected areas and its outcomes;
2. Support communities' proposals for PA boundaries based on their preliminary conservation objectives;
3. Collect potential management aspirations and modes of governance for each PA; and

4. Reevaluate past proposals and collect new proposals from communities for possible extensions of PAs or for other areas of conservation interest.



Top Photo: EPC Meeting in Montreal, November 2023

Bottom Photo: Robin Campbell, Chantal Tetreault, Isaac Voyageur, Anna Krupa and Eva-Maria Hanchar at the CNYC Youth Council Summit 2024



Marine Protected Areas

We are collaborating on the Feasibility Assessment for Winiipaakw National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA), with an expedited deadline of Summer 2025. In 2023, we developed a detailed workplan for carrying out proper and meaningful community engagements. As a first step, we held a workshop with coastal community delegates, Cree entities, and government representatives to aid in the workplan and determine how best to approach and collect concerns and statements from the communities.

With insight from this workshop, a first round of information sessions took place in February 2024. Within a week, representatives from the Cree Nation Government, the EMR Planning Commission, Canada, and Quebec travelled to Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi to discuss the creation of an NMCA in the Southern section of the EMR. We will soon return to the communities for more in-depth engagement sessions that will inform the completion of the Feasibility Assessment.

The Challenge Fund

We administer the Challenge Fund to support Cree communities and Cree entities in their projects to establish and manage PAs. Projects focus on one of three streams – Cree culture, water, and wildlife – and many are multi-year efforts. In 2023-2024, despite the forest fires and cancelled or postponed projects due to travel restrictions, we managed to support several local and regional projects.

- In May 2023, a drone training course, offered through the Canadian Drone Institute, was provided in Mistissini to nine Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers (EILKs) and staff from our PA and GIS Units. This technology holds significant promise for wildlife and natural resource monitoring in remote areas of Eeyou Istchee. Two participants completed the basic exam for certification; the remaining seven are still in progress.
- In Summer 2023, land users from Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou received training from Water First on water sampling, and Nemaska staff and land users received refresher training in lake water sampling.
- EILKs, along with the Department's Big Game Wildlife Biologist, Eliane Grant, and our PA Environmental Program



Keegan Smith, Water First, & training participants from Waswanipi & Ouje-Bougoumou

Officer, John Shecapio, led wildlife survey projects within PAs, including the deployment of Automatic Recording Units (ARUs) in Nibiischii National Park (Mistissini) to monitor breeding birds. Seven ARUs were deployed in May and retrieved in October. Due to forest fires, additional ARUs intended to record Yellow Rails were not deployed.

WILDLIFE

Our Wildlife Management and Conservation Unit ensures the implementation of the Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Regime established under Section 24 of the JBNQA, Part III of the EMR Land Claims Agreement, and other agreement provisions as they relate to wildlife in Eeyou Istchee. We provide support on wildlife matters to other Departments, Cree communities, and Cree entities, working to conserve healthy wildlife resources and to safeguard Cree rights and interests.

Led by our Wildlife Unit Coordinator, Maya Longpré-Croteau, our team includes Eliane Grant, Big Game Wildlife Biologist; Audrey Lauzon, Wildlife Biologist; and Jane Voyageur, Wildlife Technician. This year, we had further support from Clément Varoqui, Intern, and Michèle Labelle, Special Project Officer for the Sturgeon Project.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC)

The Wildlife Unit advises and supports the Cree members of the HFTCC, which reviews, manages and regulates the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping regime provided under Chapter 24 of the JBNQA. The HFTCC is comprised of representatives from the Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi nations and provincial and federal governments. Cree members include our Director of Environment, Isaac Voyageur; Nadia Saganash, Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations; and Norman Wapachee, the Deputy Grand Chief.

Key files addressed this year include the Outfitting Regime, the federal Fish and Fish Habitat Program, Migratory Caribou management (Leaf River and George River Herds); Woodland Caribou monitoring (Boreal population); and Moose monitoring and conservation in Zones 17 and 22.



Isabeau Pratte and Jane Voyageur sampling Lac Bienville for eDNA, May 2023



The Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board

Our Wildlife Unit Coordinator and Wildlife Biologist are observers on the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB), and we collaborate with the EMRWB on several projects and management files, such as coastal bird surveys and polar bear management.

Lake Sturgeon Management Plan

We completed the Cree-led Threat Management Plan for the conservation of Lake Sturgeon/ Nameu (ᓇᓄᓄ)/Nimaau (ᓄᓄᓄ) in the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement Territory in March 2024. This document represents a historic collaboration, the first of its kind developed under the federal Species at Risk Act.

Our Wildlife team led a third tour of workshops in the 9 Cree communities that are home to Nameu in Fall 2023. Feedback from tallymen and land users allowed us to prioritize the plan's measures in accordance with the most pressing challenges Nameu face in Eeyou Istchee. Workshops were also conducted in neighbouring Anishinaabe communities of Abitibiwinni, where Nameu is also present. The Cree-led Threat Management Plan will now be integrated into the federal management plan for the species.

Freshwater Seals at Lac Bienville eDNA Project

In May 2023, we assisted the Kativik Regional Government and Fisheries and Oceans Canada in a study of freshwater seals at Lac Bienville. Twelve water samples were collected to detect the presence of Freshwater Seals in the lake. Unfortunately, no positive detections were found in those samples. However, while returning to Umiujaq, our team saw two freshwater seals from the helicopter – so we landed and took additional water samples from that area.

While further testing is required to determine the status of Freshwater Seals in Lac Bienville, this was an uplifting experience. Encounters with wildlife affirm the importance of the work we do.

Ptarmigan Project

In partnership with the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA), we participated in Quebec's regional project on ptarmigans this year. Ptarmigans have a migratory cycle that brings them to the southern limit of their range (Eeyou Istchee/Lac Saint-Jean) every 8-12 years. This project seeks to enhance our understanding of the species in Eeyou Istchee by asking Cree hunters to contribute wing samples from their harvests for genetic testing. With wings collected by the local CTA offices, Quebec can identify the sex and age of harvested birds.

In March 2024, transmitters were deployed on five ptarmigans during a Cree-Quebec fieldwork session. Data gathered by these devices will help track ptarmigan migration routes and improve our knowledge of the origins of the populations that cyclically visit southern Eeyou Istchee.

Monitoring Wildlife through Bioacoustics

In May 2023, we deployed Automatic Recording Units north of Mistassini Lake as part of a Canadian Wildlife Service project on boreal birds. This work was done in partnership with the PA Unit and the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers. (See Challenge Fund, above.)



Willow Ptarmigan along the route du Nord, March 2024

In January 2024, we attended bioacoustics training provided by the EMR Wildlife Board to improve our understanding of this field, opening the door to new technologies that could greatly improve the quality and efficiency of our future wildlife surveys and studies.

Moose Management in Zone 17

In response to a 2021 aerial survey of hunting zone 17, which revealed a significant decline in the moose population, Quebec has closed the sports hunt in Zone 17, following the recommendation of the HFTCC. In collaboration with local and regional entities, the Cree Nation Government has developed Moose Hunting Guidelines that propose measures to reduce harvesting pressures on moose populations while respecting the allowable harvest limit set by the HFTCC.

Moose Habitat Under the Adapted Forestry Regime

The Cree Nation Government, the CTA, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Mistissini, Nemaska, and Waskaganish are working with McGill University and Quebec to assess moose habitat quality in Eeyou Istchee's Adapted Forestry Regime territory. As we near the end of this project, we are integrating many sources of information – including moose collar location data and Cree Knowledge – into an index of moose habitat suitability.

The project entered a new phase in 2024, focusing on collaring moose in or near burned areas. The 2023 forest fires are suspected to have impacted moose habitat quality significantly.

Caribou Management

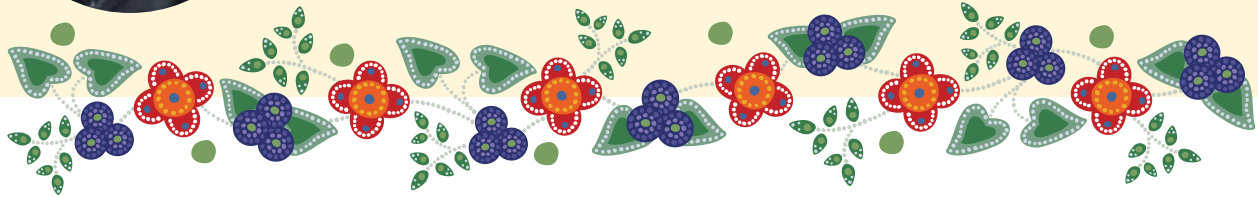
In June 2023, Quebec postponed publication of its Strategy on Boreal Caribou due to the unprecedented forest fire season. We hope for 2024 publication, as this long-awaited provincial strategy will inform our next actions.





CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

Message from the Interim Director **Martin Desgagné**



THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 WAS ANOTHER CHALLENGING YEAR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES DUE TO THE CONTINUAL INCREASE IN CONSTRUCTION COSTS, THE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS AND THE DELAYS IN THE SUPPLY OF MATERIALS. THE FOREST FIRES IN THE SUMMER OF 2023 ALSO CAUSED SOME DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING THE COMMUNITIES FOR THE CONTRACTORS AND THE DELIVERY OF SUPPLIES, WHICH RESULTED IN SOME EXTRA COSTS.

 **55**
EMPLOYEES

We also experienced the departure of the former Director of Capital Works and Services, John Longchap, and the former Assistant Director of Engineering Services, Guillaume Bédard, during the last quarter of the year, which resulted in extra duties for some of the management staff. We wish them good luck in their future endeavours.

This year, we will present the activities of the Department of Capital Works and Services first in terms of operational services and then in terms of advisory and project management services in the next few pages. The organizational chart shows the department's structure on the next page.

The operational services are those needed for the daily operations of the Cree Nation Government, and they are provided by the following sections:

1. Capital Assets & Procurements;
2. Capital Projects & Inspections Services, which involves new construction and renovations; and
3. Operations and Maintenance of the facilities (Regional Buildings and Regional Housing).

The advisory and project management services are those needed in support of the operations of the Cree communities and in support of the annual capital budget process for both Capital, and Housing projects and they are provided by the following sections:

4. Capital and Urban Planning;
5. Fire Protection Support Services;

6. Housing Support Services;
7. Project Management Services;
8. Waste Management Support Services; and
9. Water Support Services.

Lastly, CWS would like to thank all the Cree Local Administration staff that are involved with us for their excellent collaboration. Also, as interim director, I would like to take this opportunity to express all my gratitude and thanks to all the dedicated CWS staff that are involved in making a reality our mission statement.

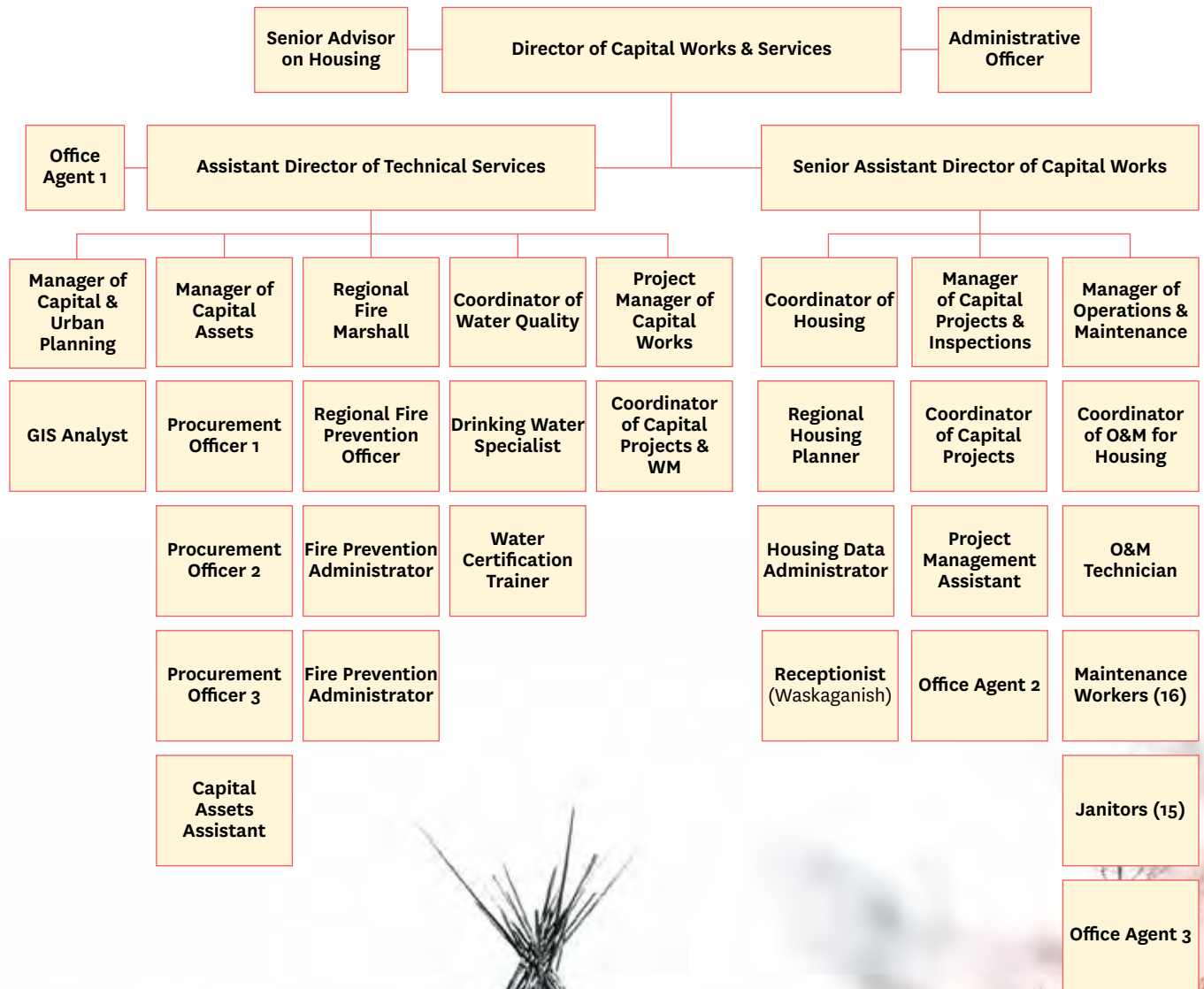
Martin Desgagné, P.Eng., M.B.A.
Interim Director of Capital Works and Services

OUR MISSION

Ensuring that the Eeyou/Eenou local and regional governments' infrastructure and related services enhance people's quality of life



DEPARTMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES



CAPITAL ASSETS AND PROCUREMENTS

The capital assets and procurement section tends to the procurement of goods and services and the management of the leases as per the processes explained below.

In terms of volume, the section posted 38 calls for tenders, and procurement for a value of \$57,500,000 and processed 10 leases .

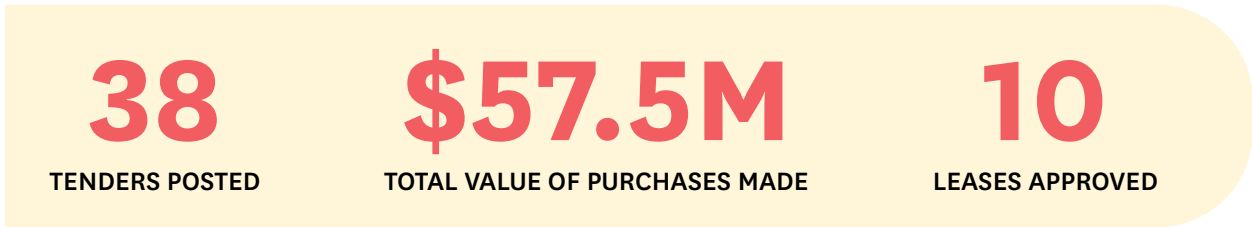


Figure 1. Percentage of purchases made per cost bracket

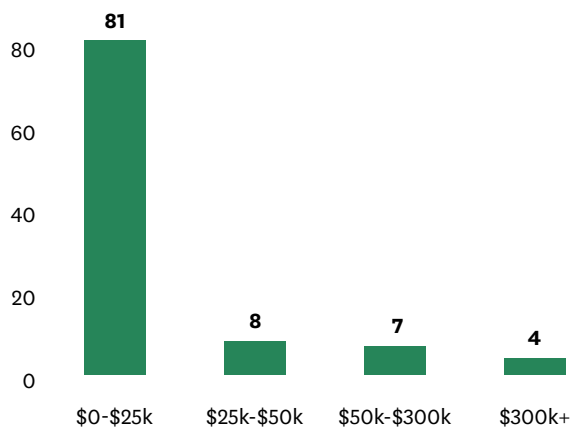
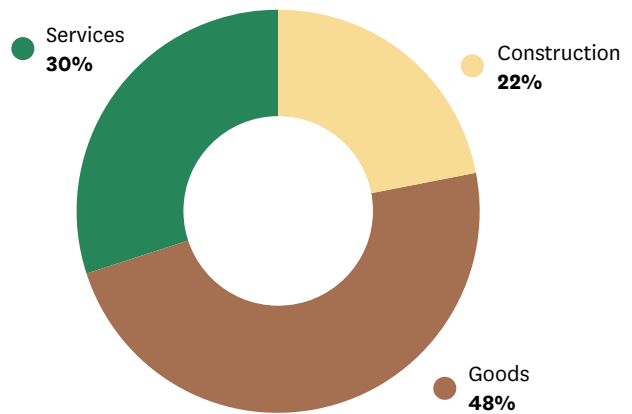
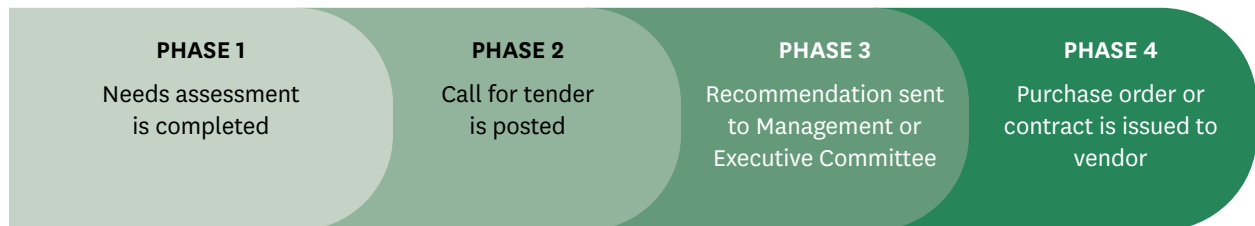


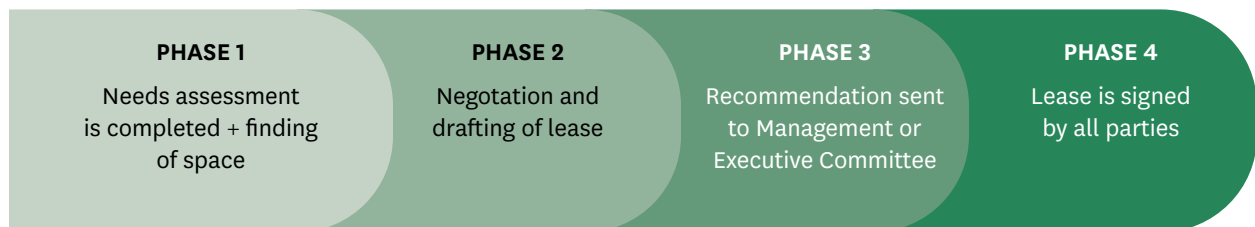
Figure 2. Types of purchases made



Procurement projects valued at \$50,000 or more follow the process below:



Renewal or signing of new property leases is carried out as follows:



CAPITAL PROJECTS AND INSPECTIONS SERVICES

The Capital Projects Team oversees construction activities for the Organization's regional capital assets. In 2023-2024, projects were executed for the Cree Nation Government's Departments, as listed in Table 1.

In addition to the projects listed below, the Capital Projects Team works with each Department assigning architects and engineers to develop projects with the goal of providing services for the Eeyou Istchee population according to each department's mandate.

Table 1. Regional Construction Activities

Serial no.	Project Description	Status (March 31, 2024)	Contractor
1.0 Department of Justice & Correctional Services			
1.1	Community Wellness Housing in Mistissini - Tiny Homes & Main Building	95%	KESI Construction
1.2	Community Wellness Housing in Waskaganish - Main Building - Completion of Tiny Homes	100% 10%	Construction de l'Avenir Wachiya Construction Inc.
1.3	Community Wellness Housing in Chisasibi - Civil Works - Tiny Homes & Main Building	95% 100%	Chee Bee Cree Construction JV VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
1.4	Community Wellness Housing in Waswanipi - Civil Works & Main Building - Purchase of Tiny Homes - Installation of Tiny Homes	90% 83% 0%	Construction de l'Avenir VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc. VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
1.5	Triplex in Mistissini	100%	Benac Construction
2.0 Forestry Department			
2.1	Administration Building in Waswanipi	95%	Construction de l'Avenir
2.2	Triplexes (2) in Waswanipi	79%	Waswanipi Eenuch Constructions
3.0 Apatisiwin Skills Development			
3.1	Training Center in Ouje-Bougoumou	95%	Eenou Eeyou Construction Inc.
4.0 Blais & Langlois inc.			
4.1	Nemaska Head Office Landscaping - Phase 1 - Phase 2	95% 51%	VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc. VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
4.2	Triplex in Mistissini	100%	Makaahiikan Construction Inc.
4.3	Duplex in Mistissini	100%	Makaahiikan Construction Inc.
4.4	Staff Housing Renovations in Nemaska	90%	Project Management Approach
4.5	Nemaska Head Office Renovations	95%	VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
5.0 Eeyou Eenou Police Force			
5.1	Triplex in Mistissini	100%	Makaahiikan Construction Inc.
5.2	Vehicle Impound in Waswanipi	100%	Naococane Construction
5.3	Detachment Expansion in Wemindji	95%	VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
5.4	New Detachment in Ouje-Bougoumou	53%	Construction Unibec Inc.
5.5	Duplex in Nemaska	62%	KESI Construction
5.6	Remediation of Detachment in Eastmain	90%	Wabannutao Construction
5.7	Radiocommunications Upgrade	74%	Bell Radio Division





Top Photo: Justice & Correctional Services Triplex in Mistissini
 Middle Photo: Apatisiwin Skills Development Training Centre in Ouje-Bougoumou
 Bottom Photos: Justice & Correctional Services Community Wellness Housing in Mistissini (2017-10)



Top Photo: Forestry Administration Building in Waswanipi
 Bottom Photo: New Tower in Wemindji for EEPF Radiocommunications



OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

As of March 31, 2024, CWS had to oversee the operations and the maintenance (O&M) of 22 regional public buildings (approx. 240,000 square feet), 1 warehouse, and 130 regional housing units (approx. 200,000 square feet) located in the Cree communities as per table 7. In order to carry out the O&M works, there is a team of 15 janitors, 16 maintenance workers (two acting as team leaders), 1 Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) Technician, 1 Coordinator of Operations and Maintenance to oversee the CNG Housing units, one office agent and 1 manager for Operations and Maintenance.

The types of operations and maintenance activities that are carried out by the Maintenance Workers can be classified in three major maintenance categories: preventive, corrective & predictive.

Since April 2016, the O&M team has been using a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) and has preventive maintenance templates for the buildings' equipment.

The existing Maintenance Internal software includes the following types of operations from CMMS and maintenance activities:

- Kompanion is an application linked with our CMMS database; this app is available on both Apple and Android mobile devices. As of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, all CNG maintenance staff now receive their preventive and corrective work orders through their mobile devices from our regional CMMS technician.

- Internal CMMS Software & Database – updated all equipment built into CNG Buildings and CNG Housing Equipment.
- Corrective work orders: 353 issued to regional CNG Maintenance in 2023-2024.
- Preventive work orders: 974 issued to regional CNG Maintenance in 2023-2024.

CWS' O&M staff also answered emergency maintenance calls for the 16 daycare centers located in the Cree communities. This is subsequent to an agreement established between the Cree Nation Government's Miyuuhpichinaasuwin Apatisiwin Department (formerly Child and Family Services) and CWS.

Here are some examples of activities carried out by the Maintenance workers:

- Transport – boxes from airport to their communities when asked or within CNG office building to storage areas.
- Fixing and replacing doors, windows, replacing light-bulbs, repairing or replacing appliances.
- Winter snow removal at entrances, summer landscaping.
- Inspect HVAC systems clean and replace filters.
- Assist with professional services such (HVAC) Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Electrician.
- Assisting when entities request help to move office furniture.

Janitorial services are provided by the janitors for general cleaning of buildings and keeping it maintained in good condition.

Housing Inspections

We conducted house inspections for all Cree Nation Government-owned housing units throughout the fiscal year, mostly during the summer and fall seasons. The inspections aim is to identify any deficiencies with the housing units and to correct any issues to prevent further deterioration. Once an inspection is completed, an Inspection Report is sent to the CMMS Technician, who then issues a work order for the work that is needed to repair the units. In addition, we keep in mind the employees who occupy these units by ensuring their safety and having comfortable living conditions.

Sheds for Housing Units

We built, in 2023-2024, a total of 42 sheds for Cree Nation Government housing units in six (6) communities with a supplementary budget. The budget for shed projects was spent entirely in the Cree communities with the material and contracting local carpenters or contractors to build the sheds.

Table 2. Assets under the responsibility of CWS for Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

	Number of Facilities
Regional Buildings	
Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) Office	1
Cree Nation Government Office in Waskaganish	1
Cree Nation Government Head Office in Nemaska	1
EEPF Detachments	9
EEPF Headquarter located in Chisasibi	1
Justice Facilities	8
Forestry building	1
Warehouse	1
Sub-Total	23
Housing Units	
Cree Nation Government Housing Units	60
EEPF Housing Units	70
Sub-Total	130
Total	153

Table 3. Number of Shed Constructions

Community	Number of sheds
Chisasibi	17
Wemindji	4
Waskaganish	11
Nemaska	8
Mistissini	1
Waswanipi	1
Total	42





Insulation and Interior Finishing of Eeyou Eenou Police Force Garages

EEPF Detachments of Chisasibi, Wemindji, and Nemaska had their garages insulated and interior finishing done so that they could be used year-round.

Collaboration with Human Resources

In collaboration with Human Resources and EEPF Material and Resources involved in housing units, a coordination group was created to work on the housing file for CNG-owned housing. Some activities worked on are as follows:

- Housing Unit Management.
- Review and update of Operational Process, Roles, and Responsibilities of HR and CWS.
- Inventory Checklist of Semi-Furnished and Fully Furnished Housing.
- House Inspections.
- Moving-In and Moving-Out Procedures.
- Developing housing policies.

The coordination team meets biweekly to follow up on housing issues. The team continues to work together to improve the overall Housing Management for all CNG units.

CAPITAL AND URBAN PLANNING ACTIVITIES

New Relationship Agreement Capital Plan

CWS continues to plan and monitor the capital projects to be carried out at the Local Administration level through

funding provided by the Canada-Cree New Relationship Agreement (NRA).

Specifically, CWS manages the administration and annual update of the NRA Capital Plan, incorporating projects from all nine communities. CWS ensures that technical standards are respected per project, prior to the recommendation of project funding. A total of \$117 M worth of projects for all nine communities was approved for 2023-2024 for projects relating to: Local Government Facilities, Essential Sanitation Services, Community Centers, Firehalls, Local Heavy Equipment and Housing, as per Figure 3.

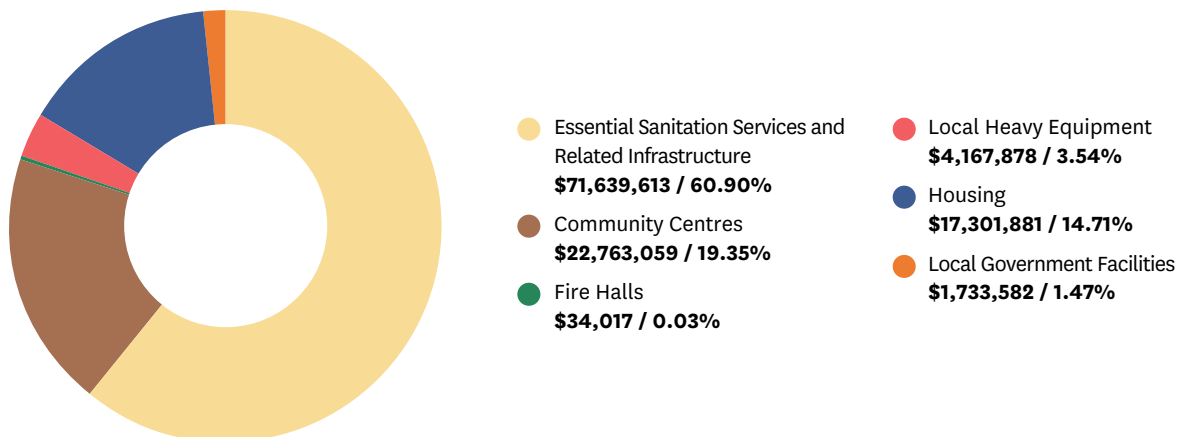
Project Reporting & Monitoring

CWS is responsible for maintaining an ongoing record of all capital projects realized with NRA funding. This involves keeping an inventory of supporting documentation for all projects funded through the NRA, including copies of contracts, proposals, cost estimates, as-built plans, final completion certificates, etc. The information collected will support the NRA renewal negotiations with an accurate and detailed account of how the NRA funds were used.

Lastly, CWS conducts a Fall Community Tour of all NRA-funded facilities and infrastructures each year. The purpose of the tour is to ensure the proper execution and maintenance of all capital projects.

A selection of pictures from the Fall 2023 Community Tour are included on the following pages.

Figure 3. NRA funding approved for 2023-2024, per program





Top Photo: Mistissini Housing Construction, 2023-09-14

Middle Photo: Chisasibi Infrastructure Site Visit, 2023-09-27

Bottom Photo: Whapmagoostui Solid Waste Site, 2023-09-26





*Top Photo: Wemindji Local Administration Office, 2023-09-25
Middle Photo: Waswanipi Swimming Pool, 2023-09-12
Bottom Photo: Waskaganish Tiny Homes' Site Visit, 2023-09-07*



FIRE PROTECTION SUPPORT SERVICES

The Fire Protection team, comprised of the Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention Officer, and Fire Protection Administrator, has been actively engaged in various projects throughout 2023-24. Their efforts have been particularly focused on supporting Cree communities, involving equipment procurement and comprehensive training for fire personnel. This is crucial for effective response to fires and emergencies.

Capital equipment acquisitions are facilitated through the Capital Works and Services procurement team. In the current fiscal year, significant purchases include a fire truck and a range of equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), fire hoses & nozzles, thermal imaging cameras, multi-gas detectors, firefighter bunker gear, and vehicle extrication equipment. These assets are instrumental in enabling fire departments to operate efficiently during emergency situations.

Training is equally vital for fire protection services, as modern fire departments are tasked with responding to a diverse range of incidents beyond traditional fires. This includes search and rescue operations, hazardous material incidents,

vehicle accidents, and medical emergencies. Collaboration between Capital Works and Services and fire departments ensures ongoing training tailored to local needs. Certification in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for various roles, along with professional development workshops for fire officers, underscores the commitment to maintaining high standards within the fire service.

In response to the large forest fires experienced by the Cree Nation in the summer of 2023, collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada and SOPFEU was essential to provide training in forest firefighting. This initiative aimed to equip the community with certified forest firefighters capable of extinguishing forest fires, and safeguarding lives and property.

The Cree Nation Government's dedication to fire protection initiatives and improvements underscores its commitment to community safety. Investment in fire stations, fire trucks, equipment, and training reflects a proactive approach to mitigate the risk of fire-related disasters and ensure timely emergency response. By prioritizing fire protection, the Cree Nation continues to safeguard its residents and vital infrastructure against the devastating impact of fires.

Top Left Photo: Firefighter Program - Coastal group vehicle extrication

Middle Left Photo: Inland Group - Vehicle extrication

Bottom Left Photo: Fire investigation training and 4 burn cubicles



Top Right Photo: Firefighting operations - Coastal Group

Middle Right Photo: Firefighting operations Inland group

Bottom Right Photo: Fire investigators in training



HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

The Capital Works and Services (CWS) housing provides support services to the Cree communities in housing programs. The housing team includes the Senior Housing Adviser, Coordinator of Housing, Regional Housing Planner, and Housing Administrator, who are working on the housing file by supporting all nine Cree communities in the Cree Nation. Housing is essential throughout the Cree Nation to help communities accommodate the needs of the growing population by providing adequate housing. The housing annual report will review the housing activities, housing achievements throughout the year, and photos of highlights during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Table 4 lists some of the main housing activities from the housing program and regional meetings.

The CWS housing achievements throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

- Regional Housing Radio show did its 100th episode;
- Complete its first Housing Community Tour;
- Held the 4th Cree Nation Housing Conference on October 3 to 5, 2023;
- It launched its first Social Media Campaign using platforms like Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and YouTube.

We thank you for your attention and forwarding to continuing working with the communities housing departments.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

For Capital Projects

Project management support continued to be provided to the Whapmagoostui First Nation for all projects approved for funding through the NRA since 2008-2009. Many projects were completed including: the construction of the northern development expansion, the construction of a storm drainage system, and the decommissioning of old water-related infrastructures. Works continued the construction of a new pool and youth center, the construction of a

new landfill, the paving of streets and the cadastral review. Several projects are at the planning stage: construction of a new cemetery, construction of a new ecocentre, construction of a charnel house and construction of a new drinking water well.

Additional support was also provided to the local capital works team for the 2023-2024 NRA funding applications.

For housing projects

The CWS team also provided management support by co-managing all new housing construction with the Whapmagoostui First Nation. In 2023-2024, two (2) new triplexes



Top Photo: Pool and Youth Centre Being Built in Whapmagoostui

Bottom Photo: Paving of streets in Whapmagoostui

Table 4. Housing Team Activities

File	Action	Details
Social and Rental Housing Program 1.3	Follow-ups	Follow up with the CMHC On-Reserve Non-profit Social Housing Program reporting requirements for the program.
Community Private Housing Initiative Program 1.3A	Implementation	The program has approved more than eighty-eight (88) subsidies so far.
Special Community Social Housing Program 1.3B	Implementation	We gather documents for the reporting requirement of CMHC co-investment funding, review community applications, and present them for approval.
Renovation and Inspection Services	Implementation	It provides support for the Urgent Housing Renovation files and coordinates inspections for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Physical Condition Review (PCR), and Insurance Claims.
Reaching Home Program	Follow- ups	We follow up with the Reaching Home Program, which builds additional living spaces in existing homes.
Regional Housing Radio show	Host by Regional Housing Planner	The housing radio show airs every month and has completed more than 100 episodes, and it is continuing.
Eeyou Miichuwaap Meeting	Quarterly meetings	The Eeyou Miichuwaap Meetings is a regional housing meeting with the Cree Nation Housing Directors.





Visit of the new landfill being built in Whapmagoostui

were constructed through funding received from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF). The planning and awarding of contracts for the construction of forty-eight (48) new social housing units was also accomplished. These units will be built over a two-year period.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Coordinator of Solid Waste provided support to the communities regarding funding opportunities for waste management projects, the implementation of Extended Producers Responsibilities (EPR) programs and other miscellaneous subject related to waste management. The coordinator continued discussions with the communities and with Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ) for the implementation of the collection of recyclables in the region and Association québécoise de récupération des contenants de boissons for the implementation of a refund/deposit system in the region.

WATER SUPPORT SERVICES

Regional Sampling Program and Local Water Testing

This year again, the Water Support Services (WSS) of the Cree Nation Government have promoted the regional sampling program and the local water testing. We supplied specialized laboratory analysis services and all the water-testing kits for onsite testing. The purpose of those activities is to allow the communities to track the water quality, promote safe drinking water and environmental protection.

Top Photo: Shane Shecapio from Mistissini coming out of the enclosed space simulator last January

Bottom Photo: Class room full of future water operator attending the OPA training in Vaudreuil last summer



Operators Trainings

During this fiscal year, three training courses have been conducted for water operators: the OPA certification program module I & II and the enclosed space training.

Water Advisories

This year, in collaboration with the Cree Health Board, we have put together a tabletop exercise to improve the water advisories responses. The purpose of this is to create a standardized communication tool kit. The activity was conducted in Nemaska, Waskaganish and Whapmagoostui. The remaining communities will be invited to participate over the next period.

Technical Support

Table 5 presents the main activities conducted by the water support service team.

Table 5. The main activities conducted by the water support service team

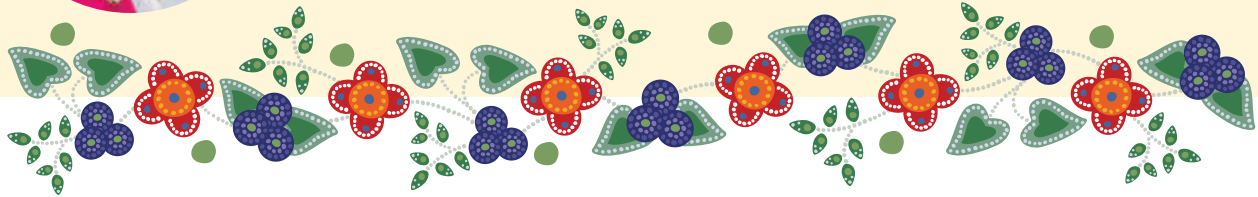
Community	Activity
Whapmagoostui	Electromechanical inspection and automation upgrades
Chisasibi	New water treatment plant construction (SNC-Lavalin)
Wemindji	Water treatment plant upgrades
Eastmain	Water supply committee with Hydro-Quebec
Waskaganish	Filter change at the water treatment plant
Nemaska	Server replacement (SNC-Lavalin), autosampler installation for Covid-19 detection
Ouje-Bougoumou	Autosampler installation for Covid-19 detection
Waswanipi	Gatineau's strategic planning session, autosampler for Covid-19 troubleshooting
Mistissini	Total coliform investigation (CIMA+) and network flushing





MIYUHPICHINAAUSUWIN APATISIIWIN

Message from the Director **Kelly Pepabano**



IT IS WITH GREAT PRIVILEGE THAT WE PRESENT THE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MIYUHPICHINAAUSUWIN APATISIIWIN DEPARTMENT OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT FOR THE YEAR 2023-2024.

 **16**
EMPLOYEES

We extend our heartfelt recognition and appreciation to all the dedicated childcare staff members who have committed themselves to improving childcare services. They are the foundation of our network and play a vital role in nurturing the development of our young children in Eeyou Istchee.

We would also like to acknowledge our regional and local partners in Eeyou Istchee and the province who have supported us in our mission to provide the best developmental opportunities for children aged 0 to 5.

In the face of the challenges posed by the forest fires, our department, alongside other key entities such as the CNG, CHB, Public Health, and various partners, prioritized safety of the children while delivering high-quality services to our clients. We collaborated closely with numerous organizations and individuals dedicated to supporting children in areas such as health, well-being, and education. Together, we worked diligently to safeguard the well-being of our communities and provide essential programs and support to children and their families.

Within our department, we not only provide essential childcare services, but we also oversee a range of programs aimed at supporting children and families. These programs are made possible through two specific agreements:

- An Agreement with Indigenous Service Canada for the Healthy Child Development initiative, which includes the Head Start, Maternal and Child Health, and Midwifery Programs.

- An agreement with the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program for the implementation for the First Nations Childcare Initiative (FNCCI) and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC).

Through these collaborative partnerships, we are able to offer comprehensive support and opportunities to foster the overall well-being and development of children and families.

Due to our capacity to effectively manage multiple programs at both the regional and local levels, our Cree childcare centres continue to offer a wide array of integrated services that go beyond what is typically found in most centres across Canada. These services include childcare programs, Head Start initiatives, specialized support for children with special needs, and comprehensive assistance for families. This holistic approach ensures that our centres can address the diverse needs of children and families in our communities.

We have strengthened our collaboration with the Maternal and Child Health program staff at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, aiming to foster positive cooperation between the two programs and avoid duplicating services provided to the communities. This collaboration has been successful, and we are confident in our progress toward working more harmoniously.

Lastly, we want to express our deep gratitude to our Cree leaders, whose unwavering support enables us to promote the development and well-being of Cree children and families across our territory. On behalf of all families in Eeyou Istchee, we extend our heartfelt acknowledgment and appreciation to them.

Chiniskuumidinaan mishtee.

Kelly Pepabano
Director of Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiiwin



MIYUUPHICHINAASUWIN APATISIIWIN PERSONNEL

Our department's head office, located in Mistissini, operates with a team of five full-time employees. However, our team extends far beyond our physical location, reflecting the widespread nature of our services. One employee is located in Waswanipi, three are based in Montreal, one is in Quebec City, and six operate from our Chisasibi office. This distribution allows us to have a presence and visibility in multiple communities throughout our territory, a fact we take immense pride in.

The Miyuuhpichinaasuwin Apatisiwin Department, under the governance of the Cree Nation Government (CNG), holds the responsibility of overseeing, managing, and administering the CNG's obligations outlined in the funding agreement with the Ministère de la Famille. Our primary role is to implement and supervise all Cree childcare services in Eeyou Istchee. This involves monitoring the quality of services offered in Cree childcare centres, ensuring compliance with relevant acts and regulations, and upholding the highest standards.

Our ultimate goal is to empower childcare centres and establish a strong network of leaders and professionals in childcare management through the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association. By providing support and guidance, we aim to facilitate the delivery of quality services that align with our Cree values, culture, and language, benefiting children and families alike.

As of the end of 2023-2024, over 450 Crees were employed in child and family service centres, predominantly in permanent full-time positions, with some serving as replacement educators. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of educators now possess college-level diplomas, representing a significant educational achievement.

Childcare centres and Head Start programs typically hire a director responsible for overall management, including human resources, finance, materials, administration, and services. Directors are supported by coordinators for each of our sixteen facilities, as well as administrative assistants. Each centre employs multiple educators, including resource educators (previously known as special needs educators) and, in some cases, home visit educators. Cooks and janitors are also part of the regular staff at all centres. Additionally, most centres have pedagogical counsellors and coordinators specifically designated for their Head Start programs.

OUR VISION

Ensuring a strong early childhood foundation to foster a stronger future in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee

OUR MISSION

We support and empower all early childhood programs in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee



IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR ACTION PLAN

Throughout the fiscal year 2023-2024, the Miyuuhpichinaasuwin Apatisiwin Department was engaged in a diverse range of activities including the following.

A. Programs and Agreements

Once again, this year, our department successfully allocated funds from various programs and agreements to local childcare centres, ensuring their continued operation and support. The implementation of these programs and agreements has proven to be instrumental in fostering economic vitality within our communities, injecting a total of twenty-eight million dollars in local services, facilitating renovation projects, and implementing training programs.

- The *Agreement concerning Childcare Centres, established between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec*, entrusts us with a range of crucial responsibilities. These include the renewal of permits for childcare centres, the implementation of our own budget regulations, conducting inspections, facilitating background checks for all staff and board members, addressing local and regional complaints, and offering technical and professional support to the centres.
- The *First Nation Childcare Initiative Program and Transformative Initiative* known as the “*Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC)*” is funded through an agreement between the Cree Nation Government (CNG) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)

The FNICCI program aims to enable local childcare centres to optimize the ratio of children to educators, resulting in an elevated level of service quality.

The IELCC program aims to provide support for projects that strive to enhance the quality of early learning and childcare by integrating Indigenous culture, language, and traditional practices.

- The *Cree Head Start, Maternal and Child Health, and Midwifery Programs* operate under an agreement between the Cree Nation Government (CNG) and Indigenous Service Canada as part of the Healthy Child Development Initiative.

The Head Start program is facilitated by dedicated educators who provide educational activities at childcare facilities or through home visits, catering to families whose children do not attend the centres. The program offers comprehensive support in various aspects of child development, including specialized services for children with special needs, engaging stimulation activities, parent-child playgroups, and more.

The Maternal and Child Health Program aims to provide health promotion services to children and families through the *À Mashkûpimâtsî Awash* program. The program focuses on enhancing the health and well-being of mothers and children, covering areas such as prenatal health, postnatal health, newborn care, nutrition, early literacy, learning, and more.

The Midwifery Program addresses various focal points, including prenatal health, postnatal health, newborn care, nutrition, early literacy, and learning, and aims to ensure

culturally sensitive access to a comprehensive range of prenatal, postnatal, and birthing services and supports.

The Maternal and Child Health and Midwifery Programs involves a collaboration between the CNG and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, strengthening their combined efforts to enhance the health and well-being of children and families within the Cree Nation.

B. Support to Childcare Centres in the Nine Cree Communities

- Throughout the 2023-2024 period, our commitment remained with the management teams overseeing nine established child and family services centres, as well as local boards of directors. We provided support to these boards in effectively supervising the operational aspects of their childcare programs and services.
- Our dedication persisted in providing technical and professional support to directors and staff members involved in childcare and Head Start programs. This supported a wide array of critical areas, including legal aspects, facility maintenance, procurement of materials, resource management, staff training, program development, promotion, overall centre coordination, and troubleshooting.
- In our commitment to staying updated and well-informed, we reviewed and collected childcare-related information from various reputable channels, including governmental entities, professionals, and relevant agencies. Subsequently, we distributed pertinent documents and information to the childcare centres, thereby empowering them with the latest resources and guidance.
- Recognizing the importance of efficient supervision, we proactively introduced innovative tools and systems aimed at enhancing the oversight capabilities of directors across all programs and services.
- Furthermore, our proactive approach extended to vigilant monitoring of the routine maintenance needs and essential services required for the optimal functioning of our sixteen childcare facilities.

Accessibility and Affordability of Child and Family Services

- By the conclusion of the fiscal year 2023-2024, a total of 1,208 subsidized childcare spaces were made accessible across the nine communities. Additionally, free spaces were allocated for children whose parents or guardians received social assistance benefits and/or were beneficiaries of the income security program. To cater to the needs of the community, each childcare centre also designated two spaces for children under the coverage of Youth Protection Services.
- Through the Head Start program, families who did not have their children attending the childcare centres on a regular basis also had the opportunity to access a range of valuable services. The Head Start program is specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income families and families with children who require specialized support due to special needs or circumstances.



C. College-Level Trainings

To promote the overall development of children and incorporate Cree heritage and culture into our programs, it is important for the Department to provide opportunities for training and development for staff members and individuals interested in pursuing a career in early childhood development.

Here is an overview of the measures taken in 2023-2024:

Training Programs

Each childcare centre is required to meet the provincial Act and Regulations ratios, which stipulate that two out of three educators working in childcare centres need to have completed college-level training programs. This ensures that our centres maintain high-quality standards in providing care and education. Furthermore, our sponsored training programs have resulted in numerous graduates finding employment within the Cree School and Health Board organizations, contributing to the growth of skilled professionals in our community.

During this fiscal year, we are currently conducting three training programs

Education in Childhood Services

In March 2023, twenty-five students from the Cree First Nation of Chisasibi and twenty-three students from the Cree Nation of Mistissini commenced their training. They are scheduled to complete their training in May, resulting in a total of 20 graduates from Chisasibi and 22 graduates from Mistissini.

Management in Childcare Centres

Currently, fourteen participants, which include three individuals from the MA Department, are undergoing training. Their anticipated completion will be in the fall of 2024.

The ENS, Special Needs, and Management training programs continue to be in high demand throughout Eeyou Istchee, reflecting the local needs for skilled educators, special needs professionals, and management-level personnel in the communities.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Apatisiwin Skills Development, the Cree Nation Government, and CEGEP de St-Félicien for their generous support in facilitating the delivery of these vital programs in Eeyou Istchee. We would also like to express our gratitude to the dedicated CEGEP instructors, whose significant contributions inspire not only their students but also all childcare workers to strive for professionalism and excellence.

D. Programs and Services Offered Under Our Department

Cree Educational Program

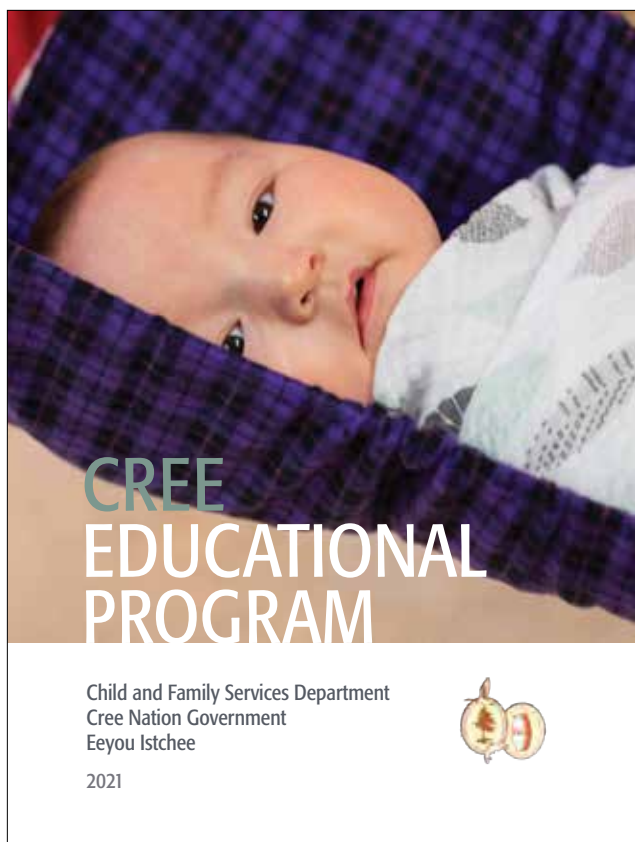
This year, once again, has been an exciting one for our educational program.

In August and October 2023, the MA Department welcomed two Pedagogical Officers into its team. They are responsible for providing professional and technical assistance to local Pedagogical Counsellors and Childcare Centre Coordinators. They are responsible for ensuring that the



Photo: Unsplash





best possible quality of services is provided to children and families in the Childcare Centres and that quality educational content is offered through the childcare centres and that each child in the centre have a completed educational file.

Our team providing continuous Cree Educational Program (CEP) Training to the pedagogical counsellors, special needs educators, Head Start workers, childcare coordinators, from all nine communities. Additionally, we extended our reach to the students enrolled in the Cegep de St-Felicien Managers' Program and new members of the MA department.

Our Pedagogical Advisor delivered the CEP training in certain communities throughout the year. In April 2023, training sessions were conducted in Waswanipi, followed by sessions in Mistissini in May 2023. Furthermore, we conducted two sessions in Ouje-Bougoumou in July 2023, underscoring our commitment to widespread implementation.

Subsequently, our focus shifted towards providing Childcare Centre Master Training to those who had completed the CEP training and subsequently trained their staff. Key communities where these master trainings took place included Waswanipi, Chisasibi, Mistissini, and Ouje.

In an effort to enrich playroom environments, the purchase of materials such Ora's Fireplaces which replicate the flickering glow of fire without emitting any heat, enhancing the atmosphere of warmth and comfort in all childcare centres. Other materials were purchased to replenish the play areas in childcare centres.

These materials have been thoughtfully crafted to align

with our Cree way of life, ensuring cultural relevance and appropriateness. Our aim is to enrich the lives of our children by fostering a deep connection to Cree values and nurturing their sense of pride and identity.

On November 20, 2023, World Children's Day, we actively took part in various activities that served as a reminder of the fundamental rights of children to be respected and to flourish in an environment that fosters their full potential. It is worth noting that World Children's Day aligns with Quebec's Early Childhood Week, and in the 2023-2024 period, we proudly celebrated our seventh consecutive year of active engagement in these important initiatives.

Our Pedagogical Advisor played a crucial role in providing essential support for the educational program implemented for educators across our childcare centres. Their expertise and guidance contributed significantly to the professional growth and development of our dedicated staff.

IELCC program funding

Community and Childcare-Based Project Funding

Under the IELCC funding, various projects were supported to enhance the services provided by childcare centres and also other entities. These initiatives included:

- Allocation of salary funding for a Pedagogical Support position in all sixteen facilities.
- Harassment training in Chisasibi.
- Cree culture activities and Nurturing program in Waskaganish.



These projects exemplify our commitment to promoting a safe and inclusive work environment, enhancing pedagogical support, providing access to literature and educational resources, facilitating smooth transitions for children, promoting well-being and cultural preservation, and fostering positive parenting practices.

Head Start Program

Our Regional Head Start Advisor has been involved in a variety of projects this year and is taking the leadership in the implementation of the Nurturing Colleges program, which is gradually being rolled out to all communities.

Our Advisor has been working extremely hard on the second phase of the Nurturing Program, which will be ready in the summer/fall of 2024.

The nurturing program has undergone significant development and expansion. It has been divided into three age categories, namely infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, to cater to the specific needs of each group.

The nurturing program aims to build essential skills in parents to advocate for their children effectively. By equipping parents with the necessary tools and knowledge, the program ensures that families can actively participate in their children's development and well-being.

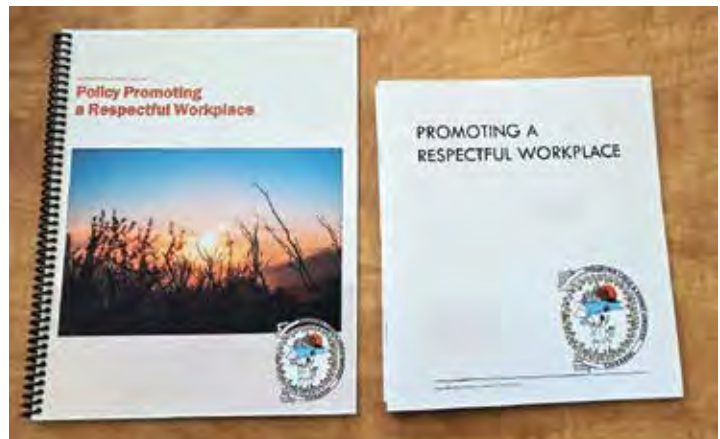
Special Needs Program

Our Special Needs Advisor was very busy this year with her visits to the childcare centres to provide support to all Special Needs Educators and Shadows. She has also facilitated workshops and specialized training for SNEs and Shadows.

One important change was renaming our Special Needs Educators (SNE) to Resource Educators (RE) due to the enduring stigma associated with the term 'Special Needs.' Additionally, our services extend beyond children with specific diagnoses; we provide additional support not only to the children but also to the playroom educators. We are striving to emphasize and foster the integration of children of all needs into the playroom setting. Therefore, we aim to shift the focus of the resource educators from the individual child to the playroom as a whole, supporting educators in adapting their approach to play to foster the development of every child within the playroom setting."

A Mindfulness training program was conducted for the SNEs and Shadows. This training imparted essential techniques and strategies aimed at enhancing personal well-being and cultivating a mindful approach to daily life. Participants gained valuable tools to navigate their experiences with increased awareness and presence. It also helped the staff by guiding them through a problem-solving process to identify the root cause of various challenges that may arise during intervention sessions. These challenges may include but are not limited to a child's disinterest in an activity, behavioural difficulties, a child's inability to achieve the intervention goal, a lack of materials to target the intervention goal, and coordinating multiple goals.

Our Special Needs and Head Start Advisors took the initiative to develop calming kits. These kits are designed to provide individuals with visual aids and sensory tools that aid in managing and coping with emotions in a positive and safe manner. Participants had the opportunity to receive



their own calming kits and learn effective techniques for utilizing them.

Our Advisor continued her involvement in the Kate Sharl Foundation, which aims to raise funds to financially support children with special needs in achieving opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach, because of their levels of need and the high cost of specialized equipment.

Maternal and Child Health Program

In partnership with the Cree Health Board, the Maternal and Child Health Program allows us to participate in the delivery of health promotion services to children and families through the Â Mashkûpimâtsit Awash program.

Since 2021, our ongoing collaboration with the Youth Councils has persisted as we have allocated funds again for Goose Break Bundles for young families. The program's remarkable success has garnered widespread appreciation, particularly from parents, highlighting its significance. The primary aim of this endeavour is to promote and assist families in engaging with the outdoors and traditional lands.

The Maamuu committee is continuing to develop a dedicated website aimed at consolidating essential resources for early childhood in a single, accessible platform. By bringing together these resources, the website will serve as a valuable resource for parents, caregivers, and professionals, supporting their efforts in nurturing and fostering the well-being of young children.

Financial Administration and Bookkeeping

Throughout the year, our regional finance team provided consistent support to all administrative employees overseeing the financial administration of childcare centres. Team members dedicated numerous hours to preparing the financial statements required for the year-end audits. Their commitment and attention to detail ensured accurate and comprehensive financial reporting, reinforcing transparency and accountability within the childcare centres' financial operations.

In February 2024, the directors of the childcare centres and our regional finance team came together in Montreal for an annual budget planning and IT training session. This collaborative effort involved most of the nine directors and focused on preparing the yearly budgets for the childcare centres, alongside providing instruction on Microsoft Teams and transitioning to new email addresses.

Last summer, forest fires presented some obstacles for our finance team in conducting their community visits. However, as soon as conditions allowed, the teams resumed their visits.

Maintenance of our Facilities

Throughout the 2023-2024 period, we maintained a strong partnership with the Department of Capital Works and Services. This ensured ongoing assistance for the maintenance and repair of our sixteen childcare facilities. In addition, we commenced the installation of new play modules and playground work in Wemindji and Chisasibi, which will be completed in the summer of 2024. Furthermore, the extension project for the childcare Centre in Nemaska was initiated and is expected to be finished in October 2024.

We are grateful for the dedicated support and assistance provided by the CWS maintenance personnel in addressing these maintenance needs and upholding the quality of our childcare centres. Their commitment to ensuring a safe and well-maintained environment for our children is greatly appreciated.

Inspection of our Facilities

Before her retirement in September 2023, our former Inspection Officer diligently reviewed the operations and facilities of our Child and Family Services Centres in Ouje, Waswanipi, and Waskaganish. Although not all inspections were completed during 2023-2024, she provided valuable recommendations for changes and improvements as necessary. Additionally, she diligently followed up on all inspections conducted throughout the fiscal year, ensuring that appropriate actions were taken based on the findings.

In October, we welcomed a new inspection officer who began training immediately upon joining our team.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Shirley Diamond for the invaluable years of service dedicated to our department. Her commitment and contributions have made a lasting impact, and we are profoundly grateful for her dedication and hard work throughout the years. We wish her all the happiness and fulfillment in this new chapter of her life.

E. Department Activities 2023-2024

Community tour - Childcare Centre Evaluation

To advance our vision and mission, we acknowledged the necessity of gathering insights from childcare centre staff, service users, and community members. Our objective is to foster collaborative efforts aimed at nurturing a resilient future for Eeyou/Eenou Istchees. In 2023, our department embarked on a tour of the 9 Cree communities, visiting longstanding childcare centres that symbolize enduring presence.

Initially, we considered outsourcing the evaluation to an external firm. However, it became apparent that they lacked a comprehensive understanding of our specific requirements. Consequently, we opted to conduct the evaluation internally. As part of our efforts, we organized engagement sessions with staff and community members, including recognition dinners for the dedicated staff and Board of Directors of the childcare centres, demonstrating our commitment to acknowledging their hard work. We also sought feedback from parents, community members, and staff regarding potential changes or their vision for the centre in the coming decade, as well as ways we can offer support.

After concluding our community tour in the fall of 2024, we will gather all our observations and consolidate them into a report, which will also include our recommendations.

Department training with Concordia

Our department embarked on a tailored continuing education program designed specifically to meet our needs. Concordia University crafted a professional curriculum focused on enhancing our leadership abilities, human resources management, administrative skills, team building and other relevant skills. This comprehensive training spans over two years and is anticipated to be completed in March 2025.





Harlem Children's Zone

Several years ago, some of our team members took part in a transformative journey with the Cree Board of Health & Social Services of James Bay through a partnership tour of the Harlem Children's Zone. This experience left a lasting mark on the policies and programs that we have since implemented in Eeyou Istchee.

Recognizing the potential benefits for our entire department, in April 2023, the MA department embarked on 3-day visit of the Harlem Children's Zone in Harlem, NY.

The Harlem Children's Zone in Harlem, NY, has three innovative early childhood programs for children from 0 to 5 years of age. Their services were originally created to combat poverty within their neighbourhood community, to ensure that every child had full access to supportive services that would enable them to reach their full potential, regardless of their home situation. They adopted a "Whatever It Takes" mission in how they provide support, and it breaks down the barriers that prevent partners from being able to support a holistic vision to ensure every child has the needed support to be able to succeed in life, despite any challenges they may be facing in their personal home life.

F. Liaison

- We planned and coordinated regional meetings throughout the year with members of the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association. The Association represents a means for local Child and Family Services Centres to cooperate on issues of common interest, including the renewal of the collective agreement in two unionized childcare centres.
- We offered technical assistance to the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association to support their operations.
- We served as a bridge between other First Nations organizations, addressing childcare matters and ensuring coordinated and well-informed actions.
- We maintained collaborative relationships and fostered partnerships with the Cree Nation Government, local Cree Nation Administration offices, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, Community Miyupimaatisiun Centres, the Cree School Board, local schools, as well as Provincial and Federal Governments. These partnerships aimed to deliver inclusive, holistic, and adaptable childcare programs for Cree children, including those with special needs.



Harlem Children's Zone



OUR NETWORK OF SERVICES, 2023-2024



Photo: Katherine Dehm



Cree Nation Government
Miyuuhpichinaasuwin
Apatisiwin Department

Cree Child and Family Services Association
composed of all 9 Child and Family Services Directors

Waaseskun Child and Family Services Centre
Waskaganish

She She Guin Childcare Centre
Nemaska

Awaash Shiishikunkamik Childcare Centre
Waswanipi

Waspshooyan Childcare Centre
Ouje-Bougoumou

Awash Child and Family Service Centre
Mistissini

2 facilities
80 children in each

1 facility
63 children

2 facilities
70 children in each

1 facility
70 children

3 facilities
80 children in each

Head Start Program

Head Start Program
Band operated

Head Start Program

Head Start Program

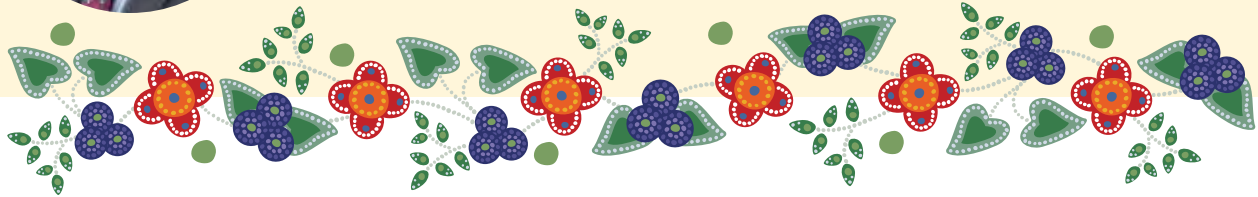
Head Start Program





JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Message from the Director **Donald Nicholls, B.A., LL.B, B.C.L, LL.M**



THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IS PLEASED TO PRESENT TO THE CREE NATION AN OVERVIEW ON THE 2023-2024 FINANCIAL YEAR. AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE REPORT LOOKS AT PERSONNEL, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LAW AND THE ADVOCACY OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS.

 **78**
EMPLOYEES

Our section of the annual report shows figures and information on justice related activities in the Cree Nation, and highlights some key events. Our department strives to honour and follow the theme of this year's annual report - safeguarding our ways and values as we move forward in building our institution and services. For additional information regarding our Department and activities, you are always welcome to visit one of the local justice facilities or offices.

In the past year, there have been new trainings for our personnel to acquire new skills in order to provide enhanced services to our adult and youth clientele. Some of these trainings address topics such as project and time management, emotional health, conflict resolution, effective communication, and traditional approaches to working with clientele on healing. The Department staff has established good partnerships with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree School Board, Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD), and local governments.

A good example of collaboration is our Cree CICR Program. We first developed this program over 13 years ago, and since then, over 200 people have graduated with a four-week program on conflict resolution skills. There have also been over 100 Cree School Board graduates of our week-long Cree CICR Managers Program on managing conflict and conflict resolution. Nicole Charron, Vivianne Snowboy and Vivianne Sheshamush delivered CICR workshops at the Cree Women's Leadership Conference in March 2024, and Nicole Charron and Celina Jimikin delivered workshops to 200 Indigenous women leaders in Quebec City as well in the past year.

We continued to deliver various other programs involving clients in the Cree communities throughout the year. The Cree Reintegration, Education and Employment (C.R.E.E.) program with ASD works by engaging with clients coming out of detention to provide counseling and job placements to help create stability and value to reduce recidivism. The traditional food program brings Elders into detention facilities to cook traditional meals with Cree inmates and to spend time speaking with them of Cree values and the steps forward. The Stop Now and Plan (SNAP®) Program works at the Elementary School level throughout the Cree Nation to provide life skills for children to help deal with anxiety, anger, apathy and other emotions to make their problems smaller instead of bigger. Skills hopefully that they will use their entire life. The Youth Enrichment Services (YES) program works with youth to provide support and meets with teachers and parents.

Besides the programs that the Department regularly delivers, the personnel and Justice Committees work closely to develop programs for clients. The majority of the programs involve Cree Elders, and are delivered in the Cree language. An important part of programming is to ensure that Cree values are integrated, and to link clients to traditional activities and culture. Many of the programs are done on the land, and can be with those coming from detention, diverted from the courts, recommended by the Community Justice Committees, victims and family members, youth and children. Depending on needs, and the staff involved, programs seek to promote environments that enable change and support positive steps forward.

The Community Justice Committees are comprised of volunteers from the local communities and provide an alternative to the justice system for certain local and less serious cases. The Committees may take on cases and work with individuals at the community level. We thank all the members of these Committees for their work.

We also provided two bootcamps this year to train new members and refresher training for existing members. The programming designed by local Justice Committees



included canoe trips in the summer, Goose Break hunting excursions, or sewing, beading, and woodworking workshops. By providing clients a chance to re-experience their land and culture, we inspire hope and connection that helps build resilience.

In terms of facilities, we have continued in the past year to build Tiny Home Communities for transitional housing and to help with homelessness as well. There will be Tiny Home Communities opening in Mistissini, Waskaganish and Waswanipi in the present year. In 2025, there will be a Tiny Home Community in Chisasibi that will open as well. These facilities are designed to allow people to have personal space during times when transformation is occurring in their lives. It would be similar to halfway houses, where people can adjust to moving back into the community and taking some additional support programs. To provide that safe and open environment for change, the clients will need to sign an agreement and undertake to follow rules that respect others and the community itself.

With the IT Department, we have been testing new video conferencing equipment in the Cree Justice Facilities. In 2025, the Quebec Government will change the system whereby video-conference hearings can be hosted. So, the Department must prepare and invest in new technology. New equipment has been ordered to be tested, and it will require a good scheduling of the remaining facilities throughout the fall and winter to ensure that video-conference hearings are available to people in the Cree communities. This type of service reduces hardships of travel and costs for families, enabling a more timely and local option to use.

The Department faced the loss of a beautiful Justice Facility in the Cree community of Whapmagoostui in November. While the Director and two managers went there immediately to meet with staff and the local government to look at next steps, people were still feeling the loss. However, we are reminded that justice and all the wonderful programming to come from that facility came from the people not a building. We were fortunate that no one was hurt, and the Department was immediately looking at options to rebuild the facility. While the physical building is not there, our people continue to work towards helping and serving the people of the community.

Some of the most significant developments in law are related to the National Action Plan that the Government of Canada must prepare, in consultation and cooperation with

Indigenous Peoples, under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Canada continues to work towards the process for affirming and implementing in Canada the Indigenous rights set out in the UN Declaration. It is commendable that Canada is the first country to adopt an Action Plan. British-Columbia and the Northwest Territories have taken concrete steps towards ensuring that their laws are consistent with the UN Declaration. The Quebec National Assembly has called upon the Quebec government to recognize and implement the UN Declaration in Quebec, but there are no plans yet to put in place a law like in British-Columbia or the Northwest Territories. However, the Supreme Court of Canada stated in a unanimous decision in March that the UN Declaration is now part of Canada's "domestic positive law", meaning that current and future laws and regulations must now comply with the rights of Indigenous Peoples as set out in the UN Declaration.

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) had their regular session in July 2023, where the Cree Nation Government hosted a side event panel on the implementation of the UN Declaration with the Attorney General of British-Columbia and their Secretariat. In February, the Cree Nation Government participated in a special seminar of EMRIP in Vancouver on Indigenous Peoples' right to traditional economies, sustainable development, and food security in an age of climate change.

In April, the Cree Nation Government attended the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and hosted a side event with the Grand Chief and other Quebec Indigenous leaders discussing how governments should collaborate with Indigenous Peoples. It was an incredible show of how Indigenous nations in Quebec can work together, and are willing to work collaboratively with provincial and federal governments on issues impacting Indigenous Peoples.

We would like to thank all our partners, and especially our Cree-Quebec Judicial Advisory Committee, for their commitment to the important work and planning of the Department. Flora Blacksmith finished her two-year term as Chair of the Committee, and we appreciate her work. Alain Bellefeuille from the Quebec Ministry of Justice started his two-year term as Chair of the Committee. We look forward to working with Alain, and the Committee throughout the next year.

We look forward in 2024-2025 to growing our overall services in the Cree Nation and continuing to connect with, respond to, and inspire healthy strong communities.



Donald Nicholls with Minister of Justice David Lametti at the Launch of the National Action Plan on the Declaration June 21, 2023 in Ottawa.



Donald Nicholls with Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April 2024.



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OUR PEOPLE

Our employees are the core component of our service delivery and programming, from accompanying individuals through the court and detention process, to supporting healing and prevention in our communities. This year, we welcomed five new employees. As always, we continue to invest in our people as we believe this enhances the contribution they bring to the department and the value they bring to the communities.

Our **DEPARTMENT EMPLOYS**

81

STAFF MEMBERS throughout all of our facilities and offices

THEY JOIN US WITH EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE IN:

correctional services criminology law youth programming media and communications



youth protection finance administration
policing justice services psychology social work

This year, our staff undertook a wide range of **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES** to further **BUILD CAPACITY** and to **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICE** to Eeyou Istchee:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | 2
Dialogue for Life Conference | 3
Holistic Wellness Meditation | 4
Learning Effective Communication |
| 5
Customer Service Training | 6
Project Management Training | 7
Trauma-Informed Practices with Youth and their Families | 8
Non-violent Communication |
| 9
In-House Cybersecurity Training - Online | 10
Cree Board of Health and Social Services Women's Healing Gathering | 11
Microsoft Office Suite Training with CNG IT Department | 12
Cree Language Training |
| 13
CDI Institute SNAP Refresher, team building & resource development | 14
Gladue Report Writing | 15
Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute Mental Health Counselling Skills Certification Online | 16
CICR |





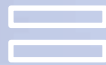


PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Prevention forms a core component of our commitment to community wellness and recovery. The bonds we forge with our clients are integral to tailoring our initiatives to align with their unique needs and abilities. Early engagement with youth is essential to foster their progression and maturation. Similarly, our interactions with adults emphasize the importance of self-reflection and thoughtful consideration in making informed choices. Our primary objective is to enhance the safety and well-being of our communities.



The Department believes in **HEALTHY LIFESTYLES** that reflect **CREE VALUES**



PROMOTE WELLBEING



REDUCE ADDICTIONS



DECREASE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

To support these goals, our **PROGRAMMING STAFF ENGAGE PEOPLE** of all ages in



WORKSHOPS



ACTIVITIES



EXPERIENCES



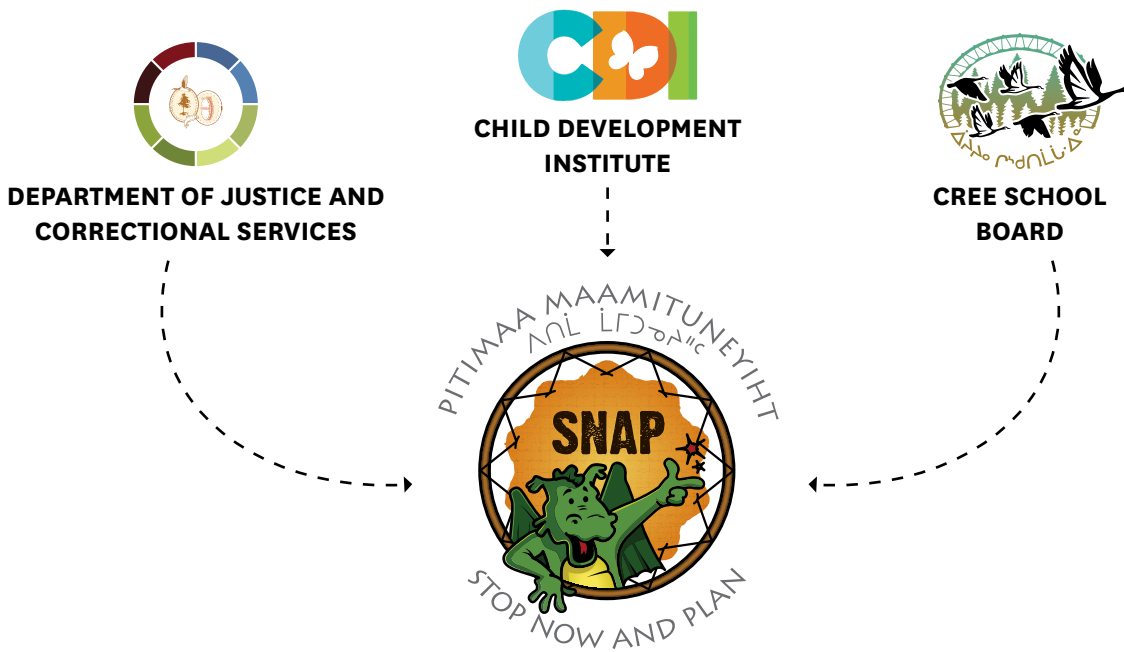


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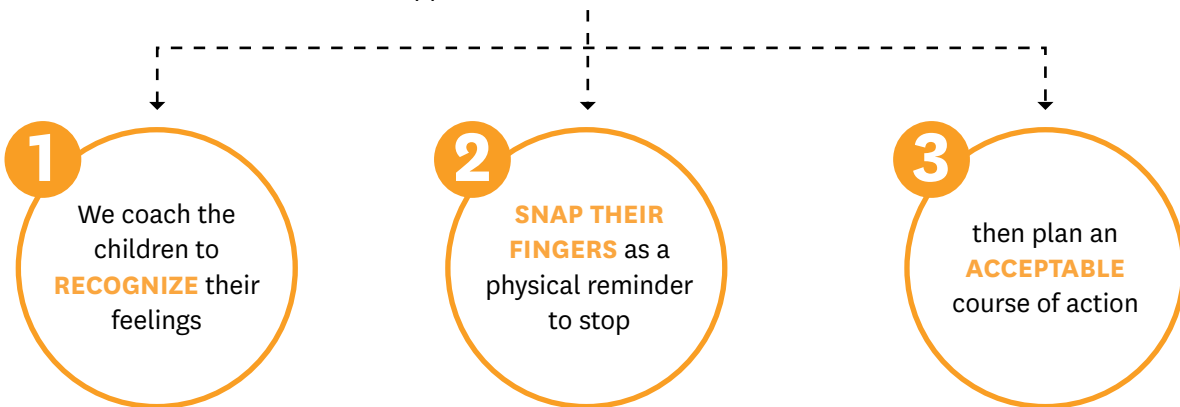
CREE SNAP®

Since 2011, the Stop Now And Plan® program has helped coach children ages 6-11 to manage their emotions by pausing, identifying the emotion, and planning the response. This program is an active outreach to children in their formative years, with the goals of imparting them with unique strategies to better manage their wide range of emotions. Childhood is often a time when emotions such as fear, anger, frustration, and anxiety can become overwhelming. Through our program, we seek to equip young people with coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills that can be used throughout their lives. These are skills all children and parents should have.

THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, we are bringing together expertise and resources to develop a comprehensive and impactful program.



Our approach is **SIMPLE** but **EFFECTIVE**.



This simple gesture primes them for the **LARGER, MORE COMPLEX CHALLENGES** they may encounter in their future.

THIS YEAR we worked with

1,886

STUDENTS

OUR STAFF also offered

2,959

CLASSROOM SESSIONS

ALSO COMPLETING a total of

Grades 1 through 6



In all 9 Communities



20

1-1 SESSIONS

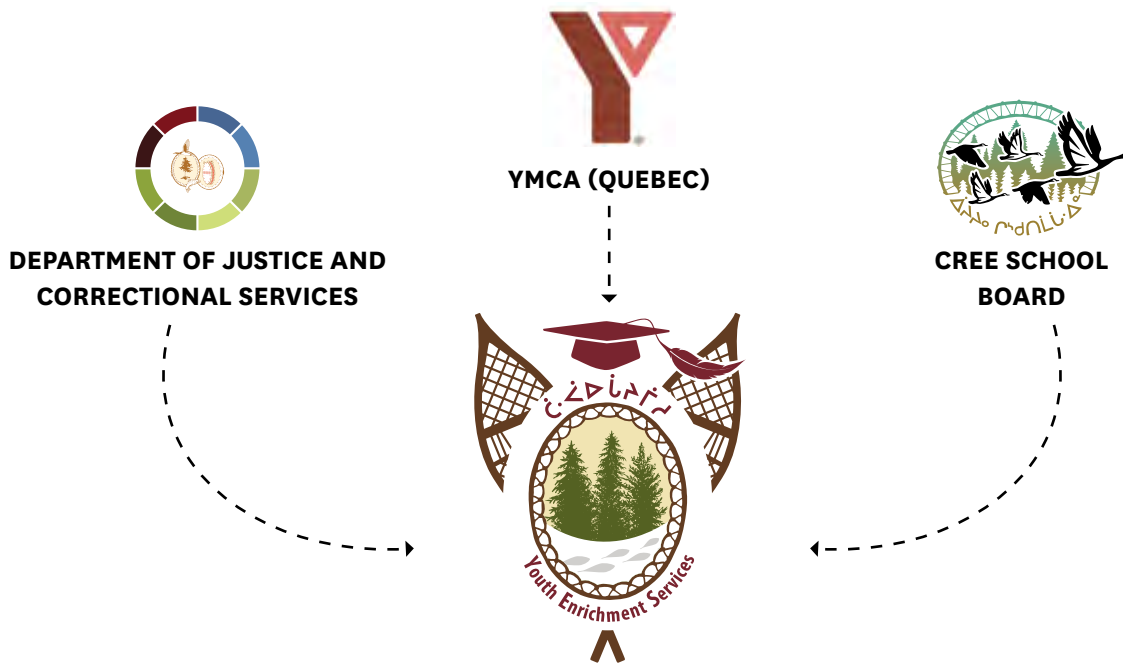


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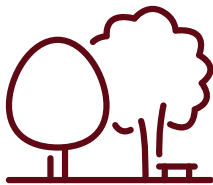
YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) is a program in which students are given support when teachers or parents identify issues in the classroom. Since its inception in the Cree Nation in 2017, the program has expanded to include programming at Youth Healing Services, as well as workshops-on-demand in the schools. YES programming is as diverse as the unique needs of each community we service. Our team uses the principles of CICR training to identify the underlying needs of individuals and support them.

Youth Enrichment Services is a **COLLABORATION** with:



Our service involves **WORKING WITH STUDENTS** away from the classroom to:



SET BALANCE



SET GOALS



**REGULATE
EMOTIONS**



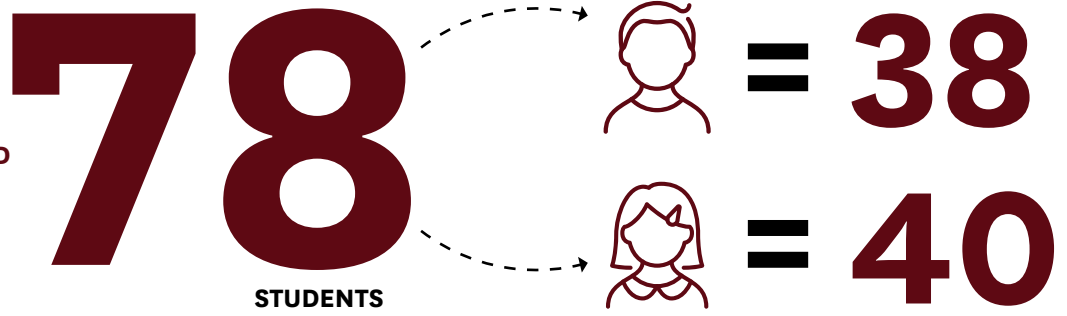
**OFFER
WORKSHOPS**



Before completion of our YES program, the student meets **WITH THE PARENT, THE SCHOOL STAFF, AND OUR YOUTH WORKER** to ensure goals have been met.



In 2023-2024
YES SUPPORTED
a total of



SOME OF THE REASONS for referrals were:

21



**DISRUPTIVE
BEHAVIOUR**

12



**SUBSTANCE
USE**

10



**LACK OF
MOTIVATION**

9



ABSENTEEISM

6

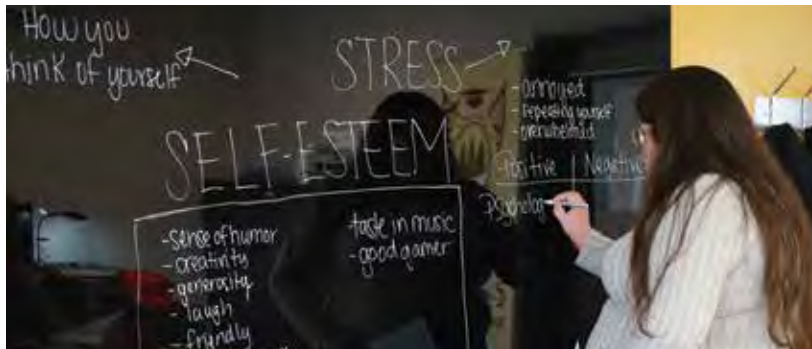


**VERBAL
ABUSE**

5



**PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE**



This year, we opened a new site in Oujé-Bougoumou, after a request from Waapihtiwewan School administrators.



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EMPLOYEE PROGRAMMING

Our staff are involved in their community, and so we continue to support them in their outreach effort through our employee initiative funds. This widely popular program permits any employee of the department to plan, coordinate and deliver a program that supports the mission of Cree Justice and connects to their work duties.

THIS YEAR we funded

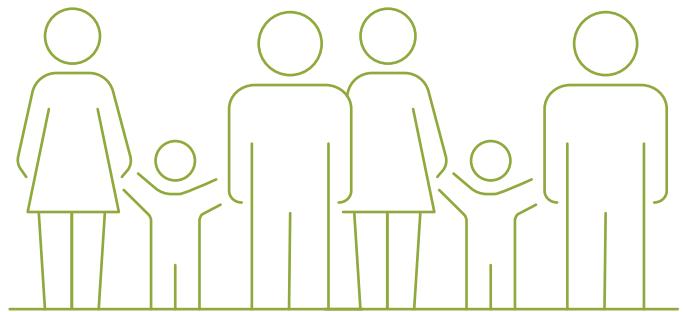
19



PROJECTS

Reaching a TOTAL OF

797



COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

OUR STAFF developed programs such as:



HEALING PROGRAM



FAMILY SLIDING



ICE FISHING



TRADITIONAL MEDICINE



HIGH SCHOOL LUNCHEON



SUMMER CAMP



BUDGETING WORKSHOP



FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

THE NEXT PAGES are programs that we are highlighting with images that we captured during the project.



BUSH PROGRAM
OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU

In October, a group of youth from Oujé-Bougoumou had the chance to spend four three-day weekends in the bush learning Cree culture and traditional skills. The connection to land and culture brings values and gives participants a lifelong connection to our land which can help them heal.





**RIBBON SKIRT MAKING
WHAPMAGOOSTUI**

A summer workshop provided youth in Whapmagoostui the privilege of learning from Natasia Mukash the art and skill of ribbon-skirt making. Learning traditional skills helps individuals connect with their Cree identity, and the pride in themselves and trust built creates bonds between community members.



**PUMPKIN-CARVING CONTEST
CHISASIBI**

34 participants representing 10 families in Chisasibi took part in the pumpkin-carving contest at the courthouse, bringing together families and building healthy communications. Parent engagement with children is an important part of supporting and building healthy relationships.



**ICE FISHING
MISTISSINI**

Parents and their children learned together about the Cree tradition of setting a fishnet beneath the ice on the south side of Mistissini Lake during a three-day hands-on workshop in February 2024. Learning about the land and how it provides a sustainable traditional economy helps to prepare our youth for a prosperous future in the Nation.





**NATIONAL ADDICTIONS
AWARENESS WEEK
WEMINDJI**

There was lots of positive feedback following our community collaboration for National Addictions Awareness Week 2024. Information sessions on the effects of drugs, alcohol, gambling, and other addictions helped to inform the community while our staff provided respite and programming, and parents attended workshops.



**FIRST AID
OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU &
MISTISSINI**

Ensuring clients and the public are empowered to act in the case of emergency is a necessary skill, especially with the amount of time we spend on the land. Clients in our correctional services unit from various communities took our department's sponsored First Aid Training this year. With new skills, it also makes our clients more employable.



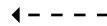
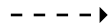
Δᐱᐳᐱ CICR

CREE CICR

Our signature Cree CICR program continues to provide significant skills to members of the Cree Nation. The unique approach, adapted to honour Cree values and traditions, provides hands-on, practical training in conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, mediation, group facilitation, and other peacebuilding activities. The entire program is rooted in the restoration of dignity and trust, and a greater understanding of why people behave the way they do by appreciating their underlying human identity needs.

The **CREE CICR TRAINING PROGRAM** is a collaboration between

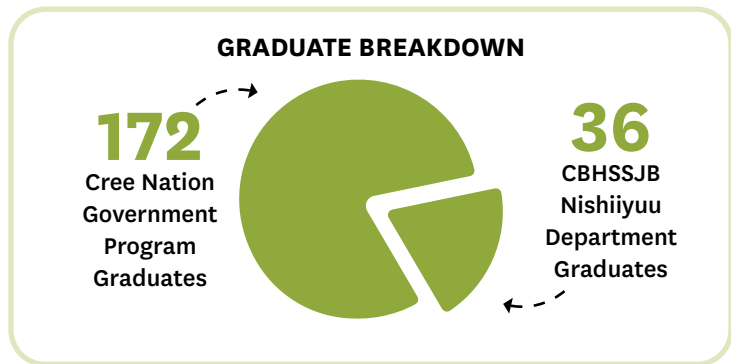
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES



CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Since its inception in 2011, the Cree CICR program **FULL FOUR-WEEK PROGRAM** has trained

208
INDIVIDUALS



FROM OUR MANAGERS ONE-WEEK PROGRAM WE HAVE HAD

=

130

Cree School Board Leaders and HR Professionals

+

13

Employment Councillors from Apatisiwin

“This experience will undoubtedly inspire and enrich you, leaving you with unforgettable memories and a newfound appreciation for life.” **Chelsea Petawabano**

“It made me see different perspectives on conflicts and not just the tip of the iceberg. It made me want to understand the conflicts differently rather than just reacting.” **Davina Cooper**

“My experience with CICR was incredibly eye opening. The tools I’ve learned and the knowledge I absorbed has helped me in my position as well as in my personal life.” **Jenna-Lee Pepabano**



**CICR SESSIONS WITH
GROUP 13
MARCH 2024**

Our CICR Elder Roderick Pachano looks on and provides wisdom to the conflict resolution training.



**1ST INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
MONTREAL**

Nicole Charron, Viviane Snowboy, and Vivianne Sheshamush facilitated a CICR-based learning session, called, The Peace Medicine of a Leader, at the 1st Indigenous Women's Leadership Conference in Montreal.

**FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU
QUÉBEC
QUEBEC CITY**

Celina Jimikin joined Nicole Charron at the Femmes autochtones du Québec in Quebec City to deliver an in-depth learning opportunity on consensus-building in the context of economic and social development based upon Cree CICR principles.



APPLYING TO THE FUNDS



STEP 1

Request an **APPLICATION** form at your local community Justice facility or online.

STEP 2

Complete the entire application in **AS MUCH DETAIL** as possible, and then return the form to the Justice facility for review.

STEP 3

We will review your application **INTERNALLY**, we might also reach out to you if we have questions or need further clarifications about your application.

STEP 4

The Cree-Québec Judicial Advisory Sub-Committee recommends the project to the **CREE NATION GOVERNMENT** who decides whether or not to approve the application.

IF
APPROVED,
YOUR
PROJECT
BEGINS






A dashed arrow points from the end of the text in Step 4 towards this blue circular icon.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is one of the most concerning activities within our Nation. It affects women, men, and children. Domestic or conjugal violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, and familial. In 2023-24, we provided close assistance to a number of clients who experienced domestic violence and we continue to build partnerships with the Eeyou Eenou Police Force to ensure all victims of crime, including those who experience or witness domestic violence, are referred to our services. According to Statistics Canada, it is estimated that 63% of Canadian Indigenous women experience domestic violence.

WHAT DOES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LOOK LIKE?*

	PHYSICAL	----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing • Shoving • Hitting • Throwing objects at someone
	SEXUAL	----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted touching • Forcing someone to humiliate themselves
	EMOTIONAL	----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats • Bullying • Hurting pets • Constant yelling or criticism
	FINANCIAL	----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withholding someone's money • Pressuring someone to sign documents or change a will
	NEGLECT	----->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to prevent physical harm • Not providing proper food, clothing, health care

*www.justice.gc.ca

When any of these types of violence happen between two or more people **LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSE**, it is considered **"DOMESTIC VIOLENCE."**

This year, **WE GATHERED REPRESENTATIVES** from other Cree entities to discuss domestic violence.

THE GOAL OF THIS WORKING GROUP is to reduce domestic violence and its impacts in the nation through a collective holistic collaboration with local entities that integrates victims and perpetrators using new and existing services, projects, and programs. By ensuring a safe space for dialogue about domestic violence, we begin the process of addressing the roots of this form of violence.

The working group, **COMPRISED OF 14 MEMBERS**, meets quarterly.



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY 2023

Every June, the Nation marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Our department joins with other local entities to promote awareness on ways we can support and protect our Elders. As an example, on June 15, 2023, we and other local entities hosted a community feast of goose, potatoes, and salad at Rupert's Hall in Waskaganish. Well over 115 Elders attended the feast or received a take-out feast.



Looking after our Women and Girls in Eeyou Itchee

Women play an important and sacred role in our communities. They are mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters, daughters, granddaughters, cousins and neighbours. We must protect them from violence and harm. The greater the wellbeing of women, the greater the wellbeing of our Nation.

Cree CAVAC
If you or a loved one has been victim of domestic violence reach out to us

Contact our main CAVAC office
Toll Free: 1 (877) 342-2822

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

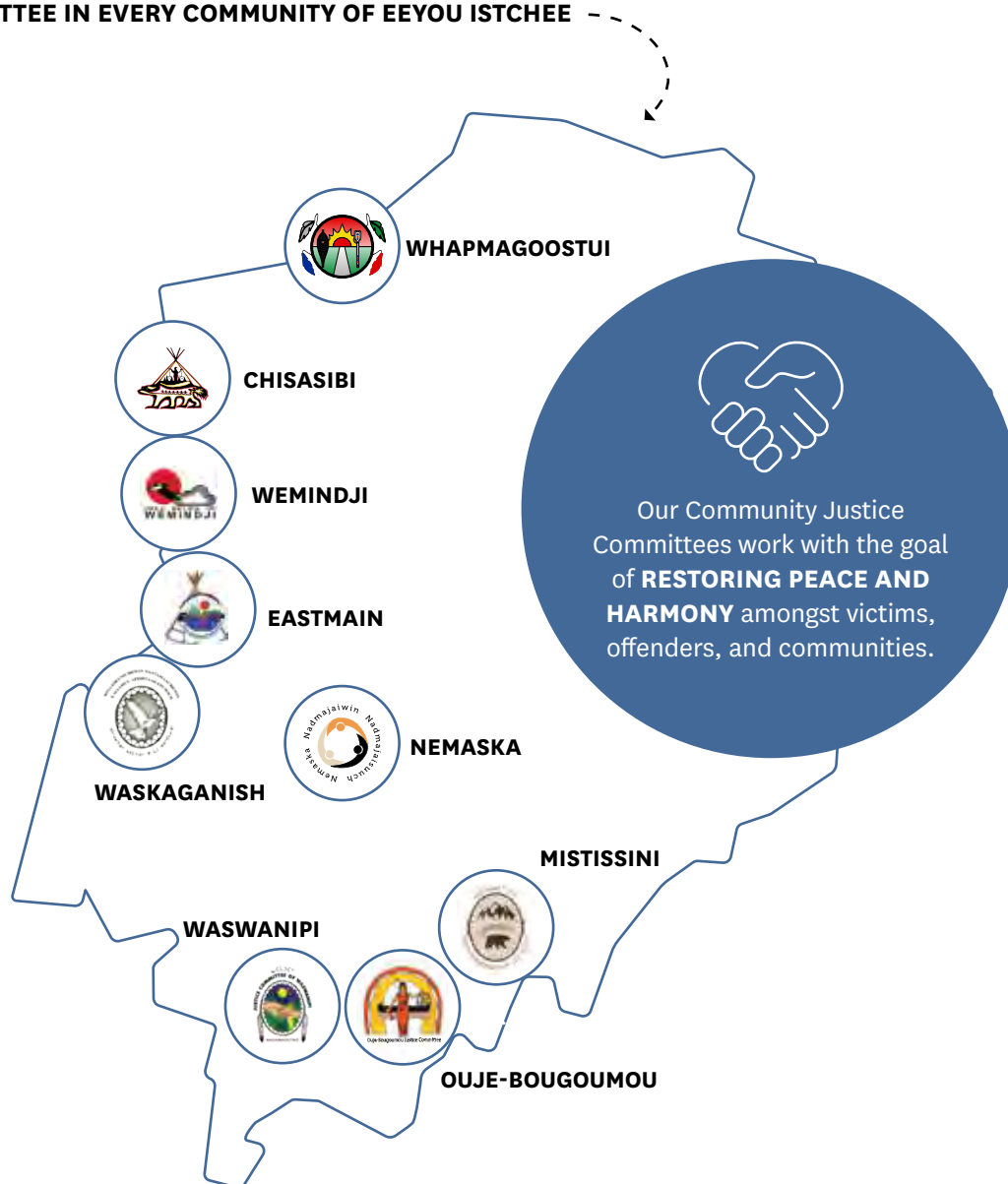
Women play an important and sacred role in our communities. We must create environments where women and girls are free from violence and harm. Each year, we mark the World Health Organization's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. We believe that by working together, we can end gender-based violence.



JUSTICE SERVICES

Our department provides support and services for any individual who comes in contact with the justice system. These services range from translation, referrals, court diversion, court accompaniment, and support for victims of crime. Historically, the court system has not treated Indigenous Peoples fairly, or as being equal before the law. The services offered address the inequities of a system that, under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, is obligated to take into account Cree ways and understandings, including the Cree language so that all concepts and processes are understood more clearly. Community Justice Officers work with the courts and members of the community that they serve to realize these rights.

A COMMITTEE IN EVERY COMMUNITY OF EEOU ISTCHEE



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COURT STATISTICS

The Cree Nation Government hosts each year the itinerant court services through its Justice Facilities located in the Cree communities. These facilities were built by the Cree Nation Government, which also operates them.

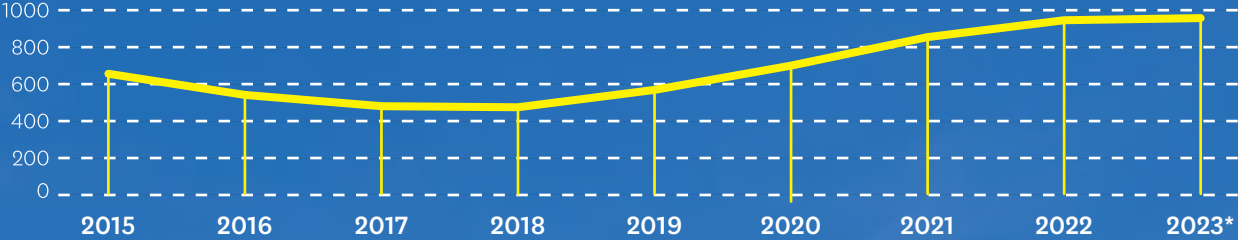
The types of courts that we can host include the Court of Québec, which can hear cases from the Criminal and Penal Division, Civil Division, Youth Division and Small Claims; it can also hold special sessions for Cree First Nation laws. The Superior Court of Québec can also sit and hear cases in the Cree communities, as can other tribunals. As mentioned last year, we are working towards adding Cree courts to this list.

Each year, we review the statistics of court cases for the whole Cree Nation to see the level of activity. These statistics are compiled and provided to us by the Ministry of Justice of Québec (MJQ). This year, the statistics presented in the report show the number of cases opened for Youth Criminal Justice. We also present the “active cases” for criminal offences, as well as for Cree First Nation laws and federal statutory offences. These “active cases” include the “opened cases” and provide an idea of the volume of cases dealt with by the court during the year.

MJQ has recently changed the way it compiles and provides court statistics. For example, Cree laws and federal statutory offences have now been grouped together and there is no longer a manual review of each file performed by the clerk’s office. For these reasons, the reader may find discrepancies between the yearly statistics reported in previous annual reports and the statistics shown in this year’s report. However, we can still see the trends in the type of activity and numbers with the new reporting system applied over an 8 year period.

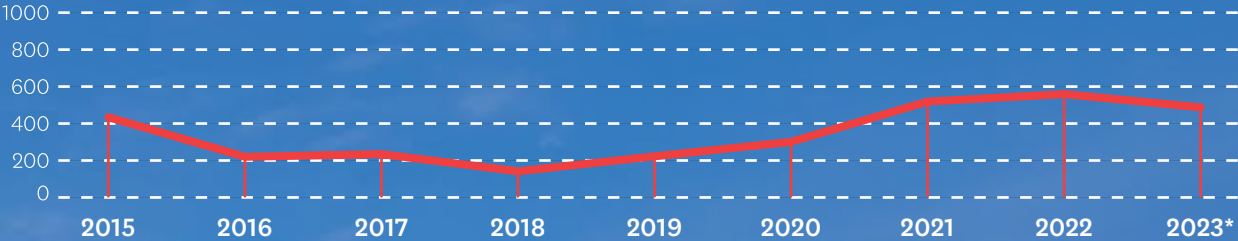


ACTIVE CASES - CRIMINAL OFFENCES



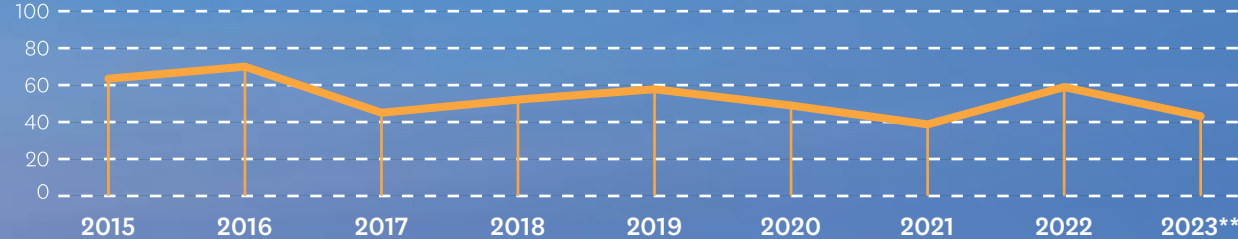
*The data for 2023 is partial and preliminary as of April 30, 2024.

ACTIVE CASES - CREE LAWS AND FEDERAL STATUTORY OFFENCES



*The data for 2023 is partial and preliminary as of April 30, 2024.

CASES OPENED - YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE*



*These yearly statistics cannot be provided by community as the address of the family or the youth person involved are not available without consulting the file manually. They do not include the cases from Whapmagoostui given that those are recorded in a separate office of the court (Hudson Bay circuit) which also includes the cases from seven Inuit communities.

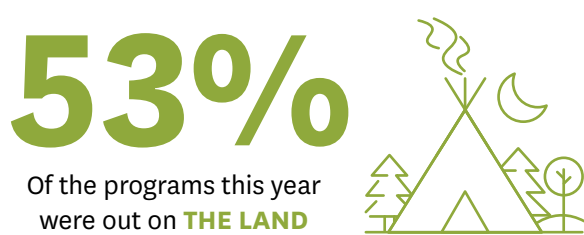
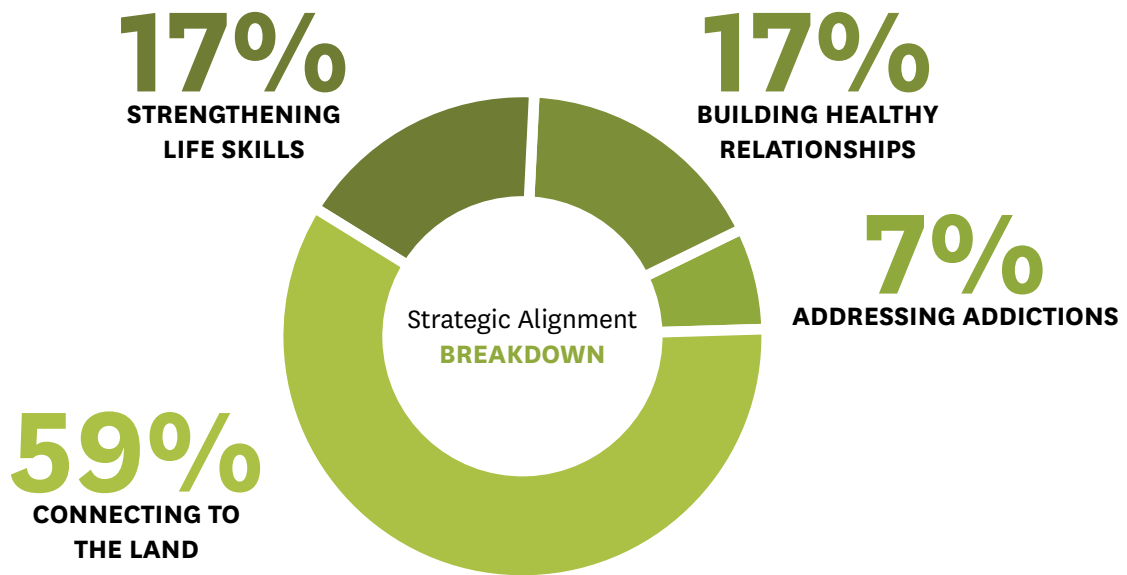
**The data for 2023 is partial and preliminary as of February 23, 2024.



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CJC PROGRAMMING

Supporting clients and communities at large, our Community Justice Committees are responsible for much of the land-based programming offered in the Nation. These programs are offered to clients of the department after they have come into contact with the justice system. They may also be offered to individuals who are in at-risk categories. The goal is to reduce harmful activities through inspiring value in Cree-based identity and programming. Some programs address specific needs identified to help people learn traditional skills, or to better cope with difficulties they may face in their lives.



**CARIBOU-HIDE PREPARATION
WHAPMAGOOSTUI**

Learning the traditional skills of preparing caribou hide helps to connect individuals to their Cree identity while also providing them with a relevant life skill and a support group. In Whapmagoostui, 14 individuals prepared 10 hides for tanning during a CJC program.



“
I joined because I wanted to reduce my addiction and to break my fear of being around too many people. I'm so proud of myself to have continued to show up. I can say, I know how to skin a caribou hide now.”

“
This workshop was full of teachings that I find relate more than just tanning a hide. The patience, teamwork, and observation skills that I have built can be applied to so many other facets of my life.”



**BUILDING HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS
WASKAGANISH**

Several local entities collaborated to offer a week-long conference focused on building healthy relationships. Initiatives like this bring a community together to address issues of domestic violence.





**WOMEN'S RETREAT
WHAPMAGOOSTUI**

Women often comment that they can benefit from connecting with other women, sharing stories, struggles, and solutions. Our women's retreat in Whapmagoostui provides this opportunity while also reconnecting participants with the land and traditional activities, and supporting one another.



“ Good positive energy all around. It helps me physically, mentally & emotionally!! I am forever thankful to experience everything that we did on this trip. **”**





CARIBOU HUNTING NEMASKA

Our programming helped to revive and preserve the traditional knowledge associated with ptarmigan and caribou hunting for youth in Nemaska. The journey on the land was to take them to a healing place and engage participants in activities that connected them to their traditions and values.



SNOWSHOE WALK
WEMINDJI

A lifelong healing journey begins with one step. In Wemindji, up to 15 participants had the opportunity to take part in a traditional winter survival trek on snowshoes. Some of the activities they took part in included ice-fishing, waupsh snaring, storytelling, and weather-reading.





CHISHANOOCHIMI BUSH PROGRAM
CHISASIBI

The connection between youth and Elders is about learning who you are and listening to the wisdom of those who came before you. The land can heal and the relationships you build in programs such as this one on the land in Chisasibi can support you through difficult times.

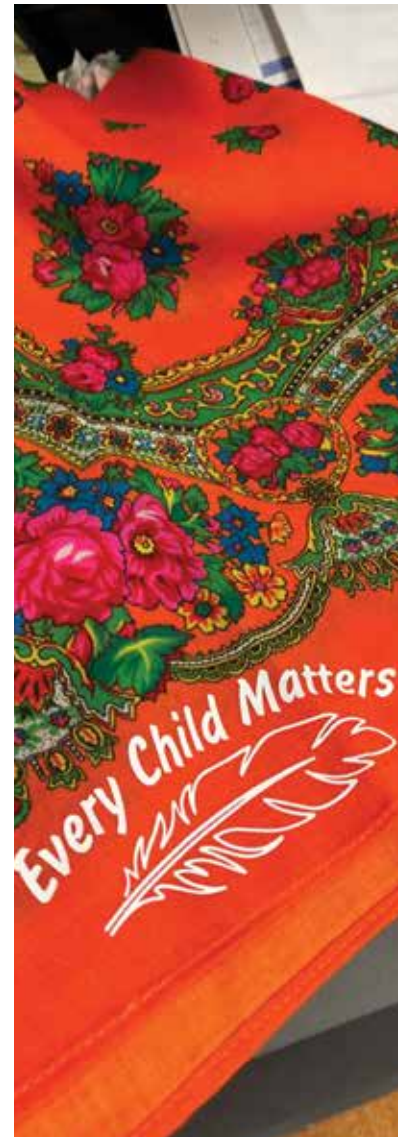


“
I am just happy to be out here, away from the community, away from alcohol and drugs, makes me think about my life.”



**TRUTH & RECONCILIATION DAY
VARIOUS COMMUNITIES**

September 30th is about honouring and acknowledging our past. It is to remember those who endured hardship and those who did not return. It allows us to heal, reconcile, and teach others of the core values and rights all people have, including Indigenous Peoples. The orange not only signifies a story but it draws attention to the significance of the history and issue.



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GLADUE WRITING

The Department continues to support efforts to consider alternative sanctions for individuals who come in contact with the criminal justice system. Gladue reports, following on the 1999 Supreme Court of Canada ruling *R. v. Gladue*, are an effort to draw attention to the unique historical backgrounds of Indigenous offenders and present alternatives to prison.



- 1 SECTION 18 OF THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT**, dealing specifically with the Administration of Justice in the Cree communities, established the reference for all judicial practice.
- Gladue Reports are crucial to fulfilling the spirit and intent of **SECTION 18 JBNQA**, as they ensure that the unique circumstances of Cree offenders are considered when decisions are made concerning sentencing.
- This section ensures that justice is administered in the Cree communities **BY CREE INDIVIDUALS** to the greatest extent possible, and that rules of practice are adapted to the unique **CREE CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE**.

KEY ELEMENTS OF GLADUE REPORTS

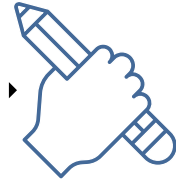
-  **GLADUE REPORTS** have been used to highlight the **SYSTEMIC FACTORS** that may be responsible for an individual's involvement with the criminal justice system.
-  Unlike the typical pre-sentence report, Gladue Reports are written after several **EXTENSIVE MEETINGS WITH A CLIENT**.
-  They play an important role in **ADDRESSING OVER-REPRESENTATION** of Indigenous peoples within the justice system.
-  They do this by providing judges with information that **CONTEXTUALIZES THE OFFENSE**, and **RECOMMENDATIONS** to existing community programs that will support the Indigenous offender in **THEIR REHABILITATION**.



Since **NOVEMBER OF 2022** our department has had



2



FULL-TIME GLADUE WRITERS

GLADUE REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE COURTS BETWEEN APRIL 1, 2023 AND MARCH 31, 2024:

24  **FOR CREE CLIENTELE**

&

6  **FOR INUIT CLIENTELE**

With the strength of **PERMANENT GLADUE WRITERS** and the help of a **LAW STUDENT FROM MCGILL**, we were able to assist **MAKIVIK** with Gladue reports as well.



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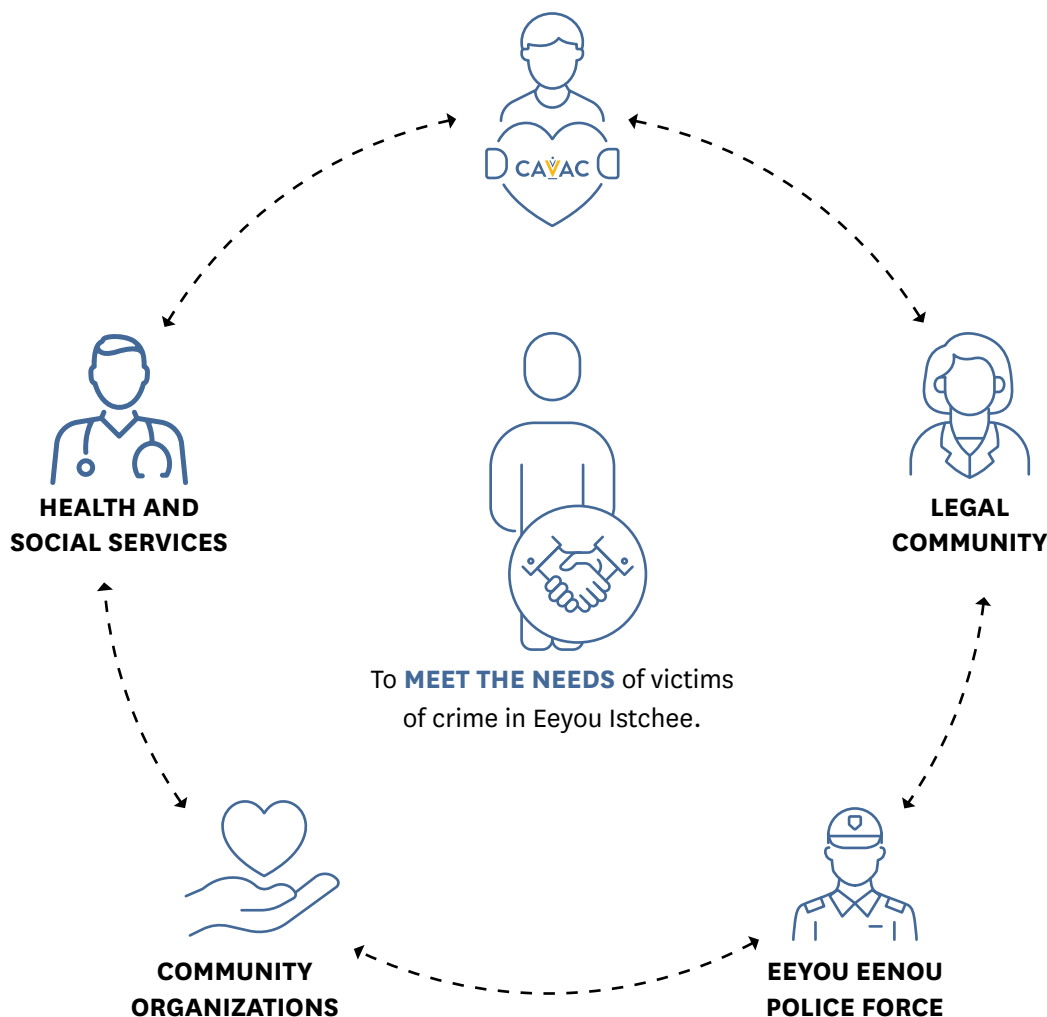
CAVAC (SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME)

We know that whenever harm is done, there can be many people affected in a community or family. Our Cree CAVAC services pledge to walk alongside victims of crime, be they directly affected, witnesses, or relatives of victims. Help is also available regardless of whether the perpetrator of the crime has been identified, apprehended, prosecuted, or convicted.



Crime Victims Assistance Centre

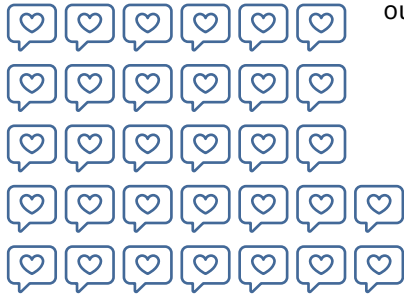
OUR CAVAC OFFICERS COLLABORATE with



Through our

5

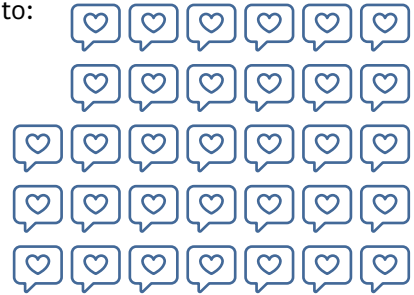
**CREE CAVAC
OFFICES**



our **CREE CAVAC OFFICERS** responded to:

65

SERVICE REQUESTS



**PROVIDING
SERVICES**

such as



**ACCOMPANIMENT TO
COURT**



GENERAL INFORMATION



**POST-TRAUMATIC
INTERVENTION**



No one-size-fits-all approach is possible, as each **CASE IS DISTINCT**; our CAVAC officers respond to the **UNIQUENESS** of each case. For instance, a CAVAC liaison officer who specializes in sexual violence is available to assist individuals **IN THE COMMUNITIES WHEN NEEDED**.

In an effort to improve our **ACCESSIBILITY** to the people in our communities who need our help, you can now reach our CAVAC Services by **CALLING OUR NEW TOLL-FREE NUMBER**:

1(877)342-2822



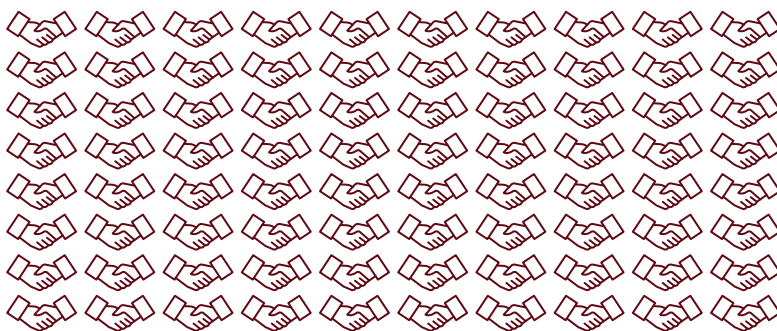
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Our correctional services division believes that individuals should be supported during incarceration through a connection with the Cree values, language, land, and customs that have always provided a strong foundation for our people. Our staff visit clients in detention to support them in navigating the system, to advocate for their rights, and to reconnect them with Cree values, land and culture. While we do not operate adult corrections facilities, we work hard to bring attention to issues whenever clients raise them with us. Discriminatory treatment in detention is still experienced; we work hard to identify it and to address it overall.

THIS YEAR, our staff had about

80

VISITS



This year, we contracted a **CREE PSYCHOLOGIST** who provided:

37

COUNSELLING SESSIONS



Our **REINTEGRATION OFFICERS IN EACH COMMUNITY** ease the reintegration process when an individual returns home. We also have staff working with clients **IN URBAN AREAS** such as Val-d'Or and Montreal.



THE ELDER VISITS IN DETENTION is where we work with Elders to provide **COUNSEL AND MENTORING** services in detention and upon release where individuals are open to this. Our aim is to:



RECONNECT INDIVIDUALS with Cree values and traditions.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS that support individuals on return to their communities.

THE TRADITIONAL FOOD IN DETENTION program was our 1st program in

2008



It was recommended by **ELDERS** for individuals who are away. They explained that, since the land is the best healer, these individuals would benefit if we brought **FOOD FROM THE LAND.**



IN 2023 we provided about

50

TRADITIONAL MEALS IN DETENTION



THE C.R.E.E. PROGRAM was developed in response to the reality that individuals need extra support to connect with others in a professional environment. Thus contributing to a healthier, stronger Cree Nation by encouraging opportunities to develop an understanding of the value of hard work – and to help them acquire necessary skills.

Along with **APITIISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL EMPLOYERS**, we are helping reduce recidivism, increase healthy pride, and instill hope and optimism.



Last year C.R.E.E. supported just over **8,900 HOURS** of employment for those wishing to return to the workforce following contact with the criminal justice system, this year we **SURPASSED** that by providing:

13,797 HOURS

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TRANSITIONAL TINY HOME COMMUNITY

Mission Statement

The Transitional Tiny Homes Community aims to restore connections within and between Cree individuals and their community, culture, and land, after such connections are disrupted by intergenerational trauma, homelessness, criminal offenses, and other related challenges.

The Tiny Homes Community receives Cree individuals transitioning from detention or under parole or probation, and Cree individuals experiencing homelessness, providing them with a temporary individual and private safe space and support in their journey of holistic healing and reconnection, with the ultimate goal of reintegrating into their community. Residents of our Tiny Homes Communities will have access to programming and services that were not offered in detention facilities, but are needed for rehabilitation.

OPENING DATES



Currently, **FOUR TINY HOME COMMUNITIES** are under construction. They are set to open in Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Waswanipi in 2024, and in Chisasibi in 2025.

FOR WHO?

They are intended to mainly support those referred by the courts, conditionally released, or transitioning from detention. To be a part of a Tiny Home Community, an individual must **SIGN AN AGREEMENT** to abide by the rules. This ensures the environment is safe and conducive to healing. Those who do not follow the rules may lose their place, so as to not interfere with **THE HEALING JOURNEY OF OTHERS**.

OUR MULTIPURPOSE TRANSITIONAL FACILITIES with comprehensive, holistic, culturally grounded programs and services are **IN PARTNERSHIP** with the CBHSSJB, Cree First Nations, Apatisiwin Skills Development, EEPF, and other Cree entities.



Our transitional communities will allow individuals to better address the **ROOT CAUSES** of their negative life outcomes e.g., mental health, social functioning, & family functioning and, in doing so, **LOWER THE LIKELIHOOD OF RECIDIVISM**.



They **WILL REDUCE** trauma, and harm in the Cree communities and Nation by providing a **STRUCTURED AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT** for rehabilitation and reintegration back into the community and to ensure residents respect any conditions of their return.



**TRANSITIONAL TINY HOME
COMMUNITY**







LEGISLATION, CASE LAW AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION

The *Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation* (previously Bill C-29) received royal assent on April 30, 2024. The Act provides for the establishment of a National Council for Reconciliation as an independent, nonpolitical, permanent and Indigenous-led organization. The Council is intended to provide oversight and monitor progress on reconciliation across Canada. The Council's core mandate is to advance reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians.

Through this legislation, the Government of Canada reaffirms its commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples as part of the preamble for the Act. This new legislation also helps to implement Calls to Action 53-56 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



UNIVERSAL NON-DEROGATION CLAUSE

Bill S-13, *An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*, is now at second reading in the House of Commons after having been passed in the Senate. This Bill introduces in the *Interpretation Act* a universal non-derogation clause that will apply to all federal legislation and that would read as follows:

Every enactment is to be construed as upholding the Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and not as abrogating or derogating from them.

There are already non-derogation clauses included in many different federal laws, such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the *Impact Assessment Act*. However, the wording of each of these clauses is slightly different, and so the new non-derogation clause included in the *Interpretation Act* will act as a universal non-derogation clause with respect to all federal laws.



YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

On February 9, 2024, the Supreme Court of Canada released a landmark, unanimous decision upholding the constitutional validity of the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Bill C-92). Bill C-92 was enacted by Parliament in 2019 and came into force on January 1, 2020. Among other things, it recognizes Indigenous jurisdiction and lawmaking power over “child and family services” (in Quebec, youth protection services) as part of an inherent Aboriginal right to self-government under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. It also establishes national standards applicable to child and family services for Indigenous children.

This ruling marks another important advance in the recognition of the inherent right of



self-government of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In this regard, the Court specifically recognized the importance of international and domestic human rights instruments and laws in affirming the rights of Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada. The Supreme Court found that the legislation supports the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Declaration Act. This is the first time the Supreme Court has commented on the role of specific legislation in contributing to achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration. The Court noted that the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, youth and families* was an example of legislative reconciliation that was undertaken in close consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. The ruling recognized that Indigenous Peoples are best placed to ensure the welfare of Indigenous children, and to end their enormous over-representation in the non-Indigenous care system.



EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

The Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act (S.C. 2024, c. 2) was assented to on March 19, 2024. The purpose of this Act includes to set out the Government of Canada's vision for a Canada-wide, community-based early learning and child care system and its commitment to ongoing collaboration with the provinces and Indigenous Peoples to support them in their efforts to establish and maintain such a system. This Act seeks to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and includes a commitment to maintaining long-term funding for the provinces and Indigenous Peoples for the establishment and maintenance of that system. It is also consistent with Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



CULTURAL SAFETY WITHIN THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK

On June 9, 2023, the Government of Quebec introduced in the National Assembly Bill 32, *An Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network*. This new legislation would require every institution in the health and social services network to adopt a cultural safety approach toward Indigenous persons, one which takes their cultural and historical realities into account in all interactions with them. The new legislation would also empower the Government to make regulations describing the terms and conditions to allow Indigenous persons to engage in certain professional activities reserved under the Professional Code to facilitate Indigenous persons' access to professional services in the field of mental health and human relations and, in particular, to promote the culturally safe nature of those services.



SPECIALIZED COURT FOR SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In May 2023, Québec announced that over 8,000 victims of sexual and domestic violence had been assisted through the new court specialized in sexual and domestic violence. The new specialized court was established in May 2022 as a division of the Court of Québec pursuant to an *Act to create a court specialized in sexual violence and domestic violence* (Bill 92). Judges





LEGISLATION, CASE LAW AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

on the specialized court are required to complete a professional development program on the realities of sexual and domestic violence. The specialized court has been implemented in ten judicial districts as part of a pilot project ending in November 2024. The specialized court will then be deployed on a permanent basis throughout Quebec by November 2026.



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE UN DECLARATION

On June 21, 2021, Canada adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* as a legislative framework to advance implementation of the UN Declaration at the federal level. The purpose of this Act is to affirm the UN Declaration as an international human rights instrument that can help interpret and apply Canadian law. Under the Act, the Government of Canada must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the UN Declaration. The Government must also prepare, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, an Action Plan and Annual Progress Reports. Canada released a first Action Plan on June 21, 2023, which contains 181 measures.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES UN DECLARATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

In October 2023, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories granted assent to Bill 85, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act*. The Act requires the Government of the Northwest Territories to indicate whether each bill is consistent with the UN Declaration. The Act was co-developed with Indigenous Peoples and provides for an Action Plan to be co-developed no later than October 2025. The Northwest Territories is the second jurisdiction, after British-Columbia in 2019, to pass legislation to implement the UN Declaration at the provincial or territorial level.



PROTECTION OF COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

On March 28, 2024, the Supreme Court of Canada issued its ruling in *Dickson v. Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation* (2024 SCC 10). The decision concerns residency qualifications for elected positions in the government of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Vuntut Gwitchin laws require that the Chief and all Councillors reside in their traditional territory. Ms. Dickson, a citizen of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation who was elected to the Council, but whose family required access to medical care not available in territory, challenged the residential requirement as a violation of her individual *Charter* right to equality.

The majority of the Court found that the residency requirement, as a means to ensure that leaders are connected to the traditional territory, is consistent with the objective of section 25 of the *Charter*. The purpose of section 25 is to uphold certain collective rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples when those collective rights conflict with an individual's *Charter* rights, such that giving effect to the individual *Charter* right would undermine the Indigenous difference protected or recognized by the collective right. In this case, the majority of the



Court was satisfied that section 25 protects the residency requirement from abrogation or derogation by Ms. Dickson’s individual *Charter* rights, which can be limited for the purpose of protecting the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples. The majority concluded that the residency requirement was “inextricably tied” to the Nation’s connection to its territory.

In a dissenting decision, Justices Martin and O’Bonsawin argued that the majority’s interpretation of the operation and scope of section 25 was “too broad.” They concluded that the existing residency requirement did not strike the appropriate balance between the right to democratic participation and the Nation’s right to exercise self-government over their traditional territory. In coming to this conclusion, the two Justices made extensive use of the UN Declaration as a source of guidance for interpreting section 25, citing numerous articles related to reconciliation of individual and collective rights.



KANIEN’KEHÁ:KA TREATY RIGHTS TO TRADE TOBACCO

On November 1, 2023, the Superior Court of Québec released its decision in *R. v. Montour and White*, which involves members of Kahnawà:ke and the import of tobacco without paying duties. In this decision, which has far reaching consequences, and for which an appeal has been filed, the Superior Court held that the UN Declaration is a binding international human rights instrument and that the protection of Aboriginal rights provided by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* should be at least as great as that afforded by the UN Declaration. The Superior Court set aside the test previously developed by the Supreme Court of Canada to determine whether an Aboriginal right was protected under section 35, and proposed a new test with greater protection of Aboriginal rights, in accordance with the UN Declaration.



QUÉBEC OMBUDSMAN MONITORING VIENS COMMISSION CALLS FOR ACTION

On October 4, 2023, the Québec Ombudsman released his first follow-up report on the calls for action of the Viens Commission. The follow-up to the Viens Commission’s 142 calls for action was analyzed in concert with First Nations and Inuit representatives and several government departments and agencies. Among other things, the Québec Ombudsman invited the Government of Québec to engage with all Indigenous representatives in a process to Implement Call for Action No. 3, which calls on the Government of Quebec to, “continue working with Indigenous authorities, draft and enact legislation guaranteeing that the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be taken into account in the body of legislation under its jurisdiction.”

In his report, the Québec Ombudsman states that “the Viens Commission report places the Declaration at the top of the list of calls for action for one simple reason: it is the bedrock for any attempt at reconciliation, collaboration, rights-recognition and co-construction with First Nations and Inuit.”



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INTERNATIONAL WORK

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee has always been a strong proponent of the UN Declaration, and the Crees have been directly involved in its development over more than four decades. We welcomed Canada's full support of the UN Declaration in 2016, and the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act on June 21, 2021. The adoption of this Act was a momentous achievement, which built on previous efforts supported by the Cree Nation. Under the UN Declaration Act, the Government of Canada must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the UN Declaration.

The Act also requires the Government of Canada to prepare, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, an Action Plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration. During the past year, Canada has prepared the draft action plan and has sought feedback from Indigenous Nations. The Cree Nation Government raised the importance of ensuring that the process was transparent, inclusive and consistent with the rights affirmed in the UN Declaration. The Action Plan, released in June 2023, sets out 181 measures, including many related to shared priorities of all Indigenous Peoples, and some related more specifically to priorities of Modern Treaty and self-Government (MTSG) groups.

Canada is the first country to adopt an Action Plan to implement the UN Declaration domestically. British-Columbia and the Northwest Territories have taken concrete steps towards ensuring that their laws are consistent with the UN Declaration. The Quebec National Assembly has called upon the Quebec government to recognize and implement the UN Declaration in Quebec. The Supreme Court of Canada stated in a recent unanimous decision that the UN Declaration is now part of Canada's "domestic positive law", meaning that current and future laws and regulations must now comply with the rights of Indigenous Peoples as set out in the UN Declaration.



From Left: Donald Nicholls, Director of Justice and Correctional Services; Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty; Canadian Ambassador Leslie Norton.



UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is a high-level advisory body of the United Nations, established in July 2000. It is currently the highest level of the United Nations system that is solely dedicated to addressing Indigenous Peoples' matters. The Permanent Forum convenes annually at the United Nations headquarters in New York City during two weeks in April. It provides an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples from around the world to have direct dialogues with members of the Forum, Member States, the UN system and other expert bodies and non-governmental organizations. Each year, the Permanent Forum devotes attention to a particular theme.

This year, the Permanent Forum was held on April 15-26, 2024 under the theme “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth”. In addition, this year’s meeting discussed the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum, economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights, with reference to the UN Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This year’s meeting coincided with a high-level event convened by the President of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014.

The Grand Chief delivered a statement at the Permanent Forum on behalf of several Indigenous Nations forming part of a coalition. The Cree Nation Government also took part in a side panel event entitled “Paving the way for Future Generations: Reclaiming Indigenous Rights and Collaboration with State Governments for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Relations”. The Director of Justice, Donald Nicholls, moderated the panel comprised of Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, Regional Chief Ghislain Picard (AFNQL), Grand Chief Constant Awashish (Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw) and Grand Chief Savanna McGregor (Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council). This panel was an opportunity for these Indigenous leaders to show how Indigenous nations in Quebec can work together, and with provincial and federal governments on issues impacting Indigenous Peoples.



“Paving the way for Future Generations: Reclaiming Indigenous Rights and Collaboration with State Governments for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Relations” side event.



INTERNATIONAL WORK CONT'D

EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (EMRIP)

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) was established in 2007 by the Human Rights Council, the UN's main human rights body. The Expert Mechanism is composed of seven independent experts. It provides the Human Rights Council with expertise and advice on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and assists Member States in achieving the goals of the UN Declaration. It also conducts studies to advance the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Each year, the Expert Mechanism holds a five-day session in July at the UN headquarters in Geneva, which is attended by representatives from Member States, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, civil society, inter-governmental organisations and academia.

Last year, the Expert Mechanism held its regular session on July 17-23. The Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty spoke at various occasions on issues mostly related to the environment and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that governments respect Indigenous rights. The Grand Chief and the Director of Justice Donald Nicholls also met with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to discuss the climate crisis and the devastating forest fires in Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Nation Government hosted a side panel event entitled "Monitoring the Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada". The Director of Justice Donald Nicholls moderated the panel and speakers, which included Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, British-Columbia Attorney General Niki Sharma, British-Columbia Deputy Minister of the Declaration Act Secretariat Jessica Wood, and Chair and North American Member of the Expert Mechanism Sheryl Lightfoot.

In February, the Director of Justice participated in a special seminar in support of the work of the Expert Mechanism hosted by the University of British-Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. The seminar's theme was Indigenous Peoples' right to traditional economies, sustainable development, and food security in an age of climate change. The Director spoke on the need for protection of Eeyou Istchee from climate change and the devastating fires, in order to preserve our traditional and sustainable economy for present and future generations. He also emphasized the need for governments to comply with the new standard of "free, prior and informed consent" before making decisions on development projects, and the requirement for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a peer-review process before the UN Human Rights Council. Under the UPR process, every 4½ years, the human rights record of each country is reviewed by other UN Member States. This provides an opportunity for countries to discuss their domestic human rights framework as well as measures taken to promote and protect human rights in their country.

Last year, Canada went through its fourth UPR cycle. In December and January, the Director of Justice Donald Nicholls was invited by federal officials to present submissions on behalf of the Cree Nation as part of Canada's fourth UPR cycle. Many of the recommendations from other Member States this year concerned the implementation of human rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and built on previous UPR recommendations. The main message from the Cree Nation Government was for Canada to focus on



certain key recommendations with potential for the most positive impact on Indigenous Peoples, and that we would continue to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the government to address the recommendations specifically related to Indigenous rights and issues.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

In October 2023, the Director met with the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights in Ottawa on his visit to Canada and raised issues of importance to the Cree Nation specifically. The main focus was on the need for government collaboration to protecting the environment and the need to improve preparations to reduce and mitigate the impacts of forest fires that destroy our lands and abilities to practice traditional activities.

COALITION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

During the past year, the Cree Nation Government continued to be an active member of the Coalition and supported several joint statements prepared by the Coalition regarding the implementation of the UN Declaration in Canada and the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and internationally.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to make a special acknowledgement for the invaluable contributions of Paul Joffe over the years as a long-time legal counsel and advisor to support the Cree Nation Government's international Indigenous human rights work. It is impossible to summarize all the work he has done over the last five decades to support the Cree Nation's efforts in promoting and protecting Indigenous Peoples rights. Paul supported the efforts of the Cree Nation in regard to the Canadian Constitution in the 1980's, the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples leading up to the UN Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples and the related national legislation, and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Paul has also been instrumental in some of the Cree Nation's interventions before the Supreme Court of Canada, and he wrote several books, including *Sovereign Injustice*, and articles of interest on the subject of Indigenous Peoples rights, self-determination and related issues.

We wish him a happy retirement, and we will continue to build on his work to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.



Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada Beverly Jacobs with Donald Nicholls at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues - Ms. Jacobs also attended CWEIA's first meeting in Eeyou Istchee.



Haudenosaunee March in Geneva to mark when their leader Deskaheh travelled to Geneva 100 years ago to speak about Indigenous rights and was denied entry.

Indigenous Caucus meeting preceding the United Nations Indigenous meetings each year where we share and discuss Indigenous issues and experiences.



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INTERNATIONAL WORK IMAGES



Donald Nicholls with Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations Bob Rae.

Donald Nicholls Historic Testimony as Canadian Expert at the UN Peacebuilding Commission.



Paul Joffe and Jennifer Preston working on Language of Statements of Rights.

Virtual Presentation by Donald Nicholls on Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action at the Embassy of Canada in Guatemala.



Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva.

From left: James Anaya, former Special Rapporteur on Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Luis Rodriguez-Piñero, UN in Venezuela; Dr. Ánde Somby, Sami Legal Expert; Donald Nicholls, Director of Justice and Correctional Services.



CLOSING MESSAGE

The coming year holds much promise as we open our first Tiny Home Communities to support those reintegrating into their communities. Our partnerships with entities such as the Cree School Board, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF), ASD, local governments, men's and women's associations, and many others will only continue to make our communities stronger.

We also see more opportunities to advocate for Indigenous rights in Canada and Quebec as we work on the implementation of the rights in the UN Declaration and to ensure that Canadian laws are consistent with the UN Declaration. We are working towards Enhanced Participation of Indigenous Peoples to allow us to have a

seat at the table when important discussions occur at the provincial, federal and international levels on issues that may impact Cree rights and interests.

We continue to look at new programs, and have trained staff on a Y Mind program to work with youth on anxiety through our Youth Enrichment Services program. We continue to be optimistic that together we can make a difference in our communities and Nation in Eeyou Istchee to address needs and interests while integrating Cree values and ways.

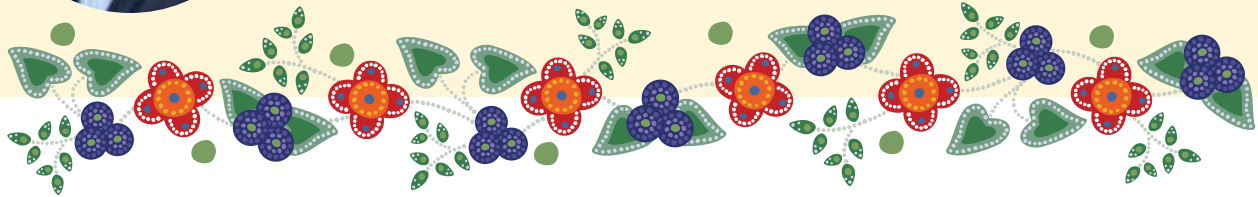






SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director **Rodney Mark**



WACHIYA TO THE CREE NATION IT IS WITH GREAT PRIVILEGE TO BE ADDRESSING YOU ALL IN THE ANNUAL REPORT. AS USUAL THE PAST YEAR OUR TEAM OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN SUPER BUSY MANAGING FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS, FACILITATING MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CREE HEALTH BOARD. I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CREE HEALTH BOARD REPS FOR THEIR TIME IN PREPARATION OF THESE MEETINGS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FOR THEIR INPUT AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR MEETINGS. OUR GOAL IS TO COLLABORATE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS. THIS GOAL REQUIRES TEAMWORK AND A COMMON VISION. TO DO THIS WE NEED TO EXCHANGE OUR BEST IDEAS AND THINK ABOUT WHERE WE WANT TO GO AS A CREE NATION.



I wish to acknowledge Mr. Willie Iserhoff for his years of dedication and commitment to the Cree Nation Government and more specifically to the Social and Cultural Development Department. Our deepest condolences to his family and friends. Also, to Mr. Charly Wash, who passed away suddenly, this is a person who worked closely with some of our team within the department regarding the Summer Games that are taking place in Mistissini in July. Our condolences to his family. Both these gentlemen will be missed, and we are deeply thankful for their contributions.

In this annual report you will find our department manages various funding agreements. Please have a look at them as they will help develop future projects next year. We thank all the communities who submitted proposals for their interesting projects. Furthermore, you will see major projects we are involved in.

The Miyupimaatisiun Committees, in partnership with the Cree Health Board, Cree School Board and Local Governments; aim to identify local priorities and to develop an action plan, and this action plan would be used to support the committees from CNG and CHB resources.

The Access to Nutrition Committee is composed of representatives of the Cree Health Board and the Cree Nation

Government. It was developed to assist communities in addressing diabetes and other chronic diseases. The Committee will follow up with a food engagement session, a meeting between with Miyupimaatisiun Committees and local Directors of Social Development.

School Age Community Programming is what this program is now called and targets the age group of 4 to 17 years old. This is a partnership effort with communities and Cree School Board.

For the Residential School project, we were able to obtain funding from the federal government and we are working with the communities of Chisasibi and Mistissini. In the coming year we are planning to develop an action plan addressing a variety of issues.

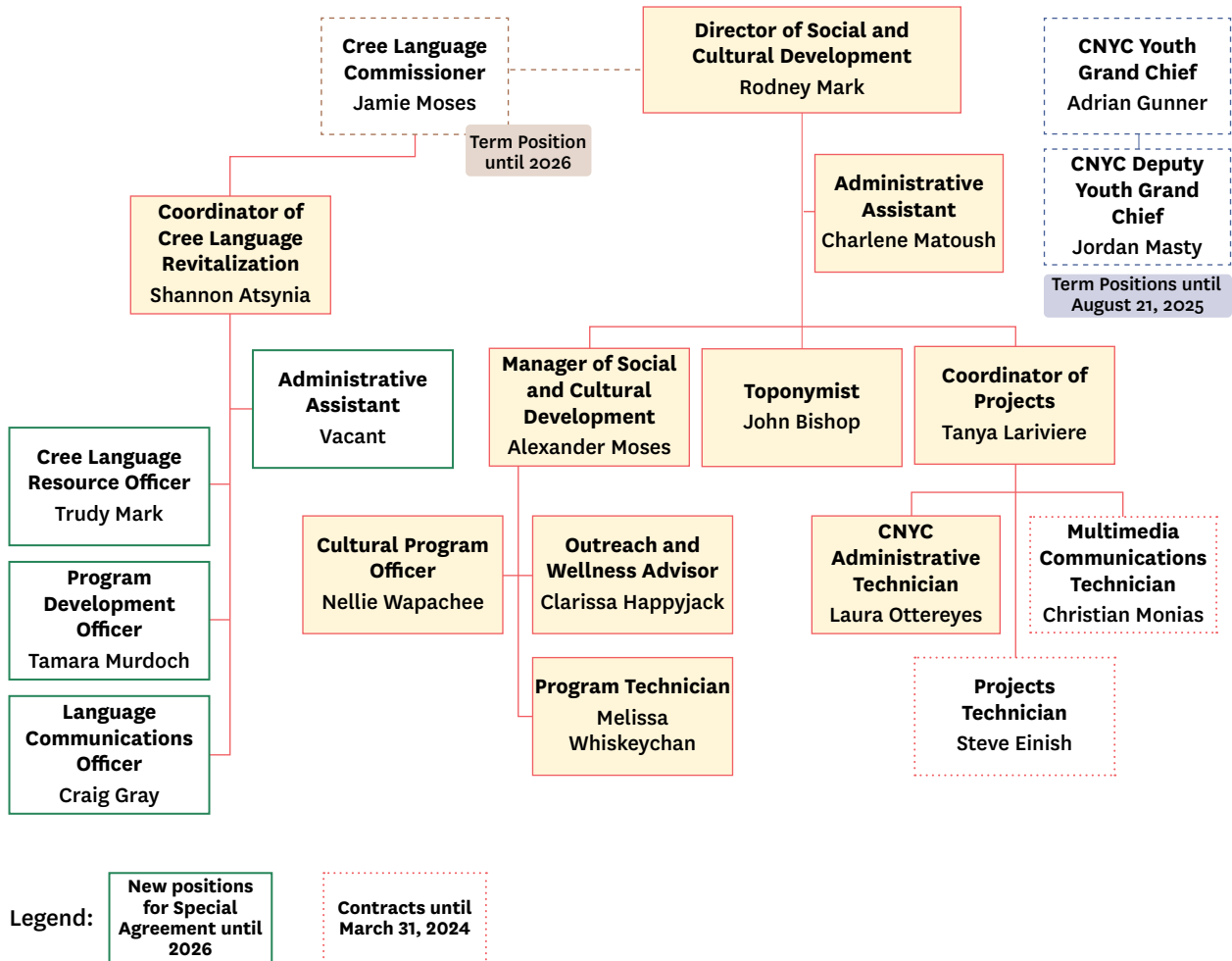
As you can see, we are working closely with our community counterparts and different entities in addressing many issues that are facing our Cree Nation. Let's continue to work together, making our communities healthier and awesome places to live.

Rodney Mark
Director of Social and Cultural Development





DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL



CNG DEPARTMENT

SOCIAL + CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



FUNDING AGREEMENTS

The Department negotiates and manages agreements from several provincial ministries and makes funds available to Cree organizations and communities through the application process, agreement implementation, providing support and reporting.

The Department committed funding to local and regional programs and projects across Eeyou Istchee. We have three major funding programs within Social and Culture to support these initiatives through a call for proposal process, review, and recommendation to our management committee. Following are the funding programs and program objectives.

Cree Alliance for Solidarity

The Cree Solidarity Program is an initiative used to fund programs throughout Eeyou Istchee that addresses Poverty and Exclusion. The CSA framework uses alliances or partners in

the region to deliver and co-fund the programs. The funding for this agreement is provided by Le Ministre de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité Sociale Québec.

The agreement as of 2023-2024 is in its 6th year under the current funding cycle. An additional seven-month extension was granted by Quebec, due to delays in program delivery and negotiations.

The total number of programs funded over the agreement from 2019-2024 was 63. The total amount of funding provided to the Cree communities and Cree entities over the agreement term was \$2,940,454 which includes an additional year of funding (2023-2024). The additional seven-month funding (Until October 31, 2024) provided was \$125,828.41.

At this time, we are in discussions with Quebec for a new 5-year agreement.

Figure 1. Cree Solidarity Alliance Funding by Community for 2023-2024

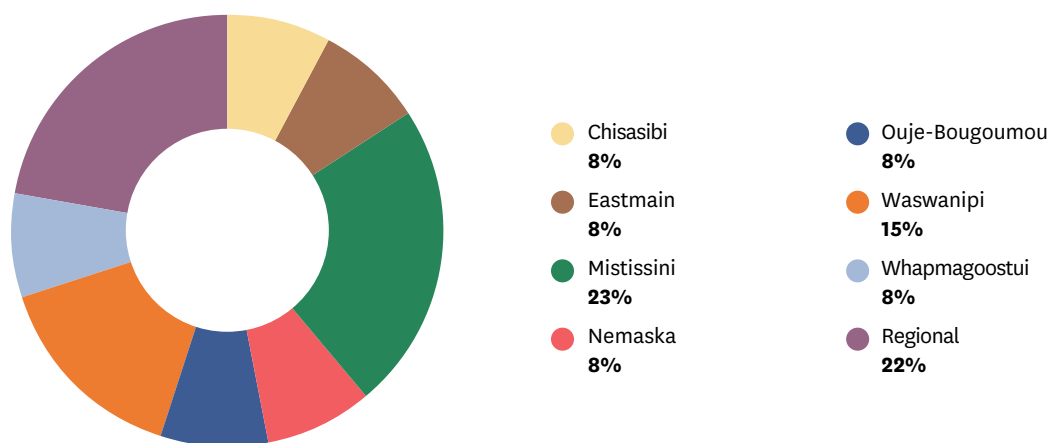


Table 1. Cree Solidarity Alliance Funding – Programs and Projects Committed for 2023-2024

Project Name	Community/Entity		Amount Funded
Meals on Wheels	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Local	\$13,802
Youth Capacity Building	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	Local	\$40,000
World Centre of Excellence for Destinations	Eeyou Istchee Tourisme	Regional	\$25,000
Breakfast Clubs Eeyou Istchee	Breakfast Club of Canada	Regional	\$75,000
Youth Capacity Building	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$50,000
Youth Capacity Building	Cree Nation of Nemaska	Local	\$40,000
Youth Capacity Building	Cree Nation of Eastmain	Local	\$50,000
Youth Capacity Building	Whapmagoostui First Nation	Local	\$40,000
Hangry Lunch Program	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$25,000
Miyupaastiuun Networking Session	CHBSSJB	Local	\$23,000
After School Fitness	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	Local	\$20,000
Welfare Social	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$23,000
Welfare Social	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Local	\$17,964



Cree Youth Development Fund

The Cree Youth Development Fund is a funding agreement between the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse, the Cree Nation Youth Council, and the Department of Social and Cultural Development; a youth programming funding initiative that is meant to encourage positive youth development in these four categories listed below:

- **Culture, Language, and Environment:** Creating partnerships that increase programs and services that promote culture, language, and environmental awareness in our youth.
- **Youth Development:** Supporting programming that meets the youth strategic priorities both as singular and collective goals at community and regional levels.
- **Capacity Building:** Helping our youth to mobilize their skills and knowledge to effectively contribute as members of their community, and throughout Eeyou Istchee.

- **Governance and Administration:** Working to build internal tools and mechanisms that enhance the administrative capacity of the CNYC (Cree Nation Youth Council) and the presence of Youth leadership across Eeyou Istchee.

This is the final year of the present agreement and the Youth Grand Chief, the Manager of the Social and Cultural Development Department, and the Youth Support Staff met with the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse (SAJ) to discuss renewing the financial arrangement for another five years. CNYC prepared the "Cree Youth Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026" based on discussions done via online surveys, a community tour, and regional events, which was given in February. SAJ endorsed the Cree Youth Strategic Plan by approving a new funding arrangement for 2021-2026.

Figure 2. Cree Youth Development Fund for 2023-2024

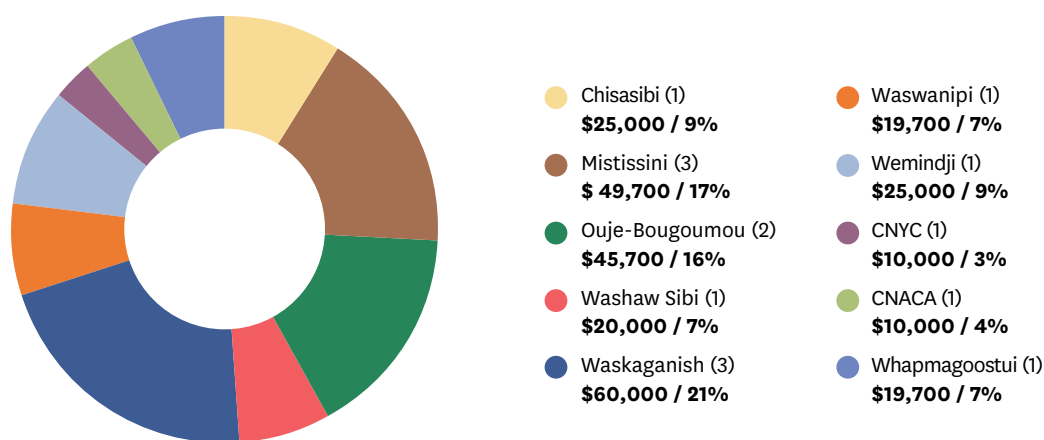


Table 2. Cree Youth Development Fund (SAJ) – Programs and Projects Committed for 2023-2024

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Climbing Gym	Waskaganish Eeyou Bouldering	\$25,000
Sharing Cree Culture Traditions	Waskaganish Wiichihiwewin Centre	\$15,000
Cultural Development	Wemindji CTA	\$25,000
Action Program	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$10,000
Training Program	Chisasibi Wellness	\$25,000
Youth Healing Sessions	Washaw Sibi	\$20,000
Essential Skills Workshops	Cree Nation Youth Council	\$10,000
Young Entrepreneur Symposium	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$20,000
Joint Sports Camp	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$19,700
Joint Sports Camp	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$19,700
School & Sports Collaborative	Whapmagoostui First Nation	\$19,700
School & Sports Collaborative	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$19,700
Recreation & Leisure Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$20,000
Miss Teen Ambassador	Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association	\$10,000
Youth Wellness	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$16,000
Youth Training	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$10,000



Elders Program Funding - The Regional Adaptation to Enhance Seniors' Living Conditions in the Cree Communities

The Social and Cultural Development Department of the Cree Nation Government manages the specific funding agreement for “Improving the Living Conditions of Elders in the Cree Communities of Northern Quebec”.

The funding under this is allocated by Ministère des Affaires Municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH). This is the final year within a 6-year funding cycle, which includes a one-year extension. Funds provided by MAMH are also matched by the Cree Nation Government, through the Department of Commerce and Industry in support of social conditions for Elders.

The Department received applications from Cree Communities and Cree Entities throughout Eeyou Istchee. Program applications address several key pillars:

- **Direct Assistance for Elders:** Supporting programming that meets Elders’ needs both as singular and collective goals at community and regional levels.
- **Participation in the Community:** Helping our Elders to be active participants in community events throughout Eeyou Istchee, this is accomplished through Elders' events, as well as snow removal for Elders to help them leave their homes.

- **Healthy Lifestyles:** Ensuring our Elders throughout Eeyou Istchee have adequate food support, as well as safe housing, which is accomplished through snow clearing, wood supplies for winter, etc.
- **Creating Safe and Welcoming Environments:** Helping our Elders to be active participants in their community by ensuring accessibility and supporting programming aimed toward Elders, both events as well as support.
- **Traditional Knowledge, Skills, and Language:** Supporting programming that allows transfer of knowledge to the next generation, as well as connect with other Elders, both locally and regionally.

The total number of programs funded over the agreement from 2018-2024 was 52. The total amount of funding provided to the Cree communities and Cree entities over the agreement term was \$1,597,138. The additional one-year agreement funding provided was \$165,534 with matching funds from the Cree Nation Government, creating a total of \$331,068 to help the Elders in our Communities.

At this time, we are in discussions with Quebec for a new 5-year agreement.

Figure 3. Elders Funding Program by Community for 2023-2024

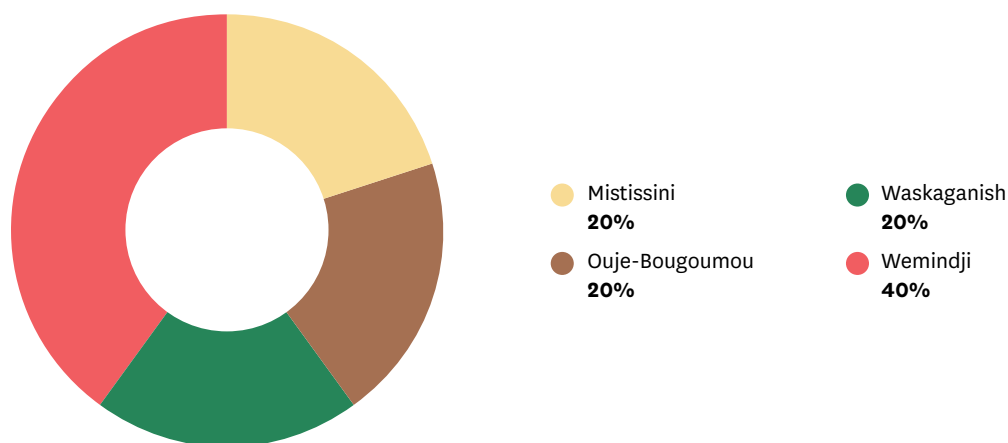


Table 3. Elders Funding Program – Programs and Projects Committed for 2023-2024

Project Name	Community/Entity		Amount Funded
Wemindji Snow Removal	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Local	\$49,999
Wemindji Cares	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Local	\$25,000
Gookumnooch Gathering	CWEIA Regional	Regional	\$43,663
Weechadowch Chainou Project	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$50,000
Sanitary Installation for Elder's Cabin	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	Local	\$50,000
Waskaganish Snow Removal	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Local	\$50,000



Physical and Outdoor Activity
Programme d'aide financière aux initiatives locales et régionales en matière d'activité physique et de plein air (PAFILR)

The objective of PAFILR is to support local and regional needs for the regular practice of physical and outdoor activities. This funding is provided to financially support these organizations in carrying out new projects or improving existing projects, to directly encourage the regular practice of physical activities in Eeyou Istchee, regardless of age, people's gender, income, abilities, culture or living environment.

The agreement as of 2023-2024 is in its 2nd year under the current funding cycle. An additional one-year extension was granted by Quebec, while a new agreement is created.

The total number of programs funded over the agreement from 2022-2024 was 31. The total amount of funding provided to the Cree communities and Cree entities over the agreement term was \$287,582. Each program can be funded for a maximum amount of \$10,000.

Figure 4. PAFILR Funding by Community for 2023-2024

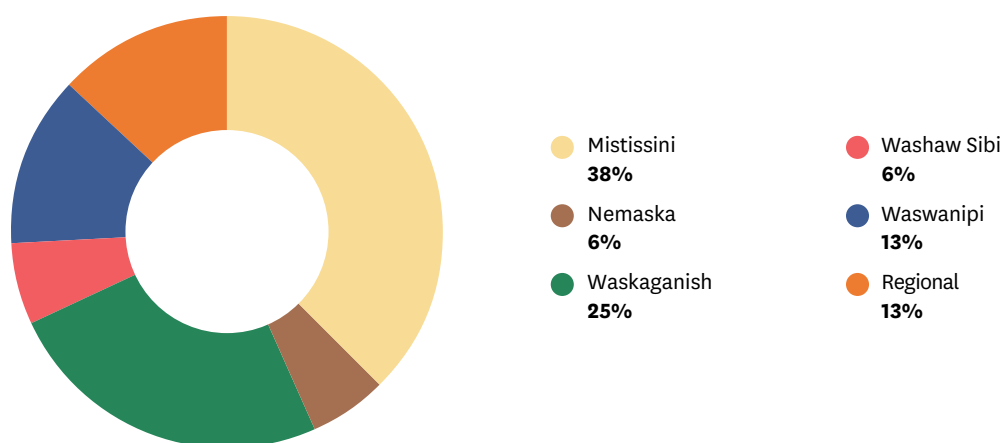


Table 4. PAFILR Funding- Programs and Projects Committed for 2023-2024

Project Name	Community/Entity		Amount Funded
Boys and Girls Physical Activities	Washaw Sibi	Regional	\$9,900
Children, Youth & Adult Activities	Cree Nation of Nemaska	Local	\$10,000
Mistissini Shotokan Karate	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$9,700
Jiu Jitsu Program	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$9,700
Facilitators	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$9,500
Indoor Soccer Program	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$7,500
Minor Hockey and Broomball	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$10,000
Summer Soccer Program	Cree Nation of Mistissini	Local	\$4,161
Basketball Camp	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Local	\$7,500
Volleyball and Ball Hockey League	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Local	\$10,000
Miyu-Nanaakachihisuutau Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Local	\$10,000
First Nation Minor Hockey Festival	EISRA	Regional	\$10,000
First Nation Minor Broomball Festival	EISRA	Regional	\$10,000
Beyond the Bumper	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Local	\$6,078
On-Ice Physical Activities	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Local	\$9,903
Fall Festival	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Local	\$9,000
Wiichihiiwewin Physical Activity with Elders	Wiichihiiwewin	Regional	\$5,113



MCCQ – Eeyou Istchee Cultural Development Funding

The CCDF (MCCQ) fund was started in 2021-2023 as a three-year agreement. Due to late transfer of the agreement, it was to be delivered over three years 2022-2024, and now includes an additional year of funding which extends this program to 2025. The funding agreement is signed with the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications. All program applications in this fund require a matching Cree contribution. Programs for this fund support:

- **Cree Community Cultural Programming:** This includes programs such as Winter Harvest Festival in Waskagan-

ish, and others including Transfer of Knowledge from Elders in Waswanipi.

- **Cree Regional Entities Working in Cree Language and Culture:** Includes programming such as the Cree Summer Games working with Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association, and Gookumnouch Gathering and Media Books with Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association.
- **Social and Cultural Department for Innovative Cultural Programming:** Includes programs supporting ongoing language media production with James Bay Cree Communications Society.

Figure 5. Cree Cultural Development Program by Community for 2023-2024

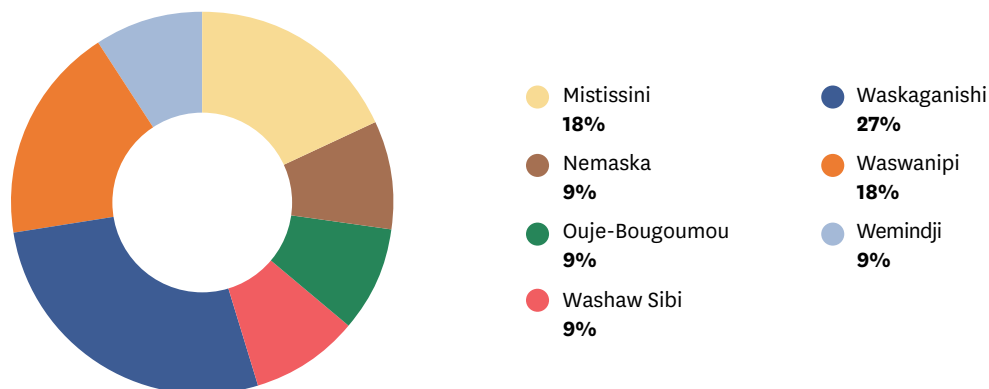


Figure 6. Cree Cultural Development Program Funding by Entity for 2023-2024

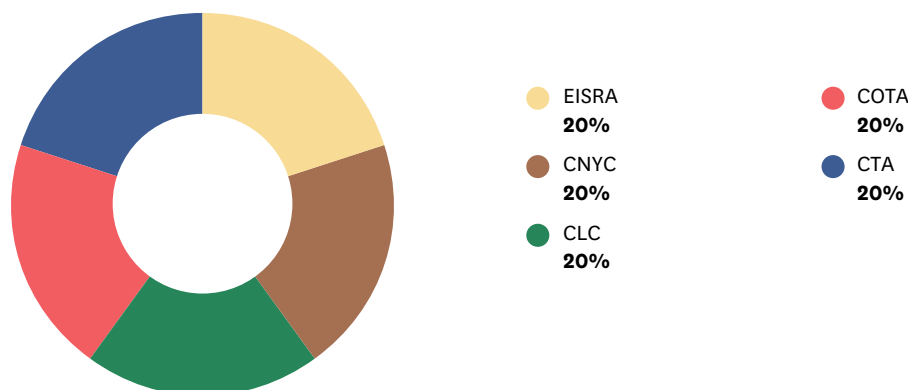


Table 5. Social and Cultural Development for Community-Based Cultural Funding for 2023-2024

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Cree Language and Cultural Programs	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$26,448
Transmission of Elders Knowledge	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$25,000
Cree Language Conference	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$13,350
Cultural Activities	Cree Nation of Wemindji	\$30,000
Eenou Entukwiin Kanauhtataau	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$10,800
Youth Excursions Project	Cree Nation of Nemaska	\$20,000
Winter Harvest Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$17,450
Sanitary Installations for Elders	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$28,776
Winter Cultural Activities and Teachings	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$33,250
Traditional Cooking Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$20,000
Canadian Firearms Safety Course	Washaw Sibi	\$2,523





LANGUAGE COMMISSION

Report on Cree Language Office

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First and foremost, I wish to extend Waachiyaaug to the people of Iiyiyiu Aschii. It is my hope that everyone had a successful harvest this spring while retreating to some quality time out on the land.

Following an exciting year for the Cree language, it is our great pleasure to share the developments and activity reports that have taken place under the Cree Language Commission office for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

First, in last year's report, we shared our plans to expand our team so that different areas of the Cree language could be focused on such as resources, programming, research, communications, etc. This year, we are pleased to introduce the new members of our team that will be working throughout Iiyiyiu Aschii with communities that seek our guidance when it comes to language planning.

In late August 2023, Trudy Mark of Wemindji took on the role as our Cree Language Resource Officer. Trudy's role is to gather, promote and maintain Cree language materials that can be utilized by Iiyiyiuch. Over time Trudy will be building a library of information of the existing materials that have been created in the past, and along the way, she will be overseeing the creation of new materials as well.

Tamara Murdoch, also from Wemindji, joined our team as the Programs Development Officer in early September. Tamara's role is to assist on language program development with the communities. Currently, she is putting together some potential programming that have been talked about in the past throughout Iiyiyiu Aschii and as we progress, she will be bringing information sessions on how to develop and implement lasting programming for the Cree language.

Also joining us last September is our Communications Officer, Craig "Ayden" Gray from Mistissini. Our team has benefited greatly from the creativity and fresh outlook Ayden has brought to our team. He manages our social media, visual promotion of the language and designs great materials to ensure Cree Syllabics is at the forefront in how we communicate to the people. Welcome to our new team!

With the team in place, there are plenty of projects being launched and plans moving forward that we had planned for in the first year. Our strategic plan over the next four years

is to make ourselves a hands-on resource that communities can request and seek guidance from. We will specialize in resource building, programming implementation, research planning and especially how to help promote and maintain the Cree language. One of the very first steps is launching the Cree Language Planning Tool Guide which will assist organizations on the steps needed to ensure sustainability of language planning in our hometowns.

Team Progress

- Creative Resource Builders Website
- Updating survey to launch this fall (survey from 1989)
- Created the Cree Language Planning Guide (hired consultant)
- Team Tour to communities to help assess the needs on language
- Gathering existing resources from all communities (books, audio, interviews, videos, etc.)
- Creating language programs to learn Cree Conversation
- 3rd annual Cree Language Month activities (Weekly themes)
- Initiating plans on the next language engagement (Spring 2025)
- Working with Cree language mentors to foster team building
- Creating a Cree Language Working Group (Terminology Team)

With the progress of our plans, the team is excited to start visiting the communities and start extending our resources to whoever needs our help and guidance. It has been many years of work from the past 35 - 40 years that we are seeing come to fruition. Our team has always looked back and continue on the work of our pioneers who worked in Cree language. Knowing where we came from will always guide us in the direction of where we want to go. With that said, keep a look out for great things coming your way. We invite you to participate and give your feedback/input on topics of interest you might have regarding our language.

Aakutaah, Waachiyaaug misiwaa.

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Niiyi, Jamie Moses



Cree Language COMMISSION

**WE ARE GROWING TO MEET THE
NEEDS OF OUR MANDATE TO
ENHANCE, STRENGTHEN, PROMOTE
AND SAFEGAURD OUR LANGUAGE.**



MEET OUR TEAM



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TRADITIONAL PURSUITS

Regional Residential School Response and Support

Our department has been working over the past couple of years to support the Cree Nation of Chisasibi's investigation of the Fort George residential school sites. Our support has primarily involved liaising between the community, the survivor's committee and outside agencies – notably CIRNAC's Residential Schools Missing Children Community Support Fund and the specialists needed to undertake the investigations.

Alongside Aanischaaukamikw's Archaeology program, we have been working with Chisasibi to facilitate a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) search of the sites on Fort George Island. The work scheduled for the summer of 2023 was interrupted by the fire-related closure of the James Bay Highway, but nonetheless, a canine search was carried out in July in collaboration with Kim Cooper of the Ottawa Valley Search and Rescue Dog Association. This was followed in October by a GPR search led by archaeologists Adrien Bourque and Jean-Christophe Ouellet of the Université de Montréal. They were assisted in the field by Aanischaaukamikw archaeologist Dario Izaguirre. When and how the results of the searches are released to the public will be decided upon by the Cree Nation of Chisasibi.

Establishing a Regional Research Capacity

The current work on Fort George Island has involved working closely with survivors to gather oral history about the sites. Documenting this history is incredibly important. Cree people themselves hold the most complete knowledge of the residential school history in Eeyou Istchee. For this reason, our department has begun work to establish a regional team to document and conserve the history of residential schooling in Eeyou Istchee. In January, 2024 George E. Pachano was hired as the Manager of the Residential School Research Project. George brings a long history of engagement and activism on behalf of residential school survivors in Chisasibi - he played an important role in the founding of the survivor's group as well as the establishment of the gatherings held there. He was also the first Residential School Coordinator in Chisasibi when the GPR investigation was being started and has been active representing the Cree in national gatherings such as those organized by the National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools, Missing Children and Unmarked Graves.

George will be working to assemble a team to undertake research into residential school history in Eeyou Istchee. His team will assist communities in developing local investigations and commemoration and will work to gather and safeguard oral history and archival documentation. This is being done to ensure that future generations will understand this history and the impact it has had on the communities of Eeyou Istchee. He will also be collaborating with national and regional investigations to ensure that we benefit from work being undertaken by others in Quebec and Canada. We are very happy to welcome George to our department and look forward to the growth of his team.

Cree Place Names Program

The Cree Place Names Program continues its work to document the Cree language place names of Eeyou Istchee. In

2023-2024, interviews were undertaken in Mistissini in collaboration with the local CTA officer Stanley Mianscum. We also did some work in Mistissini in collaboration with Thais Bernos and the FISHERS project with respect to documenting Cree knowledge of lake trout in Mistissini lake.

We continue to field requests for place names data and have worked with a number of partners over the past year, including various Cree Nation Government Departments, the regional CTA, Quebec's Toponymy Commission, and various Cree communities. We are actively participating in the Cree Nation Government's GIS Working Group and the GIS strategy being implemented in partnership with ESRI. We anticipate that this strategy will help in making the place names data more readily available to GIS users and partners, as well as to the Cree public. If you have any questions about place names on your family's trapline, or would like to request place names information, please do not hesitate to contact John Bishop, the Cree Nation Government's toponymist.

Finally, the Place Names Program is working with Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute to begin organizing and describing a number of important archival collections that relate to place names and archaeological research in Eeyou Istchee. Materials include audio and video interviews with elders about significant places in Eeyou Istchee – gathered over the past forty years. We are working with Francesca Menassa-Plourde of the Records and Information Management team to begin developing the archival capacity to safely store and disseminate these materials to the Cree public.

A Cree Language App

Our department has received 1.9 million dollars in funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Indigenous Language Component, to be used through 2028 for the development of an online language learning app for Eastern James Bay Cree dialects. We will be working in collaboration with the organization Say it First and will be adapting the online learning platform that they have developed for Anishnaabemowin in northern Ontario. Work will include the development of a text-to-speech engine as well as lessons focused on teaching vocabulary and verb conjugation. This platform will be freely available for the public and for use in the schools and will be there to support people wanting to learn to speak as well as fluent speakers wanting to learn to read. For those interested, you can check out the Anishnaabemodaa app at <https://anishnaabemodaa.app>.





YOUTH SECTOR UPDATE

Cree Nation Youth Council Report

Wachiya. On behalf of the Cree Nation Youth Council and our dedicated team, it gives us immense pleasure and enthusiasm to extend a warm welcome to all of you to our annual report on Regional Youth Initiatives.

This report stands as a testament to our unwavering commitment to the growth, empowerment, and well-being of our youth. We passionately believe that the potential of our future lies in the hands of young people, and it is our collective responsibility to equip them with the tools, opportunities, and support they need to flourish.

Over the past year, we have achieved remarkable milestones as a team, driving positive change in youth development. This annual report provides a glimpse into our highlights, offering you, our valued partners, an opportunity to witness the impact of our collaborative efforts.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continuous support and active participation in the Cree Nation Youth Council. We eagerly anticipate the promising future ahead, for our team, board, and, most importantly, our young people.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.
Chisemintuu skuu shuuweimikwau miswah!

Mikwetch,
Adrian N. Gunner
Jordan Masty

The Youth Crew and Collaborators

The CNYC's agreements, programs funding and administration of special projects are carried out under the responsibility and supervision of the Social and Cultural Development department. Our administration focuses on proposing meetings, trainings, planning sessions, communications as well as implementing and promoting our programs, projects, and organization mandate.

In addition to the internal changes within the permanent staff, we are also excited to welcome the addition of two contractual positions to our team in the upcoming new fiscal year to help us carry out our activities.

Elected Co-Chairs

Adrian N. Gunner – *Youth Grand Chief*
Jordan Masty – *Deputy Youth Grand Chief*

Current Youth Staff

Laura Ottereyes – *Administrative Technician*
Craig 'Ayden' Gray – *Multi-Media Technician*
Steve Einish – *Projects Technician*

Department of Social and Cultural Development Staff

Tania Richmond – *DSCD Coordinator of Projects*
Melissa Whiskeychan – *Program Technician (Cree Youth Development Funds)*

CNYC Governance Matters

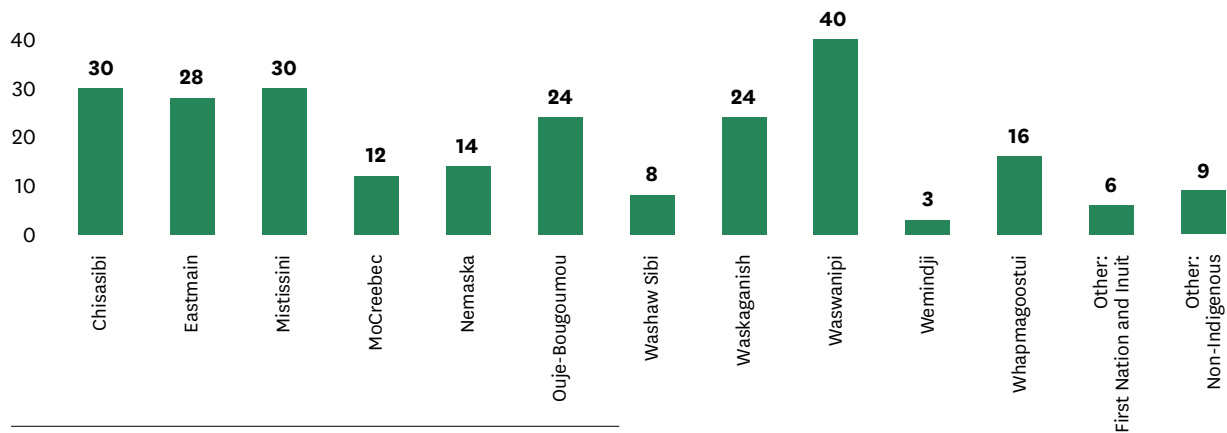
Board of Directors
Youth Chiefs, Youth Development Coordinators
Executive Committee
Austin Cheezo, Corrina Napash, Phil Mattawashish

This year at the Cree Nation Youth Council:

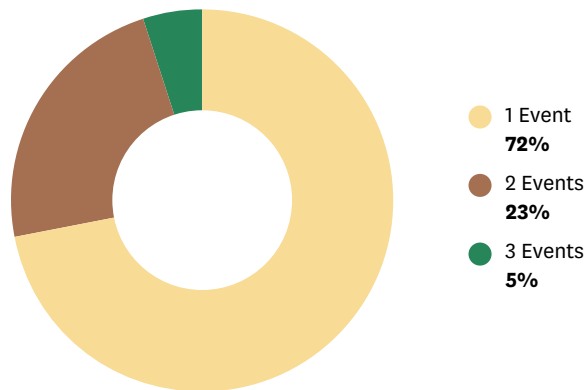
- We hired 2 new contractual staff members through our Special Projects fund!
 - Steve Einish, CNYC Project Technician
 - Christian-John Monias, CNYC Multi-Media Technician
- Our projects and meetings employed 12 youth for short term services (note-takers, labourers, local event coordination, other services such as catering or video production).
- Our direct outreach was 244 individuals through our main projects where youth represented 81% of participation. We noted an increase of participation by making our events open and inclusive for youth to bring their friends and family. The median age of our participants is X years old.
- Here is a general portrait of their participation, including proportion of participants per community, frequency of attendance, and age categories.



**Figure 7. Participation per community for total participation (244)
(Inclusive of non-youth age categories)**

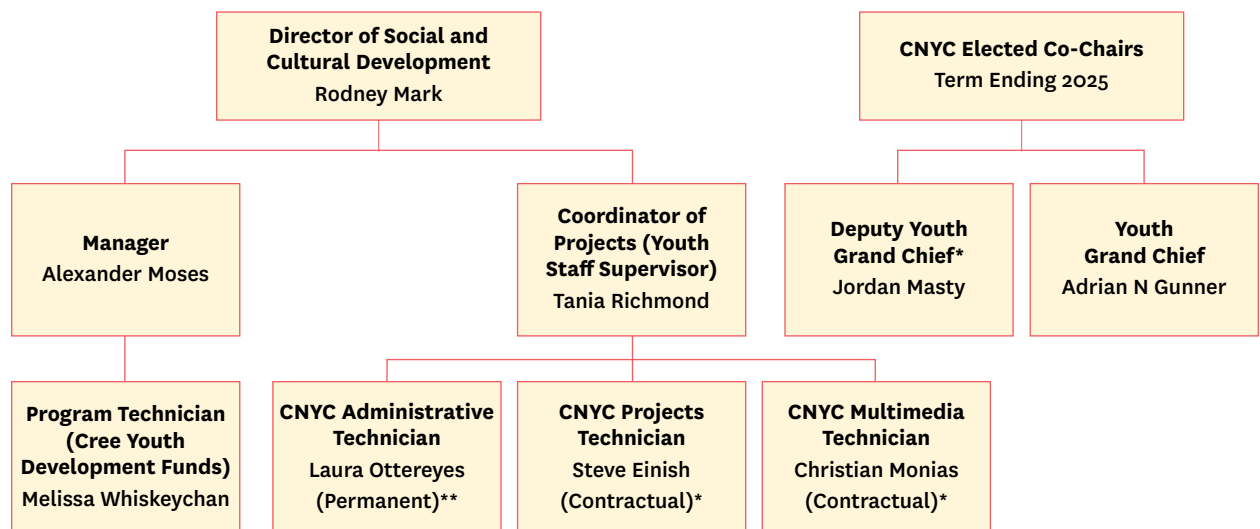


**Figure 8. Frequency of attendance for total participation (244)
(Inclusive of non-youth age categories)**



Jordan Masty, Tania Richmond, Adrian N. Gunner, CJ Monias, Steve Einish
Missing: Laura Ottereyes

The Youth Crew and Other Support Staff



* Funded by CNYC Special Projects (EELP Funds – Surplus)

** Funded by agreement with Secrétariat à la jeunesse



Meetings for 2023-2024

The Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the elected local youth chief from each of the 10 Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee alongside their local youth coordinators or proxies. Together, they work on the development of CNYC led initiatives that aim to foster the empowerment of youth throughout Eeyou Istchee.

During these meetings, Board and Executive Committee members also get to practice their presentation, facilitation, and debate skills when campaigning to host an event and sharing community and representation updates.

Table 6 shows an overview of the meetings that were held over the course of the 2023-2024 fiscal year which were mainly held virtually due to the forest fire season and security restrictions:

Table 6. Meetings, 2023-2024

Board of Directors	
April 18, 2023	Virtual
April 26, 2023	Virtual
June 13-15, 2023	Virtual
August 17, 2023	Virtual
October 12, 2023	Virtual
November 6-8, 2023	Montreal
January 23-25, 2024	Oujé-Bougoumou
Executive Committee	
February 12, 2024	Virtual
February 24, 2024	Quebec City

Top Left Photo: Executive Committee preparing for the Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit

Top Right Photo: Board of Directors – Oujé-Bougoumou (January 2024)

Bottom Photo: Board of Directors – Montreal (November 2023)



Representation

As a part of their mandate, the elected co-chairs of the CNYC also provide regional representation for youth matters. Other representatives are also elected within the Board of Directors to sit on various committees and boards. Shared responsibility of representation has allowed the CNYC to be

in up to 3 places at once (December 2023), further ensuring the inclusion of youth voices and perspectives in ongoing discussions on different matters.

From April 2023 to March 2024, the CNYC provided representation at 24 different meetings (see Table 7).

Table 7. Meetings, 2023-2024

Occasion	Date	Location
Advisory Committee “Forging the path forward”	April 4, 2023	Virtual
ASDAC Committee	April 12-13, 2023	Virtual
CSB Post-Secondary Student Conference	April 21-23, 2023	Ottawa
Department Meeting – Social & Cultural Dept.	May 23-25, 2023	Gatineau
SAJ Partners Meeting	May 30-31, 2023	Quebec City
Initial Summer Games Proposal Meeting	June 22, 2023	Virtual
EISRA Summer Games Partnership Meeting	June 28, 2023	Gatineau
Nishiiyu Council of Elders	August 8, 2023	Amos
Council Board – GCC(EI)/CNG	August 9, 2023	Virtual
CTA Summit – Inland	August 15-16, 2023	Mistissini
Cree Youth Protection Act – Task Force Commission launch	September 7, 2023	Mistissini
Council Board – GCC(EI)/CNG	September 20-21, 2023	Chisasibi
Joint Board Meeting between CSB & CHBSSJB	October 16, 2023	Montreal
SAES Graduation	October 19, 2023	Montreal
GCC(EI)/CNG Annual General Assembly	October 24-25, 2023	Eastmain
Eeyou Eenou Community Foundation	November 9, 2023	Virtual
Eeyou Eenou Community Foundation & Tripartite Meeting	November 20, 2023	Virtual
Council Board – GCC(EI)/CNG	December 6-7, 2023	Gatineau
ASDAC Committee	December 6-7, 2023	Virtual
Cree Trappers Association – Board of Directors	December 5-7, 2023	Gatineau
Board of Compensation Presentation	March 13, 2024	Virtual
Forum on Research in Eeyou Istchee	March 19, 2023	Oujé-Bougoumou
Council Board – GCC(EI)/CNG	March 20, 2024	Chibougamau
ASDAC	March 27-28, 2024	Virtual



Top Left Photo: Executive Committee preparing for the Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit



Top Right Photo: Board of Directors – Oujé-Bougoumou (January 2024)

Bottom Photo: Board of Directors – Montreal (November 2023)





34th Annual General Assembly

Youth Annual General Assemblies provide a space for young people to learn more about governance, representing their communities at a regional level, and exercising their role as advocates within the Cree nation. This year's edition included a visit to Fort-George, big discussions on matters of development, and three major resolutions to further develop partnerships and inclusion of youth voices.

Highlight of resolutions:

- Request for M.O.U.s between the CNYC and the Cree Health Board and another with the Cree School Board
- Request for a regional tour and special assembly regarding La Grande Alliance and to pursue discussions regarding development in Eeyou Istchee

Not including the local talent that was showcased during our entertainment night, this event employed a total of 9 local youth for short term services such as labour, catering, etc.

We would like to thank the following:

- Catherine Washipabano (Local Event Coordinator)
- Mark Chiskamish (Local Event Assistant)
- Janie & Roderick Pachano (our ex-officio Elders)
- HLG Entertainment
- Our guests and observers (including MoCreebec Youth, First Nations Youth Network of Quebec, Qarjuit Youth Council).





Urban/Post-Secondary Tour

Following their community tour, a request was made for the CNYC team to visit the post-secondary students and youth living in urban centres out of the Eeyou Istchee region. A total of three stops (Montreal, Ottawa/Gatineau, and North Bay). Out of the 161 participants, 70% were youth between the ages of 13 to 35. By making it open and inclusive, many of the attendees brought their children under the age of 13, representing 14% of attendance. Those over 35 years of age (16%) were either parents who brought in their families to facilitate the participation of their children or were the spouse of someone within the target demographic we represent.

The evening's activities consisted of short presentations from various departments as well as entertainment such as comedy, live music performances, and games.

We would like to thank the following departments who sent their youth staff to tag along with us on tour to present the opportunities and resources each of them offers:

- Department of Commerce & Industry
- Department of Human Resources
- Eeyou Eeou Police Force

Figure 9. Total Attendance per Tour Stop

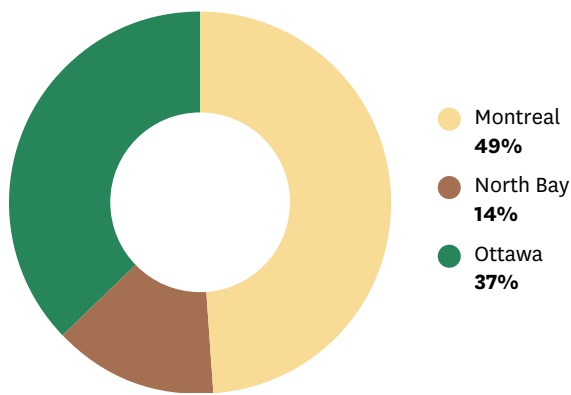


Figure 10. Total Attendance per Age Group

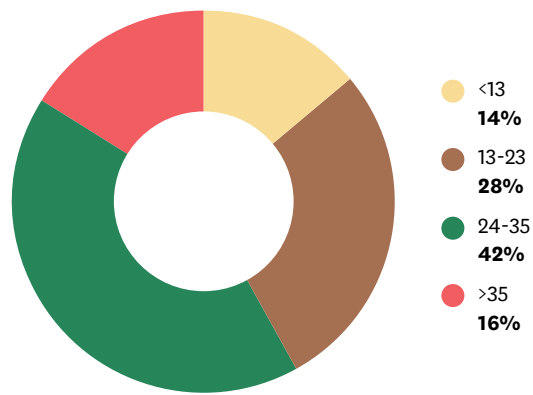
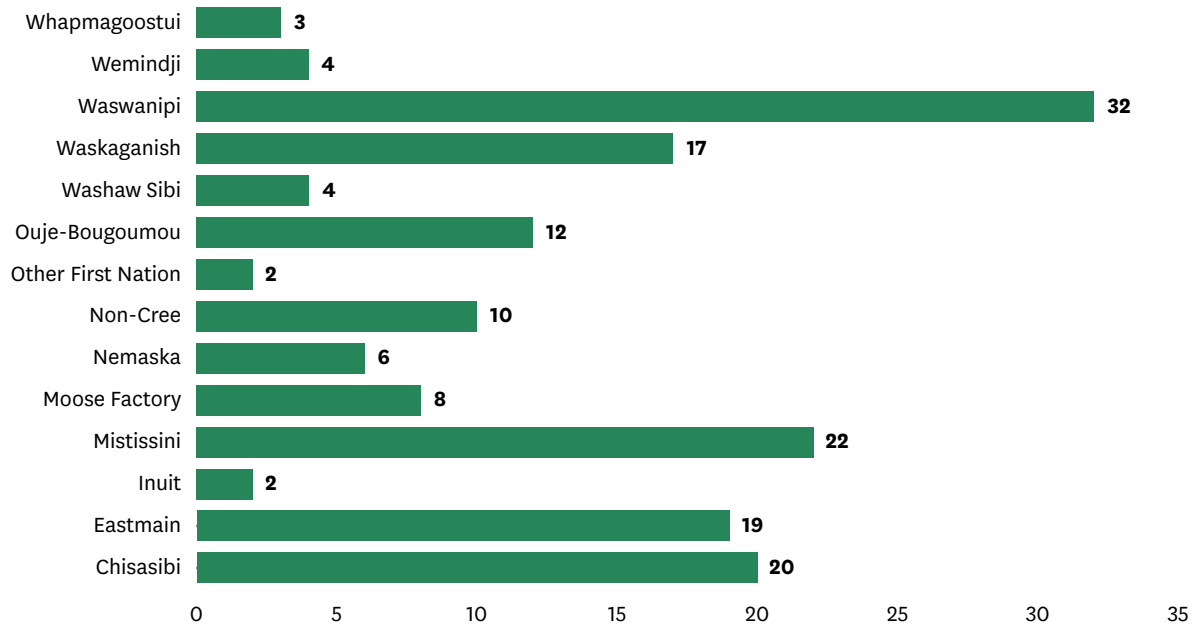


Figure 11. Total Attendance per Community



Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit

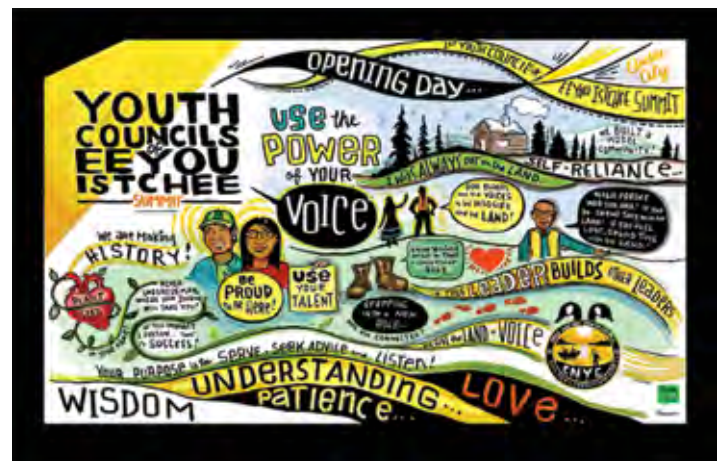
February 25th to 27th, 2024, the first edition of the Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit took place in Quebec City. The event gathered youth councillors and development co-ordinators who deliver services locally. The overarching goal of the summit was to provide a networking space, workshops, and inspire young leaders to pursue their aspirations as youth representatives and community actors.

At a glance, this event:

- Brought together 72 individuals who work directly with youth at a local level, 94% of which were youth between the ages of 13 to 35 years old.
- Gathered 17 entities and organizations for booths, presentations and workshops.
- Provided 8 different types of workshops, varying from personal capacity reinforcement to dialogue-based sessions on matters of Cree governance and development.

We would like to thank:

- Our extraordinary Master of Ceremonies, Mooselegs (Brent Edwards)!
- All the speakers: Paul John Murdoch, Dr. Sarah Pash, Liam Swallow, Jade Mukash, Bertie Wapachee, Rosalie Labillois.
- All the department and entities who provided booths and presentations.
- Those who provided workshops: Grand Chief Mandy-Gull Masty, Cree Language Commission, Cree Youth Protection Commission, La Grande Alliance, Dept. of Social & Cultural Development, Jordan Bear Consulting, Jade Mukash, Apatisiwin Skills & Development.
- ThinkLink Graphic Recording service
- Cree Health Board for sponsoring \$5,000 to our event, which covered the purchase of traditional crafts from the Wachiya Store (Cree Native Arts & Crafts association)



Overview of Upcoming Projects for 2024-2025

Eeyou Istchee Summer Games

Host: Cree Nation of Mistissini

Dates: July 14-21, 2024

35th Annual General Assembly (in Joulac)

Host: Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi

Dates: August 6-8, 2024

JBNQA Treaty Negotiation

Dates: November 9-11, 2024

In partnership with the Gordon Foundation

Urban/Post-Secondary Tour 2024-2025

- Ottawa/Gatineau (November 11, 2024)
- Montreal (Date TBD)
- North Bay (Date TBD)
- Val d'Or (Date TBD)

7th Inspire Hope Conference

Host: Cree Nation of Nemaska

Dates: TBD (Fall 2024 or Winter 2025)

Journey Through our Heart (Winter Journey)

Dates: January 2025 (Target)

OUTREACH AND WELLNESS

Miyupimaatisiin Committees' Training and Planning Session

The Miyupimaatisiin Committees' Training and Planning Session, met from February 20 to 22, 2024, at the Double-Tree by Hilton in Montreal, Quebec. It emerged as a pivotal event in the ongoing collaboration between the Cree Nation Government (CNG), the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), and the Cree School Board (CSB). Stemming from the groundbreaking agreement signed on September 21, 2023, this session aimed to strengthen grassroots initiatives by establishing and fortifying local Miyupimaatisiin Committees throughout Eeyou Istchee. These committees serve as frontline advocates in addressing pressing health and social concerns and play a vital role in advancing the strategic regional plan outlined by the CBHSSJB.

We are pleased to present the Report of the Regional Miyupimaatisiin Committees' Training and Planning Session.

The three-day event commenced with introductions, an opening prayer, and a comprehensive review of the agenda, setting a collaborative tone for the session. Distinguished leaders gathered to share, welcome and present, highlighting the collective commitment of regional entities to community empowerment and development. The session covered many important aspects necessary for Miyupimaatisiin Committee implementation including:

- Governance Documentation: Providing a sample Terms of Reference.
- Law for Miyupimaatisiin Committees. Further, participants engaged in an interactive workshop developing Mission and Vision Statements, ensuring alignment with overarching regional objectives.

- Exploring Funding Resources and Opportunities: Presenters from various entities, including the Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) and CBHSSJB explained available funding opportunities and strategies for accessing resources to support committee initiatives.
- Analyzing Key Data and Determinants: Expert presentations explained relevant data and determinants impacting community health, providing invaluable insights to inform evidence-based decision-making.
- Training on Action Plan Development, Budgeting and Data Analysis.
- Partnership Management: Training and templates equipped participants with practical tools and methodologies to develop actionable plans, manage budgets effectively, and compile and analyze data to drive informed interventions.
- Workshops on Strategic Processes: Community breakout sessions facilitated by consultants from the Cree Nation of Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation emphasized strategic processes, partnership development, and best practices to enhance committee efficiency and effectiveness.

The Miyupimaatisiin Committees' Training and Planning Session highlighted several noteworthy achievements, including:

- Organizational Collaboration: The event brought together the CNG, CBHSSJB, and CSB, signifying a united front in addressing community concerns and fostering holistic development.
- Proposing Governance Frameworks: Sample Terms of Reference and a Miyupimaatisiin Committee Law was presented to support local governance, ensuring cohesion and alignment with regional needs.
- Empowerment through Capacity Building: Training sessions and workshops empowered committee members with important skills, equipping them to navigate complex health and social challenges proficiently and drive sustainable change within their communities.
- High Engagement: Participants' engagement and positive feedback highlighted a strong sense of readiness to implement acquired knowledge and strategies within their respective communities. In total, there were over 60 Miyupimaatisiin Committee members in attendance.

The event received positive feedback from members of the Miyupimaatisiin Committees. To maintain momentum and support ongoing commitment to community health and social issues, follow-up training sessions and workshops are planned to further enhance the capacity of the committees. The Regional Miyupimaatisiin Committees' Training and Planning Session was a success in bringing together community members, leaders, and stakeholders to work towards the common goal of improving the well-being of all individuals in Eeyou Istchee.

The partnership between CNG, CNHSSJB and CSB continues to strengthen, ensuring that communities have the support and resources they need to address local concerns and promote a healthier, more prosperous future for all.





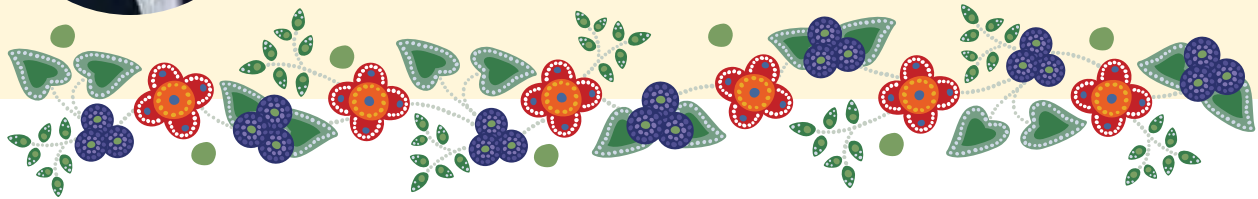
Photo: Katherine Dehm





FORESTRY

Message from the Director **Gillman Ottereyes**



I AM PLEASED TO SHARE SOME OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES THAT THE DEPARTMENT ENCOUNTERED IN 2023-24. NOT SURPRISINGLY, LAST SUMMER’S FOREST FIRES DOMINATED OUR WORK WITH EVERY MEMBER OF THE STAFF BEING IMPLICATED IN TRACKING THE FIRES AS THEY BURNED: DOCUMENTING THE DAMAGE TO CREE TRAPLINES AFTER THE FIRES, ENGAGING IN FIRE SALVAGE PLAN ANALYSIS AND CONSULTATIONS THROUGH SUMMER AND FALL, WITH FOLLOW-UP MONITORING OCCURRING IN THE WINTER MONTHS.

 **13**
EMPLOYEES

I am extremely proud of how the department rallied to complete the consultations for 12 fire salvage plans during this time. This surpassed any other region in Quebec and was made possible through Amendment Six of the *Paix des Braves Agreement* and its new section (C-5) with specific rules for salvage logging in Eeyou Istchee. This is unique to our region, allowing us to engage in planning and consultations in an expedited fashion while other groups and regions were still negotiating the parameters of fire salvage logging.

Another reason for our success was stellar cooperation from the local community Joint Working Groups and most importantly, the land users who participated in the consultations despite witnessing catastrophic losses to their traplines. It appeared that everyone understood the importance of exploiting the abundance of burned timber rather than continuing to harvest unburned trees.

Aside from the forest fires, we were able to conclude negotiations on a funding renewal agreement for the Collaborative Forest Management Regime with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MRNF). The Collaborative Regime was introduced in the governance agreement from 2012 and provides the possibility for the Cree Nation Government to assume a partnership in forest management planning for Category II lands. Negotiation on how this collaboration was to be conducted has carried on for many years and despite

numerous challenges our senior negotiators were able to conclude a framework agreement in March.

In contrast to this achievement, we are still pushing the MRNF for a set of meaningful Wildlife Habitat Development Directives. These Directives are aimed at providing additional tools for forest managers to reduce the impact that commercial forestry has on wildlife habitats and remain an outstanding commitment from the *Paix des Braves Agreement*.

In the first quarter, Marie-Pier Jean accepted a promotion from her position as GIS Analyst to become our Coordinator of Forest Monitoring. Since this time, she has been busy designing monitoring protocols and scheduling for our two Field Monitors. Additionally, she has been collaborating with Drew Hannen, our new GIS Analyst to develop a base mapping platform that can be used in conjunction with specially designed field tablets. This will improve the efficiency of our work as field monitoring data will be uploaded automatically to the department’s data system. In February, Cherish Gull-Cooper began working as our new office receptionist.

Finally, I am pleased to announce our move to the new office in March. Located next to the Band office in Waswanipi, this office will enable us to continue to provide professional service for the Cree people. I encourage everyone to stop by and visit if you have the time. It was a challenging year for the Forestry Department, and I am pleased with the progress the team has made, particularly related to the challenges posed by the unprecedented forest fires last summer.

Gillman Ottereyes
Director of Forestry



MANDATE

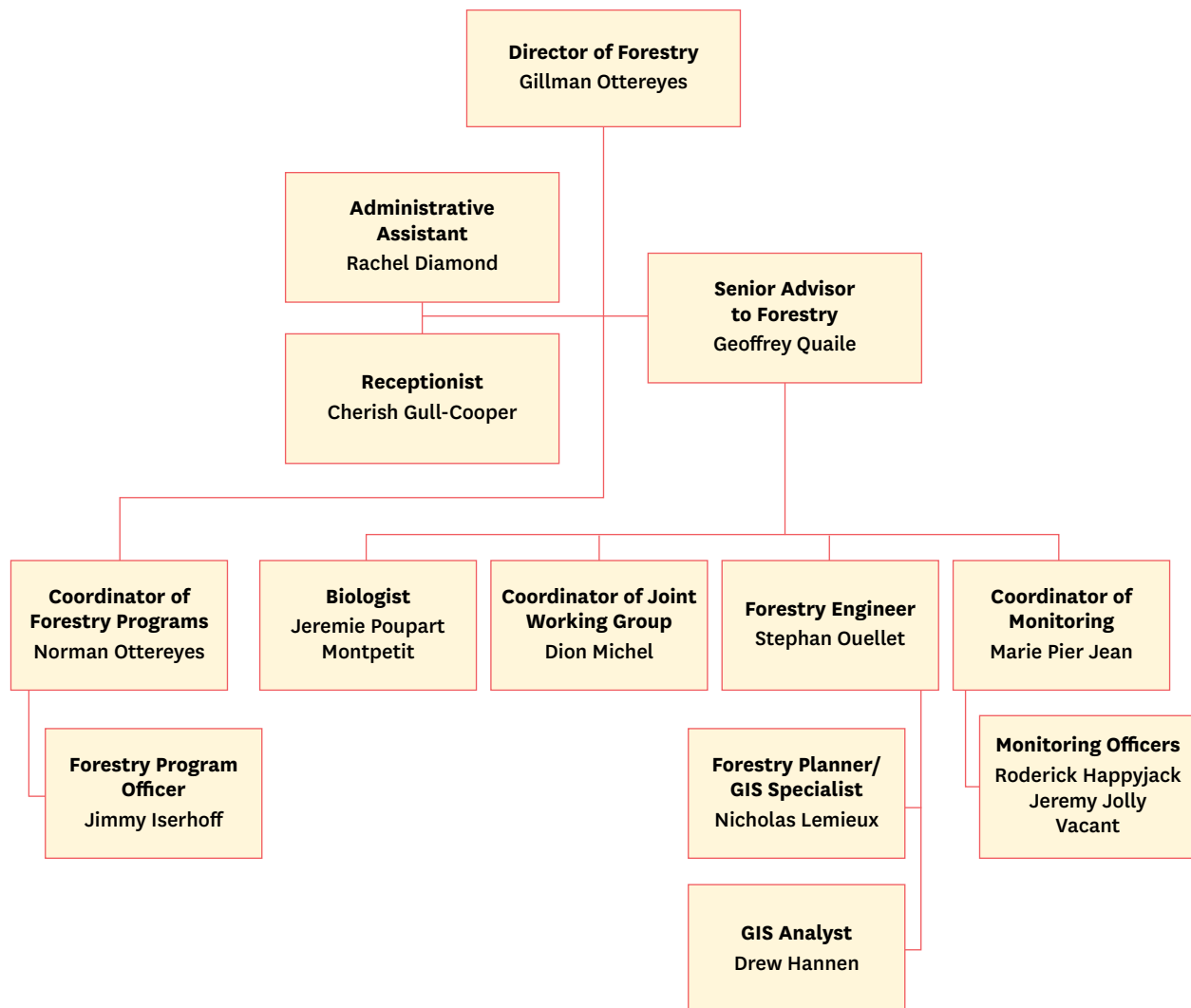
The Forestry Department's mandate is to implement the provisions of the Adapted Forestry Regime set out in the Paix des Braves Agreement. In its broadest terms the regime is designed to:

- Provide adaptations to the forestry law to better take into account the Cree traditional way of life;
- Provide greater integration of concerns relating to sustainable development;
- Provide participation, in the form of consultation, for the Crees in the various forestry planning and management processes.

In addition to these goals, the 2002 and 2015 Baril-Moses Agreements extend this regime to Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou traplines east of the height of land. The Cree Quebec governance agreement also provided for the establishment of a collaborative forest management regime over Category II lands.

The department also administers the Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program, which funds local projects to mitigate the impact of those land-users who are affected by forestry. Although not part of the Paix des Braves Agreement, this program is jointly funded through an agreement with Quebec and has been renewed 3 times since 2005.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT STAFF



CREE QUÉBEC FORESTRY BOARD

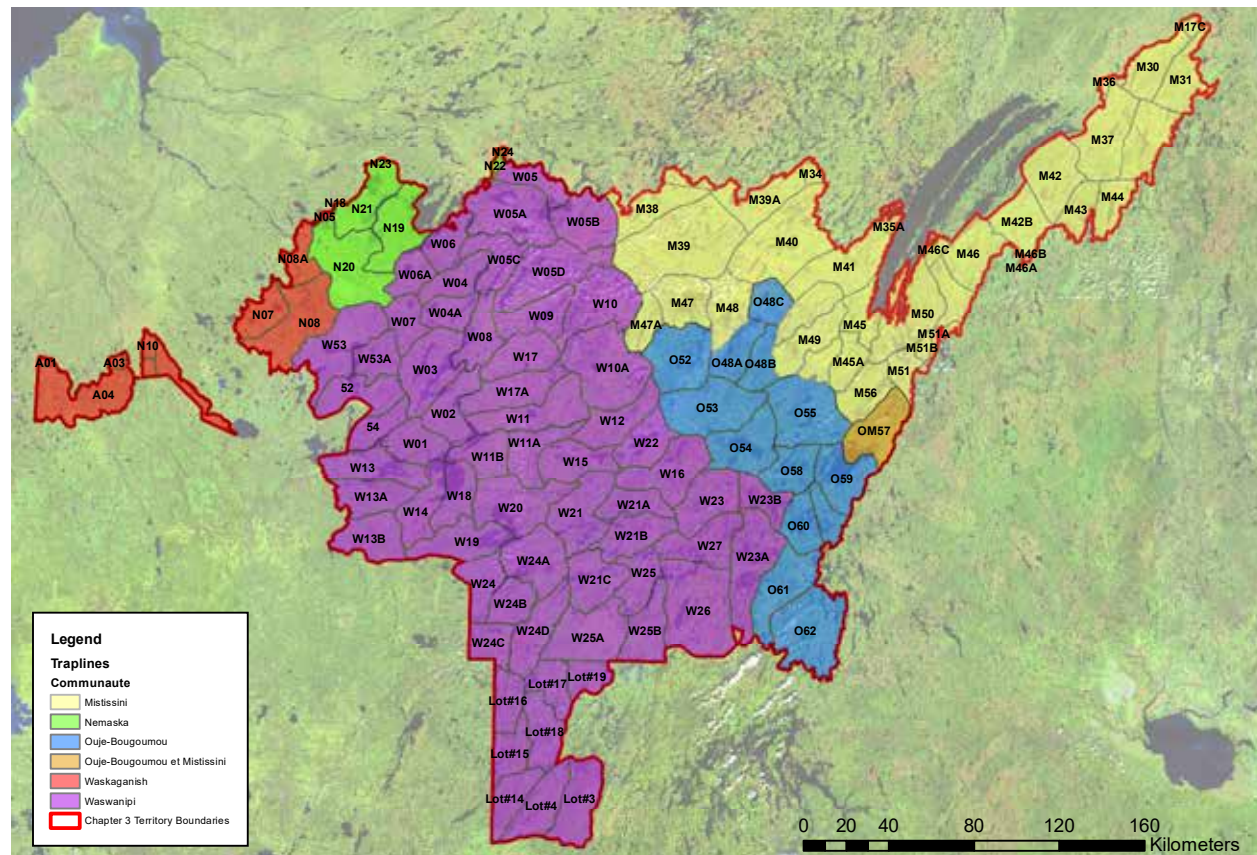
The Cree Quebec Forestry Board (CQFB) was established to monitor the implementation of the Adapted Forestry Regime of the *Paix des Braves Agreement*. The Board holds a minimum of four regular meetings each year. In June of 2023, Hervé Deschênes, the Board's long serving Chair since 2016, was replaced by Ronald Brizard. Mr. Brizard becomes the 5th Chair since the Board's inception in 2003.

In the past year, the Board continued its core projects which include a research collaboration with the University of McGill on a moose habitat study and the Board's ongoing monitoring framework which tracks progress on a variety of implementation issues related the Adapted Forestry Regime. The new Chair also oversaw the conciliation of a conflict for trapline W-23A in the fall. This marked the 2nd time the formal conciliation mechanism has been used in the 22 years that the Adapted Forest Regime has been in place.

FORESTRY PLANNING

Cree Communities Impacted by Forestry

Traplines within the Chapter 3 Territory



Traplines within the Chapter 3 territory Legend Traplines Communities Mistissini, Nemaska, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waskaganish, Waswanipi

Table 1. Traplines affected by Forestry Activity 2023-2024

Community (Traplines)	Harvesting		Roads		Silvicultural	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Waswanipi (62)	30	32	30	32	53	9
Mistissini (31)	5	26	5	26	23	8
Ouje-Bougoumou (13) (O/M-57)	6	7	6	7	13	0
Nemaska (7)	0	7	0	7	0	7
Waskaganish (3)	0	3	0	3	0	3
Total (116)	41	75	41	75	83	33



Paix des Braves Silviculture Allocation

Through amendment six of the *Paix des Braves Agreement*, the Crees were able to secure 15% percent of the silvicultural budget on an annual basis. In 2023-24 additional funding was made available for the region. This year the MRNF notified the

Industry and Commerce Department of an additional amount of funding and with assistance from our Forestry Engineer, Stephane Ouellet, these funds were distributed among Cree forest service companies.

Table 2. Budget distribution for Cree silvicultural enterprises 2023*

Enterprise	Budget (\$)	% of the budget
Staakun Enterprise	1,834,801	75
Dooden	202,271	8
Weshthau	0	0
Miiyunakutaw	400,378	16
Eenatuk Forestry	0	0
Total	2,437,450	100

*\$987,098 was added to budget

Table 3. Proposed distribution for Cree silvicultural enterprises 2024*

Enterprise	Budget (\$)	% of the budget
Staakun Enterprise	1,672,144	58
Dooden	202,271	7
Weshthau	200,00	7
Miiyunakutaw	400,378	14
Eenatuk Forestry	375,589	13
Total	2,850,382	100

*\$987,098 was added to budget



FOREST FIRES

Hot dry spring conditions across Canada led to an unparalleled number of forest fires in 2023. Beginning in early June, forest fires burned out of control in 10 provinces with Quebec suffering the highest amount of disturbance with nearly 5 million hectares burned. Eighty-seven percent of the fires in Quebec fell within Eeyou Istchee, requiring the evacuation (or partial) of 5 Cree communities. Three Jamesian communities were also evacuated. Throughout the summer and fall months, our department Biologist, Jérémie Poupart Montpetit diligently tracked and analyzed the fires' impact on Eeyou Istchee.

Fire Impacts

In addition to social disruptions, the fires caused significant financial losses for the forestry industry with nearly fifteen percent of the region's forest burning. It is estimated that the fires consumed approximately 10 years of annual forest harvesting which is significant when considering that it will take 70 to 100 years to replace these forests. According to the Chief Forester's estimates, 105,040 ha of regenerating forests were consumed by fires. These "regeneration accidents" create further unexpected delays in forest renewal and compelled the Chief Forester to revise the long-term timber supply outlook.

Table 4. Eeyou Istchee Impacted by Forest Fires

Eeyou Istchee Land Mass				
Community	Affected Traplines	Total Lands (Ha)	Burnt lands (Ha)	Burnt Land %
Mistissini	43/81	10,111,346.55	799,608.50	7.91
Chisasibi	31/41	6,351,784.00	698,563.03	11.00
Eastmain	12/15	1,312,634.71	74,576.08	5.68
Nemaska	6/15	1,288,636.09	39,031.76	3.03
Ouje-Bougoumou	8/14	896,670.38	28,776.32	3.21
Waskaganish	26/37	2,844,436.43	365,092.02	12.84
Waswanipi	36/62	3,294,263.32	489,799.41	14.87
Wemindji	18/20	2,427,020.61	1,230,398.33	50.70
Whapmagoostui	5/26	5,511,102.13	15,923.97	0.29
Total	59.5	34,037,894.23	3,741,769.41	10.99

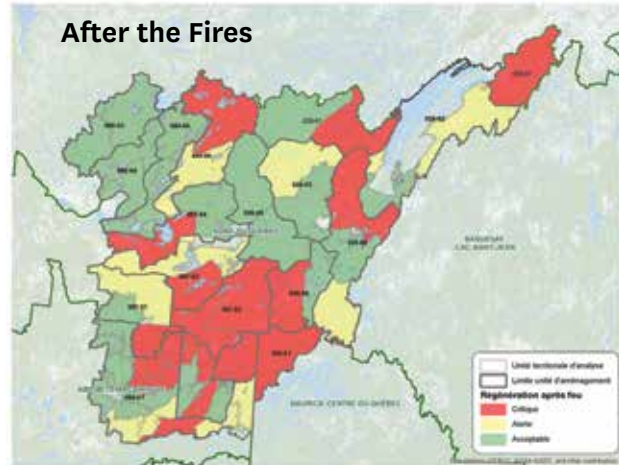
Note - 87.6% of Fires in Québec for 2023 were in Eeyou Istchee

Chapter 3 Forestry Areas (Productive Lands)				
Community	Affected Traplines	Total Lands (Ha)	Burnt lands (Ha)	Burnt Land %
Mistissini	16/30	773,564.3	112,475.5	14.5
Nemaska	0/5	59,029.5	0.0	0.0
Ouje-Bougoumou	5/11	449,075.9	12,762.2	2.8
Waskaganish	1/4	75,497.7	13,016.2	17.2
Waswanipi	36/62	2,362,699.8	373,170.2	15.8
Chapter 3 Total	58/115	3,759,907.2	511,424.2	13.6

Baril Moses Forestry Areas (Productive Lands)				
Community	Affected Traplines	Total Lands (Ha)	Burnt lands (Ha)	Burnt Land %
Mistissini	7/9	427,340.97	64,475.14	15.09
Ouje-Bougoumou	0/5	100,859.76	0.00	0.00
Baril-Moses Total	7/14	528,200.73	64475.14	12.21



Status of Regeneration Before and After the Fires



Courtesy of the office of the Chief Forester

Late in December, the Chief Forester revised the timber supply portrait for Eeyou Istchee and reduced the annual allowable cut (AAC) by 500,200 m³ per year. This represents a 17% reduction to the existing wood supply even though the Chief Forester admits that a full accounting of the fire loss would be 608,400 m³ per year or nearly 25% of the AAC.

In communication with the Chief Forester, our Forest Engineer, Stéphane Ouellet, was informed that the AAC revision was conservative due to the expectation of future supply gains through silvicultural work and further refinement of available data. This calculation is something we must closely monitor in the coming years, because on paper the AAC is clearly not sustainable. Relying on projected unrealized silvicultural gains is analogous to estimating long range debt cost with variable interest rates. Essentially it wagers on future silvicultural growth while ignoring the risks posed by climate change and increased fire loss. Moreover, it lacks any consideration for the additional stress put on the region's wildlife populations.

Forest Fire Salvage Plans

With so much forest lost to fire, it was important to expedite salvage planning to:

- Minimize financial losses as burned timber becomes infested with insects that quickly degrade quality of the forest products,
- Minimize unnecessary greenwood harvesting reducing further forest loss,
- Ensure that section C-5 of the Paix des Braves Agreement is properly implemented, and land users' concerns were properly accounted for.

Beginning in mid-July, while many of the fires were still burning, the department geared up for these fire salvage plans by closely tracking available remote sensing data to pinpoint the location of the fires and the amount of damage that occurred to Cree traplines on a weekly basis. This information was shared with local MRNF planners in validation of their preliminary analysis. This synergy continued throughout the planning process and by late August all regional forest companies were salvaging burned wood. By late

September consultations for 12 fire salvage plans had been completed which required meeting the Tallymen and family members for over 40 traplines in Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini.

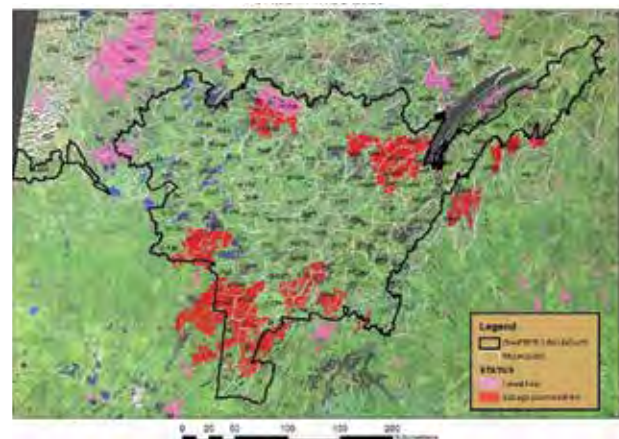
WILDLIFE

Similar to last year, the two priorities for wildlife and forest management were the Wildlife Habitat Development Directives and a woodland caribou protection plan. Jérémie Poupart Montpetit, the department's Biologist led the work for these files.

Wildlife Habitat Directives

The absence of an acceptable set of Wildlife Habitat Directives continues to represent an unfulfilled commitment of the Adapted Forestry Regime. After numerous extensions, the MRNF delivered its proposal for the Directives in July. After review and analysis, our team recommended to leadership to reject the proposal, essentially, because the Directives were a simple inventory of existing protection mechanisms already in place. Moreover, the application of many of these mechanisms are entirely at the discretion of MRNF Forest Planners. In our opinion, this interpretation

Forest Fires 2023



of provision 59 (C-4) falls short of providing “practical directives guiding the forest development planning process in order to foster the protection and development of wildlife habitats.”

In September, the Cree/Quebec negotiator, Richard Shecapio, formally notified the MRNF of the Cree Nation Government’s rejection of the MRNF proposal for the Directives. This rejection led to an impasse with the Grand Chief informing the Minister that the Cree Nation Government would not provide consent to any new forest management blocks outside of existing forest fire salvage plans. With a crisis looming, the MRNF accepted the Cree Nation Government’s proposal which limited all forestry operations for 2024-25 to forestry blocks accepted during the 2023-24 consultations. The majority of these previous forestry blocks remained unharvested due to the transition to forest salvage plans last summer.

In the absence of the Wildlife Habitat Directives, recycling previously unharvested approved blocks was a compromise, however the parties recognized that a permanent solution for the Directives is still required. Late in March, the MRNF acknowledged the Cree Nation Government’s concerns over their proposed Directives and committed to

developing a more fulsome set of Directives in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government in the next fiscal year.

Woodland Caribou in Chapter 3 Territory

After over 10 years of exploratory technical discussions with the MRNF, Quebec tabled an “Alternative” scenario for woodland caribou management in Eeyou Istchee in 2022. This proposal was to see the northern Forest Management Units set aside for caribou conservation, while preserving the mosaic harvest system unique to the Adapted Forestry Regime. Discussions for this proposal continued into the spring of 2023 with the MRNF requesting a firm endorsement by the Cree leadership by late June. This deadline coincided with the Federal Government’s legal demand date for Quebec’s woodland caribou plan.

However, this schedule was set aside by the forest fires that started in early June, the withdrawal of the Federal Government’s deadline for a caribou plan, and the transfer of wildlife responsibility to the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change. Following these events, the MRNF/Cree technical committee appears to have been dissolved.



Photo: Katherine Dehm



GIS ANALYST/DATA MANAGEMENT

Since starting with the Cree Nation Government Forestry Department in November 2023, our new GIS Analyst, Drew Hannen, has contributed to several departmental initiatives. This work includes the development of tools and applications aimed at enhancing the department’s monitoring efforts by improving the ability to visualize spatial data related to forestry, and through improved data collection and storage both within the department and at an organizational level with the Cree Nation Government’s Geospatial Strategy.

Development of Field Application

One of the significant accomplishments during the year was the development, with Marie-Pier Jean, Coordinator of Monitoring, of a field application designed to monitor:

- harmonization measures, complaints,
- Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement (CTAE) projects
- and sensitive areas within the territory covered by the adapted forestry regime.

Utilizing special field tablets, the application will enable real-time data collection, analysis, and reporting, while dispensing with manual GPS data entry and paper reports. Once fully implemented these tools should improve our monitoring efforts significantly. Once perfected, we hope to share the tablet and app with the local Cree Joint Working Groups thereby centralizing forestry field data.

Support for Joint Working Group

Further support for the Joint Working Groups will be provided through the development of custom interactive maps to visualize forestry-related mapping data for communities’ traplines. These maps will not only enhance the understanding of spatial relationships but also facilitate the collaborative decision-making processes. Through customized solutions and user-friendly interfaces, we aim to ensure that stakeholders can effectively explore and interpret complex geospatial information, ultimately contributing to informed decision-making and improved outcomes.

THE FIELD MONITORING PROGRAM

Following Marie-Pier Jean’s transition as the new Monitoring Coordinator, efforts for the monitoring team this year were focused on structuring workflows.



The first objective was to review collaboration with communities and improve our joint monitoring efforts. To facilitate this, our department field monitors (Jeremy Jolly and Roderick Happyjack), the Joint Working Group Coordinator (Dion Michel) and the Monitoring Coordinator set meeting schedules with the local Cree Joint Working Groups and community monitors. We meet with Waswanipi every month, Mistissini every two months, and Uje-Bougoumou, Nemaska and Waskaganish every three months.

Secondly, in September 2023 we received a request from our Director, Gillman Ottereyes, to begin monitoring all completed Cree Traditional Activity Enhancement (CTAE) projects, rather than simply performing annual spot-checks as before. This required face-to-face meetings with the community CTAE officers and local CTAE monitors and the Cree Nation Government Forestry Department Program Officer (Jimmy Iserhoff).

Finally, much work was devoted this year to improving our field tools and developing a new application for monitoring. We aim to continue this work next year and make these new technologies available to communities.

Over the course of 2023-24, our monitors have done a colossal amount of work visiting 57 traplines, following-up on 7 harmonization measures, surveying 456 sensitive areas, investigating 17 land user complaints, validating 21 completed CTAE projects as well as visiting 38 fire-affected locations.

Table 5. Monitoring of traplines 2023-2024

Community	Total Traplines	Harmonization Measures	Sensitive Areas	Complaints	CTAE	Impacted by Forest Fire
Waswanipi	34	4	184	13	8	20
Mistissini	18	1	265	3	10	18
Uje-Bougoumou	5	2	7	1	3	0
Nemaska	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waskaganish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	57	7	456	17	21	38



CREE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Context and Objectives of the Enhancement Agreement

The Cree Nation Government concluded the *Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement with the Government of Québec* (“Enhancement Agreement”) with the objectives of:

- Enhancing Cree traditional activities by reinforcing, on an operational basis, the exercise by the Cree of their hunting, fishing, and trapping activities while considering forestry activities.
- Complementing the implementation of certain harmonization measures resulting from the consultation mechanism of forest management activities providing various solutions as needed.
- Providing opportunities to enhance the use of the forest and its resources for Cree tallymen, Cree land users and the other members of eligible Communities.
- Encouraging greater self-sufficiency among Cree Tallymen and Cree land users in the implementation of projects funded by that Agreement.

Through the *Enhancement Agreement*, both the Government of Québec and the Cree Nation Government provide funding to support projects submitted by eligible commu-

nities (i.e. Community Submissions) that meet the above objectives of the *Enhancement Agreement* and related conditions.

Enhancement Funding 2023-24

The Cree Nation Government received Québec’s share of the program funding for 2023-24. Together with Cree Nation Government funding, three million six hundred and fifty thousand eight hundred and forty-eight dollars was disbursed on 748 projects for 107 traplines across the territory. The following chart shows a breakdown of disbursements by community.

Enhancement Projects

As mentioned, the main goal of the Enhancement Agreement is to conciliate changes due to forestry activities and address the practical needs of trappers. Projects eligible for funding include replacing or relocating facilities (camps, docks, etc.), constructing boat landings, upgrading sites of interest (gathering places, etc.), snow removal and road maintenance in cases where such activities facilitate access to a camp, projects that facilitate travel by trappers, and other measures that reinforce the exercise of hunting, fishing, and trapping activities. Also eligible for funding are stream enhancement work, beaver and muskrat relocation,

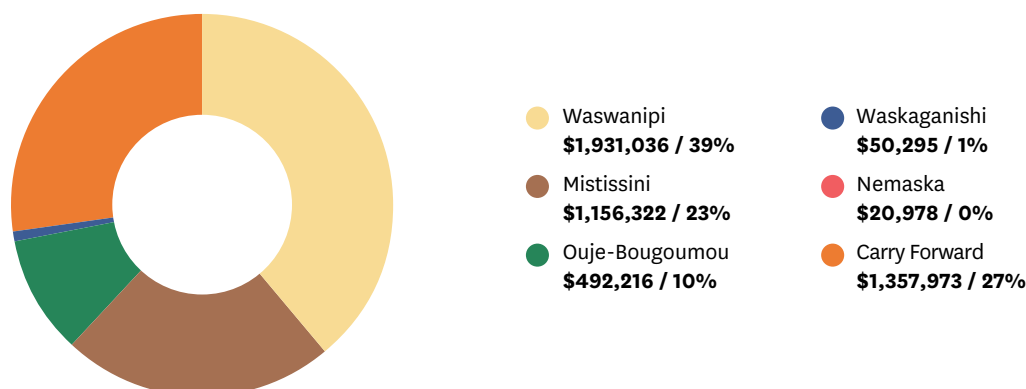
Table 6. Enhancement Funds Available and Disbursed 2023-2024

Community	Funds Available	Disbursements
Mistissini	\$1,283,342.81	\$1,156,322.92
Nemaska	\$152,555.00	\$20,978.00
Ouje-Bougoumou	\$599,228.68	\$492,216.37
Waskaganish	\$468,656.54	\$50,295.00
Waswanipi	\$2,505,038.77	\$1,931,036.44
Total Funds	\$5,008,821.80	\$3,650,848.73

Table 7. Enhancement Projects 2023-2024

Community	Traplines Enhanced	Total Projects
Waswanipi	59	494
Mistissini	35	184
Ouje-Bougoumou	11	63
Nemaska	1	3
Waskaganish	1	4
Totals	107	748

Figure 1. Enhancement Disbursements 2023-2024



spawning ground enhancement and related preparation projects, as well as trail network development, portage and snowmobile trail enhancement, silviculture work, and other wildlife habitat enhancement projects, such as moose yards – all projects that enhance the productivity of traplines and assist Cree land users in coping with the impacts of forestry.

Table 7 shows the total projects funded and traplines benefitted by the Enhancement Program in 2023-24.

Renewal of the Traditional Activities Enhancement Law

Following the renewal of the Enhancement Agreement with Quebec, it was necessary to revise our internal operating by-law. Passed by Council/Board in winter of 2024, the new Cree Nation Government Traditional Activities Enhancement Law sets out the parameters of implementation for the Enhancement Program.

Forest Information Management System (FIMS) Upgrades

A key part of administrating the Program is collaboration with the local community program officers. These officers use our FIMS platform to track project applications, bud-

gets, and approvals. To improve the delivery of this service we contracted Aammu Solutions to work with Strata360, in the development of upgrades to the system which makes it more accessible for our community collaborators. The Coordinator of Forestry Programs, Norman Ottereyes, continues to work on up-grades for the FIMS with Brian Lewis of Strata360.

Community Outreach

Although no information sessions were held in the communities in the past year, the Forestry Department continued to meet with the Community Forestry Program Officers on issues regarding the Forestry Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement. Three, two-day meetings took place in 2023-24.

Site Visits of all 5 communities

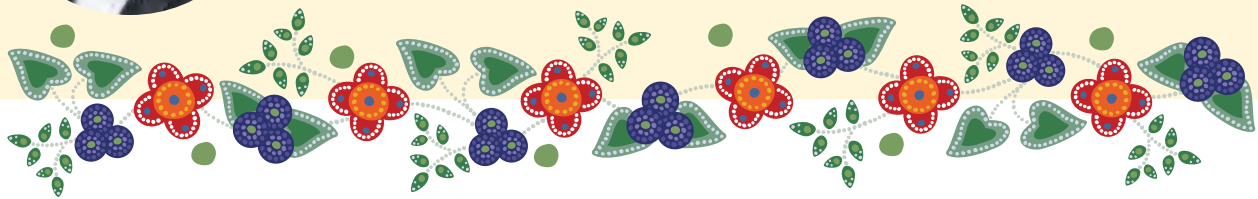
With a well-equipped Forestry Department of the Cree Nation Government monitoring crew, it was recommended to replace our system of random annual monitoring spot checks with a full monitoring program so that every project is reviewed. This change will improve the implementation and administration of the program significantly.





EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Message from the Police Director **Shannon Nakogee**



IT IS A PLEASURE TO SHARE WITH YOU ONCE AGAIN THE HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE FOR THE YEAR 2023-24.



Every year has its own set of accomplishments and challenges. We strive to ensure that communities have the best law-enforcement services in order to keep our families and homes safe. Here is an overview of how we have worked toward achieving our goals aligned within our mission.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to maintain peace, order and public security, to prevent and repress crime and offences under the law and Cree communities 'by-laws throughout Eeyou Istchee. In pursuing our mission, EEPF and its members ensure the safety of persons and property, safeguard rights and freedoms, as well as respect and remain attentive to the needs of victims. We partner strategically with key stakeholders to uphold the highest level of public security and social wellness for our people throughout the territory.

RECRUITMENT

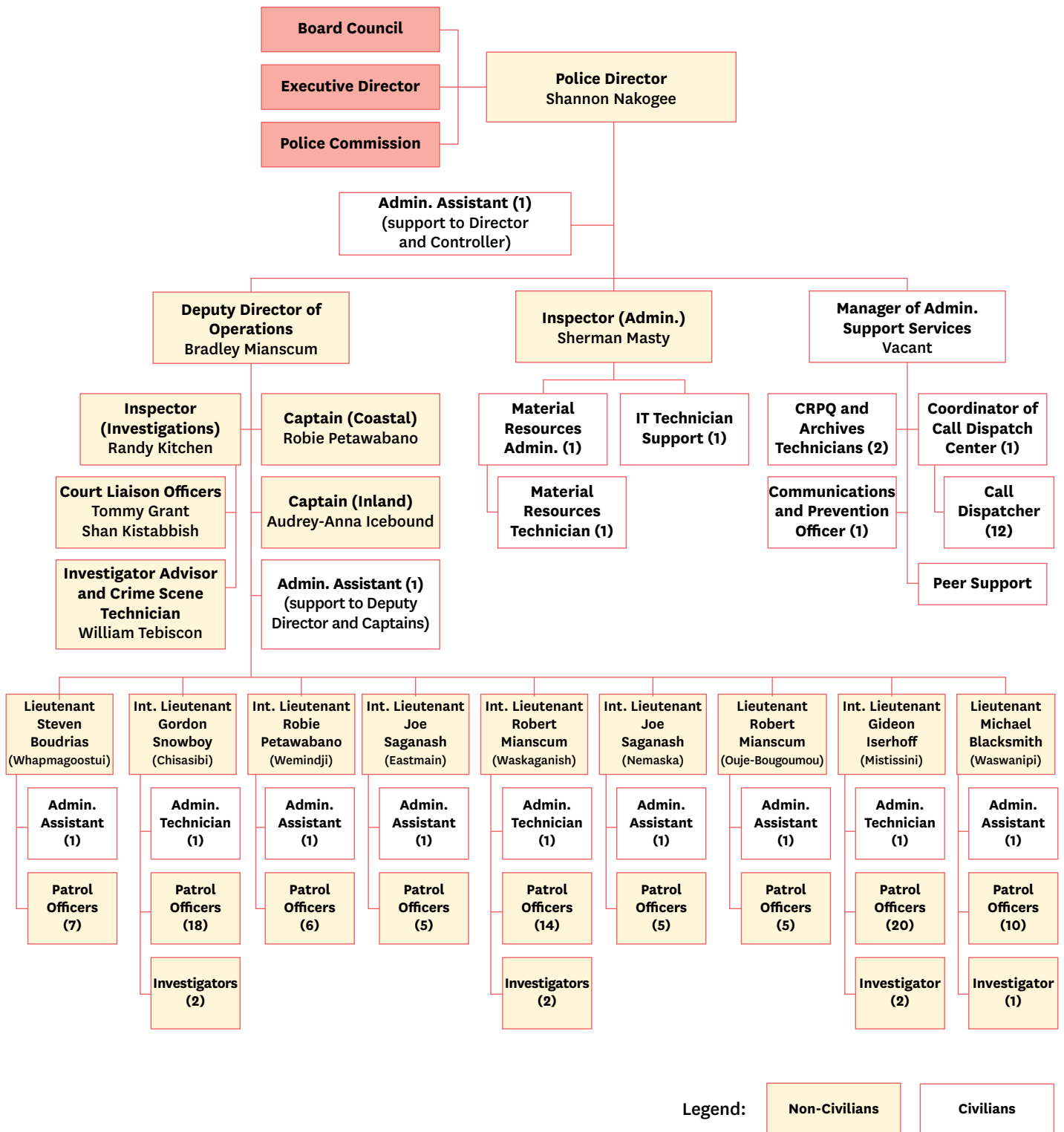
Members of EEPF continue to participate in various opportunities to promote police recruitment in all communities. With our Human Resources team, we have attended multiple career fairs throughout Eeyou Istchee. EEPF also continues to show support by visiting students enrolled in the Indigenous Police Technology program at the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue in Rouyn-Noranda. In November 2023, members of the senior management visited students, served a traditional meal while presentations by Officer Shawn Masty, Lt Michael Blacksmith, Deputy Director Bradley Mianscum and HR Manager Pauline Lameboy gave a wide scope of information, advice and words of encouragement.



Lt Michael Blacksmith



Figure 1. Eeyou Eenou Police Force Organizational Chart





Top Left Photo: CEGEP Ceremony for EEPF

Bottom Left Photo: Policing Graduates 2023

Bottom Right Photo: CEGEP Graduates Celebration



There was a total of 14 students enrolled in the new cohort to graduate in March 2025. Six special constables from the preceding group were in their final semester and preparing for the École National de Police du Québec (ENPQ). The CEGEP held a special evening ceremony to commemorate their completion of the program. Nicolet was a success for all six and one more from the previous group that also passed at the ENPQ. EEPF welcomed seven new full-fledged Eeyou officers to the team.

ADVANCEMENTS WITHIN EEPF

EEPf continues to build their senior management team by promoting current members that have demonstrated strong leadership skills and perseverance with decades of work in our communities. Lt Bradley Mianscum was promoted to the position of Deputy Director of Operations and Lt Randy Kitchen was promoted to Inspector of Criminal Investigations.



Lt Bradley Mianscum



Lt Randy Kitchen



TRAINING

EEPF has organized various training opportunities for all staff throughout the year. Not only does training help acquire new skills, it also helps us ensure that our officers are up to date with information and knowledge to better serve our communities. Patrol officers followed training on subjects such as conjugal and sexual violence; use of the taser; learning & practices (ENPQ to be instructor), basic criminal investigations (CPC) and the land based mental health workshop. All civilian staff followed trainings on time management and effective communications. As for the senior officers, management emergency planning, mental health and Conflict Competence Leadership training (CPC) were completed.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

In the past year we have taken a new and different approach to raising awareness and providing resources for our officers and our call center dispatchers. One-on-one psycho-social help is provided for those who may need some support, with a social worker travelling to the detachments to provide important counselling. We have also offered a land-based program to help our officers that would want to take time and reconnect with the land in their steps towards spiritual and psychological well-being.

CONTINUED ASSISTANCE FROM THE SÛRETÉ DU QUÉBEC

Since 2022, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) has been providing support to EEPF to help absorb the shortage of patrol officers. With a 21-day rotation of fly-in and fly-out schedule, 18 SQ officers continue to help EEPF in serving our communities.



SQ EEPF Pink Shirt Day



MEDAL CEREMONY 2023

Québec's Aboriginal Chiefs of Police Association held their annual medal ceremony on June 15th, 2023. The Eeyou Eenuu Police Force's medal recipients were Tommy Grant (30 years); Donna Rupert (20 years); Robie Petawabano (20 years); Gabriel Masty (20 years); Johnny Kawapit (20 years); Gordon Snowboy (15 years); Shannon Nakogee (15 years) and Michael Blacksmith (15 years). We would like to thank them for their dedication and commitment to the safety of the Cree Nation.

- 1. Donna Rupert
 - 2. Gordon Snowboy
 - 3. Johnny Kawapit
- Photo credit: Frederic Lavoie



- 4. Tommy Grant
 - 5. Michael Blacksmith
 - 6. Robie Petawabano
 - 7. Shannon Nakogee
- Photo credit: Frederic Lavoie



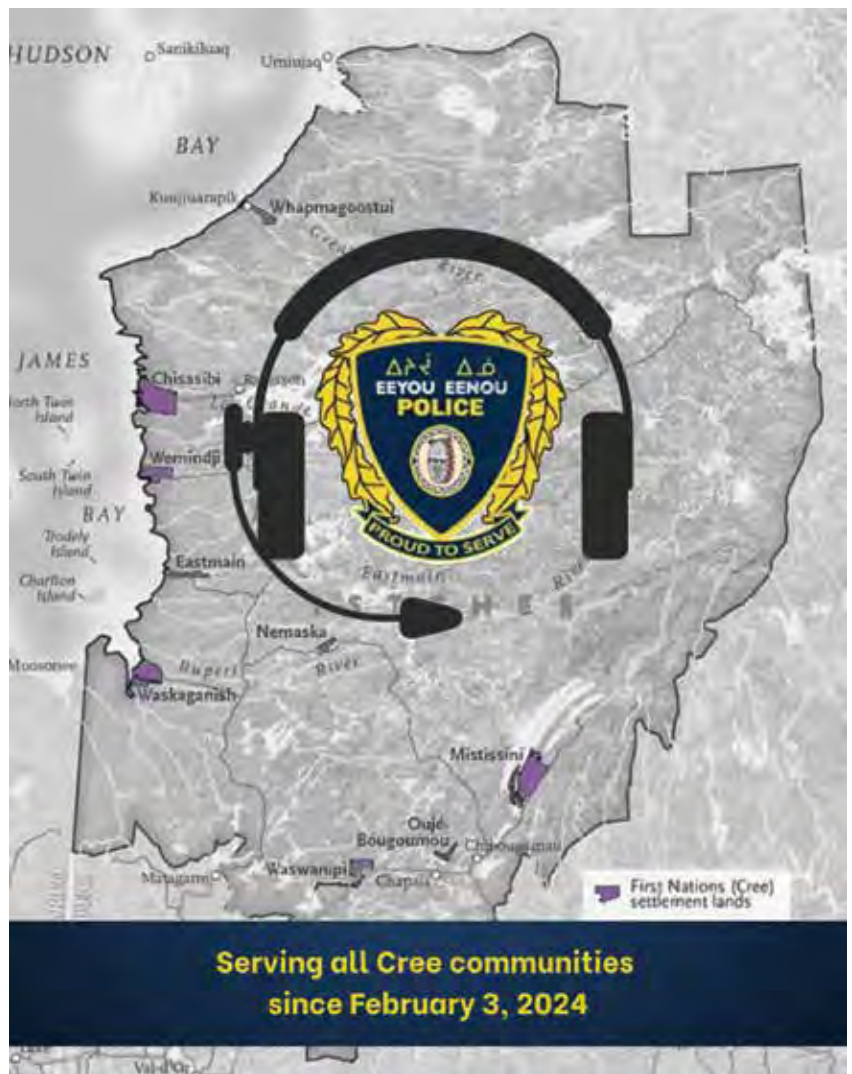


EEPF'S EXEMPLARY SERVICE AND RECOGNITION OF YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

On February 21, 2024 EEPF announced that we will be holding our very own award ceremony to celebrate our officers for their dedicated work in our communities and to honour the ones who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to serve and protect. Nominations for the Eeyou Ee'noo Police Force's First Annual Exemplary Service and Recognition of Years of Service Awards were received and the review process has begun. The very first award ceremony is planned to take place in the fall of 2024.

CALL DISPATCH CENTER

The Eeyou Ee'noo Police Force Call Dispatch Center continues to receive calls requesting police assistance. It is with great pleasure that we announce that since February 3 2024, the CDC now serves all nine communities.



PREVENTION

Our statistics show that officers and detachments' activities mostly consist of prevention work, being the top entries in our database. Outreach to schools, presence in community activities, interacting with community members and social media awareness are some of the many channels we use to raise awareness and connect with the population. Some events this past year include celebrating Children's Day; K9 demonstrations, presentations on Drugs and Alcohol's effects on the body; participating in the anti-bullying campaign, Pink Shirt Day and diverse social media content raising awareness on topics such as car theft, involuntary intoxication and fraud prevention and more.

Left Photo: Lt Boudrias on Fraud Prevention

Right Photo: K9 Demonstration in Waswanipi



FRAUD PREVENTION IDENTITY THEFT

What is identity theft?

Identity fraud is when a criminal steals information and pretends to be their victim. They **use personal information**, obtain government issued IDs to access services and finances.

Bank loans, mortgages and investments are some ways a person can have their financial **identity stolen**.

How to prevent this?

- Be very careful when sharing personal information.
- **Never provide your Social Insurance Number over the phone or internet.**
- Keep your user IDs, passwords and codes private.
- Immediately report lost or stolen wallet and IDs.
- Check government profiles to verify current address.
- If your identity has been compromised, you may also contact your bank.

For more information or to report a crime, please contact your local detachment.



SIGNED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

On February 8th, 2024, EEPF has signed a collective agreement with the Eeyou Eenu Police Association and the Fédération des Policiers et Policières Municipaux du Québec. It is a step forward in giving officers access to more resources and programs that will equip them toward a better-balanced environment and well-being.

DETACHMENTS TOUR

In the past year, along with Deputy Director Bradley Mianscum, Captain Audrey-Anna Icebound and Int Captain Robie Petawabano, we embarked on a community tour and visited all EEPF detachments. Seeing firsthand each detachment has allowed us to have a thorough overview of each of our communities, emphasizing our support to all personnel.

COLLABORATIONS AND WORKING GROUPS

Approaching the various issues that our communities face requires a holistic approach. We have collaborated and taken part in multiple working groups to address different matters that impact our communities. In working with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, we share knowledge and information that is valuable in our work. These exchanges allow us in our work to have a better insight and understanding of root causes of criminal behaviour, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and sharing resources and tools that will benefit the population.

INVESTIGATIONS

Within our criminal investigations, we continue our work towards dismantling drug trafficking in Eeyou Istchee. With 5 search warrants, our team has seized 821.58 grams of cocaine and 481 pills. To add to these numbers are other seizures that did not require a search warrant: 838.38 grams of cocaine, 114.3 grams of cannabis, 530.5 pills and 1 white rock consistent with crack cocaine. We have seized a combined total of 1.66 kilograms of cocaine. We would like to thank community members for their continued collaboration.



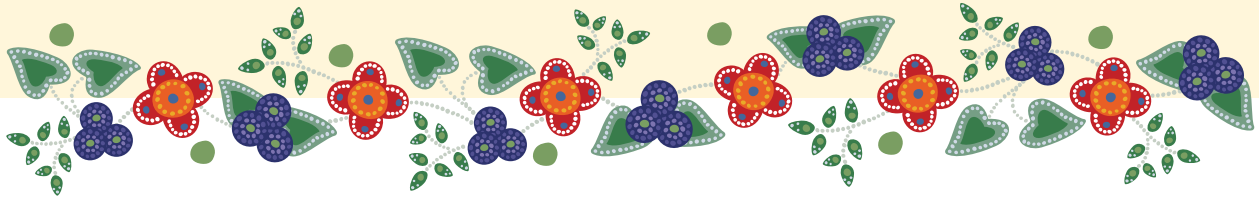
Lt Saganash at the NAAW Healing Week



EEPF Senior Officers



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Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
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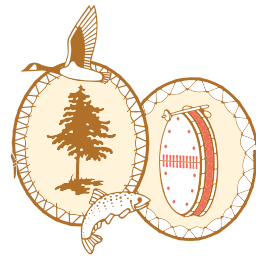
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GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT



Executive 2023-2024

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty
Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee
Chief Daisy House
Chief Christina Gilpin
Chief Gaston Cooper

Board/Council Members 2023-2024

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty
Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee

Chiefs

Chief Daisy House
Chief Raymond Shanoush
Chief Michael Petawabano
Chief Clarence Jolly Sr.
Chief Gaston Cooper
Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
Chief Greta Whiskeychan-Cheechoo
Chief Irene Neeposh
Chief Christina Gilpin
Chief Robbie Kawapit
Chief Allan Jolly

Corporate Services

Rita Blackned
Emma Coon Come
Paul John Murdoch
Edna Neeposh

Community Representatives

Christopher A. Napash
Daniel Mark-Stewart
John S. Matoush
John Henry Wapachee
Lance Cooper
Deputy Chief Adrianna Trapper*
Raymond Jolly
Romeo Saganash
Brant Blackned
Stanley George
Deputy Chief Kelly Kitchicappo**

**Rotating representative Betty Trapper*

***Rotating representative Michael Jolly*



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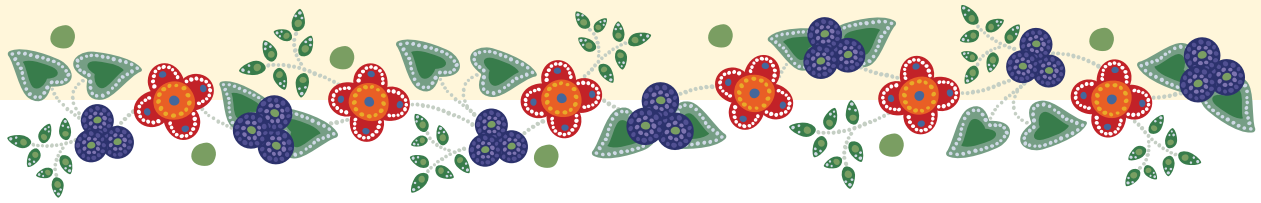
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Special thanks to all contributors

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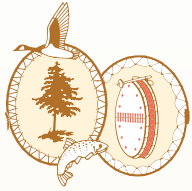
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