



# ·ꐱσⁱᵇᵈᵐ | WANISHKAAKWH | Wake Up Declaration on Climate Change in Eeyou Istchee

*“Climate change in Eeyou Istchee is occurring more rapidly than we realize [...] and it’s an area in which we need to be innovative in our response.”*

– Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

## 1. Context

We, a well-rounded and variegated group of representatives from the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, gathered in Oujé-Bougoumou in April 2024 for the **Cree Regional Climate Forum** to respond to the issue of climate change. Recognizing its impact on our way of life, we commit to holistic solutions guided by traditional knowledge and supported by all levels of governance through regulation and policy. We abide with natural law because this is how we, the Cree of Eeyou Istchee, have lived through the life cycle since time immemorial. Climate change compromises every aspect of our use and experiences of the land, and thus our vital traditional practices. Acting now, rather than merely reacting, will protect our future generations.

## 2. Definition

Climate change refers to long term shifts in temperature and weather patterns. These shifts can be both natural and anthropogenic. We, the Cree Nation, experience climate change through the full cycle of life and are impacted generation to generation. Climate change impacts Cree ways of life, knowledge and traditional understanding, and everyday activities related to both sustenance and cultural identity.

## 3. Vision & Mission

**We agree on the following:**

Our **vision** is that of a sustainable and resilient Eeyou Istchee that thrives by following the Traditional Knowledge of our ancestors while integrating innovative practices to protect our lands, waters and communities— today and for generations to come. A trailblazing Nation leading the way for Indigenous climate policy, setting the standard for effective adaptation and balance in the face of climate change impacts.

Our **mission** is to mobilize Eeyou Istchee and parties with interest in collaborative action to combat the impacts of Climate change, employing traditional knowledge and modern science to protect, preserve

and maintain our way of life, to live in harmony with nature through the challenges of a changing climate, with careful forethought for future generations.

## 4. Guiding Principles

**The pursuit of our vision must be based on the following principles:**

- Climate initiatives are Cree-led, integrating traditional and scientific knowledge.
- Effective collaboration with partners (including other Indigenous entities, industries, governments, and NGOs) is essential.
- Prioritize education and knowledge transmission within Cree communities.
- Pay special attention to the protection of wildlife, lands, and waters across our territory.

## 5. Goals

**Based on the principles stated above, the Cree Nation will aspire to:**

- Enhance climate change awareness and empower communities through education and engagement.
- Ensure meaningful community involvement at all stages of climate action projects.
- Expand climate and wildlife monitoring/research using a blend of traditional and scientific methods.
- Strengthen collaboration between governments and Indigenous entities on climate action.
- Improve climate change preparedness and reduce Eeyou Istchee's carbon footprint.
- Secure carbon rights on land while supporting Indigenous-led conservation finance initiatives.
- Uphold Indigenous sovereignty and establish a permanent Climate Change Advisory Committee.
- Integrate climate change considerations into the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in alignment with UNFCCC principles.
- Empower youth through learning opportunities and facilitate knowledge sharing between generations.
- Raise awareness of climate change impacts and opportunities while implementing practical solutions.

## 6. Commitments

**In a coordinated effort to achieve these goals, we commit to:**

- Empower youth through increased learning opportunities.

- Facilitate knowledge sharing between Elders, youth, and institutions.
- Expand existing wildlife and environmental monitoring programs.
- Provide climate change information in the Cree language.
- Involve community members, particularly youth, in projects.
- Foster collaboration between governments and learn from other Indigenous communities.
- Formalize a permanent Climate Change Advisory Committee with a clear mandate and powers.
- Establish strategic action plans for communities and a regional adaptation plan.
- Implement improved recycling infrastructure and raise awareness.
- Increase awareness of GHG emissions' impact and ways to reduce them.

## 7. Signatories

We collectively agree that this declaration will lead to working together to mobilize Eeyou Istchee and parties with interest in collaborative action to combat the impacts of Climate change. Efforts will be spearheaded by the new Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), in collaboration with the Cree entities below, and backed by the Grand Council of the Crees.

The detailed contributions from participants of the 2024 Cree Regional Climate Forum will go toward shaping the CCAC's Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which will guide the effective delivery of the various goals set forth in this declaration.

---

Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee

---

Date

---

Cree Nation Government

---

Date

---

Cree Trappers' Association

---

Date

---

CBHSSJB

---

Date

---

**Cree School Board**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association**

---

**Date**

---

**Nishiyuu Council of Elders**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation Youth Council**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Chisasibi**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Eastmain**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Mistissini**

---

**Date**

---

**MoCreebec Eeyoud**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Nemaska**

---

**Date**

---

**Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation**

---

**Date**

---

**Washaw Sibi Eeyou**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Waskaganish**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree First Nation of Waswanipi**

---

**Date**

---

**Cree Nation of Wemindji**

---

**Date**

---

**Whapmagoostui First Nation**

---

**Date**

## 27 Proposed Climate Calls to Action

*As climate change action requires active participation and cooperation across all sectors and levels of government, we call upon all elected officials, Cree leadership and decision-makers, community members, partners and stakeholders to join us on this journey.*

		CREE						STAKEHOLDERS				
		Leadership	Regional Entities	Community members	Schools & Educators	Elders	Youth	All Decision-Makers	Federal Gov.	Provincial Gov.	Inuit & First Nations	KRG, ARBG
<b>EDUCATION &amp; TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE</b>												
1	Provide learning opportunities on climate change, the environment, and traditional knowledge			X								
2	Share knowledge and experiences with younger generations					X						
3	look for opportunities to learn from elders and knowledge-holders and engage in them						X					
<b>PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE, LAND &amp; WATERS</b>												
4	Consider the cumulative effects of climate change and development when considering or planning new projects on ancestral lands.	X							X	X		X
5	Re-evaluate and implement forestry practices through a climate lens, beginning with increasing buffers around water bodies in the Cree Nation's territory	X							X	X		X
<b>LANGUAGE &amp; PROTECTION OF CULTURE</b>												
6	Keep the Cree language alive by speaking it among ourselves.			X								
7	Continue to engage in discussions on climate change and advocate for the inclusion of the Cree language in these discussions.			X								
8	Support initiatives aiming to gather and safeguard Cree knowledge and oral history							X				
9	Ensure that official documents be accessible in Cree language and reflect Cree culture							X				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>												
10	Assume individual responsibility of lifestyle choices regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation			X								
11	Integrate climate change into various conversations (e.g., health, education, housing, forestry, etc.).	X						X				
12	<i>Listen</i> to community members and make decisions in line with the needs they express	X						X				

13	Facilitate youth involvement at every level through various opportunities: conference observers and participants, jobs, school projects, etc.	X						X				
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION</b>												
14	Include other Northern Indigenous communities in policy making								X	X		
15	Hold shared forums on climate change with neighbouring Indigenous Nations	X									X	X

CREE							STAKEHOLDERS				
Leadership	Regional Entities	Community members	Schools & Educators	Elders	Youth	All Decision-Makers	Federal Gov.	Provincial Gov.	Inuit & First Nations	KRG, ARBG	

<b>INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY</b>												
16	Ensure active participation and permanence of a Climate Change Advisory Committee	X	X									
17	Recognize that tallymen are rightsholders not simple stakeholders							X	X			
18	Respect all previously signed agreements							X	X			
19	Consider a new or updated agreement on Climate change							X	X			
20	Implement United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People's principles							X	X			

<b>EMERGENCY MEASURES/STRATEGIC PLAN</b>												
21	Plan and act on emergency measures proactively and with a sense of urgency	X		X				X				
22	Implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures with a long-term horizon (including infrastructure development: impact of climate change on new building/homes, etc.).	X		X				X				

<b>ENERGY/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT</b>												
23	Encourage local economy and services			X								
24	Reduce energy consumption and move towards more renewable energy sources.	X						X				
25	Move away from fossil fuel-powered vehicles and equipment (explore battery or electric-powered alternatives).	X						X				
26	Promote agriculture and greenhouses	X						X				
27	Consider innovative approaches for land development, hunting, fishing, gathering, and crafts, and explore new paradigms for economic development	X						X				