

**UNITED IN PURPOSE | HONOURING OUR PAST
CELEBRATING OUR SHARED JOURNEY**



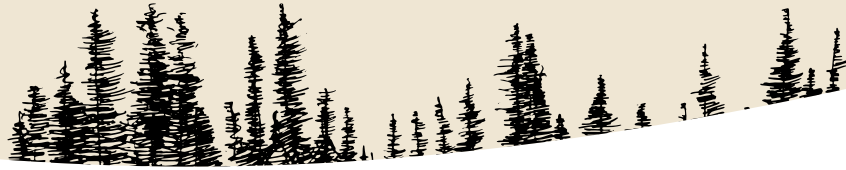
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Annual Report





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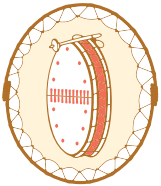


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MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND CHIEF/CHAIRPERSON

Mandy Gull-Masty



AS I COME TO THE END OF MY TERM, I AM PROUD TO SHARE THE MILESTONES FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT. THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS PAST YEAR INCLUDE WORK ROOTED IN COLLABORATION, GUIDED BY THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE, AND GROUNDED IN OUR SHARED COMMITMENT WITH THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF TO THE CREE NATION.

Since the beginning of my mandate, the Deputy Grand Chief and I built a strong partnership and worked side by side with the Cree communities, entities, and leadership across Eeyou Itschee. This annual report reflects that effort. It is not just about milestones—it is about how we have grown as a Nation by supporting one another, making space for our voices, and staying focused on the future.

Throughout my time in office, we have tried to keep our work transparent, the decisions inclusive, and our direction clear. Whether in governance, negotiations, development, or protecting our land and way of life, we have done our best to move forward together.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank Richard Shecapio, who served as a negotiator for the Cree Nation Government. His leadership and dedication have been invaluable throughout my term. Richard's steady presence and deep understanding of our Nation's priorities helped guide some of our most important discussions and decisions.

I hope that this report gives you a clear picture of what has been done, and more importantly, where we are headed. Our path forward will always rely on strong relationships—within our communities, across leadership, and with the land we call home.

SHARED FILES WITH DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

Since our election in 2021, we, as the Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief, have united around a shared vision, forged a strong partnership, and worked in close collaboration with Cree communities, entities, and groups to drive progress and strengthen Cree governance; to foster a new era of empowerment, growth and prosperity.

With our commitment to the foundational democratic Eeyou-Eenou values, we empower our communities, entities, families, and individuals to create a better future.

Throughout our leadership, we upheld accountability and transparency across all aspects of the Cree Nation Government, and made remarkable advancements in socio-economic and environmental areas that reinforce our responsible stewardship over our lands and the natural resources we depend on for the well-being of all Eeyou-Eenou.

Cree Economy: Initiated a global economic leakage study to pursue a vibrant Cree-led mixed economy in collaboration with the Cree stakeholders (public and private sectors) to create a resilient Cree circular economy.

Cree Trappers' Association (Summit): Initiated regional forums to explore shared challenges, interests, and identify opportunities to enhance the well-being of Cree trappers and land-users.

Cree Governance and Constitution: Work began setting up a comprehensive, grassroots initiative to reform and modernize our internal and external Cree Governance and Constitution.

Acts of Service Award: A recognition presented by the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government to Cree beneficiaries of Eeyou Istchee who have made outstanding contributions to their communities. The nominees must demonstrate betterment, achievement, leadership, innovation, and the ability to overcome challenges through volunteer service.

Relationships: Building and nurturing meaningful relationships with neighbouring nations, including several Anishnabeg communities, the Moose Cree and Innu. Through open dialogue and mutual respect, we have collaborated in key areas such as forestry, economic development, wildlife stewardship, and traditional knowledge-sharing. These partnerships have not only promoted unity and shared advocacy but have also strengthened the Cree Nation's position in regional and national conversations, reinforcing



Cree-Indigenous Permanent Forums and Commitments: These were established to build lasting, nation-to-nation relationships between the Cree Nation and neighbouring Indigenous nations. Their purpose is to support ongoing dialogue and formal agreements to address shared issues, such as Caribou preservation and the resolution of overlapping land and harvesting claims. They also aim to create youth exchange initiatives that promote cultural sharing and leadership development. Through these forums, participating nations strengthen their partnerships and build respectful and cooperative solutions.

A woman with dark hair and glasses is speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a red shawl with a colorful, patterned vest. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The background is a light-colored wall with wooden beams.

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Since the beginning of my mandate, the Deputy Grand Chief and I built a strong partnership and worked side by side with the Cree communities, entities, and leadership across Eeyou Itschee.

GRAND CHIEF FILES

This report reflects on my tenure as Grand Chief of the Cree Nation, outlining key achievements, challenges and the strides we have made toward our collective goals. It stands as a record of the governance, legislative, economic, and social progress realized under my leadership, while reaffirming my deep passion and steadfast dedication to protecting the rights of Cree Nation members. Throughout my term, I have remained committed to ensuring that our government is not only proactive and responsive to the evolving needs of our communities, but also forward looking—planning to modernize our treaty while preserving our sovereignty and shaping a better future for generations to come.

Additionally, I have been deeply determined to ensure that Cree Nation members fully understand the critical role of leadership in serving and protecting their rights under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). Leadership must work in collaboration with Cree communities, ensuring that governance is not only about negotiations but also about the day-to-day realities of our people. I have prioritized our representation within the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government to assert our governance over our traditional territory while maintaining our inherent responsibilities as stewards of the land. This commitment has guided every step of my leadership, reinforcing the need for an inclusive, transparent, and community-driven approach to decision-making.

Legislative Achievements

- Adoption of Significant Policies: Strengthening transparency in governance and cultural preservation.

- National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) Renewal: Ensuring continued protection of Cree marine areas while maintaining Cree decision-making authority.
- Forestry Chiefs Table and Multi-Community Agreement: Ensured sustainable forestry development with strong community involvement.
- *Ayimihiiituunaanuwich* Joint Process to assess the technical, environmental, social and cultural aspects of the potential capacity upgrades for the La Grande Hydro-electric Complex : Secured agreement with Hydro-Québec benefiting Cree communities and supporting our economic self-sufficiency.
- Trilateral Partnership with the Cree School Board and Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay: Strengthened collaboration for better services and resource allocation.
- Cree Culture and Language Preservation Funding: Allocated \$2.4M in investments for Elders, youth, and the Cree Trappers' Association to ensure cultural continuity.
- Cree Nation Leadership Forum: Provided a platform for governance dialogue that reflects community concerns and aspirations.
- Enhanced Social Acceptability Mining Report: Created sustainable development tools that prioritize the protection of land and Cree values.

Organization Success

- Strengthened administrative and departmental functions to enhance responsiveness.
- Improved strategic planning internally and with directors to align with community needs.
- Enhanced financial planning and corporate services with greater transparency.



- Increased accessibility of governance information to community members, social programs and reforms.
- Strengthened social initiatives impacting education, health and welfare to meet community needs.
- Introduced a Declaration on Special Needs to ensure equitable access to services.
- Developed anti-bullying initiative, including a published book to promote inclusivity and respect.

Economic Impact

- Advocated for and influenced key economic policies with a focus on self-sufficiency.
- Hosted an Economic Summit to strategize sustainable economic growth.

Challenges Faced

- Forest Fire season disruptions.
- COVID-19 pandemic impacts.
- Negotiation difficulties with Quebec and Canada, requiring steadfast advocacy.
- Exclusion of First Nations in broader climate change policies, which we actively fought against.

Legacy and Impact

- Advocated for Cree rights at the Vatican and the United Nations.
- Ensured the 50th Anniversary of James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement reinforced our commitments to our people.

CONCLUSION

Throughout my term, my deep passion for safeguarding the rights of the Cree Nation has guided every decision. Our achievements reflect a commitment to ensuring that governance remains responsive to the evolving needs of our people while modernizing our treaty in a way that respects and enhances our sovereignty. As I reflect on this journey, I am grateful for the trust placed in me by the people of Eeyou Itschee. The future remains bright as long as we continue to walk this path together, grounded in our traditions and driven by our collective vision.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me and the Deputy Grand Chief. It has been an honour to serve.

Mandy Gull-Masty
Grand Chief/Chairperson

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As I reflect on this journey, I am grateful for the trust placed in me by the people of Eeyou Itschee. The future remains bright as long as we continue to walk this path together, grounded in our traditions and driven by our collective vision.



MESSAGE DE LA GRANDE CHEFFE/PRÉSIDENTE

Mandy Gull-Masty



ALORS QUE MON MANDAT TOUCHE À SA FIN, JE SUIS FIÈRE DE VOUS FAIRE PART DES ÉTAPES IMPORTANTES FRANCHIES PAR LE BUREAU DE LA GRANDE CHEFFE DU GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS (EYYOU ISTCHEE)/ GOUVERNEMENT DE LA NATION CRIE. PARMI LES POINTS SAILLANTS DE L'ANNÉE ÉCOULÉE, IL Y A LIEU DE MENTIONNER UN TRAVAIL FONDÉ SUR LA COLLABORATION, GUIDÉ PAR LES BESOINS DE NOTRE PEUPLE ET ENRACINÉ DANS NOTRE ENGAGEMENT COMMUN AVEC LE GRAND CHEF ADJOINT ENVERS LA NATION CRIE.

Depuis le début de mon mandat, le Grand Chef adjoint et moi avons bâti un partenariat solide et travaillé main dans la main avec les communautés, les entités et les dirigeants cris d'Eeyou Itschee. Le présent rapport annuel reflète ces efforts. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de jalons, mais de la façon dont nous avons grandi en tant que nation, en nous soutenant mutuellement, en faisant entendre nos voix et en restant tournés vers l'avenir.

Tout au long de mon mandat, nous avons veillé à ce que notre travail soit transparent, nos décisions, inclusives, et notre orientation, claire. Que ce soit en matière de gouvernance, de négociations, de développement ou de protection de notre territoire et de notre mode de vie, nous avons fait de notre mieux pour progresser ensemble.

Je tiens à saluer et à remercier Richard Shecapio, qui a agi à titre de négociateur pour le Gouvernement de la Nation Crie. Le leadership de Richard et son engagement ont été inestimables tout au long de mon mandat. Sa présence constante et sa profonde compréhension des priorités de notre nation ont contribué à orienter certaines de nos discussions et décisions les plus importantes.

J'espère que ce rapport vous donnera une image claire de ce qui a été accompli et, plus important encore, de la direction que nous avons prise. Notre avenir reposera toujours sur des relations solides – au sein de nos communautés, entre les différents dirigeants et avec le territoire qui nous appelons notre chez-nous.

DOSSIERS PARTAGÉS AVEC LE GRAND CHEF ADJOINT

Depuis notre élection en 2021, en tant que Grande Cheffe et Grand Chef adjoint, nous nous sommes unis autour d'une vision commune, avons forgé un partenariat solide et travaillé en étroite collaboration avec les communautés, les entités et les groupes cris afin de promouvoir le progrès et renforcer la gouvernance crie, et ainsi favoriser une nouvelle ère d'autonomisation, de croissance et de prospérité.

Forts de notre engagement envers les valeurs démocratiques fondamentales Eeyous-Eenous, nous donnons à nos communautés, entités, familles et individus les moyens de bâtir un avenir meilleur.

Tout au long de notre mandat, nous avons fait preuve de responsabilité et de transparence dans tous les aspects du Gouvernement de la Nation Crie et nous avons réalisé des avancées remarquables dans les domaines socio-économique et environnemental, renforçant ainsi notre gestion responsable de nos terres et des ressources naturelles dont dépend le bien-être de tous les Eeyous-Eenous.

Économie crie : Nous avons lancé une étude sur les fuites économiques mondiales afin de poursuivre une économie mixte dynamique dirigée par les Cris en collaboration avec les parties prenantes cries (secteurs public et privé) dans le but de créer une économie circulaire crie résiliente.

Association des trappeurs cris (Sommet) : Nous avons lancé des forums régionaux pour explorer les défis et les intérêts communs et identifier les possibilités d'améliorer le bien-être des maîtres trappeurs cris et des utilisateurs des terres.

Gouvernance crie et Constitution : Les travaux ont débuté par la mise en place d'une initiative globale et au niveau des communautés locales en vue de réformer et de moderniser notre gouvernance crie interne et externe et notre Constitution.

Prix des actes de service : Une reconnaissance décernée par le Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)/Gouvernement de la Nation Crie aux bénéficiaires cris d'Eeyou Istchee qui ont apporté une contribution exceptionnelle à leur communauté. Les candidats doivent faire preuve d'amélioration, de réussite, de leadership, d'innovation et de capacité à surmonter les difficultés grâce au bénévolat.

tation fondés à la fois sur les connaissances traditionnelles et la recherche scientifique. Le Forum soutient la collaboration en matière de surveillance environnementale, de développement durable et de préparation aux situations d'urgence. Il veille à ce que l'action climatique soit menée par les communautés et enracinée dans leur culture, aidant ainsi les communautés à rester proactives tout en influençant les politiques générales et en accédant aux ressources nécessaires.

Le présent rapport rend compte de mon mandat de Grande Cheffe de la Nation crie et souligne les principales réalisations, les difficultés et les progrès réalisés vers l'atteinte de nos objectifs collectifs. Il témoigne des progrès réalisés sous ma direction aux plans de la gouvernance, de la législation, de l'économie et de la société, tout en réaffirmant ma passion profonde et mon dévouement indéfectible envers la protection des droits des membres de la Nation crie. Tout au long de mon mandat, je me suis engagée à faire en sorte que notre gouvernement soit non seulement proactif et réactif aux besoins changeants de nos communautés, mais aussi tourné vers l'avenir, et ce, en planifiant la modernisation de notre traité tout en préservant notre souveraineté et en façonnant un avenir meilleur pour les générations futures.

De plus, je suis profondément déterminée à faire en sorte que les membres de la Nation crie comprennent pleinement le rôle crucial de leurs dirigeants dans la défense et la protection de leurs droits en vertu de la Convention de la

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Tout au long de mon mandat, ma passion profonde pour la sauvegarde des droits de la Nation crie a guidé chacune de nos décisions. Nos réalisations témoignent de notre engagement à faire en sorte que la gouvernance demeure adaptée aux besoins en évolution de notre peuple, tout en modernisant notre traité de manière à respecter et à renforcer notre souveraineté.

Baie-James et du Nord québécois (CBJNQ). Les dirigeants doivent travailler en collaboration avec les communautés crie, en veillant à ce que la gouvernance ne se limite pas aux négociations, mais tienne compte des réalités quotidiennes de notre peuple. J'ai priorisé notre représentation au sein du Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James afin d'affirmer notre gouvernance sur notre territoire traditionnel tout en maintenant nos responsabilités inhérentes de gardiens du territoire. Cet engagement a guidé chaque étape de mon leadership, en renforçant la nécessité d'une approche décisionnelle inclusive, transparente et axée sur la communauté.

Réalisations législatives

- Adoption de politiques importantes : renforcement de la transparence en matière de gouvernance et de préservation culturelle.
- Renouvellement de l'aire marine nationale de conservation (AMNC) : en vue d'assurer la protection continue des aires marines crie tout en préservant leur pouvoir décisionnel.
- Table des chefs forestiers et entente multicommunautaire : afin d'assurer un développement forestier durable avec une forte participation communautaire.
- *Ayimihituunaanuwich* établissant un processus pour l'évaluation conjointe de certains aspects des augmentations potentielles de la puissance du complexe hydroélectrique de La Grande : entente conclue avec Hydro-Québec au profit des communautés crie et soutenant notre autonomie économique.
- Partenariat trilatéral avec la Commission scolaire crie et le Conseil crie de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James : renforcement de la collaboration pour de meilleurs services et une meilleure allocation des ressources.
- Financement pour la préservation de la culture et de la langue crie : 2,4 millions de dollars ont été alloués aux aînés, aux jeunes et à l'Association des trappeurs crie afin d'assurer la continuité culturelle.
- Forum des dirigeants de la Nation crie : plateforme de dialogue sur la gouvernance reflétant les préoccupations et les aspirations de la communauté.
- Rapport sur l'amélioration de l'acceptabilité sociale des mines : création d'outils de développement durable qui priorisent la protection du territoire et des valeurs crie.

Réussites organisationnelles

- Renforcement des fonctions administratives et départementales pour une meilleure réactivité.
- Amélioration de la planification stratégique à l'interne et avec les administrateurs afin de répondre aux besoins de la communauté.
- Amélioration de la planification financière et des services généraux avec une plus grande transparence.
- Meilleure accessibilité de l'information sur la gouvernance aux membres de la communauté, aux programmes sociaux et aux réformes.





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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF/ VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Norman A. Wapachee



KWEIH EYOUCH/EENOUGH OF EYYOU ISTCHEE, AND TO ALL THOSE WHO WALK WITH US ON THIS PATH TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

As Deputy Grand Chief of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, it is my great honour to reflect on the fiscal year 2024-2025 and to celebrate the achievements we have made together. This year holds special meaning, as we mark the 50th anniversary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)—a milestone in our shared journey and a testament to the strength of our unity.

The theme of this year is "Maamuu: United in purpose, honouring our past, celebrating our shared journey." This theme reminds us that everything we achieve is the result of working together as one. We honour the resilience of our ancestors and the strength of our communities as we move forward, united by a shared vision for the future.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the staff at the Cree Nation Government. Their dedication to our land, people, and goals has been vital this year. Their hard work in areas like governance, economic development, community growth, and cultural preservation has helped drive our progress, ensuring that we stay connected to our roots while building a bright future.

CREE NATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CNRI)

One of the major highlights of this year was the creation of the Cree Nation Research Institute and the formation of its Advisory Committee. This project represents a new chapter in our collective journey, allowing the Cree Nation to have control over research conducted within Eeyou Istchee. Together, with our communities and partners, we can now ensure that research aligns with Eeyou-Eenou values, needs, and vision for the future. This is an important step in empowering our people and safeguarding our knowledge.

The Cree Nation Research Institute Project emerged in 2023 from the idea of building an Eeyou-Eenou collective vision to support Cree Research and Cree Research Governance in Eeyou Istchee. At its core, the project seeks to ensure that research in our territory is led by Cree values, guided by Cree voices, and accountable to Cree communities. This work is leading to the creation of a new Cree entity dedicated to research and research governance—an institution designed to equip our people, communities, and organizations with the tools to shape and manage the research

that affects us. Rather than react to outside agendas, the CNRI is meant to centre our own knowledge systems and priorities—on our terms.

In parallel, a Steering Committee, which I chair, was created to provide leadership and guidance throughout the start-up phase. Together, these committees have laid the groundwork for an institution that is responsive, representative, and rooted in Eeyou-Eenou values.

Throughout 2024-2025, CNRI team members have visited Cree communities to meet directly with councils and boards, listen to local concerns, and present the vision and progress of the Institute. These visits provided an opportunity to introduce the CNRI team, share milestones reached so far and discuss the proposed foundation of the new organization. The idea of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formally establish the CNRI was introduced during these conversations and received enthusiastic preliminary input.

In the coming year, the CNRI Staff and Steering Committee will focus on finalizing and signing the MOU, leading to the official creation of the new organization in early 2026. At the same time, several foundational programs are being designed and developed, including a Research Project Review Protocol, a Regional Research Portal, an Online Training for Researchers working in Eeyou Istchee, and Communication and Engagement activities to deepen community involvement. These initiatives will help protect our knowledge and data, define clear expectations for external researchers, and promote Cree-led innovation. As the CNRI takes shape, it will serve as a hub to ensure that research coming to Eeyou Istchee reflects not only our priorities—but also our responsibilities to one another and to the land.

NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA (NMCA)

I am also proud to report that our team has completed information/consultation sessions with the coastal communities and the feasibility study for the National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA). This is a significant step in protecting our land and waters, ensuring that the Cree Nation has a leading role in the decision-making process.



We are now moving forward with negotiations to establish the NMCA, which will bring numerous benefits to our people. The NMCA will help protect our marine environment, enhance conservation efforts, and provide economic opportunities through eco-tourism. It will also strengthen our cultural connection to the land and waters, which are central to our identity and way of life.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EYYOU ISTCHEE

Another project I am particularly proud of is the Rights and Responsibilities of Eeyou Istchee initiative. This work is about what I deeply believe in: Let Us Give Our Land a Voice. Our land has always shaped our identity, and through this project, we are ensuring that Cree values and practices continue to guide our governance. As we honour the past, we are also ensuring that we move forward as a united, self-determined people. Our land is our foundation, and it is our responsibility to protect it for future generations.

Throughout the 2024-2025 year, the RREI Working Group worked with Elders to develop a bilingual Eeyou/Eenou ayimuwin and English Declaration called *Îyiyiu Aschî Kinyi-wâihtimuwin / Caring for Eeyou Istchee: Eeyou Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities in Eeyou Istchee*.

The Declaration affirms not only the rights of Eeyouch, but also the rights of Eeyou Istchee - and our shared responsibilities to one another. We have the right to live on this land, to use its gifts, and to maintain our cultural practices and legal traditions that are rooted in it. But these inherent rights come with responsibilities: to care for the land, to listen to it, to speak on its behalf, and to protect its vitality.

RREI Working Group members (from left to right)- Chantal Otter Tetreault, Adrienne Tessier, Kristy Franks, Wanda Miniquaken, Norman A. Wapachee, Elisabeth Patterson

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The Declaration affirms not only the rights of Eeyouch, but also the rights of Eeyou Istchee - and our shared responsibilities to one another.





For generations, the land has upheld its responsibilities toward us: nourishing us with food and water, sustaining us with materials to use for shelter, and guiding us with its teachings. With that, the land, animals and waters have rights too - the right to live, to thrive, to grow and flow - including all the life they sustain, each with the right to be treated with respect and be included in decision-making processes. This Declaration serves as a reminder to not view Eeyou Istchee as a commodity, but as a relative - a living entity with whom we are in an ongoing relationship, not something we own, give up and/or take from.

In developing the Declaration, the RREI group interviewed Elders, and integrated messages from other Cree declarations, policies, and videos. The group also drew on nature-based rights initiatives from other Indigenous nations. Implementing the Declaration could support Cree-led land-use planning, protected areas management, and sustainable development. The Declaration's principles could also be integrated into future Cree Nation Government and Cree First Nation laws and policies.

A video is also currently being produced, featuring clips from interviews with Elders to contextualize the Declaration and to help share its message in caring for the land, especially amongst youth. Stay tuned!

CULTURAL BASELINE STUDY

This year marked the completion of the first phase of the Cultural Baseline Study, conducted in close collaboration

with the communities of Chisasibi and Waswanipi. Through interviews with Elders, we have gathered important knowledge about how our communities have evolved since the signing of the JBNQA. This study helps us celebrate our cultural identity and heritage while guiding us in strengthening our traditions in the modern world.

Phase One aimed at understanding the impacts of development on Cree culture since the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). It was started in the fall of 2022 and comprised two main components:

- 1) A short-term literature review based on a selection of works and knowledge built over time by Cree knowledge holders, academic researchers and industry-based socio-environmental experts. The literature showed that cultural change was in great part brought about by contact with Western material culture and commercial goods from larger society. And in the past 50 years, Cree culture and identity have faced multiple stresses and transformations without losing their essence, which is based on the concept of survival. Cree identity remained solidly anchored in a close relation to the land and a strong sense of community, crucial elements when considering the resilience of Cree language.
- 2) A sample of 3 pilot group interviews with Elders and knowledge holders from Waswanipi, Oujé-Bougoumou and Chisasibi – chosen according to their geographical location and the nature of impacts they have undergone from major developments: hydroelectric, forestry and mining. The goal was to test the meeting format that

Our continued dialogue and collaboration with these governments are vital as we work together for the collective well-being of our people.

As we reflect on this year, and especially on the 50 years since the signing of the JBNQA, I am filled with gratitude for all that we have accomplished together. The strength and resilience of our people are our greatest assets, and together, we are building a future that honours our past and prepares us for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for your dedication to the growth of our Cree Nation, for preserving our culture, and for your commitment to the future of Eeyou Istchee. Let us continue walking together—united in purpose, honouring our past, and celebrating our shared journey.

Norman A. Wapachee
Deputy Grand Chief/Vice-Chairperson





MESSAGE DU GRAND CHEF ADJOINT/VICE-PRÉSIDENT

Norman A. Wapachee



KWEIH EEOUCH/EENOUCHEE D'EEOU ISTCHEE, ET À TOUS CEUX QUI MARCHENT AVEC NOUS SUR CE CHEMIN VERS UN AVENIR MEILLEUR.

En tant que Grand Chef adjoint de la Nation crie d'Eeyou Istchee, c'est pour moi un grand honneur de revenir sur l'exercice financier 2024-2025 et de célébrer les réalisations que nous avons accomplies ensemble. Cette année revêt une signification particulière, car nous célébrons le 50^e anniversaire de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois (CBJNQ), une étape importante de notre parcours commun et un témoignage de la force de notre unité.

Le thème de cette année est « Maamuu : Unis dans un but, honorant notre passé, célébrant notre parcours commun ». Ce thème nous rappelle que tout ce que nous réalisons est le fruit d'un travail d'équipe. Nous honorons la résilience de nos ancêtres et la force de nos communautés alors que nous avançons, unis par une vision commune de l'avenir.

Je tiens à exprimer ma plus profonde gratitude aux membres du personnel du Gouvernement de la Nation Crie. Leur dévouement envers notre territoire, notre peuple et nos objectifs a été essentiel cette année. Leur travail acharné dans des domaines comme la gouvernance, le développement économique, la croissance communautaire et la préservation culturelle a contribué à nos progrès, en nous permettant de rester connectés à nos racines tout en bâtissant un avenir prometteur.

INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE DE LA NATION CRIE (IRNC)

L'un des faits marquants de cette année a été la création de l'Institut de recherche de la Nation crie et la formation de son comité consultatif. Ce projet représente un nouveau chapitre de notre parcours collectif, en permettant à la Nation crie d'avoir le contrôle de la recherche menée en Eeyou Istchee. Ensemble, avec nos communautés et nos partenaires, nous pouvons désormais nous assurer que la recherche s'harmonise avec les valeurs, les besoins et la vision d'avenir d'Eeyou-Eenou. Il s'agit d'une étape importante pour l'autonomisation de notre peuple et la préservation de notre savoir.

Le projet d'Institut de recherche de la Nation crie est né en 2023 de l'idée de bâtir une vision collective eeyou-ee-nou pour soutenir la recherche et la gouvernance de la recherche crie en Eeyou Istchee. Fondamentalement, le projet vise à faire en sorte que la recherche sur notre ter-

ritoire soit guidée par des valeurs crie, par des voix crie et qu'elle soit responsable envers les communautés crie. Ce travail mène à la création d'une nouvelle entité crie dédiée à la recherche et à sa gouvernance – une institution conçue pour doter notre peuple, nos communautés et nos organismes des outils nécessaires pour façonner et gérer la recherche qui nous concerne. Plutôt que de réagir à des agendas extérieurs, l'IRNC a pour vocation de centrer nos propres systèmes de connaissances et de priorités – selon nos propres conditions.

Parallèlement, un comité directeur, que je préside, a été créé pour assurer le leadership et l'orientation tout au long de la phase de démarrage. Ensemble, ces comités ont jeté les bases d'une institution responsable, représentative et ancrée dans les valeurs eeyou-ee-nou.

Tout au long de l'année 2024-2025, les membres de l'équipe de l'IRNC se sont rendus dans les communautés crie pour rencontrer directement les membres des conseils et des bureaux de direction, écouter leurs préoccupations locales et présenter la vision et les progrès de l'Institut. Ces visites ont été l'occasion de présenter l'équipe de l'IRNC, de partager les étapes franchies jusqu'à présent et de discuter de la fondation proposée pour le nouvel organisme. L'idée d'un protocole d'entente (PE) pour la création officielle de l'IRNC a été évoquée lors de ces échanges et a reçu des commentaires préliminaires enthousiastes.

Au cours de la prochaine année, le personnel et le comité directeur de l'IRNC se concentreront sur la finalisation et la signature du protocole d'entente, qui mènera à la création officielle du nouvel organisme au début de 2026. Parallèlement, plusieurs programmes fondamentaux sont en cours de conception et de développement, notamment un protocole d'évaluation des projets de recherche, un portail régional de recherche, une formation en ligne pour les chercheurs travaillant en Eeyou Istchee, ainsi que des activités de communication et de mobilisation visant à approfondir la participation communautaire. Ces initiatives contribueront à protéger notre savoir et nos données, à définir des attentes claires envers les chercheurs externes et à promouvoir l'innovation menée par les Crie. À mesure que l'IRNC prendra forme, il servira de plaque tournante pour

faire en sorte que la recherche menée en Eeyou Istchee reflète non seulement nos priorités, mais aussi nos responsabilités les uns envers les autres et envers le territoire.

AIRE MARINE NATIONALE DE CONSERVATION (AMNC)

Je suis également fier de faire rapport que notre équipe a terminé les séances d'information et de consultation avec les communautés côtières ainsi que l'étude de faisabilité de l'aire marine nationale de conservation (AMNC). Il s'agit d'une étape importante pour la protection de nos terres et de nos eaux, qui fait en sorte que la Nation crie joue un rôle de premier plan dans le processus décisionnel. Nous poursuivons maintenant les négociations en vue de la création de l'AMNC, qui apportera de nombreux avantages à notre peuple. L'AMNC contribuera à la protection de notre environnement marin, améliorera les efforts de conservation et créera des débouchés économiques grâce à l'écotourisme. Elle renforcera également notre lien culturel avec la terre et l'eau, qui sont au cœur de notre identité et de notre mode de vie.

DROITS ET RESPONSABILITÉS D'EYYOU ISTCHEE

Un autre projet dont je suis particulièrement fier, c'est l'initiative Droits et responsabilités d'Eeyou Istchee (DREI). Ce travail porte sur ce en quoi je crois profondément : Donnons une voix à notre territoire. Notre territoire a toujours façonné notre identité, et grâce à ce projet, nous veillons à ce que les valeurs et les pratiques crie continuent de guider notre gouvernance. En honorant le passé, nous veillons également à aller de l'avant en tant que peuple uni et autodéterminé. Notre territoire est notre fondement, et il est de notre responsabilité de le protéger pour les générations futures.

Tout au long de l'année 2024-2025, le groupe de travail DREI a travaillé avec les aînés pour élaborer une déclaration bilingue en eeyou/eenou ayimuwin et en anglais intitulée Prendre soin d'Eeyou Istchee : *Îyiyiu Aschî Kinyiwâihtimuwin / Caring for Eeyou Istchee: Eeyou Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities in Eeyou Istchee*.

La Déclaration affirme non seulement les droits des Eeyouch, mais aussi ceux d'Eeyou Istchee, ainsi que nos responsabilités communes les uns envers les autres. Nous avons le droit de vivre sur cette terre, d'en exploiter les richesses et de préserver nos pratiques culturelles et nos traditions juridiques qui y sont ancrées. Mais ces droits inhérents s'accompagnent de responsabilités : prendre soin de la terre, l'écouter, parler en son nom et protéger sa vitalité. Depuis des générations, la terre assume ses responsabilités envers nous : elle nous nourrit de nourriture et d'eau, nous fournit les matériaux nécessaires à notre abri et nous guide par ses enseignements. De ce fait, la terre, les animaux et les eaux ont eux aussi des droits : le droit de vivre, de prospérer, de croître et de s'écouler, y compris toute vie qu'ils abritent, chacun ayant le droit d'être traité avec respect et d'être inclus dans les processus décisionnels. Cette déclaration sert de rappel pour ne pas considérer Eeyou Istchee comme une matière première, mais comme un parent – une entité vivante avec laquelle nous



*Cette année revêt
une signification
particulière, car
nous célébrons le
50e anniversaire
de la Convention
de la Baie-James et
du Nord québécois
(CBJNQ), une étape
importante de notre
parcours commun et
un témoignage de la
force de notre unité.*



sommes dans une relation continue, pas quelque chose que nous possédons, abandonnons et/ou prenons.

Lors de l'élaboration de la Déclaration, le groupe DREI a interrogé des aînés et intégré des messages tirés d'autres déclarations, politiques et vidéos crie. Il s'est également inspiré d'initiatives d'autres nations autochtones en matière de droits fondés sur la nature. La mise en œuvre de la Déclaration pourrait soutenir l'aménagement du territoire, la gestion des aires protégées et le développement durable menés par les Crie. Les principes de la Déclaration pourraient également être intégrés aux futures lois et politiques du Gouvernement de la Nation Crie et de la Première Nation crie.

Une vidéo est également en cours de production, présentant des extraits d'entrevues avec des aînés, et ce, afin de contextualiser la Déclaration et de contribuer à diffuser son message sur la protection du territoire, notamment auprès des jeunes. Demeurez à l'écoute!

ÉTUDE CULTURELLE DE BASE

Cette année a marqué l'achèvement de la première phase de l'Étude culturelle de base, menée en étroite collaboration avec les communautés de Chisasibi et de Waswanipi. Grâce à des entrevues avec des aînés, nous avons recueilli des connaissances importantes sur la façon dont nos communautés ont évolué depuis la signature de la CBJNQ. Cette étude nous aide à célébrer notre identité et notre patrimoine culturels tout en nous guidant dans le renforcement de nos traditions dans le monde moderne.

La première phase visait à comprendre les impacts du développement sur la culture crie depuis la signature de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois (CBJNQ). Elle a débuté à l'automne 2022 et comprenait deux composantes principales :

- 1) Une revue de littérature à court terme basée sur une sélection d'ouvrages et de connaissances accumulés au fil du temps par des détenteurs de savoirs crie, des chercheurs universitaires et des experts socio-environnementaux du secteur industriel. La littérature a montré que le changement culturel a été en grande partie provoqué par le contact avec la culture matérialiste occidentale et les biens commerciaux de la société. Au cours des cinquante dernières années, la culture et l'identité crie ont subi de multiples stress et transformations sans perdre leur essence, fondée sur le concept de survivance. L'identité crie est restée solidement ancrée dans un lien étroit avec le territoire et un fort sens de la communauté, des éléments cruciaux lorsqu'on considère la résilience de la langue crie.
- 2) Un échantillon de trois entrevues de groupe pilotes avec des aînés et des détenteurs de savoirs de Waswanipi, d'Oujé-Bougoumou et de Chisasibi – choisis en fonction de leur situation géographique et de la nature des impacts qu'ils ont subis à la suite de développements majeurs : hydroélectrique, forestier et minier. L'objectif était de tester le format de rencontre qui s'adaptait le mieux au sujet complexe et riche du changement culturel. Dans l'ensemble, les récits et les commentaires des participants reflétaient les principales idées et concepts présentés dans la revue de littérature. Comme l'échantillon était réduit à trois communautés, les résultats ne représentent pas les points de vue de l'ensemble de la population. Des consultations appropriées devraient être menées dans toutes les communautés d'Eeyou Istchee avant de pouvoir tirer des conclusions solides, indiquant l'âge, le sexe, la profession et l'origine géographique.

La phase un a consisté principalement en une phase préliminaire de discussion sur différentes questions liées à l'évolution de la culture crie, lesquelles pourraient



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Davey Bobbish



AS WE CLOSE ANOTHER YEAR OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE CREE NATION, I WISH TO EXTEND MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO OUR CREE LEADERSHIP FOR THEIR CONTINUED TRUST, GUIDANCE AND COMMITMENT. THEIR LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ADVANCING OUR SHARED VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR CREE NATION AND CREE CITIZENS.

I would also like to express special thanks and heartfelt congratulations to former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Mas-ty for her dedicated service to the Cree Nation. We also congratulate her on her recent federal election victory and appointment as Minister of Indigenous Services. We wish her success in this important role of national leadership where she can continue to advance the important work of reconciliation.

As we prepare for a new chapter with the incoming leadership, we remain focused on a seamless transition that will honour our achievements and carry forward the momentum we have built together.

This year has not been without its challenges. We faced external pressures, including growing demand for natural resources, the unfolding climate crisis, and the impact of tariffs from the United States, which has the potential to affect key sectors of our economy and add complexity to our lives and work.

As a People, we have always navigated change. As the pace of change is accelerating, we must embrace it and adapt to these new realities even faster, while at the same time protecting our rights and maintaining our traditional way of life. The Cree Nation Government remains steadfast in our mission – working collaboratively to find solutions, protect our Cree rights and interests, and support our Cree communities and Cree citizens.

As we prepare to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of our Treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (JBNQA), we should take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey of the Cree Nation over the past five decades. From the foundation laid by the JBNQA in 1975, to the *Paix des Braves* of 2002, and the *New Relationship Agreement* with Canada in 2008, each step has strengthened our Cree self-determination and self-governance, expanded our autonomy, and affirmed our rights and responsibilities in our traditional territory of Eeyou Istchee.

During the past year, and building on our JBNQA Treaty and key agreements with Quebec and Canada, we have continued to work collaboratively with the Cree communities to deliver on major projects and initiatives that have a meaningful impact on the life of our people, most notably in housing, infrastructure, and community and economic development.

This year has also been one of important groundwork as we prepare for the renewal in 2028 of the Cree-Canada *New Relationship Agreement* and other key Agreements, such as the *O&M Funding Transfer Payment Agreement* and the *Annual Capital Grants Agreement*. This is another important juncture in our relationship with Canada. The renewal of these Agreements will be crucial for the protection of Cree rights and to ensure the continued well-being of our people, our Cree Nation and our communities for the future. We expect formal discussions with Canada to begin at the latest at the beginning of 2026.

The renewal of the Cree-Canada *New Relationship Agreement* is a fundamental component of my responsibilities as Executive Director of the Cree Nation Government. It forms part of my ongoing responsibilities for implementing this and other major Agreements with Canada and Quebec, and it is directly tied to shaping and forecasting our future obligations under renewed agreements.

Preparations for these renewal discussions with Canada are critically important. We have a short window to address a great number of very important issues with Canada, and both sides must be ready to begin substantive discussions at the beginning of 2026, which will entail a considerable amount of internal preparatory work on the Cree side this year.

For some time already, we have identified the renewal of the Cree-Canada *New Relationship Agreement* as a priority for the Cree Nation, with the active involvement of all Cree Nation Government departments and the Cree communities. Furthermore, we clearly advised Canada last year, at

the meeting of the Deputy Ministers Oversight Committee (DMOC), that the renewal of the Cree–Canada *New Relationship Agreement* is the number one priority of the Cree Nation at the moment, and that Canada must be prepared for renewal discussions at the beginning of 2026, and it must also ensure it has the capacity and resources to renew the Cree–Canada *New Relationship Agreement* in 2028.

Once again this year, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire Cree Nation Government team – our directors, managers, coordinators and employees. Your dedication and work are at the heart of our success. I am personally committed to building and maintaining a strong team so that together we can continue to build a stronger future for the Cree Nation.

I also want to recognize our positive relationship and collaboration with the Cree First Nations, including through channels like the meetings of “Directors General and Treasurers”. These quarterly meetings are an essential part of the collaborative working relationship between the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities, and they provide an excellent forum for exchange among the communities themselves. I wish to thank all the Directors General, Treasurers and other community capital planning personnel for their commitment and dedication to this collaborative work.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank 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.

Meegwetch.

Davey Bobbish
Executive Director

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Photo: Katherine Dehm



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Melissa Saganash



IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT WITH NEW INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATIONS ALWAYS HIGHLIGHTED WITH AN OBJECTIVE TO PROVIDE COMMUNITIES WITH THE SERVICES DESERVED. OUR NATION IS A THRIVING AND AMBITIOUS ONE, AND THEREFORE OUR GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES OFFERED MUST BE AS WELL.

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EMPLOYEES

As Deputy Executive Director, it is my role to support the Executive Director, Davey Bobbish. As you have read in his message a few pages earlier, we have a very busy year ahead of us as we prepare for some key negotiations of important agreements that are coming to term. We must ensure that although the preparations for these negotiations will be time-consuming for various departments throughout the year, the quality and continuity of services offered by the Cree Nation Government to the people of Eeyou Istchee remain stable.

We will also be entering into an election year, which is always an exciting time for the Cree Nation. This year, to meet the needs of voters, an electronic voting platform will be introduced for the first time. Some Cree First Nations and other Indigenous governments and entities have begun adopting this new practice that allows for greater voter participation. Members of the Cree Nation often travel for work or play and are not always home or near a ballot box on voting day. This online and secure option will provide for extended advance polling days for those who wish to vote online, with the traditional ballot boxes that will continue to be available in communities of the Cree Nation on voting day. The Communications team has spent most of the winter and spring developing this new feature that will hopefully help provide beneficiaries of the JBNQA with additional options to exercise their right to vote.

Some of the collaborations we have been working on have been enriching and we are hoping to bring these projects to life as we look ahead.

Emergency Call Center Working Group

Early in the year, we received a report from Quebec's Chief Coroner regarding the tragic loss of a community member and it included a clear recommendation for the Cree Nation Government along with essential stakeholders—the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, Eeyou Eenuu Police Force, Fire Protection Services, and relevant Quebec ministries—to establish a committee tasked with examining ways of ensuring that all emergency communications for the territory are processed and relevant emergency services are notified in a timely manner to enhance the safety of the population. In essence, we are tasked with assessing the implementation of a 911 emergency service in Eeyou Istchee. The Committee has been active during this first year in assessing the existing technological and physical components of establishing such a service that would not only serve our communities but also with Iiyuu Aimun as a priority language. All stakeholders have been supportive in providing expertise and ensuring that the service that will eventually be set in place is the right one for necessary safety and timely service to all residents of our communities. Our work will continue in the new year as we go into more depth of what is required to build an efficient emergency call center for Eeyou Istchee.

Land Registry System

As reported in the Cree-Canada Relations section of this report, the Land Registry System as we know it, is ready for some upgrades. Since 1984, the structure and process of registering lots in Cree communities has remained the same. However, as the Cree Nation begins to create its own private housing market, with Cree individuals securing their own mortgages without a guarantee from the Band, as it has always been, there is a need for evolution. We are becoming more and more autonomous as a people and therefore need the tools and service that any private homeowner across the country requires in order for a financial institution to grant a mortgage – an official Cree Nation Government lot registry attesting that the lot in question is free from lien or mortgage and that the individual may



indeed become the rightful owner to the lot and the house they wish to build on it, and securing a mortgage. This is one of the benefits that we have brought to life following the signing of the 2017 Cree-Canada Governance Agreement that allows for Crees to be proprietors in perpetuity of their lots without financial oversight from their Band.

In support of my colleague Tina Petawabano, Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations, we have been collaborating with her counterparts at the Federal government to find solutions towards a modernized and optimized Land Registry System that would efficiently serve the needs of an ever-evolving Cree Nation.

Regional Public Safety Officer

We are thankful that the summer of 2024 was a more clement one concerning forest fires. Although we remained vigilant and prepared to face another difficult season, the Capital Works and Services Department took this time to continue the Regional Emergency Management Plan and are proud to announce that the new position of Regional Public Safety Officer at the Cree Nation Government will be filled in the spring of 2025. This role will be central to assisting communities and entities facing emergency situations with the understanding that local emergencies are of local jurisdiction and will be ready as needed. As we experienced with the forest fires of 2023, expedient coordination of information for and from external emergency services became critical for the safety of the Cree Nation. We have learned much from this experience and wish to build on it as we deploy this new position. Changes in climates have been manifesting in unpredictable and sometimes sudden events that have a disruptive effect on our territory and people. The Cree Nation Government will continue to be present and collaborate with communities as needed through our new Regional Public Safety Officer.

Related to the 2023 forest fires, the Cree Nation Government has continued to contribute to the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA) Cabin Rebuilding Program. Last year, 50 camps were rebuilt through this program for families that have lost theirs in the fires. In collaboration with Niskamoon Corporation, the CTA has been able to collect donations from various entities and foundations that wanted to help families rebuild in their traplines. We are proud to be part of this collaboration and thank the CTA for their leadership in this special project.

Government Support Services of the Cree Nation Government

The Government Support Services units of the Cree Nation Government are dedicated to providing support to their colleagues across our 11 departments. Each team is composed of a small but dedicated group of people with the best intentions to assist and find solutions that can help make our jobs a little easier each day. I would like to thank them for their continued support of our 450 staff members. I would also like to thank Charlotte Coonishish, the Executive Assistant to my office, who has been a great asset and always prepared to lend a helping hand to others. I

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appreciate her dedication and readiness to always want to learn something new or share with others.

Here are some highlights that have kept our Government Support Services units busy during the year

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

During the fiscal year, our IT department successfully executed several key projects and initiatives to enhance our infrastructure, security, and overall technological capabilities. These efforts reflect our continued commitment to supporting the Cree Nation Government and its communities through reliable, secure, and forward-looking technology services.

Infrastructure Enhancements

- Relocated infrastructure to a new datacenter, primarily to enhance security, availability, and scalability.
- Migrated the Justice and Correctional Services’ courtroom systems to a more integrated communication platform for improved collaboration.
- Centralized HVAC infrastructure to improve efficiency and reliability.

These initiatives build on last year’s infrastructure expansion and position us for greater resilience and scalability in the years ahead.

System Upgrades and Integrations

- Integrated advanced device management solutions for enhanced control and security.

- Completed the upgrade to the latest operating systems across all systems.
- Upgraded courtroom technology to support modern judicial processes.

Security Improvements

- Established a comprehensive monitoring centre for continuous oversight and protection.
- Implemented robust security configurations.
- Delivered comprehensive training to staff.
- Initiated involvement in physical security assessments and preliminary implementations in several offices.

This year marks a shift from assessment to active implementation in physical security, focusing on our physical infrastructure and buildings.

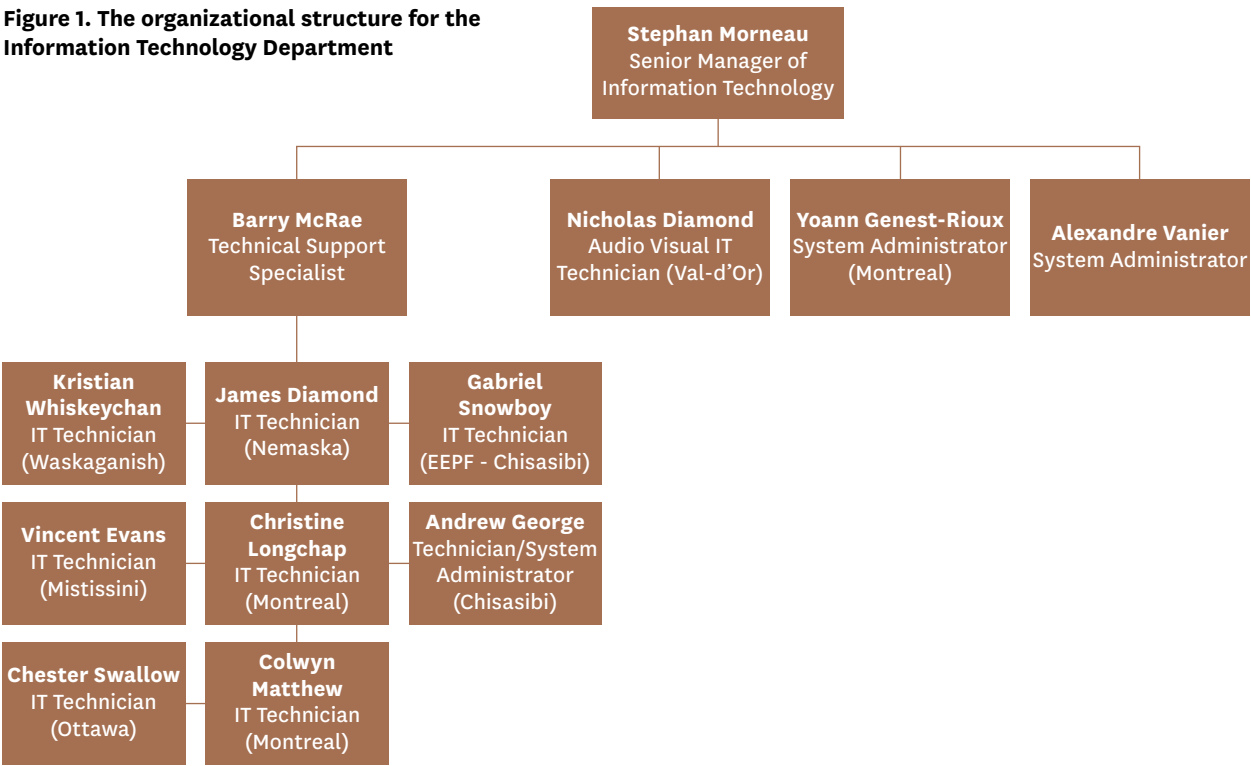
Software and Technology Upgrades

- Migrated productivity suites to robust cloud-based solutions for employees, ensuring access to the latest tools.
- Supported the relocation of a key EEPF detachment, providing necessary technological upgrades.
- Facilitated office relocations and used the opportunity to integrate new technologies to support these transitions.
- Started an assessment of departmental databases currently used with a vision to centralize, standardize, and improve data access and security for each department.

Childcare Centres Involvement

We are increasingly involved in supporting childcare centres across the Cree Nation. This year marked the beginning of a deeper collaboration, providing technological support,

Figure 1. The organizational structure for the Information Technology Department



infrastructure planning, and security assessments tailored to the unique needs of these essential community services. Our role will continue to grow in the coming years as we work closely with childcare administrators to ensure safe, modern, and efficient environments for children and staff.

Day-to-Day Operations

- Supported over 650 user profiles and managed more than 550 infrastructure equipment.
- Configured over 200 cell phones and collaborated with more than 75 partners.
- Managed over 60 internet connections and supported a total of 62 offices.
- Coordinated with over 40 service providers across 13 communities or cities.
- Addressed 5,723 requests during the year, representing a 37.90% increase from the previous year.

This consistent growth in requests reflects our expanding role and the increasing reliance on our services. Over the past three years, requests have grown from 2,448 to 3,167 (29.37% increase), then to 4,150 (31.04% increase), and now to 5,723 (37.90% increase), averaging an annual increase of approximately 32.77%.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM)

The Records and Information Management (RIM) team continued to build upon the solid foundation laid in previous years. Throughout 2024–2025, we sustained momentum on the RIM Project while also launching new initiatives aimed at strengthening organizational knowledge, access, and long-term archival integrity for the Cree Nation Government.

Antès Business Design Collaboration

This year marked another busy and successful year of collaboration with Antès Business Design on the Records and Information Management Project. Together, we have continued refining and deploying document management strategies across departments using a 6-step process tailored to the Cree Nation Government’s evolving needs.

The RIM Project remains in active development, with a continued focus on implementation across departments. We

have maintained close collaboration with many teams, and this year expanded our work to include the Environment and Remedial Works, Ottawa Embassy and Commerce and Industry departments. Our efforts involve optimizing processes, creating clear documentation protocols, and ensuring seamless integration with the SharePoint platform.

In parallel, we have begun revisiting and updating our classification scheme and internal policies to better reflect the organization’s evolving operations. These updates aim to enhance consistency across departments and strengthen the link between digital records and their physical equivalents, ensuring a more integrated and coherent information management system.

As the project matures, the emphasis has shifted toward the sustainability and resilience of our information systems. We continue to streamline internal practices and adapt structures to meet the dynamic needs of our departments, ensuring the longevity and utility of our digital environment.

Historical Archives and 50th Anniversary Initiatives

This year, we embarked on two exciting archival and historical initiatives. First, we have begun the initial phases of developing a publicly accessible historical archives database. This resource will serve as a central hub for significant documents, photographs, and records that reflect the Cree Nation Government’s institutional history.

As part of this archival initiative, we have started working on the first archival fond dedicated to the initial negotiations of and signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). This work aligns with the 50th anniversary of the JBNQA and reflects a renewed commitment to preserving and sharing foundational documentation from this historic negotiation.

In parallel, we have been exploring the digital component for future funds. A detailed due diligence has been conducted, assessing key factors such as cost-efficiency, system robustness, and open-source capabilities. Among the platforms reviewed, the ATOM database has emerged as a strong candidate due to its flexibility, user-friendly interface, and alignment with archival standards. In addition, we have been developing procedures and tools to support effective archival description on the selected platform.

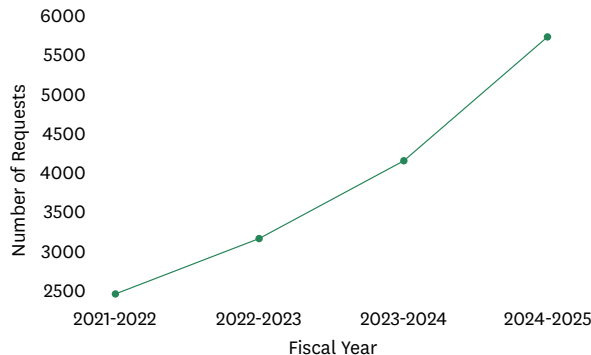
Internal Digital Research Library and Documentation Centre

We are also laying the groundwork for the creation of an internal digital research library. This library will gather bibliographic, reference, and institutional materials currently in our possession, housed within the Documentation Centre. Our aim is to make these materials more accessible and discoverable by staff across the organization, further promoting information literacy and organizational memory.

Looking Ahead

In the year ahead, we will continue implementing the RIM framework within additional departments—including

Figure 2. Growth in IT Support Requests Over the Past Four Years



Forestry, Quebec Indigenous Relations, and Miyuuhpichi-naausuwin Apatisiwin. We are also moving forward with the development of the overarching information architecture that will define our archiving platform, which includes setting out policies, procedures, and classification structures.

These initiatives all contribute to a comprehensive vision of records and information management that is centralized, accessible, and sustainable. By continuing to strengthen the foundations of both active, semi-active and archival records, the RIM team is proud to support the Cree Nation Government in preserving its legacy and enabling effective, transparent information governance for years to come.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications team is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and dissemination of news, updates, and information related to the activities and priorities of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government. Our goal is to keep the people of Eeyou Istchee, as well as the broader public, informed and engaged.

We oversee the maintenance and regular updates of the Cree Nation Government's website and social media channels, ensuring timely and accessible communication across all platforms. The Cree Nation Government is active on five primary platforms—Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube—through which it engages with the public.

The team's responsibilities include issuing press releases, coordinating the production of annual reports, and supporting the organization of major events such as the Annual General Assembly and livestream broadcasts.

For the past 2 years, the team has produced highlights of the key discussions and resolutions from the Annual General Assembly and Board/Council meetings. Additionally, we provide communications support to departments across the Cree Nation Government, assisting with their promotional materials and outreach initiatives, including copy-editing documents, drafting and reviewing reports, and formatting new forms and policies.

Also, over the past year, efforts were made to enhance communications with the communities. The Regional Communications Meeting—an annual event that had been paused during the pandemic—was successfully revived last year and a second event was held in early April 2025. Both events brought together communications representatives from the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Board of Health, and the Cree School Board.

This year, each organization presented its communications achievements, challenges and collaboration ideas. A progress update on the 2024 Communication Needs Assessment Report followed, alongside a contact list activity to strengthen network ties. The participants also shared best practices in both internal and external communications. A strategic planning session also took place, where participants out-

lined three-month, six-month, and one-year communication goals. Discussions focused on establishing collaboration protocols, particularly how each entity shares information locally and regionally. The meeting closed with the drafting of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for initiating project collaborations across entities. WE look forward to providing further updates on the collaboration with regional entities to enhance communications in Eeyou Istchee.

Since last year, the Communications Team has been involved in the planning of a year-long commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). A guidebook on the JBNQA produced and Edelman was engaged to produce a series of animated videos to be shared on social media. In collaboration with Studio Nord-Est, Edelman has worked with the Communications Team to develop a content strategy and scripts for the series.

The goal of this project is to raise awareness about the historical significance of the JBNQA, particularly among younger generations and wider audiences. Titled *United We Walk*, the video series will feature nine short episodes that explore the context, negotiation process, and lasting impact of the JBNQA. All episodes will be made available in Cree, English, and French, and will be released progressively from November 2024 to November 2025. A full-length version will be published following the series' conclusion. This initiative forms part of a larger effort to commemorate this pivotal moment in Cree history and to ensure that the legacy of the JBNQA remains known, celebrated, and accessible for future generations. To learn more visit: www.jbnqa50.com

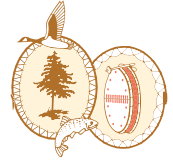
As part of a strategic realignment, the Communications Department has been restructured to strengthen leadership and enhance service delivery across the organization. The role of Manager of Communications was established by reclassifying the former Communications Advisor position, creating a dedicated leadership role to guide the Communications team and provide strategic support across key projects throughout the fiscal year. The Senior Digital Communications Advisor position was also redesigned from the previous Web Communications Specialist role, with an expanded mandate that includes project management, interdepartmental collaboration, and oversight of web platforms. To further enhance our visual communications, a Graphic Artist Technician was added to the team, responsible for producing creative assets, supporting digital media campaigns, and ensuring visual alignment with the Cree Nation Government's brand identity. Together, these changes mark an important step forward in building a more cohesive, responsive, and modern communications team.

With the hiring of a new Graphic Artist Technician in May 2024, the communications team has been able to extend its graphic design services. Over the past year, we were able to contribute to a vast and diverse range of creative projects that supported our communications. Visuals were designed for the GCC(EI)/CNG pages, layouts were developed for the Eeyou Eenou Newsletter, and a design



SOCIAL/WEBSITE STATISTICS 2024-2025

cngov.ca



SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS



[@gcccra](https://www.facebook.com/gcccra)

11,420 (up 720 from last year)



[@gcccra](https://www.twitter.com/gcccra)

2781 (down 176 from last year)



[@gcccng](https://www.instagram.com/gcccng)

1,398 (up 149 from last year)



[@creenationgovernment](https://www.youtube.com/c/creenationgovernment)

348



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/gcccng>

3,697 (up 880 from last year)

WEBSITE STATISTICS



Site Visitors over the past year: 87,000

Site Visits: 396,000

New Visitors: 42,000

LIVESTREAM STATISTICS



Total Hours Watched: 2,108

Viewers: 5,681

Total Broadcasts: 16

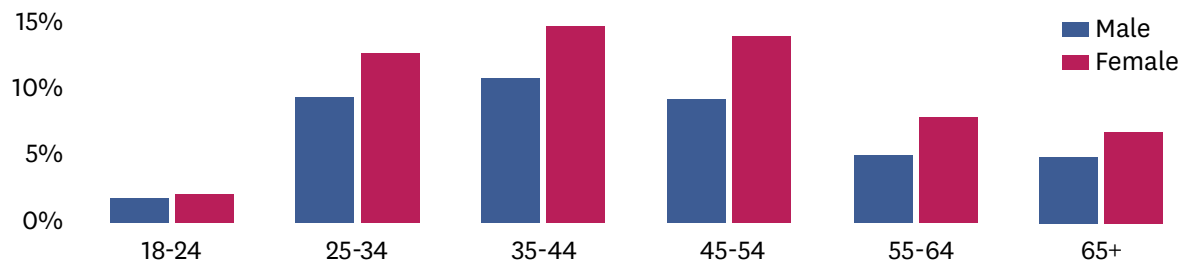
DEMOGRAPHICS



Male: 41.5%

Female: 58.5%

AGE DISTRIBUTION



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

The Land Keepers will not only have certain responsibilities and enforcement powers under Québec 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 in the monitoring, management and building of awareness to ensure continued respect for the land, animals, traditional values and practices.

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 have also brought a presence to the Chisasibi territory during this winter's caribou harvest and assisted in reporting activities to local leadership and tallymen. When fishing season begins, patrols of spawning or other popular areas are conducted to ensure that proper licenses are held and regulations are respected by people enjoying our many 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. When asked to, they may also intervene if a tallyman requests the assistance of a third party to help mediate a situation on the land that has become challenging.

Background of the EILK/WPA Program

Mista mikwec
Melissa Saganash
Deputy Executive Director



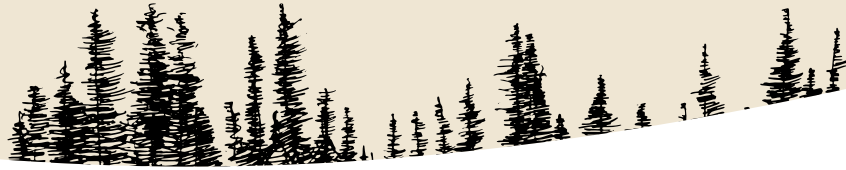


- Patrol, monitor and demonstrate a presence on lands and waters of Eeyou Istchee;
- Support and promote the role of the tallymen and the respect of the traditional management system and practices;
- Assist the Wildlife Protection Officer in their operations and implementation of the Wildlife protection 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



FEDERAL ELECTION

Mark Carney was elected Liberal Party leader on March 9, 2025. He was sworn in as the 24th Prime Minister of Canada on March 14. Following the general federal election of April 28, 2025, Mr. Carney secured a minority Liberal government with 170 seats in the House of Commons and 43.7% of votes. A majority government requires more than half of the seats in the House of Commons, or at least 172 out of 343 seats.

Following the election, Prime Minister Carney announced the members of the new federal cabinet. Former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty was appointed Minister of Indigenous Services. She is the first Indigenous cabinet minister to hold the portfolio responsible for providing services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis. As Member of Parliament (MP) for the riding of Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, the former Grand Chief represents and is in a position to advance the interests and priorities of the Crees, Inuit and other residents of the region. She also has a voice in the federal cabinet where she can continue to advance the important work of reconciliation. This is truly historic for the Cree Nation and for Indigenous Peoples across Canada. On behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees and Cree Nation Government, we congratulate the former Grand Chief on this extraordinary achievement, and we wish her all the best in the pursuit of these new endeavours.

During the election campaign, Mr. Carney reaffirmed his “fundamental and unwavering” commitment to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He reiterated his commitment to reconciliation, and he admitted that there is much more to do on the UN Declaration Act and its action plan, the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the Calls to Actions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

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 it 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.

2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the JBNQA. The Cree Nation Government has organized several events and initiatives to highlight this important milestone, and federal representatives have indicated that Canada would also like to mark this anniversary with joint presentations and events.

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

STANDING LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Cree-Canada Standing Liaison Committee established under the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement continues to serve as an ideal forum to strengthen relations between the Crees and Canada 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 Cree-Canada 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 currently Assistant Deputy Minister Heather McLean for the Modern Treaties, Consultation and Intergovernmental Relations Sector of CIRNAC.

OPERATIONAL TABLE

The Cree-Canada Operational Table presents an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the Cree Nation and Canada at an operational level. This is becoming increasingly important as we approach the renewal of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement and other key agreements with Canada in 2028. During the past year, the Operational Table addressed several operational and





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Former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty is the first Indigenous cabinet minister to hold the portfolio responsible for providing services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Photo: Brendan Forward



One of the main purposes of the Cree-Canada 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.



Photo: Brendan Forward



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. The Cree Nation Government is currently represented at this table by our Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations, Tina Petawabano.

CREE-CANADA NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT (2008)

The Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement marked a turning point in Cree-Canada relations. One of the main purposes of the Cree-Canada 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 1980's and 1990's 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 Paix des Braves. Those against Canada were mostly resolved in 2008 with the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement.

Under the Cree-Canada 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 report regularly to Canada on how we implement the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement, and particularly the Assumed Federal JBNQA Responsibilities, 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. This year, we presented another 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. We also presented a virtual "tour of the communities" with pictures of the main facilities built with funds under the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement.

There are less than three (3) years before the end of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement and other major agreements with Canada, such as the O&M Funding Transfer Payment Agreement and the Annual Capital Grants Agreement. Discussions with Canada on the renewal of

these Agreements should start at the latest at the beginning of 2026. The renewal discussions concerning the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement and other major Agreements with Canada will thus run from early 2026 until new agreement(s) can be agreed upon, hopefully before the expiry of the existing Agreements in 2028. These negotiations and discussions are crucial for the protection of Cree rights and to ensure the continued well-being of our people, our nation and our communities for the future.

Preparations for these renewal discussions with Canada are critically important. We have a short window to address a great number of very important issues with Canada, and both sides must be ready to begin substantive discussions at the beginning of 2026, less than one year from now, which will entail a considerable amount of internal preparatory work on the Cree side this year.

As reported previously, some of this preparatory work has already begun and is ongoing. Under the direction of the Executive Director of the Cree Nation Government, these preparations have involved all relevant departments within the Cree Nation Government responsible for implementing key components of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement, as well as the Cree communities themselves. We have already allocated funds to the Cree communities to support the development of new long-term capital plans and to review and evaluate templates for key infrastructure and program areas funded by the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement.

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 Cree-Canada 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.

For some time already, we have identified the renewal of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement as a priority for the Cree Nation, with the active involvement of all Cree Nation Government departments and the Cree communities. Furthermore, we clearly advised Canada last year, at the meeting of the Deputy Ministers Oversight Committee (DMOC), that the renewal of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement is the number one priority of the Cree Nation at the moment, and that Canada must be prepared for renewal discussions at the beginning of 2026, and it must also ensure it has the capacity and resources to renew the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement in 2028.

The renewal of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement is a fundamental component of the responsibilities of the Executive Director of the Cree Nation Government. It forms part of his ongoing responsibilities for implementing this and other major Agreements with Canada and Quebec,

and it is directly tied to shaping and forecasting our future obligations under a renewed agreement.

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 Cree-Canada 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

The current Land Registry System for Category IA 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, and the Land Registry System itself, have remained essentially unchanged since 1984, and are well overdue for modernization.

Cree and federal representatives have established a technical Table to explore options to modernize the current Land Registry System and to make it more efficient, accessible, reliable and easier to use, particularly to facilitate the development of a private housing market in the Cree communities. Cree and federal representatives have held several meetings, which have been positive and have provided an opportunity to explore short- and longer-term solutions.

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 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.

The Cree communities are on track to build their respective shares of the new social housing units, without incurring any substantial debt.

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 other things, 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 continues to pursue discussions with financial institutions in order to find long-term solutions 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 “construction loan” 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 home in the Cree communities.

This year, the Cree Nation Government has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the Private Housing Program to expand housing solutions, in consultation and collaboration with the Cree communities, and taking into account requests from Cree Chiefs and Cree Nation members and input from Cree communities’ senior management.

Discussions with CMHC

The Cree Nation has worked with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) since the 1980’s. Initially,



CMHC invested in the Cree communities 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 take 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) last year, we reached out to CMHC’s senior management to pursue high-level discussions on the portion of our Cree Nation Housing proposal involving CMHC.

Cree and CMHC representatives have held several meetings to date. These meetings have been positive and have provided an opportunity for the Cree Nation Government to present the Cree Nation Housing Strategy and elaborate on areas of particular interest for CMHC. The objective is to develop short-term “fixes” to current issues and challenges, and longer-term solutions, through an approach that better reflects and recognizes 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.

MOCCREEBEC AND WASHAW SIBI

Cree and federal representatives continue to pursue exploratory discussions on MoCreebec, in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Canada in 2022. Cree representatives have 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.

In parallel, the Cree Nation Government is committed to building and maintaining a positive relationship with the Moose Cree First Nation, and to exploring options for MoCreebec that may present opportunities and benefits for all parties and neighbouring communities.

Washaw Sibi requires 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 carried out pursuant to the federal *Impact Assessment Act*. These discussions are based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concluded with Canada in February 2022, and several agreements concluded with Canada for specific mining projects, enabling the creation of joint assessment committees with equal membership from the Cree Nation and Canada.

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*The Cree Nation
Housing Strategy
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for unlocking
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individuals and
for stimulating the
economies of the
Cree communities.*

The Crees and Canada are working together on proposed amendments to Section 22 JBNQA. This year, prior to the federal election, the parties concluded a Consensus between Negotiators Agreement, affirming their intention to proceed with legal and technical review of the proposed amendments, to engage with stakeholders that may be impacted by the amendments, and to complete the final internal reviews required to finalize and execute the amendments.

In the meantime, Canada has made certain amendments to the *Impact Assessment Act* in response to the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling in the *Reference re Impact Assessment Act* (2023 SCC 23). These amendments primarily ensure that impact assessments carried out under this federal law focus on areas of federal jurisdiction. The Cree Nation Government has worked with our federal counterparts to understand these amendments and their potential impacts on the Section 22 amendment process.

EEYOU MARINE REGION LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT

Renewal of EMR Implementation Plan

Cree and federal representatives are pursuing bilateral discussions to renew the Implementation Plan related to the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement 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

On January 18, 2024, the Governments of Canada and Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated concluded the Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. This Agreement contemplates the eventual devolution or transfer to the Government of Nunavut of the administration 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 Conservation Area (NMCA) in the EMR.

National Marine Conservation Area

On May 30, 2019, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to assess the feasibility of establishing a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR). The Steering Committee established under the MOU carried out a feasibility assessment that included several studies and stakeholder consultations. It then submitted a report to the Grand Chief and the federal Minister of the Environment recommending the establishment of the Wiinipaakw as an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) by Cree mechanisms and as an NMCA pursuant to Chapter 6 of the EMR Agreement and the relevant federal legislation.

The establishment of the Wiinipaakw IPA-NMCA will contribute to efforts by the Crees to preserve our culture, reclaim our traditional place names, provide opportunities for land- and sea-based healing, pass on language and culture to future generations, and acknowledge that the Crees are the primary stewards of our traditional territories. It will also contribute to Canada's global commitment that by 2030 at least thirty percent (30%) of marine and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed through protected areas, while recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

On July 19, 2024, the Crees and Canada signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which they committed to work towards the establishment of the Wiinipaakw IPA-NMCA. The parties are currently developing an establishment agreement and impact and benefit agreement, which they expect to sign in the summer of 2025.

CANADA'S MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION POLICY

Canada has developed a 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.

On October 10, 2024, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations introduced in Parliament Bill C-77, *An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation*. The Cree Nation Government was consulted on the proposed legislation, and most of our substantive comments were reflected in the new Bill. The Bill was in the second reading stage in the House of Commons when the Prime Minister asked the Governor General to dissolve Parliament and

Photo: Brendan Forward



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Canada's
Modern Treaty
Implementation
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.



Photo: Katherine Dehm

initiate the federal election in March 2025. In order to become law, the Bill will need to be reintroduced into the House of Commons once legislative activities resume.

INDIGENOUS AND HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSPERSON

In 2023, the government of Canada appointed a Ministerial Special Representative to carry out consultations and provide advice and recommendations concerning the possibility of creating an Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudsperson, as recommended by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls through Call for Justice 1.7.

The Ministerial Special Representative, Ms. Jennifer Moore Rattray, carried out consultations across Canada and submitted a report in 2024 with recommendations calling for the establishment of four distinct National Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudspersons – one for First Nations, one for Inuit, one for Métis, and one for urban Indigenous Peoples.

The four Ombudspersons would respect and reflect distinctions between Indigenous Nations, while working together in one office in the National Capital Region to protect and defend all Indigenous and human rights. The report also calls for the establishment of regional offices in each province and territory led by a Regional Ombudsperson – for a total of 13 regional offices.

If the government decides to carry out these recommendations, new federal legislation would be required to create these National and Regional Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudspersons.

Call for Justice 1.7 also contemplates the creation of a National Indigenous and Human Rights Tribunal, but advice and recommendations on the creation of such a Tribunal were outside the scope of the mandate of the Ministerial Special Representative.

In December 2024, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples tabled its own report on Indigenous human rights, calling for, among other things, the establishment of an Indigenous Human Rights Ombudsperson and a Tribunal, with powers to investigate complaints, impose sanctions, and enforce binding orders related to Indigenous rights.

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 aimed at implementing the UN Declaration at the federal level. Since then, Canada has tabled three progress reports outlining the steps the federal government has taken to implement the 181 Action Plan measures. A fourth progress report is expected in the summer of 2025.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

First Nations Drinking Water and Wastewater Act

Bill C-61, the *First Nations Drinking Water and Wastewater Act*, 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. Bill C-61 was examined by the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs from June to November 2024, and the House of Commons was set to review the Committee's report when Parliament was dissolved in advance of the federal election. In order to become law, the Bill will need to be reintroduced into the House of Commons once legislative activities resume.

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.

The Cree Nation Government has developed its own law on the quality of drinking water to support the assumption of federal JBNQA responsibilities and to ensure that drinking water in our communities meets at least existing provincial standards.

National Council for Reconciliation

In March 2025, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations announced the inaugural Board of Directors of the National Council for Reconciliation, an independent, non-political, permanent and Indigenous-led organization established pursuant to the *Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation* (previously Bill C-29).

The Council is intended to provide oversight and monitor progress on reconciliation across Canada. Its 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 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.

Cree, federal and Quebec representatives have established various tables to address land issues, including:

- The table for Waskaganish also deals with enclaves in that community. Certain land issues in Chisasibi have been referred for resolution to the Cree-Quebec Standing Liaison Committee.

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 1A lands, once the reconfiguration is completed.

Waskaganish

issues with federal and Quebec representatives and a proposed Agreement is advancing well in order for those lands to be reconfigured as Category IA lands. The 2025 federal election has delayed the participation of federal representatives in the discussions. However, there are indications that federal representatives may be close to recommending its approval.

Another deed of transfer was executed between Waskaganish and Sydney Georgekish-Watt in May 2024 regarding the “Maloney-Watt Lands”. Waskaganish and the Cree Nation Government recently instituted non-contentious legal proceedings in the Superior Court of Québec to resolve certain technical issues with respect to the land title.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration also provides the opportunity to address the issue of the so-called “Hudson’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 1A lands.

Eastmain acquired the so-called “Former Mission Lands” and must deal with the 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.

Eastmain has also requested that a table be established in order to discuss a possible reconfiguration of its land.

Discussions are taking place on the need to reconfigure Category I lands of Chisasibi in relation to the transportation corridor that transects the community.

Canada has been informed that a land reconfiguration issue may also arise for the community of Washaw Sibi in the near future, subject to the development plans of the community.

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 counterclaim, and on May 30, 2024, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation (formerly Wahgoshig First Nation) filed its statement of defence. On December 6, 2024, Canada and Ontario delivered their statements of defence to the various counterclaims.

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. Replies to the defences of each of the defendants were filed on behalf of the Cree Nation and the other plaintiffs on April 30, 2025.

A litigation timetable has now been set by the Court for next steps to prepare the first phase of the action for trial. That timetable provides for deadlines for discovery steps and for the exchange of expert reports, over the course of identified dates in 2026 through 2029.

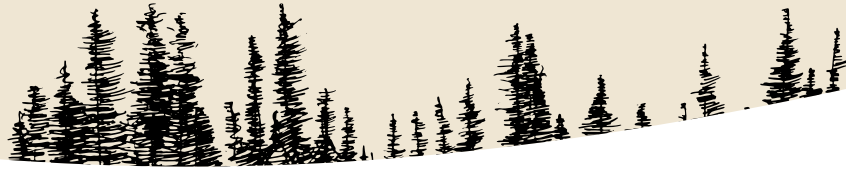
We strongly believe that our real dispute regarding the historical and ongoing denial of our rights in Ontario lands is with the provincial and federal Crowns, and not with other First Nations. We will continue in our efforts to engage with Moose Cree First Nation, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation and others, 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, along with other case preparation activities, 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



OVERVIEW

The relationship between the Cree Nation and the Government of Quebec is based on the Nation-to-Nation collaboration and partnership established by our treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (JBNQA), and strengthened by subsequent agreements, including the *Paix des Braves* (2002) and the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* (2012).

The Cree-Quebec relationship is of critical importance for the Cree Nation, and has proved to be resilient and beneficial for both parties. The relationship is all the more important now in view of the current economic and trade context and the need to pursue economic development in the North.

The Cree Nation Government continues to develop this relationship with Quebec through regular communications at the political level through the offices of the Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief, including with Premier François Legault and the relevant Ministers. At the administrative level, the office of the Executive Director maintains relations with senior officials of line Ministries.

CREE-QUEBEC STANDING LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Cree-Quebec Standing Liaison Committee established by the *Paix des Braves* serves as the clearing house for relations between the Cree and Quebec. It provides a forum to resolve potential difficulties as they arise, and helps to strengthen relations between the Cree and Quebec. The Cree representatives are Davey Bobbish, Executive Director, Paul John Murdoch, Corporate Counsel, Melissa Saganash, Deputy Executive Director, and Nadia Saganash, Director, Cree-Quebec Relations.

Patrick Lahaie serves as Associate Secretary General of the Secretariat for Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit (SRPNI). Me Marie-José Thomas, State Administrator, has a long track record in CreeQuebec relations. She is responsible for Strategic Projects and reports directly to the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers.

The Standing Liaison Committee focuses 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. Caribou – Modernization of Section 24 JBNQA;

- vi. Cree Nation Housing Strategy;
- vii. Childcare;
- viii. Youth Protection;
- (b) Section 28 JBNQA issues, including contracting and tendering procedures, Cree priority in contracting, definition of “Cree enterprise”;
- (c) *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement*
 - ix. Review of Governance Agreement;
 - x. Representation on Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government;
 - xi. Renewal of funding arrangements for Cree Nation Government.

CREE – QUEBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT (2012)

Implementation continues for the *Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory* signed with Quebec 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 functions under the *Governance Agreement* 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 Quebec and the Cree Nation Government for the development by Quebec 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.

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





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The Cree-Quebec relationship is all the more important now in view of the current economic and trade context and the need to pursue economic development in the North.

Photo: Katherine Dehm

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 Jamésien 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.

Officials of the Cree Nation Government, under the direction of the Grand Chief, the Executive Director and the Director of Cree-Quebec Relations, are working with officials of the Regional Government to clarify its roles and responsibilities 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 Jamésien.

This clarification has taken on increased importance due to two factors. The first is the requirement in section 85 of the *Governance Agreement* for the review of the representation and voting rights on the Council of the Regional Government, discussed below. The second factor is the growing role of the Cree Nation in shaping future 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.

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 Quebec shall fund the Cree Nation Government in accordance with five-year funding agreements. The first five-year funding agreement, for the period from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2018, is set out in Chapter VI of the *Governance Agreement*. In accordance with section 164 of the *Governance Agreement*, the funding provided to the Cree Nation Government in financial year 2017-2018 was renewed for the subsequent financial year 2018-2019.

The Cree Nation Government and Quebec had intended to enter into a five-year funding agreement, for the period from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2024, but were unable to do so within the time limits provided. They therefore decided, on an exceptional basis, to enter into three Funding Agreements, the first for financial year 2019-2020, concluded on March 27, 2020, the second for financial years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, concluded on March 30, 2021, and the third for financial year 2022-2023, concluded on March 30, 2022.

On March 25, 2024, the Cree Nation Government and Quebec concluded the *Funding Agreement for the Financial Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 concerning the Agreement*

Photo: Katherine Dehm



on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory, providing for annual payments of \$5 million from Quebec to the Cree Nation Government for the financial years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, which may allocate the funding as it deems appropriate to the different components provided for the Cree Nation Government in Chapter VI of the *Governance Agreement*. The Funding Agreement for the next five-year period remains to be completed.

Review

The *Governance Agreement* provides that its implementation will be reviewed after five years of its coming into force on July 24, 2012. Since work focused on setting up the institutions and processes necessary to implement the *Governance Agreement*, the first five-year review has not yet been carried out.

In the Funding Agreements concluded on March 30, 2021 and March 30, 2023, the Crees and Quebec undertook to initiate discussions as soon as possible, in accordance with sections 203 and 204 of the *Governance Agreement* concerning the review of its implementation, in particular on the following subjects:

- (a) Representation and the distribution of votes on the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government in accordance with section 85 of the *Governance Agreement* and section 37 of the Act establishing the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (chapter G-1.04);
- (b) Sections 44 and 45 relating to energy on Category II lands;

- (c) Planning processes on Category II and III lands, taking into account the evolution of programs and the current context and other related questions;
- (d) Other implementation issues.

This review is pending in view of certain preparatory orientation work to be carried out with Cree and Jamésien representatives.

CHARTER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE (BILL 96)

In May 2021, the Government of Québec tabled in the National Assembly Bill 96, An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec (now Law 14). The stated purpose of the Bill was to affirm that the only official language of Québec is French. It also affirms that French is the common language of the Québec nation. To that end, the Bill makes several amendments to the Charter of the French language.

As indicated in previous annual reports, former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, in consultation with the Chairs of the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, advised the responsible Quebec authorities of certain serious concerns of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee related to Law 14.

These concerns centre on the conditions of priority access of Cree students to English-language colleges in Quebec, the requirement for three additional college French-language courses, and the requirement to pass a French





An important objective is to ensure that the CBHSSJB's governing statute reflects its character as an institution of Cree self-governance in health and social services as contemplated in Section 14 JBNQA.

proficiency exam in order to obtain the Diploma of College Studies. Concerns also exist regarding the administration of justice adapted to Cree culture, language and way of life pursuant to Section 18 of the JBNQA.

Quebec has adopted a regulatory exemption for certain Indigenous students from the French proficiency exam required to graduate from Cegep. However, this exemption from the French proficiency exam would not exempt Cree students from the other two requirements. These are the requirements for (a) a certificate of eligibility for English-language instruction as condition for priority access to English-language Cegeps, and (b) three additional French courses at Cegep. This exemption appears to be a positive first step towards resolving the remaining two issues for Cree students regarding English language Cegeps.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

For an overview of the services and organization of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), please consult its most recent annual report available online.¹

Legislative Review

The CBHSSJB is continuing the process to revise on a priority basis its governing legislation, the *Act respecting health and social services for Cree Native persons* (**Chapter S-5**).²

An important objective is to ensure that the CBHSSJB's governing statute reflects its character as an institution of Cree self-governance in health and social services as contemplated in Section 14 JBNQA. The review is also intended to modernize the Act, taking account of developments in the general health and social service legislation over the past 30 years.

In addition, the Board wishes the Act to take better account of the Cree language and culture, including the integration of Cree traditional healing practices within the Board's operations and implementation of a special Cree youth protection program better adapted to Cree culture, values and needs.

As this legislative review affects Cree Nation treaty rights under Section 14 JBNQA, the CBHSSJB is coordinating its work with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government. Chairperson Jeannie Pelletier has assumed leadership for the CBHSSJB of this initiative, with the support of Executive Director Daniel St-Amour, negotiator Abel Bosum, Cree Nation Government representative Melissa Saganash, and a negotiation team.

Further to the commitment made by Health Minister Christian Dubé in early 2024, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS), the CBHSSJB and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government have intensified discussions with a view to revising Chapter S-5. Discussions with Quebec are expected to continue to advance significantly in 2025-2026.

¹ CBHSSJB_AnnualReport23-24_v9b-FINAL-Web.pdf

² CQLR, c. S-5.

Funding Framework

The CBHSSJB continues to implement the five-year Health Agreement and Funding Framework entered into with the Government of Quebec for the period 2019-2024.

The Government of Quebec, the CBHSSJB and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government continue to discuss whether this previous Agreement and Funding Framework will be extended for the period of 2024-2026 or whether a new Agreement and Funding Framework will be concluded for the period of 2024-2031. In the meantime, the Government of Quebec continues to provide operational funding to the CBHSSJB.

This 2019-2024 Agreement provided significant new recurrent development funding to further improve the services offered to the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee, including specialist services such as gynecology and obstetrics, oncology and mental health. The development of these services in Eeyou Istchee is intended to reduce the need for Crees to travel to the south. The CBHSSJB will also continue to advance its work to incorporate traditional Cree healing practices and to provide a culturally safe setting for service delivery to Cree clients.

The 2019-2024 Funding Framework also provided capital funding for the construction of new health and social services facilities, including the new Regional Health Centre in Chisasibi as well as birthing centres, seniors' centres, respite resources for the elderly, and mental health resources in the Cree communities. It also provided funding for information technology assets.

This Agreement and Funding Framework provided the CBHSSJB with the tools to implement the priorities identified in consultations with the Cree communities and clients and set out in the Strategic Regional Plan. In the spring of 2024, the CBHSSJB presented its new Strategic Regional Plan for 2023-2030 to the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services.

The new Strategic Regional Plan identifies key strategic orientations and objectives to guide the CBHSSJB in the coming years. It will also serve as the basis for discussions with the Government of Quebec on the next Health Agreement and Funding Framework.

EDUCATION

Legislative Review

The Cree School Board has undertaken a review of its governing legislation, the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons* insofar as this Act applies to the Cree and the Cree School Board. This Act has remained essentially unchanged in regard to the Cree since 1978, and a modernization of its provisions in regard to the Cree and the Cree School Board is overdue. An important objective is to ensure that the Board's governing legislation better reflects the Cree School Board as a specifically Cree institution of self-governance in education, makes more room for Cree language instruction and better reflects Cree culture and way of life.

In November 2021, the Grand Chief and the Chairperson of the Cree School Board agreed with Quebec to establish a Special Joint Table to review the modernization of the Cree School Board's governing legislation. Quebec's representatives are led by Mme Marie-José Thomas, who reports directly to the Secretary General of the Government, and by Mme Marie-Josée Blais, Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education of Quebec (MEQ). The Cree team is led by Abel Bosum as chief negotiator of the Cree School Board and Caroline Mark, Director General of the Cree School Board.

The Special Joint Table met several times last year. In December, Quebec representatives reported that the Quebec Cabinet would most likely require that all legislative amendments to the Board's governing legislation be made at once, as opposed to proceeding in two separate phases, as originally contemplated.

Quebec representatives also stated that the level of autonomy of the Cree School Board to determine matters like the "basic school regulations" and education programs for Cree students is an important issue for Quebec, given the need for all students to acquire the basic skills and qualifications to pursue higher or technical education outside the Board's education framework, if they wish to do so.

The Cree School Board has developed and tabled with Quebec a proposed Agreement on a new *Education Act for the Crees*. The Agreement is intended to be signed by Quebec, and the Crees as represented by the Cree Nation Government and the Cree School Board. The Agreement would commit Quebec to table in the National Assembly a new *Education Act for the Crees*, substantially in the form appended to the Agreement, in order to replace the existing legislative framework of the Cree School Board. The Agreement would also commit the Crees and Quebec to negotiate a complementary agreement to amend Section 16 of the JBNQA to ensure its consistency with the new Education Act for the Crees.

The new *Education Act for the Crees* would essentially build on existing structures, processes, guarantees and relations with Quebec and Canada as currently set out in Section 16 JBNQA. The new Act would better reflect the Board's Cree identity, treaty status and special circumstances. It would recognize greater responsibility and flexibility for the Board in managing its own internal affairs. Among other things, the new Act would bring together changes already agreed to with Quebec or already presented to Quebec officials in the past.

Budgetary Rules

The Cree School Board has been engaged since the fall of 2023 in discussions with MEQ and Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada (CIRNAC) for the renewal of the Budgetary Rules for school years 2024-2025 to 2028-2029. These negotiations are conducted under paragraphs 16.0.22 and 16.0.23 of the JBNQA, which state that the funding to be provided to the Cree School Board shall be in accordance with a formula to be determined by Quebec, Canada and the Crees.

Discussions on the Budgetary Rules have made considerable progress, and most issues have been resolved. Several issues remain outstanding, and it is expected that they will be resolved relatively quickly.

It has been agreed with Quebec to establish a negotiating table with representatives of the Ministry of Labour, which is responsible for the administration of the Economic 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 Economic Security Program under the JBNQA.

gram to the Cree Nation Government. While the program is efficiently administered, an issue exists in that participants are penalized through “clawbacks” of amounts received from programs to compensate them for damage done to their family territories. 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.

A multi-year *Child Services Agreement* was signed by the Cree and Quebec 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.

Photo: Katherine Dehm



from the Ministry of Families, more regional support for Cree childcare centres and enhanced funding mechanisms for salary increases of Cree childcare personnel.

This 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 Agreement help to attract and retain qualified and competent childcare personnel for Cree childcare centres, who are so important to the success of these centres.

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-Quebec 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. The Cree Nation Housing Strategy is discussed in greater detail in this annual report under the heading of Cree-Canada Relations.

CONTRACTING AND TENDERING

The tender and contracting rules imposed under Quebec 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 Quebec have established a special Working Group of Cree representatives and procurement officials of the Quebec Treasury Board to address this matter under the Cree-Quebec 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 and have a real connection to the communities of Eeyou Istchee, regard-

less of their legal status or structure: corporation, joint venture, partnership and so on.

ENERGY

Hydro-Québec Strategic Action Plan

The Cree Nation Government is following closely the orientations of the Government of Quebec and Hydro-Québec regarding energy development in Northern Quebec, including the effects of proposed energy exports to New England and New York. Former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty met on several occasions with 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.

La Grande Upgrades

On January 21, 2024, the Board/Council adopted Resolution 2024-026 to approve the *Ayimihituunaanuwich* document 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 capacity upgrades for the La Grande Hydroelectric Complex. The *Ayimihituunaanuwich* was signed by former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Michael Sabia, the CEO of Hydro-Québec, on February 21, 2024.

The *Ayimihituunaanuwich* process has progressed well:

- (a) The Main Table, at which Executive Vice President Claudine Bouchard leads the Hydro-Québec team and Executive Director Davey Bobbish leads the Cree team, met several times. It made significant progress in defining an efficient approach toward regulatory authorization of the proposed Upgrades.
- (b) The Technical Sub-Table has been established with representatives of HydroQuébec, the Cree First Nations of Chisasibi, Wemindji and Mistissini, as well as Niskamoon Corporation. It has met several times, and is working on defining the scope of the technical, environmental and social studies that will inform the regulatory authorization process in due course.
- (c) The Economic Sub-Table has also met and has exchanged certain information to allow the parties to define an economic valuation of the Upgrades. The Cree party is working to develop a position on economic valuation that will be critical for future discussions.

Wind Energy

Hydro-Québec has expressed interest in partnering with the Crees in order to develop up to 6,500 MW of wind power in Eeyou Istchee. This would be among the largest wind power developments in North America. Unlike past, smaller wind power projects, Hydro-Québec would itself act as project proponent and owner, in partnership with the Cree First Nations.

Discussions are still at an early stage on this potential wind power partnership with Hydro-Québec. The Cree First Nations have emphasized the need for thorough consultations

with tallymen and land users in order to assess community support for wind power development.

The orientation to be taken regarding discussions with Hydro-Québec on a potential wind power partnership will turn on the results of these community consultations as well as the direction given by the new Grand Chief to be elected in July 2025.

FORESTRY

Adapted Forestry Regime

As of February 2018, the Cree and Québec signed Amendment No. 6 of the *Paix des Braves* to replace Chapter 3 dealing with the Cree Adapted Forestry Regime, Complementary Agreement No. 25 to amend Section 30A of the JBNQA dealing with the Forestry Regime and a new Confidentiality Agreement to protect Cree traditional knowledge. Complementary Agreement No. 25 came into force in March 2019. Amendment No. 6 to the *Paix des Braves* was published in the *Quebec Official Gazette* on December 11, 2019.

The Cree Nation Government made representations to Quebec in order to ensure that the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* be amended in order to implement Amendment No. 6 of the *Paix des Braves*. Quebec introduced Bill 57 entitled “An Act mainly to modernize the forest regime” on April 23, 2025. It provides that the provisions of Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves* prevail over the provisions of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*. It also provides for a process with respect to fines in cases of breaches, as well as a consultation process regarding a draft regulation related thereto.

Amendment No. 6 also deals with the preparation of Wildlife Habitat Directives guiding the forest development planning process in order to foster the protection of wildlife habitats, which has proved a challenge since the signature of the *Paix des Braves*.

Collaborative Forestry Management Regime

The *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* provides for the establishment of a collaborative management regime for the forestry resources on the Category II and III lands situated in the territory contemplated by Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves*. This regime consists of collaboration between Quebec and the Cree Nation Government in order to develop the integrated forestry management plans.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* of 2015 provides for funding by Quebec for the implementation of the Collaborative Forestry Management Regime set out in the *Governance Agreement* over the five years 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. The Agreement also provides for the negotiation of successor agreements regarding funding for implementation of the Collaborative Forestry Management Regime for the five-year period 2021-2026 and then the ten-year period 2026-2036.

In June and July of 2024, the Cree Nation Government and Quebec signed the *Agreement concerning the Implementa-*

tion of the Forestry Management Collaborative Regime for the Period from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2028 (Collaborative Regime Agreement).

The *Collaborative Regime Agreement* provides, in particular, that it is:

- (a) intended to enable the Cree Nation Government to continue to develop additional capacity in forest planning and management;
- (a) a partnership between the Parties concerning their respective roles, responsibilities and capabilities in forest planning and management.

The *Collaborative Regime Agreement* defines Quebec's financial assistance, implementation mechanisms, roles and responsibilities of the Parties, reporting requirements similar to those of the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* and a process for the negotiation of subsequent agreements.

In parallel with the *Collaborative Regime Agreement*, the Cree Nation Government and Quebec also signed the *Agreement respecting the Provision and Use of Certain Data for the Collaborative Regime on Category II Lands*. This *Data Sharing Agreement* contains various undertakings by the Cree Nation Government to keep certain data confidential. The data contemplated by this Agreement excludes Cree traditional knowledge, which is already protected through an Agreement signed in 2017. The Cree Nation Government Forestry Department will, among other things, carry out the forestry planning and management work.

PADF Agreement

The Cree Nation Government and the Minister of Forests, 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 Quebec similar agreements for the periods 2018-2021 and 2021-2024.

Discussions were held in 2024-2025 regarding the conclusion of a PADF Delegation Agreement for the 2024-2025, 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 fiscal years. The Agreement would take into account the provisions of the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* and have the effect of adapting the Sustainable Forest Development Program's (SFDP) objectives, components and reporting tools, as provided by Quebec's normative framework. However, the Parties were unable to finalize this three-year Agreement within the time limits provided.

Consequently, it was decided, exceptionally, to conclude an Agreement for one year, 2024-2025, on a without prejudice basis and subject to special provisions on a successor agreement for the years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. These special provisions include a clause that, considering the



Photo: Katherine Dehm

ongoing discussions, the successor agreement for the fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 will adapt the PADF's objectives, components and reporting tools in accordance with the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* in a manner comparable to the PADF Agreement concluded between the parties which expired on March 31, 2024.

EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Modalities Agreement, Court Security, Education and Special Constables

Cree-Quebec discussions took place during 2024-2025 regarding:

- (a) 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
- (b) certain training components for future officers as well as other issues, such as the provision of Court security.

Efforts are also ongoing in order to address, with Quebec and the education institutions, recruitment and retention for the EEPF. Agreements were reached with the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ) and other educational institutions during fiscal year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 in this respect.

There has been some delay in implementing these agreements, which led to Cree-Quebec discussions and exchange of correspondence. In April 2025, Quebec suggested a new recruitment and training pathway in order to ensure that, in addition to the aspiring Cree police officers who obtain a "*patrouille gendarmerie*" (police patrol) diploma from the ENPQ, other aspiring Crees could become police officers through equivalency standards. Discussions are underway in order to determine how this arrangement will be implemented.

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

CREE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION AND YOUTH PROTECTION

Following changes to Quebec law to clearly reflect the legal effects of Indigenous customary adoption and guardianship, 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.

In November 2019, the Quebec Registrar of Civil Status included the Cree Nation Government in its register of Indigenous competent authorities. This allows the Cree Nation Government to officialize 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, including through the assistance of the CBHSSJB Director of Youth Protection.

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 allowing their members to have Cree customary adoptions and guardianships certified, if they choose.

In the spring of 2025, the Cree Nation Government published a general "Call for Interest" in Eeyou Istchee to assess how many Cree families may be interested in applying to the Cree Nation Government to have an existing Cree customary adoption or guardianship certified officially. The results of this Call for Interest will help the Cree Nation Government to evaluate how many applications it may receive, to help plan for this program for the future.

LAND RECONFIGURATION AND FINAL DESCRIPTIONS FOR CREE COMMUNITIES

Several tables have been established with Quebec and Canada concerning Cree land issues:

- (a) One table deals with determining the final land descriptions for Cree Category I and II lands with a view to incorporating such final descriptions into the JBNQA and pertinent legislation;
- (c) Three tables were created pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves*, which concerns the reconfiguration of the Category I lands of Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Nemaska following the abandonment of the N.B.R. Complex;
- (d) The Cree-Quebec Standing Liaison Committee is dealing with the Chisasibi 500-foot corridor;
- (e) One table is dealing with the Former Mission Lands in Eastmain, and, in the future, possibly other land issues.

Final Land Descriptions

The intention is make changes to Section 4 of the JBNQA and to other related provisions of the JBNQA 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.

Waswanipi Reconfiguration

Cree, Canada and Quebec representatives have worked on a proposed Waswanipi reconfiguration agreement. There are positive indications that Quebec representatives may



be ready to recommend its approval, but the 2025 federal election has delayed the participation of federal representatives in the discussions.

A transitional agreement was signed during fiscal year 2022-2023 in order to secure the opening of a new waste management site and infrastructure adjacent to the community of Waswanipi. The site would eventually be located in Category IA lands, once the reconfiguration is completed. In addition, steps have been taken with Quebec and Canada to prioritize the reconfiguration of a small block of lands located in front of the community, identified as Block A12.

The plan of agreement for the Waswanipi Reconfiguration was signed by the Waswanipi Cree First Nation, the Waswanipi Landholding Corporation, the Cree Nation Government, Quebec and Canada in January and February of 2024.

Waskaganish Reconfiguration

The Waskaganish reconfiguration discussions have provided the opportunity for the parties to regularize various areas (enclaves) such as the so-called “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” and the “Maloney-Watt Lands”.

In June 2023, the situation of the “Roman Catholic Mission Lands” was finally regularized through the execution of a deed of transfer between Waskaganish and the Amos Diocese. This was followed by an Agreement between Cree Entities which occupy the land, and by discussions with Quebec and Canada in order to secure an agreement that the various enclaves will become Category IA lands.

In May 2024, a deed of transfer was also signed with respect to the “Maloney-Watt Lands”. However, Quebec informed the Cree Parties of possible uncertainties related to the validity of the title of such lands and suggested that non-contentious proceedings be undertaken to regularize such title. Waskaganish and the Cree Nation Government therefore undertook these proceedings on April 1, 2025. No decision has yet been rendered by the Court.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration also provides the opportunity to address the issue of the so-called “Hudson’s Bay Lands”, now partially occupied by the North West Company and their Northern Store. Discussions have begun with a view to permitting the lands to become Category IA lands.

Photo: Katherine Dehm



LEGISLATION AND POLICY

BILL 63, AN ACT TO AMEND THE MINING ACT AND OTHER PROVISIONS

The Cree Nation Government is closely following the legislative and regulatory changes to the *Mining Act*. On May 28, 2024, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forests introduced Bill 63, *An Act to amend the Mining Act and other provisions*. The bill proposed several changes to the exploration regime, including anti-speculation measures, greater ministerial powers to limit the impact of exploration on Cree communities, new requirements for notices and information sessions prior to the beginning of exploration work, and agreements between First Nations and the Government of Quebec on excluding exploration activities on certain areas of land.

While the Cree Nation Government supported many of the changes, Bill 63 did not provide Cree communities with any greater decision-making ability concerning mining exploration. The Cree Nation Government expressed this opinion in a brief submitted to the national assembly. The brief was presented on September 24, 2024 by Nadia Saganash, Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations before the parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Natural Resources.

On November 28, 2024, Bill 63 was passed into law. The Cree Nation Government's proposals to make Cree communities play a greater role in mineral exploration were not adopted. Nevertheless, the Cree Nation Government continues to monitor the changes to the regulations of the *Mining Act* to come following Bill 63.

BILL 97, AN ACT MAINLY TO MODERNIZE THE FORESTRY REGIME

The Cree Nation Government is actively reviewing and following changes to the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*. On April 24, 2025 the Minister of Natural Resources and Forests introduced Bill 97, *An Act Mainly to modernize the forestry regime*. The bill brings major changes to the forestry law in Quebec by introducing zoning within forest management units. However, the bill provides that the provisions of the Adapted Forestry Regime set out in Chapter 3 of the Agreement Concerning a New Relationship between le Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec (the Paix des Braves) prevail over the provisions of the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*. Consequently, the Cree Nation Government holds the position that because the provisions of the Adapted Forestry Regime take precedence over the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* and Bill 97, the status quo for forestry will be maintained in Eeyou Istchee.

As such, Cree traplines remain the basis for forest planning, and special rules, such as those concerning Sites of Special Interest (1%) and Areas of Wildlife Interest (25%), continue to apply. The planning processes (PAFIT, PAFIO,

PRAN) and the roles of the Cree-Québec Forestry Board (CQFB), Joint Working Groups, Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council (CQFEC) and the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment (JBACE) remain integral.

The Cree Nation Government further confirms that Bill 97 also does not alter the application of the Collaborative Regime which arises from the *Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Gouvernement du Québec* nor the *Agreement to Resolve the Baril-Moses Forestry Dispute between the Cree nation of Eeyou Istchee and the Gouvernement du Québec* which apply to the territory east of the height of land with provisions that mirror those of the Adapted Forestry Regime.

The Cree Nation Government is conducting a detailed review of Bill 97 and will engage in direct discussions with the Gouvernement du Québec to ensure dialogue, and respect of our treaty obligations, shared commitments, and recognized governance structures. A public statement on its position was released June 10, 2025.

CONSULTATIONS ON THE DRAFT REGULATION ON BIODIVERSITY RESERVES

The Minister of Environment, Climate Change, Fauna and Parcs (MELCCFP) is proposing changes to the regulation of biodiversity reserves established under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*. The proposed amendments seek to simplify the process of listing the activities that are either prohibited or required ministerial authorization within biodiversity reserves through the creation of one regulation of general application. It was explained that Cree rights pursuant to section 24 of the JBNQA would not be subject to the authorization process. The draft regulation will be presented in a bill in the fall of 2025, which will include public consultations.

In April 2025, the Cree Nation Government attended consultations hosted by the MELCCFP on the proposed amendments. It is vital that the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping coordinating Committee be consulted on these proposed changes. Further, such discussions need to also take place at a bilateral level in the appropriate nation-to-nation forum, which for this matter would be the Cree-Quebec protected areas bilateral table. The Cree Nation Government made its comments known in a letter submitted to the Minister.

2025-2030 QUÉBEC PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL AND STRATEGIC MINERALS

The Cree Nation Government is also monitoring the development of the *2025-2030 Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals*. The plan will set out the Government of Quebec's priorities, objectives, and actions pertaining to critical strategic minerals. In April 2025 the Minister of Natural Resources and Forests held discussion workshops on the plan, setting out its key objectives which

A photograph of a ptarmigan in its winter plumage, standing on a snowy surface. The bird has brown, black, and white mottled feathers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with snow and distant hills under a pale sky.

The Minister of Environment, Climate Change, Fauna and Parcs is developing a guide concerning the creation, management and development of Aboriginal-led protected areas established under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*. The Minister is proposing a process in which First Nations, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Development Institute, and relevant Ministers work together to develop the guide. The guide is anticipated to be published by spring 2027.

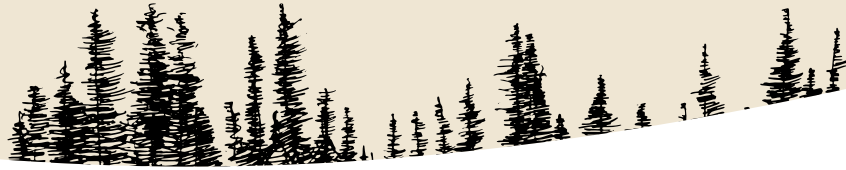
The Cree Nation Government met with representatives of the Ministry. Upon review of the proposed process, the Cree Nation Government holds that a distinct bilateral process should be applicable to Indigenous-led Protected Areas in Eeyou Istchee. Such a process would ensure that the distinct legal regimes set up by the JBNQA, Cree culture, and realities inform the guidebook. The Cree Nation Government's comments will be transmitted to the Minister in a letter.



Photo: Katherine Dehm



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS



The Cree Nation Government continues to engage directly with other Indigenous groups to share the experiences and history of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. We recognize the importance and mutual benefits of maintaining and strengthening relationships with our Indigenous neighbours, with whom we share many common concerns. Our approach is rooted in building and deepening relationships based on our shared Indigenous histories and values, and in concluding arrangements that reflect our cultures and traditional ways of relating to one another.

CREE INNU OF PEKUAKAMIULNUATSH NATION RELATIONS

The Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement, signed in 2018 between the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Nation and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, continues to serve as a foundation for identifying and addressing issues of mutual concern. These include land title, forestry management, economic development, wildlife management, environmental protection, and the promotion of our respective languages and cultures. Committees established under the agreement remain active, engaging in ongoing dialogues and collaboration throughout the year.

In the winter of 2025, Cree and Innu representatives from the Traditional and Wildlife Committee organized a meeting

with land users of the Peschitaskau common area. The discussion focused on matters related to cabins and big game harvesting. This gathering also provided an opportunity for land users to meet one another, strengthen relationships, and share their concerns. Follow-up meetings are being planned to present the outcomes and recommendations that emerged from this important exchange.

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

CREE-NASKAPI-INUIT RELATIONS

The Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of the Cree-Inuit and Naskapi Forum was developed and signed in 2022. The permanent forum promotes cooperation and coordination between the parties to establish and advance nation-to-nation collaboration.

Establishment of the Cree-Inuit-Naskapi Technical Table

At the Cree-Inuit-Naskapi Forum held on June 26, 2024, the parties agreed to establish a Cree-Inuit-Naskapi Technical Table and to nominate representatives to participate in this new initiative. The parties recognized the value of such a



table in fostering stronger collaboration among the signatories of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). The table is intended to serve as a platform for addressing shared concerns, developing joint positions, maintaining open lines of communication, and strengthening working relationships. The mandate of the technical table includes meeting on a regular basis to address issues raised at the annual forum and to prepare the agenda for future forums. The Cree Nation Government nominated the following representatives to the Cree-Inuit-Naskapi Technical Table: Melissa Saganash, Tina Petawabano and Nadia Saganash.

We look forward to working collaboratively with our Inuit and Naskapi partners on this important initiative.

CREE-INNU NATION RELATIONS

The continued decline of migratory caribou populations remains a significant concern across the territory. In recent years, the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, and the Cree Trappers' Association have engaged in ongoing dialogues with the Innu Nation of Quebec regarding their request to access caribou.

Through these collaborative efforts, the parties have sought balanced solutions that respect Cree rights and interests while prioritizing the health and sustainability of the herds. This collaboration led to the signing of three consecutive Maamuu Nisituhimuwin-Traditional Mutual Understanding on the Harvest of Caribou in the Cree Traditional Territory of Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee between the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and the Innu Nation of Quebec.

However, due to the continued decline of the caribou populations, it was mutually agreed that the agreement would

not be renewed this year, in order to allow the herds time to recover. Following this decision, some Cree land users raised concerns about unauthorized caribou harvesting within traditional territories. In response, Cree and Innu leadership convened to address these concerns and reaffirm their shared commitment to respecting the decisions taken.

Both the Cree and Innu Nations remain committed to ongoing joint discussions to address shared concerns and build mutual understanding. To support and formalize this continued collaboration, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed to promote open and respectful dialogue between the Cree and Innu leadership. This MOU will serve as a foundation for continued discussions on matters of common interest.

CREE – MOOSE CREE NATION RELATIONS

The Grand Chief and Chief Peter Wesley of the Moose Cree Nation have engaged in meaningful discussions to share and reflect on the histories and relationship between our Nations. Both leaders expressed a shared commitment to continuing this important dialogue, with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and working together to find common solutions. The leadership and representatives from both Nations are committed to holding future meetings to continue these valuable 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.



WANISHKAAKWH CLIMATE DECLARATION

March 27, 2025 – Mistissini

“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.”

Former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

The Cree Nation launched 2025 with the signing of the Wanishkaakwh ("Wake Up") Climate Declaration, uniting all 11 Cree communities and key regional organizations in a shared commitment to climate action. This declaration affirms the Nation's leadership in environmental stewardship and sets the foundation for a more resilient Eeyou Istchee.

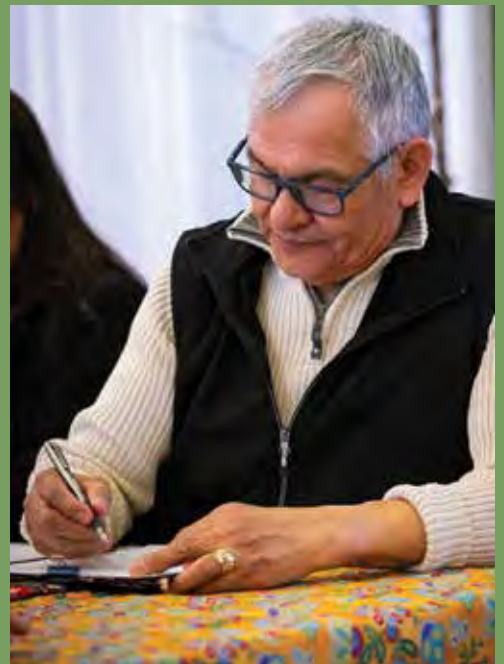
The signing marks the launch of the Cree Nation Government's first 10-Year Climate Action Plan, aligning with the Paris Agreement and global targets set at COP29. The plan blends Cree traditional knowledge and scientific insight, prioritizing decarbonization, community resilience, and climate justice.



Also announced was the creation of the Cree Regional Climate Change Advisory Committee, which will guide regional adaptation and mitigation strategies. Already underway is a Train-the-Trainer initiative focused on developing local climate plans and enhancing emergency preparedness. These efforts follow the 2024 Cree Regional Climate Forum in Ouje-Bougoumou, which produced 27 calls-to-action and 25 policy recommendations on critical issues including carbon rights, conservation finance, and Indigenous-led response planning.

Together, these initiatives reflect a bold step forward, grounded in Cree values and a shared responsibility to protect the land, waters, and future generations of Eeyou Istchee.

To read the Wanishkaakwh ("Wake Up") Climate Declaration: <https://www.cngov.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/wanishkaakwh-climate-declaration-and-27-calls-to-action-final.pdf>



UPCOMING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JBNQA

As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) on November 11, 2025, a number of initiatives are underway to honour this historic milestone. Key preparations include the development of a "United We Walk" animated video series, revisiting its context, process and outcomes of the Agreement. In addition, a JBNQA Guidebook has been produced to provide accessible information on the Agreement's main sections, its legacy, and its continued relevance to Cree self-determination and governance. These efforts aim to educate, inspire, and engage both Cree youth and the broader public in celebrating this landmark moment in Cree history.



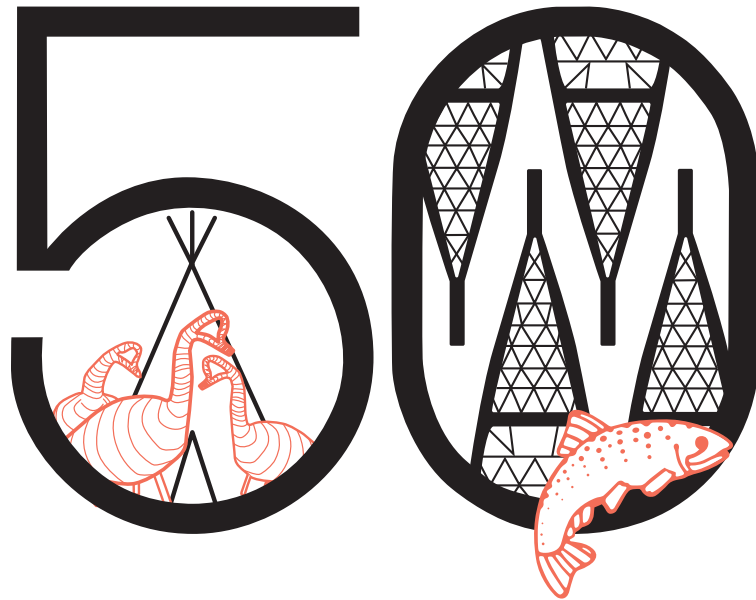
Leading up to the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA on November 11, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government invites everyone across Eeyou Istchee and beyond to join us in commemorating this historic milestone in our history, celebrating our resilience as a strong Indigenous Nation!



The 50th JBNQA Anniversary Logo

Honouring our Past, Celebrating our Future

The design of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA pays tribute to the original Grand Council of the Crees (GCC) logo, highlighting the importance of our traditional practices hunting, fishing, and trapping. Each element in the logo reflects the interconnection between the natural world and our way of life as Eeyouch.



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James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois

The fish: Carried over from the original GCC logo, it represents the water and all life sustained by water.

The tamarack goose decoy: A blend of the tree and goose elements in the GCC logo, it represents plant life, the earth, the animals and all they provide.

The goose: Representing the air, winged creatures, and all they provide.

The teepee: A symbol of gathering, it reflects the spaces we come together to discuss and make decisions.

The snowshoes: Representing progress and moving forward, the two snowshoes point in different directions, one is facing forward looking toward the future, the other looking back, honouring the past.

*While these elements are both reminiscent of the past and look to the future, they illustrate how everything around us is interconnected. We depend on each of these elements to sustain and maintain our way of life. These elements show the responsibility we have as a Nation to maintain and ensure a balance that will allow us to continue the way of life that makes us who we are: **Eeyou.***

Tribute to CHIEF ALLAN JOLLY

1950-2025



“Chief Allan Jolly led the MoCreebec community in Ontario for decades with humility and strength, advocating tirelessly for their complicated concerns—especially those arising from divided territory bisected by the Ontario–Quebec border. Despite facing rejection from some neighboring Cree groups, he persistently brought these issues to governments and First Nations leaders. As Chief and Cree Nation Government member, his guiding voice in deliberations elevated MoCreebec’s presence and needs. His vision and leadership will be deeply missed, but his people must continue the path he helped advance.”

Bill Namagoose, Former Executive Director of Cree Nation Government

It is with great respect that we honour the memory of Allan Jolly (1950–2025), long-serving Chief of MoCreebec Eeyoud. A survivor of the residential school system whose life was shaped by deep convictions, Chief Jolly’s leadership was grounded in Cree values and unwavering commitment to his people.

A Visionary Leader and Advocate

Chief Jolly led MoCreebec for several decades, guiding a dispersed Cree population in Ontario without official reserves or Treaty 9 status. He championed the rights of the MoCreebec Eeyoud, navigating jurisdictional challenges between Ontario and Quebec. His advocacy was instrumental in securing political recognition, stability, and resources—working tirelessly toward eventual formal status for his people.

Community Builder

Under his stewardship, MoCreebec developed essential community infrastructure—from housing initiatives to cable and internet services. Chief Jolly believed in capacity-building from within, nurturing local economic and social resiliency for over 800 members living in Moose Factory and Moosonee.

Mentor and Cultural Keeper

Affectionately remembered as a mentor, teacher, and loving family man—husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—he shared traditional knowledge of hunting, harvesting, and harmony with the land. Community pillars, including Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Mushkegowuk Council, recognized him as “a visionary and compassionate leader” whose spirit and wisdom will continue to inspire.

Enduring Impact

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government acknowledges that Chief Allan Jolly’s contributions—both as leader and elder—are deeply woven into the fabric of Cree governance and community life in MoCreebec. His work has laid a foundation for future generations to continue the journey toward self-determination and recognition.

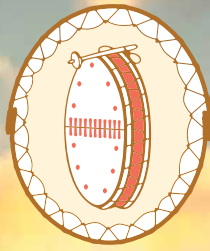
Though we mourn his passing, we celebrate a life dedicated to the well-being and advancement of his community. His legacy—of leadership, resilience, and vision—will continue to guide, inspire, and uplift the people he served.





MINOR CHAMPIONS — St. James' won the Kootenay Interchurch Hockey League's minor "A" championship. Front row, left to right: Bill Lee, Peter Harris, Alan Jolly, Don Kelly. Second row: Mike Saitoh, Harold Miller, Edward Gilpin, George J. Back. (row) Jim Harrison (coach), Bryan Kain, Gary Glanhamert, Carl Peters, Sandy Smith, Jim T. man, David Jones (manager-coach).







FINANCE AND TREASURY

Message from the Treasurer **Matthew Swallow**



THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE KEY GOVERNANCE AGREEMENTS WITH BOTH CANADA AND QUEBEC. THESE AGREEMENTS HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, ESTABLISHED A STABLE FINANCING FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES—EXCLUDING EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES, WHICH REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CREE SCHOOL BOARD AND THE CREE BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

13



EMPLOYEES

In addition to the core agreements, several supplemental arrangements have been put in place to fulfill specific obligations. These include targeted agreements in areas such as policing, justice, forestry, and economic development through JBNQA-established economic associations. These initiatives further reflect the evolving Cree-Canada-Quebec fiscal relationship.

Ongoing negotiations in 2024–2025 have yielded new agreements with Canada, including enhanced support for housing, infrastructure, and water initiatives. A major focus has been the development of a long-term Capital Plan, which remains a priority as we prepare for the 2026–2028 renewal of key funding arrangements. Efforts are underway across all communities to ensure readiness for these upcoming negotiations.

Many federal funding agreements intersect with Quebec's jurisdiction, as they involve shared responsibilities. In this context, the Cree Nation is also seeking to renegotiate several funding arrangements with Quebec. Our goal is to ensure that all financial agreements are renewed on a long-term basis, aligned with Cree priorities and the new Capital Plan.

Looking ahead, the Cree Nation Government and Canada will begin comprehensive renewal negotiations for all Cree-Canada financial arrangements in 2026, with a view toward concluding negotiations long before the end of the current Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement.

It is imperative that we continue to pursue forward-looking strategies that respond to shifting geopolitical conditions

and ensure the sustainable growth of our Nation. Backed by longstanding financial arrangements and broad support from both Canada and Quebec, the Cree Nation has continued to strengthen its financial position. Throughout the past year, we implemented new administrative efficiencies and adopted innovative approaches to improve our operations and better fulfill our mission.

A significant focus during 2024–2025 has been the continued implementation of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, which aims to ensure access to affordable housing for all Crees and to promote private homeownership. This ambitious initiative—projected to cost over \$1.3 billion—requires collaboration with multiple partners and full engagement at the community level. It also envisions economic contributions from individuals through private financing or participation in the sustainability of social and government-supported housing via economic rents.

Since 2021, the Cree Nation Government has secured \$514 million from the Government of Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to support the construction of 750 new social housing units—an important milestone toward our long-term objectives.

We are also pleased to report that additional federal funding was secured this year for key initiatives, including new housing programs, water and wastewater infrastructure, health-related projects, and programs serving school-age children.

The Cree Nation Government remains actively engaged with federal departments to streamline funding mechanisms under the Cree-Canada Governance Agreement. We continue to advocate for a whole-of-government approach to treaty implementation, which has led to constructive dialogue and opened the door to innovative funding strategies that better reflect our Nation's needs.

We have also made meaningful progress toward further recognition of our inherent right to self-government,

consistent with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and related accords. As we move into the final implementation phase of the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement, this work is essential to shaping our Nation's future governance and autonomy.

As we reach this critical juncture, the effective management of our financial and human resources is more important than ever. We must ensure our commitments are met and that all agreements—particularly those related to the JBNQA—are aligned to support sustainable development in our communities.

For the 2024–2025 fiscal year, the Council/Board of the Cree Nation Government has allocated \$530,643,203 to support programs, services, and responsibilities administered by the Cree Nation Government and entities estab-

lished under the JBNQA. This amount does not include the budgets of the Cree School Board, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, or several other Cree entities.

The accompanying graphs in this report illustrate how these funds have been allocated across our key priority areas for the current fiscal year.

In closing, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to our accounting staff. Their dedication and professionalism are essential to the effective functioning of the Cree Nation Government. From their offices in Nemaska, they play a critical role in ensuring the efficient flow of funding to all communities, directly supporting the well-being of our people.

Meegwetch
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 2024-2025:

Government of Canada	
Cree Act Operation and Maintenance Funding	\$127,501,208
Supplemental Funding to support Operation and Maintenance Needs	\$8,423,918
Federal Base Funding for Capital	\$22,794,727
Supplemental Capital Funding for Housing Related Investments	\$75,205,370
Agreement respecting the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and Related Services	\$6,801,082
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Funding Agreement	\$1,600,770
Canada / Quebec Joint Funding	
Policing Services Agreement	\$32,745,924
Government Of Quebec	
Agreement Concerning a New Relationship - Annual Payment	\$110,820,530
Agreement Concerning the Administration of Justice	\$25,654,389
Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee Territory	\$5,000,000
Cree Nation Trust	
Implementation of Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities	\$114,095,285



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:

Figure 1. New Relationship Agreement CANADA | Funding Allocation 2024-25 by Program | \$114.1 Million



NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT QUEBEC

Figure 3. New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC | Funding Allocation 2024-25 by Program | \$110.8 Million

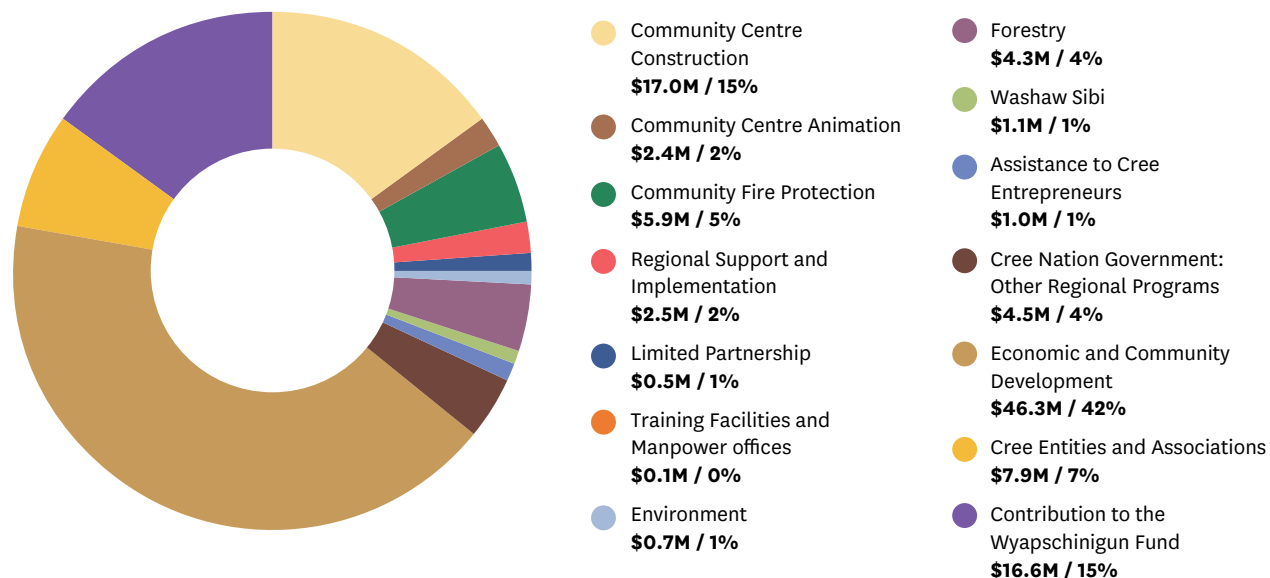
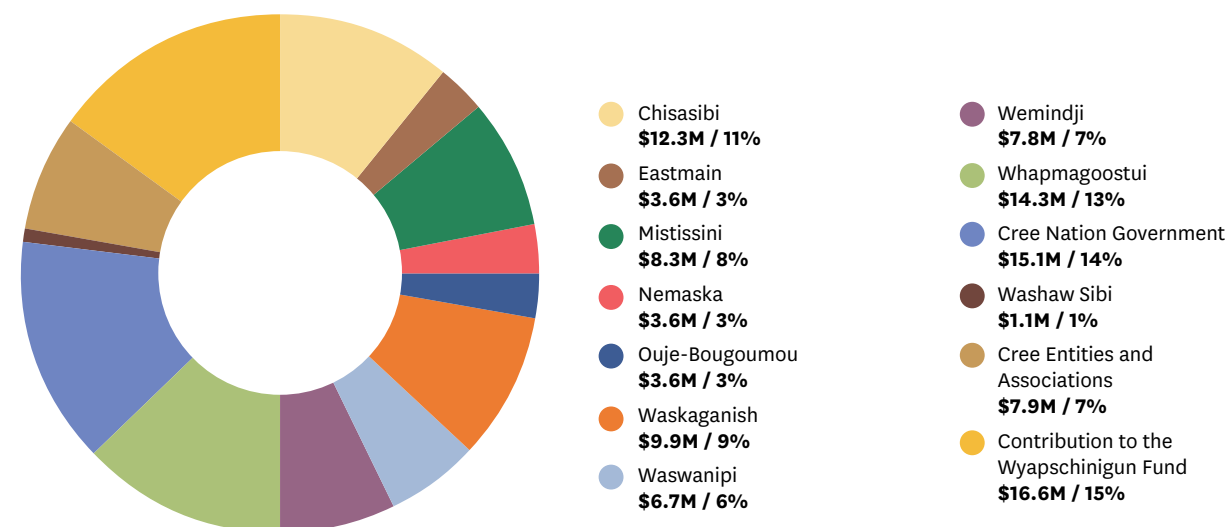


Figure 4. New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC | Funding Allocation 2024-25 | \$110.8 Million



O&M AND CAPITAL FUNDING ALLOCATION

Figure 5. O&M Funding Allocation 2024-25 | \$127.5 Million

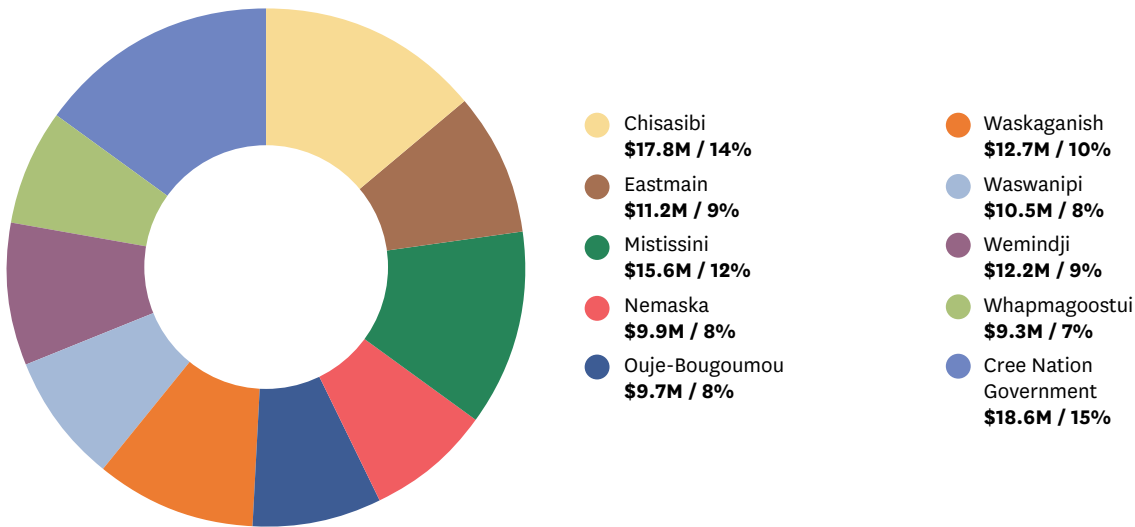
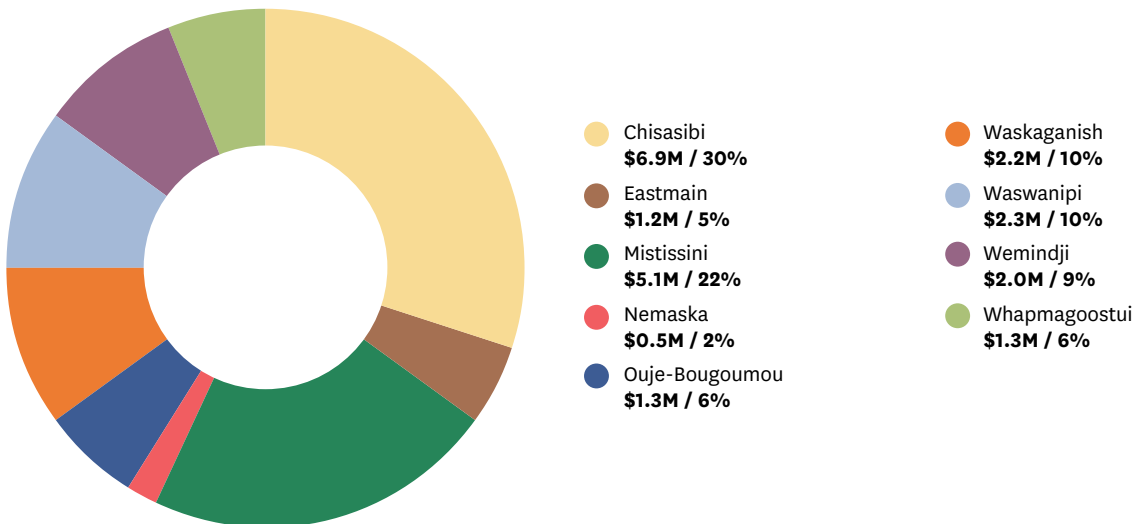


Figure 6. Capital Funding Allocation 2024-25 | \$22.8 Million





HUMAN RESOURCES

Message from the Director **Nancy Bobbish**



WELCOME TO OUR HR REPORT 2024-2025. OUR MISSION BEGINS WITH THREE SIMPLE BUT CRITICAL WORDS: WE ARE COMMITTED. EACH YEAR, WE FOCUS ON GOALS THAT WILL ULTIMATELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ORGANIZATION, TRANSFORM THE WORK EXPERIENCE, AND DEVELOP INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO EMPOWER EMPLOYEES.



We have made significant strides in enhancing our onboarding process to ensure new employees feel welcomed and well-prepared. We believe that a strong start is vital for long-term satisfaction and engagement. As we continue to prioritize employee well-being, we have developed comprehensive training and tools for managers to effectively manage employee leaves and navigate disciplinary mea-

sures. Furthermore, we are excited to continue our training in the Cree language, which not only enhances our cultural competency but also empowers our teams.

As I take a moment to reflect on our achievements, it's essential to recognize the incredible effort each HR professional contributes to our workplace. The passion displayed in supporting our employees is what truly sets us apart. Their dedication is inspiring and essential to our success. We will continue to support each other and strive for excellence in all that we do. Their contributions are invaluable.

Best,

Nancy Bobbish
Director of Human Resources

Our goal is to create a work environment where employees are inspired to be their best, through strategic human resources practices that support personal and professional growth, operational excellence and the success of our collective goals.

MEET OUR TEAM

Director of Human Resources
Nancy Bobbish

Assistant Director of Human Resources
Cynthia Vezina

Human Resources Officer
Maya Riel-Lachapelle

Manager of Human Capital Management
Andra Dumitrescu

Human Resources Administrator
Debralee Wesley

Manager of Workforce Planning and Recruitment
Kathleen Smith

Recruitment Specialist
Valerie K. Mianscum

Human Resources Specialist
Lacey Biedermann

Manager of Training and Development
Cynthia Taylor

HR Operations Technician
Vacant

Manager of Human Resources
Pauline Lameboy

Human Resources Officer (EPPF)
Vacant

Human Resources Specialist (EPPF)
Emma-Joyce Visitor

Recruitment Specialist (EPPF)
Katie Napash

Manager of Employee Relations
Sheena Costain

Employee Attendance and Benefits Administrator
Marlena Otter

Photo: Katherine Dehm

Katherine D

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE) | CREE NATION GOVERNMENT | ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025 | 79

**Director of
Human Resources
Nancy Bobbish**

**Assistant Director of
Human Resources
Cynthia Vezina**

Human Resources Officer
Maya Riel-Lachapelle

**Manager of Human
Capital Management**
Andra Dumitrescu

**Manager of
Workforce Planning
and Recruitment
Kathleen Smith**

**Manager of Training
and Development
Cynthia Taylor**

Manager of Human Resources
Pauline Lameboy

**Manager of
Employee Relations
Sheena Costain**

**Human Resources
Administrator
Debralee Wesley**

**Recruitment
Specialist**
Valerie K. Mianscum

HR Operations Technician Vacant

**Human Resources
Officer (EPPF)
Vacant**

**Employee Attendance
and Benefits
Administrator**
Marlena Otter

**Human Resources
Specialist
Lacey Biedermann**

**Human Resources
Specialist (EPPF)**
Emma-Joyce Visitor

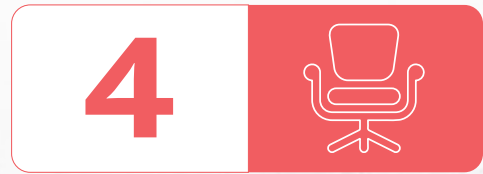
**Recruitment
Specialist (EPPF)**
Katie Napash

Photo: Katherine Dehm

AT A GLANCE (BY THE NUMBERS)



APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



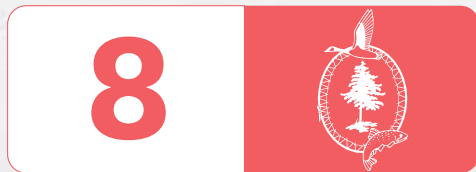
EXECUTIVE OFFICE



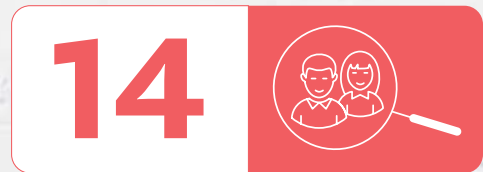
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APATISIIWIN**



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT SERVICES



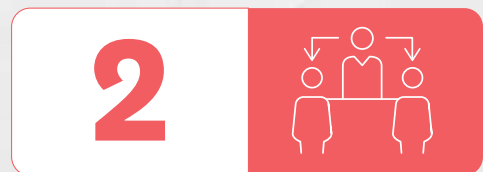
GRAND COUNCIL



HUMAN RESOURCES



CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

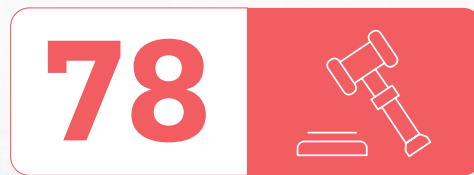


CORPORATE SERVICES

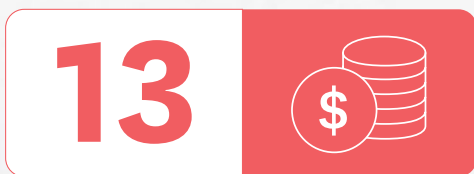
Photo: Brendan Forward



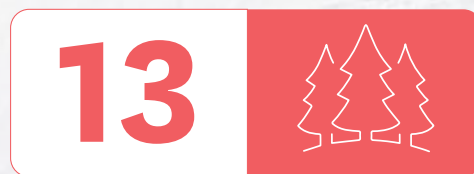
ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL
WORKS



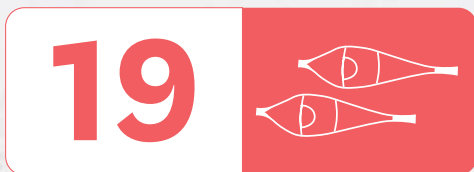
JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES



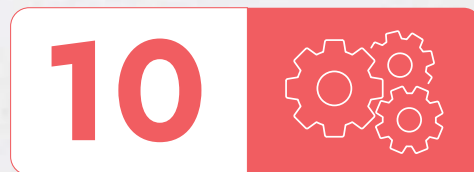
FINANCE AND TREASURY



FORESTRY



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT



COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

WORKFORCE AND RECRUITMENT

During the 2024–2025 reference year, the Cree Nation Government (CNG) employed 455 individuals across its various departments - an increase of 9.9% from the previous year.

Throughout the year, Human Resources (HR) conducted numerous job interviews resulting in the hiring of 39 employees across the departments, 2 contractual officers, and 10 permanent for the Eenou Eenou Police Force (EPPF). Of the total hires, 31 individuals were employed on a permanent basis, while 8 were given contracts lasting six months or longer (see Figure 1). HR also managed 30 casual contracts and 9 short-term replacement contracts.

Civilian employees are distributed across a wide geographic area, as shown in Figure 2, with the highest concentration in Mistissini, Chisasibi, and Montreal.

The EEPF had 106 approved positions, allocated across the nine communities, as illustrated in Figure 3. The majority of the officers are primarily based in Mistissini, Chisasibi, and Waskaganish – understandably, as they are the most populated Cree communities.

In addition to reporting the number of employees and work locations, it is also important to include gender distribution within our workforce. This helps monitor representation and inform future workforce planning.

In the Support & Technical category, there are 68% women / 32% men. In the Professional category, the distribution is 61% women / 39% men. In the Senior Professional & Manager category, there are 32% women / 68% men. Among Directors, there are 33% women / 67% men, and in Executive positions, 40% women / 60% men. As illustrated in Figure 4, our inclusive workforce demonstrates our commitment to an equitable working environment.

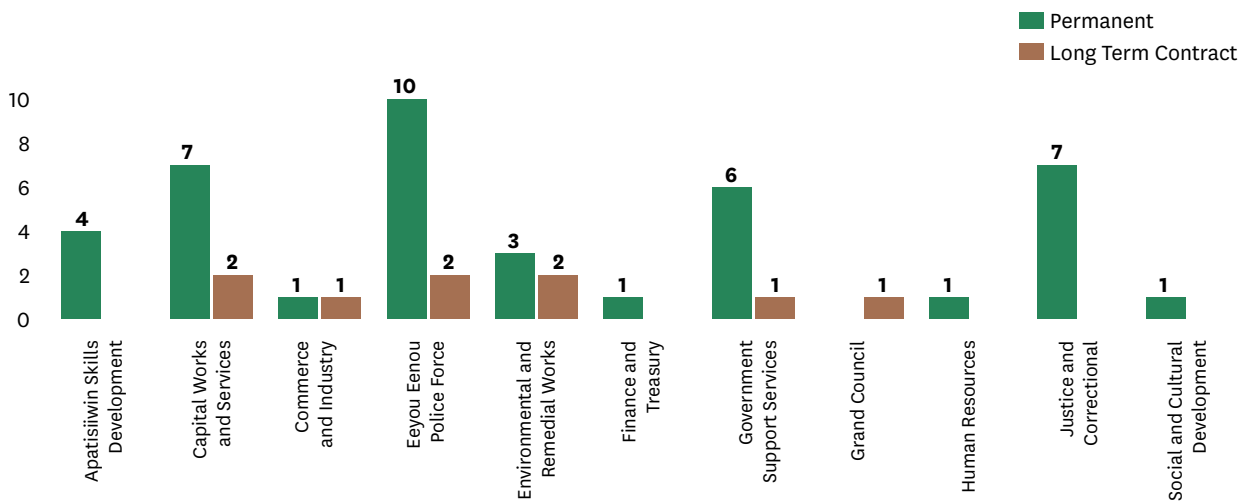
As shown in Figure 5, the gender distribution among our officers includes 13% and 87% males in various positions.

Table 1. Average number of active employees per department in 2024–2025

Department	Number of Employees
Apatisiwin Skills Development	35
Capital Works and Services	63
Commerce and Industry	10
Eeyou Eenou Police Force	112 (*non-civilian: 77 and civilian: 35)
Environment and Remedial Works	32
Executive Office	4
Finance and Treasury	13
Forestry	13
Government Support Services	36
Grand Council	8
Human Resources	14
Justice and Correctional Services	78
Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiwin	16
Office of Corporate Services	2
Social and Cultural Development	19

**Non-civilian employees refers to police officers and law enforcement personnel with police training and have legal authority to enforce laws. Whereas, civilian employees work in administrative, technical, and support roles.*

Figure 1. Recruited Employees (Civilian and Non-Civilian)



Region	Number of Cases
Amos	1
Chisasibi	67
Eastmain	10
Mistissini	72
Montreal	67
Nemaska	37
Ottawa	9
Ouje-Bougoumou	15
Quebec City	3
Val-d'Or	21
Waskaganish	23
Waswanipi	26
Wemindji	17
Whapmagoostui	10

Band	Number of People
Amos	3
Chisasibi	14
Eastmain	4
Mistissini	18
Nemaska	6
Ouje-Bougoumou	6
Waskaganish	11
Waswanipi	7
Wemindji	4
Whapmagoostui	4

Career Stage	Female	Male
Support & Technical	130	62
Professional	84	54
Senior Professional & Manager	10	21
Director	4	8
Executive	2	3

Rank	Female	Male
Senior Officer	1	12
Investigator	2	4
Officer	7	49
Court Liaison	0	2

First Nation	Number of people
Cree	299
Non First Nation	61
First Nation	18

Additionally, 77% of EEPF officers are Cree beneficiaries as illustrated in Figure 7, supporting the importance of having a police force that is representative of its population.

EEPF Policing Programs – Cohort Overview

- Cohort 9 (Regular Policing Program) included 9 students – 2 women and 7 men – who successfully completed both the AEC Police Technology Program and the Basic Training Program in Police Patrolling at the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ). All graduates were sworn in as full-fledged officers on March 12, 2025, and now actively serve the communities in Eeyou Istchee.
- Cohort 10 (Alternative Program for Special Constables) began training in October 2024 with 13 students. Training is ongoing with successful candidates to be welcomed into active service upon completion.

Summer Students

Medical Leave Procedures Guide

Category	Percentage
Cree	58
Non First Nation	13
First Nation	6

The guide supports a culture of accountability and care, setting clear expectations for both the employee and their respective departments during the leave period. This initiative reinforces the CNG's commitment to employee well-being while maintaining operational continuity.

In line with recognizing the importance of employee well-being, a video presentation of the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) was produced, circulated to current employees, and then integrated into the onboarding section of Dayforce. This ensures that all new employees are introduced to the wide range of confidential support services available to them and their immediate family members from the start of their employment.

Hybrid Work Model

● ● ● ● ● ● ●

To promote consistency, transparency, and fairness in workplace practices, a comprehensive Disciplinary Procedures Guide was developed for managers.

compromising the quality of initiatives, services, or overall performance. The hybrid model reflects the organization's adaptive approach to modern workplace needs while maintaining a high standard of service delivery.

Disciplinary Procedures Guide for Managers

To promote consistency, transparency, and fairness in workplace practices, a comprehensive Disciplinary Procedures Guide was developed for managers. It provides a structured, step-by-step approach for addressing employee performance and conduct issues in a way that is both consistent and aligned with organizational values and legal obligations. It includes guidance on documenting incidents, conducting investigations, and performance management, with clarifying the responsibilities of all involved in the disciplinary process.

To support implementation, virtual group training sessions were held. They gave managers the opportunity to ask questions, discuss real-world scenarios, and build confidence in handling sensitive employee issues. The training reinforced the importance of accountability while emphasizing respectful and constructive communication. Together, the guide and training initiative equipped managers to handle issues proactively, maintain a respectful workplace, and support employee development through corrective action if necessary.

Dayforce

In partnership with the IT department, Single Sign-On (SSO) was successfully implemented for Dayforce, enhancing both user experience and security. By reducing the number of login credentials, potential vulnerabilities were minimized, and cyber threats were reduced. HR provided support to employees throughout the transition, addressing any issues that arose and ensuring a smooth rollout.

The build and testing phases of the Dayforce Learning feature were completed and we are now finalizing the details before its launch. This feature will integrate with our Training and Development plan, facilitating access to learning resources for employees.

Ongoing updates to Dayforce ensure that it meets the changing needs of the organization. This year, updates

included certain pay rules such as overtime calculations, to ensure compliance with internal policies and workplace legislation. Additionally, new rule configurations were completed in preparation for onboarding a new group of employees for the Tiny Homes project.

Training and Development

In 2024–2025, a new strategic approach to Training and Development (T&D) at the CNG was developed, resulting in a five-year Training and Development Strategy and Action Plan. At its core is a semi-centralized support system that balances centralized governance with department-led training. This model aims to promote consistent practices across the organization while allowing departments to address their unique training needs. Our commitment to training remains strong—to promote meaningful workforce development and support a skilled, united CNG workforce that contributes effectively to our organization.

Key 2024-2025 T&D Initiatives include:

- **T&D Policy:** A comprehensive new policy is set to launch in 2025, providing a consistent framework to guide all organizational training efforts.
- **Cree Language Learning Project:** Virtual Cree lessons continue, with session 2 completed and session 3 concluding in June 2025. The initiative will resume in the fall. Apatisiwin Skills Development's gratefully supports this project financially.
- **eLearning Platform:** The HR team was selected to participate in a pilot project for the Dayforce eLearning platform. This platform will enhance access to learning opportunities and help support a strong learning culture. Implementation and official launch are planned for 2025.
- **Management Training:** Planning is underway to enhance leadership and supervisory skills among current and future CNG managers.
- **New HR Position:** A new Human Resources Technician role was created to strengthen the HR team. In addition to providing T&D support, this position also assists with recruitment and employee relations.



APATISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director Abel J. Trapper



IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO PRESENT THE 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE APATISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (ASD) DEPARTMENT.



Above all, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my outstanding team for their steadfast support and tireless dedication throughout the past year. Our divisions are now digitally streamlined and are working in a collaborative spirit, supported by our department's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and the recently published labour market research of Eeyou Istchee titled: *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 milestone socioeconomic study provides a unique look at the evolution of the Eeyou Istchee labour market over the last twenty years. It also reveals key information that enables us to identify current labour market needs and inform the redesign of our Policy on Programs, with the objective of improving capacity building, refining our workforce strategy and offering Cree youth opportunities for a brighter future.

This year, our Program Development Officers have undergone a series of comprehensive training courses, among others, on monitoring projects efficiently and designing a program promotion plan specific to each territory/community of Eeyou Istchee, with the objective of publicizing ASD's programs and creating a network of collaboration that will strengthen our grassroots' knowledge of local labour markets.

Present in every community of Eeyou Istchee, our Employment Counsellors have made strides in fulfilling their objective for being known to skillfully deliver a wide range of employment services. The Services team continuously relies on its profound knowledge of community members and organizations to maintain relationships and develop partnerships.

Now equipped with cutting-edge digital tools, the Finance and Administration Division efficiently oversees our depart-

mental budget, which includes human resources, employment services, and program operations. The division ensures that all payments are processed accurately and seamlessly.

Our very popular Cree Bursary Program continued its successful path, reaching out to an even larger number of recipients and bearing witness to the growing number of Cree people pursuing a post-secondary education. ASD is proud to support students in their academic endeavours.

Reflecting on the past year's accomplishments, we are reminded of the vital role our clients play. They set the direction for our department and serve as the guiding light for our path forward. Moreover, our clients inspire our conduct throughout the 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

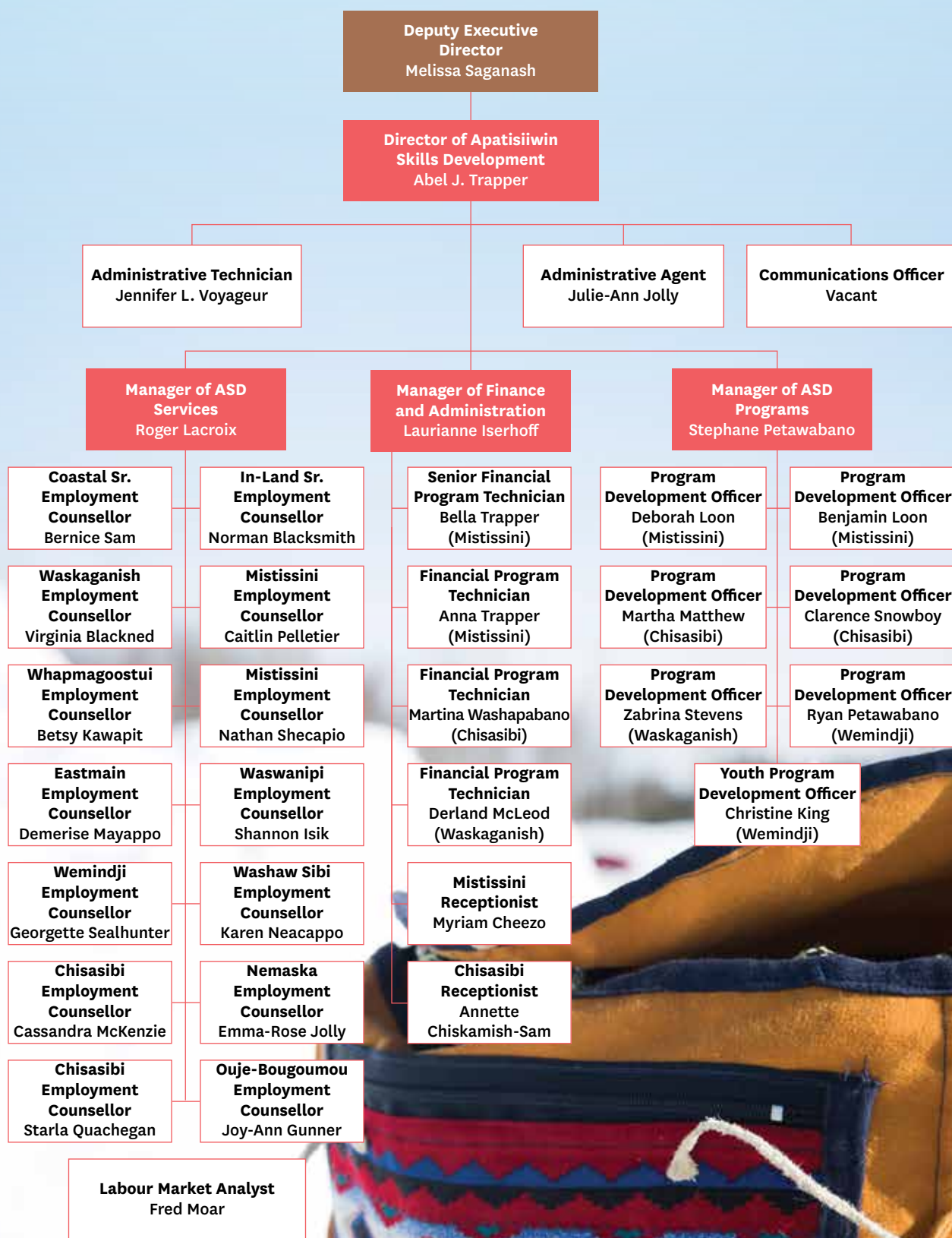


Photo: Brendan Forward

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Youth Programs
create summer
employment
opportunities and
innovative work
experiences for
secondary and
post-secondary
students, preparing
them to successfully
integrate the
labour market.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The overarching goal of the Apatisiwin Skills Development department is to build capacity in Eeyou Istchee by making an invaluable contribution to human resource development in Eeyou Istchee. Our department's mandate is to offer wraparound service and cutting-edge programs by aiming to:

- Support individuals on their career pathway by helping them to pursue their education, upgrade their professional skills or secure self-employment through the creation of a business.
- Help organizations in finding qualified candidates to fulfill their workforce needs.

ASD TEAM

Operating from ten offices in Eeyou Istchee and a point of service at the Cree Nation Government Embassy in Ottawa, a team of 36 dedicated professionals implements all-inclusive employment services and employment programs at both the local and regional level, through a custom-tailored approach that ensures individual success and advances human resource development.

ASD SERVICES DIVISION

Led by a Manager of Services and supported by Senior Employment Counsellors, twelve Employment Counsellors serve each of the ten communities in Eeyou Istchee, providing additional resources to the most populated communities, Chisasibi and Mistissini.

Leveraging its extensive knowledge and experience, the Services Division empowers communities by providing valuable support in the following key areas of employment counselling: needs assessments, job interview preparation, resume preparation, job applications and other measures.

The division also offers a range of services designed to help clients under the programs such as Cree Bursary applications, referral forms for training allowances and participant follow-up. Employment Counsellors also provide essential assistance and information relating to Employment Insurance (EI) and Québec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP).

The Services Division also acts as liaison for Service Canada, Services Québec, Canada Revenue Agency, Revenu Québec and the Commission de la construction du Québec, providing general support to Cree clients when needed.

In accordance with ASD's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the Services Division is focusing on the following priorities:

- Archival System, by developing an efficient archival system for both digital and printed client files, ensuring all documents are up-to-date, secure and easily accessible.
- Paperless Office Transition, by working on a comprehensive plan to transition operations to a paperless office, enhancing efficiency and sustainability.



ASD PROGRAMS DIVISION

The Manager of Programs guides a team of seven Program Development Officers that implement a portfolio of programs professionally and efficiently.

Based on up-to-date labour market research, the division provides programs in three essential categories designed to foster capacity building and empower Eeyou Istchee communities.

Youth Programs

Youth Programs create summer employment opportunities and innovative work experiences for secondary and post-secondary students, preparing them to successfully integrate the labour market.

These programs also offer part-time job opportunities during the academic year, helping youth develop life skills and shape their future careers:

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

Capacity Building Programs

Capacity Building Programs aim to strengthen the Eeyou Istchee workforce by encouraging individuals to pursue their education at post-secondary level, assisting graduates with job market integration and facilitating career upgrading. Focusing on supporting JBNQA Cree Beneficiaries, these programs are:

- Cree Bursary
- Cree Graduate
- Career Advancement

Workforce Strategy Programs

Our Workforce Strategy Programs encourage employers to hire and train new personnel for specific job positions. These programs create productive employment opportunities for unemployed individuals, helping them maintain or increase their skills. Additionally, they help individuals seeking self-employment by offering financial support throughout their entrepreneurial journey:

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

In accordance with ASD's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the Programs Division is focusing on the following priorities:

- **Monitoring and Promotion**, by performing on-site monitoring visits and using a new user-friendly monitoring report template and by preparing a program promotion plan for a specific geographic territory/community, including all type of clients, employers or economic sector of activity.

- **Archival System**, by establishing an advanced and secure archival system for digital and printed program files to ensure all documents are appropriately archived.
- **Paperless Transition**, by developing a comprehensive plan to transition its operations to a paperless office and providing support to employees for its implementation.

ASD FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Under the guidance of its Manager of Finance and Administration, six dedicated specialists perform complementary financial and administrative work in two separate teams.

Finance Team

The Finance Team is responsible for monitoring and implementing all financial activities. Financial Program Technicians perform the following key actions items:

- **Processing Claims**, by assessing recipient reports and supporting documents to ensure compliance with the Schedule A of a specific contribution agreement.
- **Database Management**, by ensuring all relevant financial information is accurately compiled and maintained in the database.

Administration Team

The Administration Team oversees the day-to-day operations across all the department's offices, providing essential administrative and technical support, including:

- Utilizing *Laserfiche* for electronic filing.
- Managing *SharePoint* for document sharing.
- Processing electronic travel claims.

Technological Implementations

To enhance efficiency and collaboration, the Finance and Administration Division has implemented:

- **DocuSign**: For electronic signing of contribution agreements
- **SharePoint**: As a document-sharing network accessible to all offices within the Apatisiwin Skills Development department

COMMUNICATIONS

This year, ASD increased its online presence with a focus on an overall digital approach, including daily social media posts on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *X*, featuring employment offerings, along with events and other labour market opportunities.

We have also added community groups for each community in Eeyou Istchee to reflect local activities and engagement.

Our website now provides comprehensive information about the department services and programs, with dynamic and user-friendly *Find a Job* and *News* sections.

We are currently exploring innovative ways to engage with our clients, such as designing a client portal to streamline communications and provide a quick access to information and useful documents.

We believe that the 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 apatisiiwin.ca.

PLANNING SESSIONS

Over the past year, ASD has successfully conducted two planning sessions. These bi-annual meetings ensure effective team collaboration and keep all staff members informed about updates and new initiatives. The sessions aim to establish a shared direction within the department and foster a deeper connection among team members. They play a crucial role in promoting team synergy and enhancing departmental efficiency. One planning session is held with the entire department, while the other is conducted within individual divisions to focus on the priorities of each division.

CONFERENCES

Our dedication to professional development and knowledge-sharing is reflected in our staff's active participation in conferences and industry events throughout the year. These gatherings provide essential opportunities for our team members to enhance their expertise and promote our organization's mission and initiatives. By interacting with peers and industry leaders, our staff effectively conveys our organization's values and accomplishments, encouraging a deeper understanding of our work, increasing our visibility within different industries interested in the development of the Eeyou Istchee labour market.

Administrative Professionals Conference (APC)

Our employees attended the June APC 2024 conference, themed "The Future is AI: Administrative Intelligence." This event highlighted the rapid evolution of administration, driven by AI's transformative impact on workflows and productivity. The conference celebrated the crucial role of Administrative Professionals in leveraging these innovations and prepared attendees for future advancements in their careers. Responding to attendee feedback, APC 2024 featured numerous sessions focused on tech tools and AI-driven solutions, offering practical insights for immediate implementation.

Québec Mines + Énergie

Held this year in Quebec City, from November 19 to November 21, 2024, this annual event focused on the exchange of scientific knowledge in the mining and energy sectors. ASD Program Development Officers attended the conference to learn about new trends and promote ASD programs.

The event featured a high-calibre agenda that includes training, conferences, and networking opportunities designed to enrich participants' knowledge. It also aimed to promote and develop Québec's rich mining and energy potential from a sustainable development perspective.

Professionals from various sectors gathered at Québec Mines + Énergie to promote synergy and exchange ideas, with a strong emphasis on geoscience knowledge and

innovation. Active participation in these conferences helps attendees enhance their expertise, expand their networks, and stay updated on industry trends, contributing to career growth and sustainable development.

ASD-SAES/CSB Joint Meeting

This annual planning meeting is held between Apatisiwin Skills Development, Sabtuan Adult Education Services, and the Cree School Board to collaboratively select vocational programs that align with both community priorities and regional labour market needs. The event took place in Montreal, on April 3 and 4, 2024 and again, almost a year after on March 13, 2025.

The North and Its Logistics Conference

On June 18 and 19, 2024, ASD attended the 20th annual Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance conference in Rouyn-Noranda, which focused on "The North and its Logistics." The event brought together nearly 200 participants, including Indigenous and regional leaders, to discuss key issues affecting the sustainable development of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. ASD gained valuable insights into logistical challenges such as food autonomy, wildfire impacts, infrastructure, and innovation.

Cree Nation Business Summit

The Cree Nation Government's Department of Commerce and Industry in partnership with Eeyoupreneur hosted a Cree Nation Business Summit, which aims to empower Cree entrepreneurs through inspiring talks from industry leaders and a dynamic group case study competition. Open to members aged 18-35, the event offered a unique opportunity to network, learn, and contribute to economic development within the Cree Nation. The event was held in Chisasibi, from August 23 to August 25, 2024.

Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association Tourism (COTA) Conference

The Ouje-Bougoumou community welcomed the conference, on September 18 and 19, 2024. The event brought together over 85 delegates under the theme "Reconciliation: Both Journey and Destination – The Power of Indigenous Tourism." The conference promoted meaningful dialogue among Cree tourism operators, government partners, and Indigenous tourism leaders, emphasizing cultural authenticity, sustainable tourism, and reconciliation.

The conference also showcased COTA's strong commitment to sustainability, with eco-friendly practices and a community cleanup initiative. With its blend of cultural pride, strategic vision, and environmental stewardship, the event marked a significant step forward in building a world-class, Cree-led tourism industry rooted in community values and reconciliation.

Opinagow Collaboration Agreement 5th Summit

This year's annual conference was held in Wemindji, on October 22, 2024. Partners of the Opinagow Collaboration Agreement—Goldcorp Inc., the Cree Nation of Wemindji,

to start, promote, and manage socially relevant businesses or organizations, lead and manage people effectively, communicate with confidence, design and lead projects, and negotiate and manage conflict.

Communicating Effectively - McGill University Training

This communication training program is tailored for professionals, managers, and team leaders seeking to elevate their influence and effectiveness. Highly regarded among human resource professionals, it also serves as a valuable resource for individuals transitioning into new leadership roles. The course equips participants with essential communication tools and strategies, empowering them to lead with confidence, foster collaboration, and drive organizational success. The training was held in Montreal on April 9 and 10, 2024.

PARTNERSHIPS

Cree School Board

The Apatisiwin Skills Development department and the Cree School Board are nurturing their sustainable partnership to enhance collaboration at all levels and better meet the needs of students and clients.

The partnership aims to provide an aligned approach to students, clients, bands, and employers by offering simple, effective services, avoiding duplications and contradictions.

In the past, our department and the Cree School Board's Sabtuan Adult Education Services signed an agreement to strengthen collaboration and support students in accessing employment opportunities. The agreement outlines clear processes for information sharing, confidentiality, consultation, and community relations, ensuring a seamless process for all involved.

Similarly, a partnership agreement with the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services is in development to maximize resources and assistance made available to post-secondary students transitioning to the Eeyou Istchee labour market.

These joint efforts to build partnerships stem from an attitude of open communication that fosters transparency, mutual understanding, and facilitates dialogue among all stakeholders. This commitment to communication is the key to continuous improvement and the success of our joint initiatives.

Service Québec, Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency

In recent years, we have chosen to expand the range of services we offer by developing collaborations with various provincial and federal government departments, including Service Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, and Revenu Québec.

We remain committed to expanding the reach of these partnerships by ensuring that we have visited and offered services to all our communities by the end of summer 2025.

Commission de la Construction de Québec (CCQ)

Over the last decades, the Cree Nation Government raised issues and identified barriers in relation to the integration of Cree workers and entrepreneurs in the regime applicable to the Commission de la Construction de Québec (CCQ). The following key requests made by the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee were essentially the following:

- Increase the access to competency certificate for Cree construction workers
- Recognize the work experiences and training outside the CCQ regime
- Prioritize hiring of the Cree workforce
- Diversify vocational training program available in the territory
- Provide access to English and adapted services for workers, for qualification exams and for CCQ skills upgrading courses
- Increase mobility of the workforce outside communities.

In the last ten years, increased collaboration between the CNG and the CCQ has led to important milestones for a better inclusion of Cree workers and entrepreneurs in the CCQ regime.

In 2019, the CCQ launched the Collaborative Approach for the Inclusion of First Nations and Inuit in the Construction Industry, whose objectives were to provide an adequate response to the demands expressed by the First Nations and Inuit in a general manner, and to enable the CCQ to coordinate structured efforts via the development of a Construction Industry Action Plan for the Inclusion of the First Nations and Inuit.

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.

Last year, the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ), alongside the First Nations and Inuit and the partners in the industry, launched the Construction Industry Action Plan for the Inclusion of First Nations and Inuit.

In early 2025, the CCQ started the implementation of the action plan, answering the request of the Cree Nation by harmonizing boundaries of the CCQ Baie-James region with those of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay region, and agreeing to adapt administrative services accordingly. Furthermore, the Ministère du Travail du Québec granted ASD the authority to act as a referral agency on its behalf.

CREE-CANADA RELATIONS

The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee stands in a special treaty relationship with Canada as a result of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), the first modern Indigenous land claim agreement and treaty in Canada.

This unique relationship was further developed through the New Relationship Agreement, signed in 2008, which aimed to establish a new, more balanced relationship between Canada and the Cree Nation. It focused on improving the implementation of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), including addressing lingering issues and resolving disputes.





Photo: Brendan Forward

However, the indexation of federal funding levels for the entire period of the New Relationship Agreement (2008-2028) remains an outstanding matter, and the parties maintain their respective positions as to whether such funding levels comply with the agreement. Formal discussions to renew the New Relationship Agreement will begin in 2026.

Alternately, the Agreement on Cree Nation Governance (Governance Agreement) stemmed from a long-standing process aimed at establishing Cree self-government and addressing historical grievances. This included years of negotiations following the initial New Relationship agreement in 2008, which outlined a framework for such an agreement and constitution. The agreement was ultimately approved by all nine Cree First Nations and the Cree Nation Government, following extensive consultations with Cree beneficiaries and other parties, and was then formally signed in 2017 with Canada.

The Governance Agreement strengthens Cree self-determination on Cree community lands as defined in the JBNQA and provides the Cree with greater autonomy and flexibility in governance on these lands. It also offers long-term stability for the Cree First Nations of Eeyou Istchee and the Cree Nation Government in financial arrangements with Canada.

In parallel, for the period of April 2018 to March 2028, the Cree Nation Government and Canada renewed a Funding Transfer Payment Agreement which provides the Apatisiwin Skills Development department with core funding to develop, implement and monitor its own programs and employment services to assist its clientele in gaining transferrable skills, finding long-term employment and career success.

Complementarily, the Cree Nation Government and Canada also signed the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Funding Agreement to provide support to eligible unemployed clients through workforce programs under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. The Apatisiwin Skills Development department is responsible for implementing this agreement, for the period of April 2019 to March 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.

Finally, Cree and federal representatives are also pursuing discussions regarding additional funding to support the Crees living in MoCreebec, who no longer receive 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 initially secured a short-term solution with Canada on behalf of MoCreebec, pending discussions on longer-term funding arrangements.

ASD COMMITTEES

Two committees review project assessment and recommendations made by ASD Program Development Officers. Their specific mandates are the following.

Technical Group

The Technical Group consists of ASD Managers and meets at least once a month to review projects with a value of \$25,000 or less.

Apatisiwin Skills Development Advisory Committee (ASDAC)

ASDAC consists of voting members which are representative from each of the 9 communities of Eeyou Istchee, the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation Youth Council and the Cree School Board.

Non-voting members include the Director of ASD, a Washaw Sibi appointee and a Canada representative.

The ASDAC meets typically quarterly or at any other time deemed necessary thereafter to review projects of \$25,000 and over.

The ASDAC promotes full-time employment for the development of clients' employability skills, preferably leading to full-time employment, and monitors the progress of Cree Beneficiaries in the workforce. The Committee also provides support in resolving employment development issues by helping to bring them to the attention of the Government of Canada.

Photo: Brendan Forward



PROFESSIONAL COOKING COURSE

ASD ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS

Programs Financial Information

During the fiscal year 2024-25, 530 projects were approved for a total of \$30,400,505 under employment and training programs and 262 projects received payments for a total amount of \$11,841,518.

In the data presented below, the “Other” category includes territorial projects and program contracts with Cree organizations of Eeyou Istchee outside of the territory.



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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



For more details

Figure 1. Number of Projects with Financial Commitments and Payments

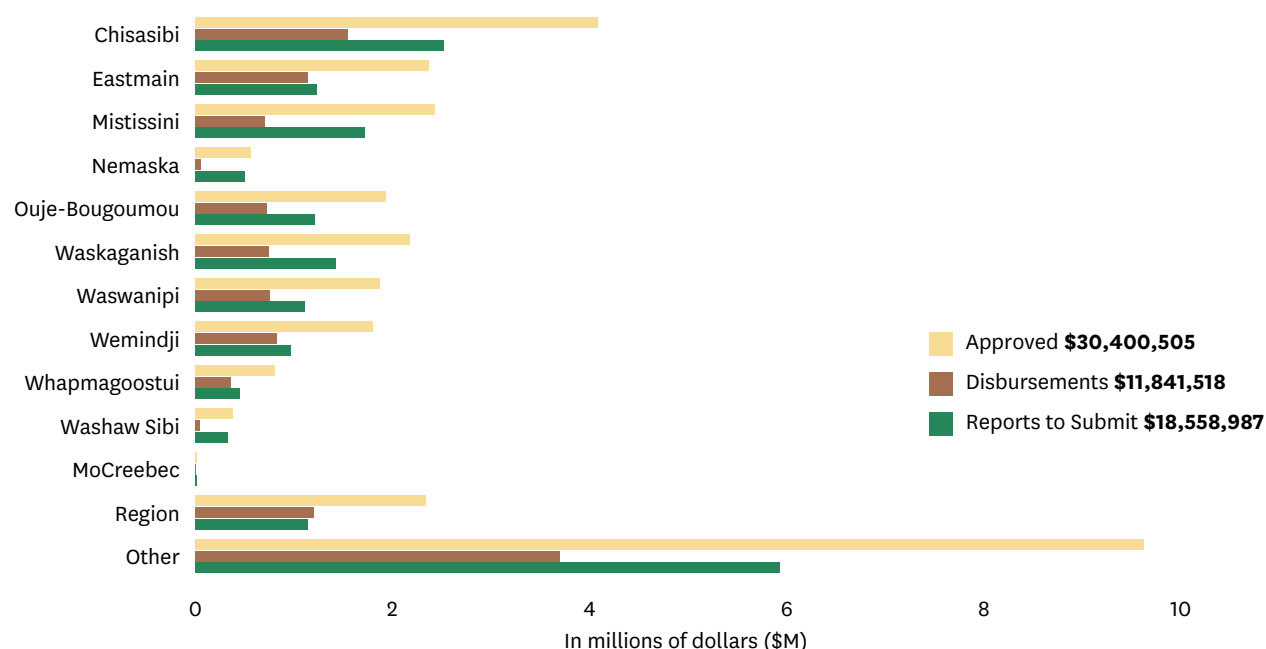
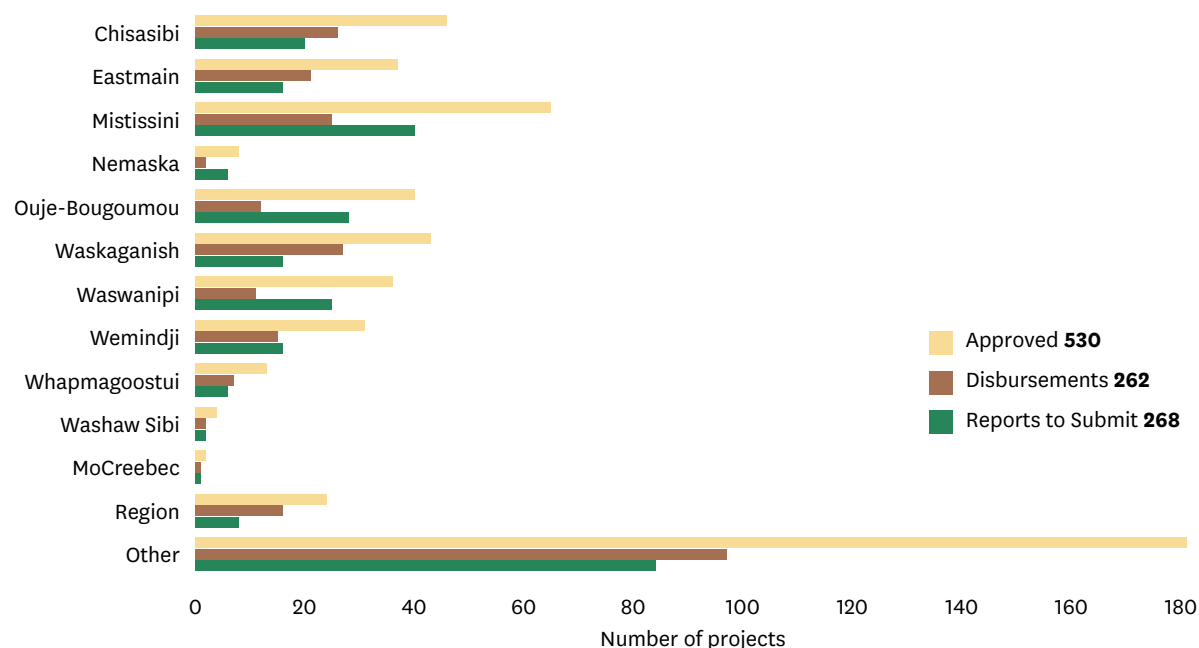


Table 1. Number of Projects with Financial Commitments and Payments

	Approved		Disbursements		Reports to Submit	
	No. of Projects	Amounts	No. of Projects	Amounts	No. of Projects	Amounts
Chisasibi	46	\$4,075,032	26	\$1,554,500	20	\$2,520,532
Eastmain	37	\$2,374,167	21	\$1,139,183	16	\$1,234,984
Mistissini	65	\$2,427,249	25	\$709,534	40	\$1,717,715
Nemaska	8	\$558,728	2	\$57,019	6	\$501,709
Ouje-Bougoumou	40	\$1,934,320	12	\$726,562	28	\$1,207,758
Waskaganish	43	\$2,179,864	27	\$754,827	16	\$1,425,037
Waswanipi	36	\$1,872,077	11	\$759,288	25	\$1,112,789
Wemindji	31	\$1,803,463	15	\$833,402	16	\$970,061
Whapmagoostui	13	\$811,181	7	\$357,332	6	\$453,849
Washaw Sibi	4	\$379,257	2	\$46,445	2	\$332,812
MoCreebec	2	\$20,075	1	\$6,862	1	\$13,213
Region	24	\$2,343,812	16	\$1,201,504	8	\$1,142,308
Other	181	\$9,621,280	97	\$3,695,060	84	\$5,926,220
Total	530	\$30,400,505	262	\$11,841,518	268	\$18,558,987

Participants in ASD Programs

Apatisiwin Skills Development carried out employment and training activities throughout the communities and territory. During the fiscal year 2024-25, there were more than 3,500 participant interventions under the programs based on contract dates.

Figure 2. Client Services from ASD Counsellors

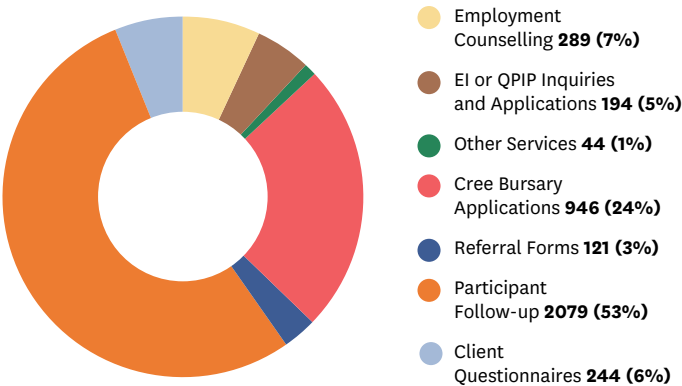


Figure 3. Client Services from ASD Counsellors – Clients by Gender

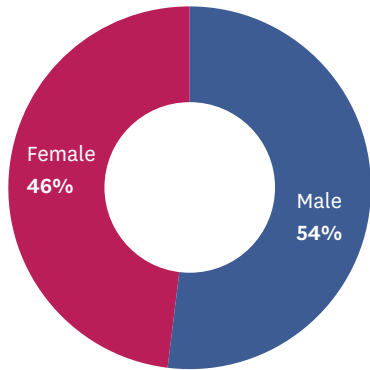
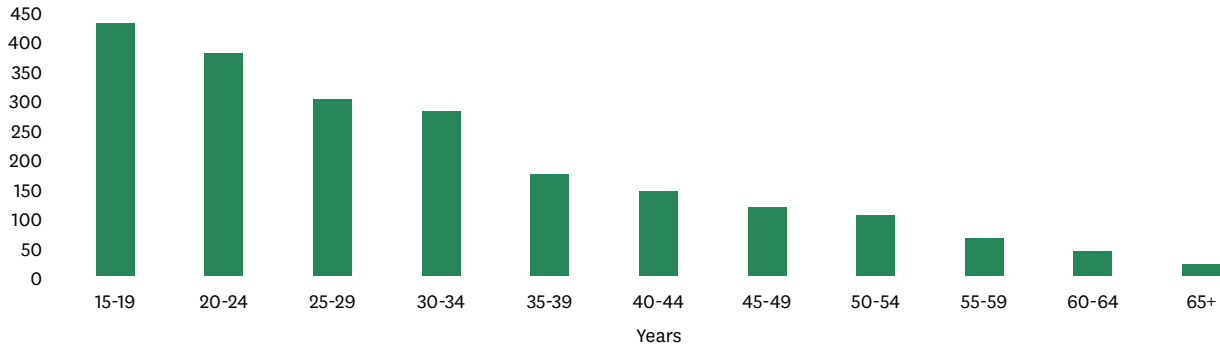


Figure 4. Client Services from ASD Counsellors – Clients by Age-Group





COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Message from the Director **Anthony MacLeod**



IN 2024–2025, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DCI) CONTINUED TO ADVANCE ITS MANDATE TO DIVERSIFY AND STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN EYYOU ISTCHEE. GUIDED BY OUR CORE PILLARS—LOCAL ENTERPRISES, NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, AND COOPERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES—WE STRENGTHENED OUR ROLE AS A STRATEGIC DRIVER OF REGIONAL PROSPERITY AND INNOVATION. EVERY INITIATIVE, EVERY PARTNERSHIP, AND EVERY SERVICE WE DELIVERED THIS YEAR WAS AIMED AT ENSURING THAT ALL EYYOUCH AND EENOUGH BENEFIT FROM OUR REGION’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—WITHOUT COMPROMISING OUR VALUES OR CULTURAL IDENTITY.

10



EMPLOYEES

This year saw important transitions within our team, with new staff bringing fresh perspectives and departing members leaving behind lasting contributions. These changes reflect a dynamic and evolving department, committed to continuous improvement and responsive service. Notably, our internal coordination efforts around mining, forestry, and data analysis have positioned us to respond proactively to regional opportunities and challenges.

In 2024, the DCI proudly hosted the Business Summit in Chisasibi, bringing together Cree entrepreneurs, business leaders, and partners to connect, share ideas, and explore new opportunities. The event highlighted the strength and innovation of our local businesses and reaffirmed our commitment to supporting economic growth across Eeyou Istchee.

Through funding programs like the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF), Regions and Ruralty Fund (RRF), and the Cree Social Economy Regional Table (CSERT), we helped bring to life diverse projects in tourism, communications, local infrastructure, and business development. From supporting the renovation of fishing camps to launching the Keep It Local campaign, these projects are fostering long-term community resilience.

As we prepare for the next phase of the RRF and further integration of regional economic data into planning, we remain focused on service delivery and long-term impact. Our Benefits and Financial Program Officer traveled exten-

sively to deliver tailored financial literacy sessions across Eeyou Istchee—strengthening not only financial capacity but community confidence.

As Director, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the entire DCI team. Your dedication, professionalism, and collaborative spirit have once again made a meaningful difference in the lives of our people. Together, we are building a future grounded in opportunity, sustainability, and Cree values.

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

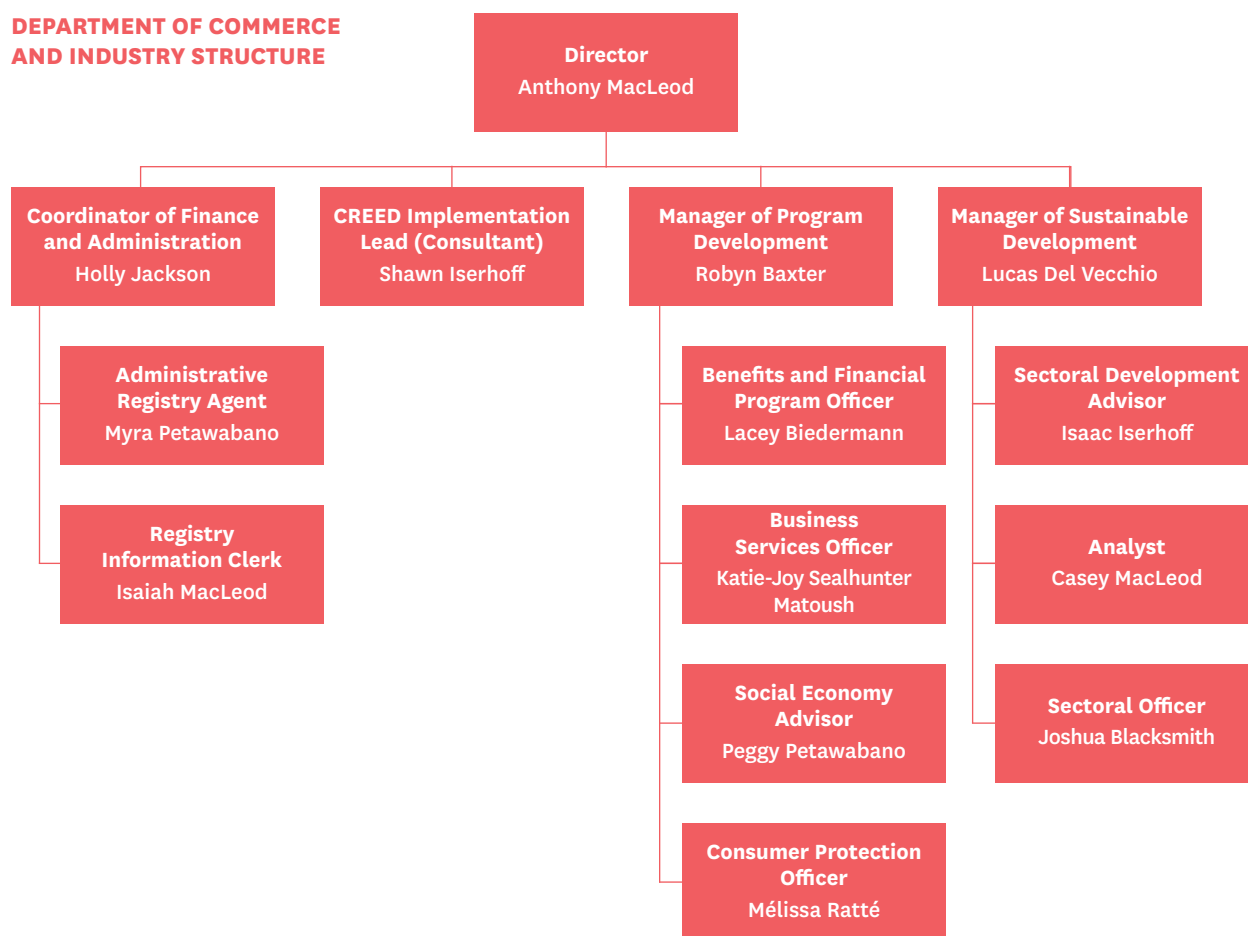
Department Movement

- Katie-Joy Sealhunter Matoush joined as Business Services Officer on April 8, 2024.
- Sheena Costain, Manager of Program Development, left on May 10, 2024, to become Manager of Employee Relations in Human Resources.
- Robyn Baxter joined as Manager of Program Development on June 26, 2024.
- Judith Shecapio, Registry Information Clerk, resigned on August 30, 2024, to return to school.
- Myra Petawabano joined on November 4, 2024, as the Administrative Registry Agent (short-term contract).

- Isaiah MacLeod joined on January 27, 2025, as Registry Information Clerk (short-term contract) to support Business Registry data collection.
- Lacey Biedermann resigned as Benefits and Financial Program Officer on March 28, 2025, and now works as a Human Resources Specialist with the Human Resources department.

We thank all former team members for their valuable contributions to the department and wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE



Christmas Planning Session 2024, Nibiischii - Waconichi Lodge

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SECTORAL OVERVIEW

Mining

Committees

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 on Business Opportunity/Economic Development committees related to mining projects and the Impact Benefit Agreements and Pre-Development Agreements that have been signed.

Legislative and Regulatory

Bill 63 – Amendments to the Mining Act

DCI collaborated with the inter-departmental task force that was designated to review Bill 63, write a brief and present it to the provincial parliamentary committee on September 24, 2024.

Authorization for Impact-Causing Exploration Work

This year, DCI undertook a role in the implementation of the new Quebec regulation on mining exploration. The new regulation came into full effect in May 2024. The authorization regime for impact-causing exploration work requires exploration proponents to consult with communities before conducting work. DCI's Sectoral Officer has been tasked with overseeing the implementation and ensuring that the mining exploration contact the communities affected by their work.

Coordination and Engagement

Internal Working Group on Mining

The DCI team continued to coordinate the internal working group, which assembled representatives from DCI, Apatisiwin Skills Development, and the Department of Environment and Remedial Works. The three departments are all involved in the same mining projects, and there was a need for increased internal coordination. We look forward to continuing this initiative and fostering intra-departmental collaboration, which will enable us to serve the Cree First Nations better.

Information Sessions

DCI participated in both inland and coastal mining information sessions for tallymen. The inland session was held on September 16th, 2024, in Mistissini, while the coastal session was held in Chisasibi on January 21st and 22nd, 2025. DCI was responsible for presenting the mining cycle and providing an overview of the Cree Nation's Mining Policy, as well as the various types of agreements between the Cree Nation and mining proponents. DCI also had a booth at the event to speak with attendees and address their questions.

Outfitting

Throughout 2024, DCI continued to play a vital support role for Cree outfitters and wildlife stewardship. The Sectoral Officer participated in meetings of the Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC), contributing Cree perspectives to discussions on endangered species monitoring, wildlife protection, and regional resource management. Direct support was also provided to individual outfitters to ensure compliance with permit and renewal requirements. This work helped clear significant administrative backlogs and strengthened the operational capacity of local Cree outfitting ventures.

Forestry

Forestry Operational Table

The DCI team continued to attend and facilitate sessions of the Forestry Operational Table, which met monthly. The Cree leadership and signatories of the Aah Nuutahtik-waaniwich Nisituhtimuwin MOU created the operational table. The goal of the operational table is for forestry-affected communities to work together and collaborate on forestry operations and economic opportunities.

Energy

In 2024, the Department of Commerce and Industry made significant progress on the Cree Nation Energy Policy. The draft policy was presented to the Board/Council for approval in July 2024, marking a key step toward defining a sustainable and community-driven energy future for Eeyou Istchee. Work continued throughout the year with a graphic designer to finalize the public-facing version of the policy.



Overview

Foundation & Capacity Building

Data Systems & Reporting

Census & Macroeconomic Research

Strategic Outreach & Expansion

Strategic Framework Development

Conclusion

“

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 to allow Cree entrepreneurs to gain experience and realize new services for the communities and the region. The circulation of funds and the trickle-down effect of small businesses are essential throughout Eeyou Istchee. Transport and construction-type businesses are among the highest requests for funding through the CEAF Funds.

Within this fiscal year, the CEAF guidelines were updated and formally adopted as a policy document to enhance clarity, accountability, and alignment with community priorities. The updated policy introduces clearer eligibility requirements, including stricter territorial and business registration criteria. The application process has been refined with new timelines, documentation standards, and community approval requirements, while funding rules now include a pro-rated structure based on Cree ownership and limits on re-funding certain equipment. Additionally, the policy clarifies eligible and ineligible startup costs, ensuring a more transparent and efficient funding process for businesses in Eeyou Istchee.

Table 1. Projects Approved under CEAF

Proponent	Community	Sector
Darren S. Blacksmith Transport	Ouje-Bougoumou	Transport
Blackned Excavation	Waskaganish	Construction
Mistay Enterprises Inc.	Mistissini	Retail & Resto
Hester Transport	Waskaganish	Transport
Cheezo & Sons G.P.	Eastmain	Transport
Antonio's Fencing & Firewood Services	Ouje-Bougoumou	Services
Ratté Enterprises	Waswanipi	Construction
Napash Gas & Convenience	Chisasibi	Retail & Resto
Total: \$570,727		



Napash Gas & Convenience, Chisasibi

This year, we received fifteen (15) applications. Eight (8) projects were approved, totaling \$570,727. The remaining seven (7) projects are still under review (see Table 1).

Regional Development Fund (RDF)

The Regional Development Fund (RDF) continues to support economic diversification and regional development across Eeyou Istchee. By focusing on large-scale, strategic initiatives, the RDF strengthens Cree economies through targeted investments that encourage long-term growth, entrepreneurship, and capacity-building.

Over the past year, the RDF approved a range of projects supporting infrastructure, business development, tourism, and community services. The fund also contributed to departmental programs such as the Cree Social Economy Regional Table Fund, the Regions and Ruralty Fund, and ongoing support for the Eeyou Communications Network—all of which help foster a resilient and self-sustaining regional economy.

Table 2. Projects Approved under RDF, 2024-2025

Proponent	Project
Cree Nation of Nemaska	Multi-User Industrial Building
Cree Nation Government – Social and Cultural Development	Elder's Funding 2024-2029
Waswanipi Development Corporation	Waswanipi Hotel
Cree Nation Government – Department of Commerce and Industry	Business Liaison Specialist
Cree Nation Government – Department of Commerce and Industry	Communications Technician
Cree Nation Government – Department of Commerce and Industry	Keep it Local
Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation	Commercial Center
Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association	Alternative Lodging

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."

Ten projects were approved but also carried over from the previous fiscal year (Table 3).

Regions and Rurality Fund (RRF)

The Commerce and Industry Department oversees the Regions and Rurality Fund (RRF), which is open for applications from projects across Eeyou Istchee. Any project with regional outreach that will impact more than one Cree community and contribute to achieving regional priorities is eligible for this program. Funding for the RRF is allocated to Eeyou Istchee through the Quebec Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH). Applications are reviewed by the Cree Nation Government's RRF Review Committee, and recommended projects are sent to MAMH for final approval. The RRF Evaluating Committee is composed of three representatives: Anthony MacLeod (Director, DCI), Nadia Saganash (Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations), and Melissa Saganash (Deputy Executive Director).

Table 4. Projects Approved under RRF, 2024-2025

Proponent	Project
Cree Nation Government – Department of Commerce and Industry	Communications Technician
Cree Nation Government – Department of Commerce and Industry	Keep it Local
Broadback Outfitters	Fishing Camp Renovation
Niibischii Corporation	Environmental compliance upgrade – Phase 1 of the Waconichi site
Waswanipi Hotel	Waswanipi Hotel Phase 1 - Plans & Specifications

In 2024-2025, the RRF supported projects that contribute to infrastructure development, local tourism, communications, and regional economic growth. These investments supported community outreach, local purchasing, and tourism and environmental infrastructure development.

As the current RRF program concludes in March 2025, planning is underway for a renewed version that will include updated priorities, flexible regional outreach tailored to Eeyou Istchee, and improved evaluation tools. The fund remains an essential lever for regionally driven growth and development.

Five projects were recommended and approved in 2024-2025.

CREED



The Cree Real Estate Entrepreneurship Development (CREED) Program aims to support the growth of Cree-led businesses in the housing and real estate sectors by

Table 3. Projects Approved Under the CSERT

Project	Community	Amount	Approval Date
Chisasibi Community Agriculture	Chisasibi	\$25,000	October 27, 2023
JBCCS – Cree TV broadcasting	Regional	\$25,000	March 19, 2024
Mianscum Solidarity	Ouje-Bougoumou	\$25,000	March 27, 2024
EISRA – Cree Summer Games	Mistissini	\$25,000	March 27, 2024
E-New Data Corp – Green Edge Data Center	Waswanipi	\$25,000	July 29, 2024
Maaskinaahchaasiuh – Cree Traditional Snowshoe making	Chisasibi	\$25,000	October 23, 2024
COTA – Cree Knowledge Festival	Ouje-Bougoumou	\$25,000	December 6, 2024
CNACA – Eastmain Arts Symposium	Eastmain	\$25,000	December 6, 2024
Dabwetamun Academy – Modernize Learning	Mistissini	\$22,445	March 5, 2025
CWEIA – Technology Upgrade	Regional	\$22,929	March 17, 2025

Table 5. Funding under the CREED Program

Project	Community	Amount	Status
Mehekin Construction	Chisasibi	\$75,000	Approved

offering start-up grants and capacity-building opportunities. Focused on renovations, private home construction, and real estate projects across Eeyou Istchee, the program plays a key role in promoting economic independence and entrepreneurial activity within Cree communities.

A significant barrier for entrepreneurs seeking to access CREED funding – particularly those interested in rental real estate – is the lack of local real estate laws in most communities. These regulations are a prerequisite for securing funds under the program. Currently, Mistissini remains the only community to have formally adopted a real estate law, enabling entrepreneurs with interests in real estate to access CREED funding.

Mehekin Construction is actively completing its project and is expected to submit a final report by spring 2025. DCI has closed the remaining two projects due to project inactivity. They will need to re-apply to CREED should they wish to access funding in the future.

CREED continues to demonstrate its value as a catalyst for entrepreneurship in Eeyou Istchee. Moving forward, DCI will continue to:

- Encourage the adoption of real estate laws to unlock full access to program funding
- Engage with communities to raise awareness of CREED opportunities
- Supporting aspiring entrepreneurs with training (with ASD support) and application guidance

SERVICES

JBNQA Beneficiary List

Over the 2024-2025 fiscal year, there were a total of 64 requests across various categories. These requests came from internal departments, local entities, and external organizations seeking information related to the JBNQA beneficiary file. The following is a summary of key request types received throughout the year:

Request Type

- Electoral Lists
- Population Statistics
- Beneficiary Lists
- Inquiries about JBNQA Status (including ASD)
- Deceased Beneficiaries/List of Deceased
- Beneficiary Application (Transferred)
- Genealogy Assistance
- Cree Board of Health and Social Services Chairperson Inquiries

Cree Nation Business Registry

Throughout the year, the Registry Information Clerk, Administrative Registry Agent, and the Coordinator of Finance

and Administration worked to collect and update business information across the region. Wemindji and Ouje-Bougoumou signed on to the Cree Nation Economic Prioritization Agreement and nominated representatives to the Economic Prioritization Review Panel.

Data collection included emails, phone calls, and outreach during events such as LAGA in Waswanipi, where eight new businesses were added—bringing the total number of registered businesses to 250. Despite challenges like limited responses and incomplete forms, efforts continued steadily. In preparation for the platform launch, contact details were verified through follow-up calls and social media.

Economic Prioritization Review Panel Appointments

- Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation: William Paddy Mailloux, Director of Economic Development
- Cree Nation of Wemindji: Chelsea Moses-Blackned

Cree Nation Business Registry and Opportunities Platform

By creating accounts and managing their public profiles, businesses can increase their visibility, attract new clients, and build credibility across the region. The platform also serves as a direct link between Cree entrepreneurs and opportunity providers, making it easier to find and pursue contracts. Through the platform, businesses can apply for Community-Based Enterprise (CBE) certification, positioning themselves to benefit from procurement opportunities under the Cree Nation Economic Prioritization Agreement (CNEPA). Overall, the platform empowers businesses to promote their services, connect with potential partners, and participate more fully in economic development initiatives across Eeyou Istchee.

Cree Community-based Enterprise (CBE) Certification

Under Section 6(c) of the CNEPA, DCI reviews and processes each application to the Business Registry, preparing a complete file and recommendation for the Review Panel, which decides whether to grant CBE certification.

- Decisions are made by consensus or, if needed, by a two-thirds vote via secret ballot.
- Businesses not certified receive a written explanation and may resubmit.
- Certification is renewable annually, and remains valid only if the business continues to meet eligibility criteria.
- Panel members must disclose any conflict of interest and abstain from related decisions.
- DCI provides administrative support and ensures transparency in all certification steps.

The certification process ensures Cree-owned businesses are recognized and prioritized in regional opportunities, supporting economic growth and self-sufficiency in Eeyou Istchee.

Consumer Protection

Over the past year, the Consumer Protection Officer (CPO) focused on strengthening consumer awareness and creating accessible, practical resources for Eeyou Istchee communities. She updated existing workshop content and developed new, youth-friendly materials with real-life examples to help Secondary 5 students better understand contracts, leases, and rental responsibilities. Online webinars and school-based sessions covered topics such as identity theft prevention and rental costs.

A key highlight of the year was the CPO's direct engagement with community members. She received several calls from individuals across Eeyou Istchee seeking help with consumer issues—particularly related to car purchases and contract clarity. In one notable case, she supported a local business by successfully convincing a dealership to provide a proper sales contract for a piece of equipment rather than just a basic invoice. These interactions reinforced the need for ongoing consumer support, leading her to develop a simple, three-step guide to help residents make informed decisions when purchasing a vehicle.

To further strengthen her expertise, the CPO pursued multiple professional development opportunities. She completed a two-day course on Communicating Effectively at McGill University. She participated in training through the Centre de Formation Automobile du Québec, focusing on trade-ins, leasing, financing, and after-sales services. She also attended a leasing information session in Val-d'Or. She took part in consumer protection webinars hosted by Option Consommateur.

The CPO also promoted her role at events like the Cree School Board gathering in Montreal, where she engaged directly with

students and educators. Social media remained a key platform for sharing tips, raising awareness, and connecting with the broader public on consumer protection topics.

Benefits and Financial Program Officer

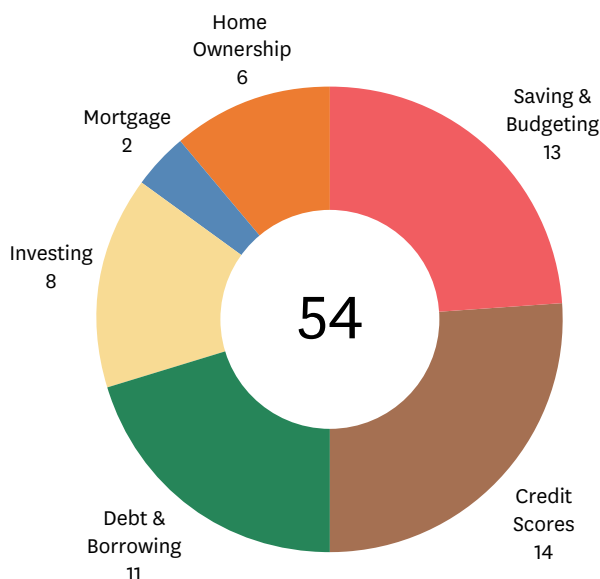
The BFPO began the fiscal year by completing a two-day "Communicating Effectively" course at McGill Institute, enhancing her presentation and communication skills. Throughout the year, she continued to build her knowledge by attending the First Nation Housing Professionals Association Conference in Toronto, where she participated in workshops on home maintenance and private housing, which she now integrates into her community education efforts.

The BFPO played a central role in delivering workshops across Eeyou Istchee, engaging with youth, community members, and organizations. She offered sessions on topics including Saving & Budgeting, Credit Scores, Debt & Borrowing, Investing, Mortgage Pre-Approval and the Process of Homeownership. Audiences ranged from high school students and summer youth employees to women's groups, post-secondary students, and the general public. Notable events included the Youth Empowerment Conference, the Cree School Board Youth Summit, and the Building Healthy Relationships conference in Waskaganish.

Over the year, she visited nearly every Cree community, delivering tailored financial literacy sessions and offering support on financial planning and homeownership. Her ability to adapt her content to different groups, including Indigenous college classes, local women's associations, and community youth groups, made her work widely accessible. The year concluded with preparations for the next fiscal year and a strong foundation for continued outreach and education.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Similar to last year, the Cree Nation saw noticeable demand for financial literacy workshops. To address this need, the Benefits and Financial Program Officer organized workshops in seven (7) communities and one (1) CEGEP institution.



COLLABORATION

Special Project

Cree Nation Business Summit

Chisasibi, August 23–25, 2024



The Department of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with Eeyoupreneur and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), hosted the first Cree Nation Business Summit to inspire and engage Cree youth in entrepreneurship. The event featured expert panels, interactive workshops, and a hands-on case study competition where participants developed business plans for fictional Cree-owned companies.

Of the 40 selected youth, 15 completed the full event, with all nine Cree communities represented. The program included panels on funding, trades, retail, and procurement, with keynote speaker Carol Anne Hilton delivering an inspiring message on Indigenous economic growth and nation-building.

BDC supported the event by providing an online business training course ahead of the summit. This course gave participants foundational knowledge in business planning, marketing, and financial literacy. Completion of the course was part of the scoring for the case study competition, and BDC also took part in the Access to Capital panel, offering insights into financing and grants for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

The competition awarded first place to MIIYOIMOOON Retreat & Spa (Nemaska), followed by Eeyou Eenou Bakery (Wemindji) and Sîpîy Wellness and Spa (Chisasibi). Post-event feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants highlighting the value of mentorship, collaboration, and real-world learning. Lessons learned will help improve logistics and scheduling in future editions.

Keep it Local Campaign

In response to the Grand Chief's declaration of 2024 as the "Year of Economic Development", the Department of Commerce and Industry (DCI) launched the Keep it Local Campaign—a region-wide initiative designed to strengthen local economies by encouraging community members to shop within their Cree communities.

Originating from DCI's *Map of Ideas* presented at the January 2024 Board Council meeting, the campaign evolved from the initial *Buy Eeyou Istchee* concept into a struc-

Business Summit Participant





tured, mobile app-based contest and awareness effort. Its goal is to promote economic self-sufficiency by increasing consumer activity at locally owned, registered businesses throughout Eeyou Istchee.

Campaign Overview

The Keep it Local Campaign will be a recurring initiative facilitated through a user-friendly mobile application. Community members submit receipts over \$10 from participating local businesses to earn entries into monthly draws. Winners are selected randomly and awarded \$500 gift cards redeemable at any participating business within their community.

Participation is open to businesses listed in the Cree Nation Government's Business Registry, reinforcing the importance of formal registration and visibility in regional economic planning.

Design and Promotion

The campaign branding, logo, posters, and social media content were developed by Mercedes Petawabano of Mahiikan Designs. Each community's promotional materials incorporate recognizable local buildings and business landmarks, creating a strong visual identity tailored to each area.

DCI deployed a comprehensive communication strategy, which included:

- Radio interviews across Eeyou Istchee
- Posters in high-traffic areas
- Window stickers for participating businesses
- Video testimonials from Cree entrepreneurs and social media influencers
- Targeted social media content on platforms like Facebook and TikTok

A promotional video created by Joshua Iserhoff was also launched in the first quarter of 2025 to increase awareness and drive app engagement. Early analytics show positive reception and growing traction online.

Eligibility and Participation Rules

- Community members earn 1 entry per receipt over \$10
- Prizes: Ten (10) \$500 gift cards per draw
- Only purchases from businesses registered in the CNG Business Registry are eligible
- Rules and regulations were developed in consultation with legal counsel to ensure full compliance with contest law

User Data

Mistissini represents the majority of our users, with a significant portion coming from Waskaganish, Wemindji, Chisasibi, and Nemaska.

System Performance Summary

- Total Transactions Submitted: 1,145
- Successful Entries: 1,138 (Success rate: 99.39%)
- Total Value of Receipts: \$76,084.93
- Average Receipt Value: \$66.45

Spending Trends and Insights

- Peak Months: December 2024 and January 2025 (each exceeding \$20,000 in spending)
- Monthly Average: \$18,350.30 over four months
- Total Spend (4-month campaign window): \$73,401.19

Key Takeaways

- Community response has been strong, with high engagement during peak periods
- The app-based structure allowed for smooth submission and tracking of eligible purchases
- The campaign has provided visibility for local businesses and highlighted the value of supporting the local economy
- Feedback from both consumers and business owners supports the continuation and expansion of the initiative

The Keep it Local Campaign is a cornerstone of DCI's economic development strategy. It supports the formal business ecosystem, fosters community pride, and promotes a culture of local reinvestment. With promising early results, DCI is preparing for a stronger second edition in 2025–2026.

Table 6. Draw Schedule and Winners

Draw Period	Retail Winner	Other Winner
December 2024	Johnny Loon	Justine Mianscum
January 2025	Ruth Gunner	Bertha Dixon
February 2025	Sheena Costain	Monique Jolly
March 2025	Mary Diamond	Luis Mejicano

Table 7. User Data Highlights

Rank	Community	Users	Share
1	Mistissini	168	38.6%
2	Waskaganish	48	11.0%
3	Wemindji	48	11.0%
4	Chisasibi	45	10.3%
5	Nemaska	36	8.3%
6	Eastmain	25	5.8%
7	Ouje-Bougoumou	24	5.5%
8	Other/Unspecified	19	4.4%
9	Waswanipi	15	3.5%
10	Whapmagoostui	7	1.6%



ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS

Message from the Interim Director Nadia Saganash



ON BEHALF OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS DEPARTMENT, IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE AND CONTINUED COMMITMENT THAT WE PRESENT THE 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT.



Assuming leadership near the close of the fiscal year, I have taken on the Interim Director role in with deep respect for those who have shaped the department's progress, past and present leaders, dedicated managers, and the many staff whose efforts sustain our mission to protect the environment of Eeyou Istchee. I would also like to reflect not only on the achievements of the past year, but to recognize the enduring contribution by Isaac Voyageur, that has guided this department and its accomplishments over many years of dedicated service to the Cree Nation Government.

Across all units, including Protected Areas, Climate Change, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Land Regime, Land Use Planning, Wildlife, Mining, Community Environmental Services, and Geomatics, each advancement reflects our shared responsibility to uphold the rights, values, and duties entrusted to the department.

Through the tireless efforts and dedication of our skilled and committed team, the Environment and Remedial Works Department has continued to fulfill its vital mandate: protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife of Eeyou Istchee, supporting community resilience, and responding with urgency to the climate crisis. From environmental impact assessments to restoration and sustainable development initiatives, the work of each unit reflects a unified commitment to safeguarding the territory for generations to come.

Above all, our work would not be possible without the knowledge, leadership, and continued collaboration of the tallymen, land users, and families who have walked Eeyou Istchee for generations. Their insights ground our decisions, shape our policies, and define our collective vision for the future. We offer our deepest gratitude for their enduring trust and partnership. As we look to the future, may we continue

to build on this foundation, strengthening trust, listening to the voices of tallymen and land users, and advancing our mandates with integrity, courage, and respect.

As we present some of this past year's achievements, we are reminded that the strength of the Environment and Remedial Works Department lies not only in the services we deliver or the strategies we implement, but in the people and land we serve with dedication, passion, and shared purpose. While this report cannot fully capture the reality and true extent of all the effort and dedication shown by this department, it demonstrates what can be achieved in unity when decisions are guided by values, and when responsibilities are carried as commitments to future generations.

These achievements are the result of collective dedication, within the department, Cree Nation Government, Cree organisations, across our communities, throughout Eeyou Istchee, and among our many external partners and collaborators.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire team of the Environment and Remedial Works Department. It is important to acknowledge the many individuals who have quietly gone above and beyond, working late, taking on extra responsibilities, and giving generously of their time, energy, and spirit in service of our shared mission. This quiet dedication has not gone unnoticed. It reflects the strength of character, professionalism, and heart that define this department. There is something truly inspiring in the way so many contribute selflessly, without expectation of recognition, driven by a deep commitment to the land, the communities, and the future of Eeyou Istchee.

To each of you: thank you. Your work matters. Your contribution is seen, respected, and deeply appreciated.

Meegwetch.

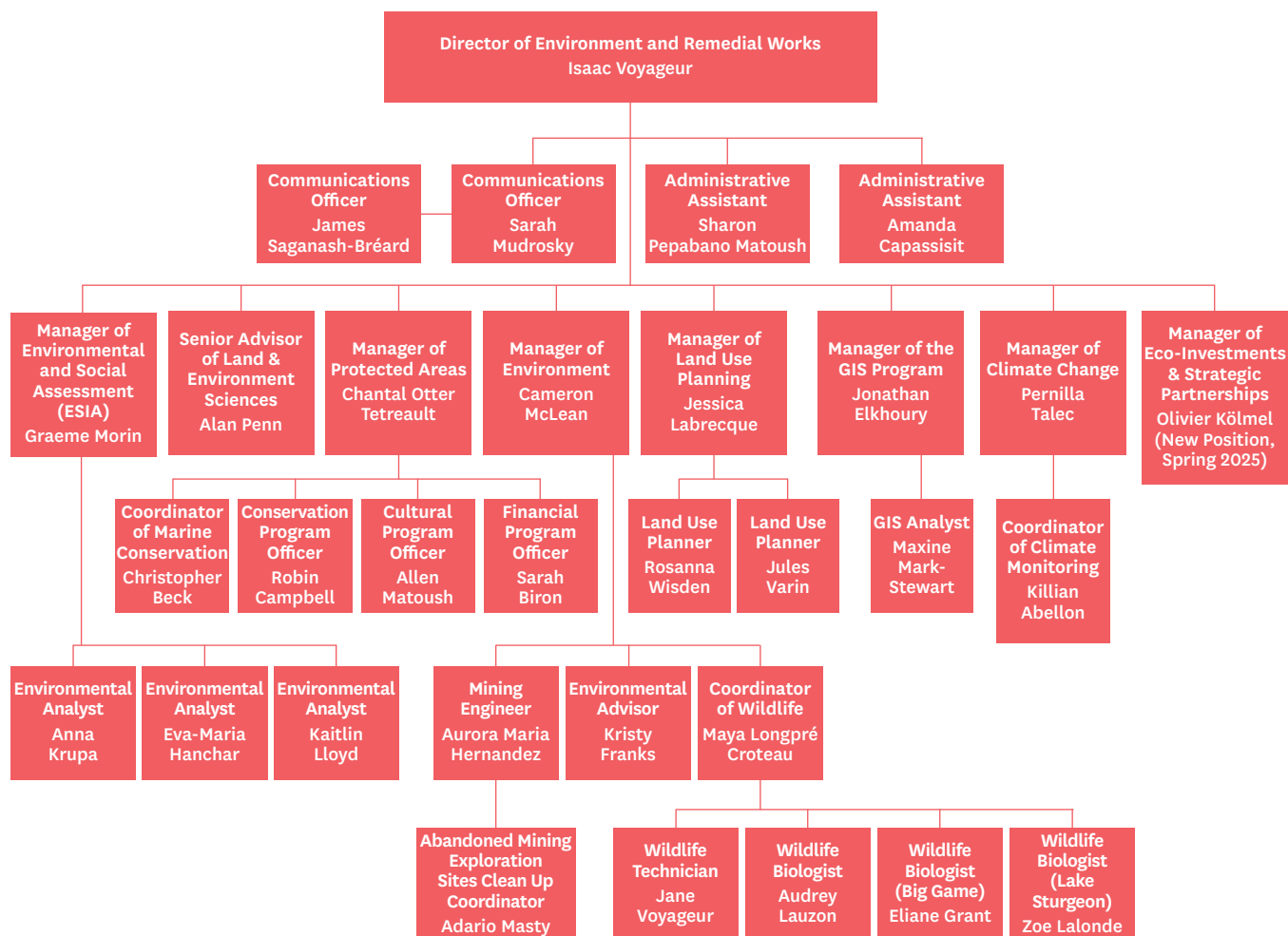
Nadia Saganash
Interim Director of Environment and Remedial Works



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 land management, hydroelectric development, environmental policy and impact assessment, and wildlife management. Our mission is to protect the air, lands, and waters of Eeyou Istchee for the well-being of all Cree people, today and tomorrow. The Department's team of 32, based primarily in Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Montreal, includes biologists, analysts, engineers, planners, technicians, project coordinators, and management specialists, supported by administrative assistants and a communications officer.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS DEPARTMENT



OUR MISSION

To protect the air, lands, and waters of Eeyou Istchee for the well-being of all Cree people, today and tomorrow.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (ESIAs)

The ESIA Unit leads the assessment and review of projects under Section 22 of the JBNQA. The team includes Manager Graeme Morin and Environmental Analysts Eva-Maria Hanchar, Kaitlin Loyd and Anna Krupa. The Unit serves on the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment and participates in all Environmental Committees created per Impact and Benefits Agreements signed with proponents and Cree First Nations. The ESIA Unit's work is supported by close collaboration with CNG colleagues, Cree communities, regional organizations, and federal and provincial partners.

Projects Under Section 22 ESIA Assessment and Review in 2024-2025

We assessed 16 projects in the early stages of the ESIA procedure (Preliminary Information and Directives) for COMEV this year. Of these, 9 were exempted, and 2 were directed to submit an Impact Statement. (Details available on the [COMEV website](#).)

We reviewed a further 21 projects requiring work at the latter stages of the ESIA Procedure (Impact Statement review and Follow-up) for COMEX this year. 3 project impact statements were the object of review. Detailed information is on the [COMEX website](#).

ESIA Project Highlights

Eleonore Gold mine (near Wemindji)

The project's operations are on-going, and the Environment Committee has maintained regular meetings. While closure is a few years off, consultations have already begun.

Rose Lithium-Tantalum mine (near Eastmain and Nemaska)

Critical Elements Corp. received federal and provincial authorizations for the project in 2021 and 2022, respectively. The proponent is currently awaiting the approval from DFO for the proposed fish habitat offsetting project.

James Bay Lithium mine (near Eastmain and km381)

The project received federal and provincial authorizations in 2023. An emergency site visit (fall 2024) confirmed project compliance. Construction of hauling roads and a permanent camp is underway

Whabouchi Lithium mine (near Nemaska)

Construction set to resume. COMEX has approved an overpass over Route du Nord to link the mine to a co-disposal stockpile.

Other ESIA Unit Highlights

The ESIA Unit engages in ongoing research and policy work with partners to improve ESIA processes and impact miti-

Table 1. Select projects assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEV in 2024-2025 (4 of 16)

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community Traditional Territories
Mont Sorcier Iron mine	Voyager Metals Inc.	Directive sent	Ouje-Bougoumou
Ecocenter proposal	CNG – Capital Works Department	Responses from proponent under analysis	Whapmagoostui
Shaakichiuwaanaan lithium mine	Patriot Battery Metals	Directive sent	Chisasibi
Adina Lithium Mine	Miyunaakun Lithium Inc.	Preliminary Information under analysis	Mistissini

Table 2. Select projects reviewed/followed up on by the ESIA Unit before COMEX in 2024-2025 (7 of 21)

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community Traditional Territories
Rose Lithium-Tantalum mine	Critical Elements Corp.	Conditions follow-up and Modification approved	Eastmain, Nemaska
Whabouchi Lithium mine	Nemaska Lithium Inc.	Modification approved	Nemaska
Renard diamond mine	Stornoway Inc.	Follow-up and cessation of activities	Mistissini
James Bay Lithium mine	Galaxy Lithium (Canada)	Conditions conformity	Eastmain, Waskaganish
Windfall Gold mine	Osisko Inc.	ESIA under analysis	Waswanipi
Wemindji new landfill	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Reviewing request for modification	Wemindji
Nemaska landfill	Cree Nation of Nemaska	ESIA under analysis	Nemaska



gation. In October 2024, the team supported the Opinagaw Environment Committee and a mine closure symposium in Wemindji. In March 2025, the Unit participated in a site visit to the former Selbaie mine with the same committee.

MINING

In 2024–2025, under the leadership of Mining Engineer Aurora Hernandez, the Mining Unit of the ERWD strengthened its role in Cree Nation governance of mineral development through enhanced fieldwork coordination, policy engagement, capacity building and direct support to communities and tallymen. The year marked significant progress in mine closure planning, site restoration, and tallyman-led oversight of mining activities, ensuring Cree rights and values are fully integrated in the mining cycle from exploration through closure.

Advancing Mine Closure and Environmental Oversight

Cree involvement in mine closure planning continued through work with environmental committees linked to project-specific agreements.

At the Éléonore Mine, the Opinagaw Environment Committee (OEC) advanced its review of mine closure strategies. The committee worked collaboratively with all parties to:

- Review long-term environmental and social impacts of closure,
- Begin the process of updating the Mine Closure Plan,
- Contribute to the development of communications tools to support awareness and understanding of sustainable closure.

Feedback from community members and committees were heard, Opinagaw Collaboration Agreement partners will form a new committee to plan for post mining impact assessment envisioning a shared understanding of the social impacts of the mine's end of operations and potential opportunities during and after closure.

In 2025, the OEC also began planning an awareness video to capture Cree perspectives and committee experiences. With technical support from the ERWD Communications Officer,

this initiative will document and share the value of Cree participation in environmental oversight, and will serve as a reference for other committees. This initiative was derived from the coastal mining information session, from the participation of the OEC community members.

Mining Information Session with Tallymen

A major highlight of the year was the Inland Tallymen Information and Exchange Session on Mining, held in Mistissini on September 16, 2024, with over 300 participants. The session brought together land users, tallymen, local governments, CTA representatives, and CNG staff for an open exchange on mining-related issues.

Key topics raised included:

- Participants called for a more transparent and coordinated communication structure, noting confusion over organizational roles and requesting regular meetings, better access to mining information, and clearer process.
- The importance of ensuring meaningful inclusion of tallymen in IBA/PDA negotiations and ongoing project monitoring
- Long-term environmental impacts and lack of protection measures (e.g., buffers, spill response)
- Interest in establishing community-based mining liaison roles to improve communication and coordination
- Questions regarding the process and impacts of access roads, as well as the restoration of contaminated sites
- The need for a Cree-led mining mitigation fund similar to forestry compensation models
- Desire for increased land-based programming and direct benefit-sharing with impacted families
- A clear and accessible communication process

The outcomes of the session are being used to inform internal policy planning and strategic engagement approaches. The final report will be finalized and made available shortly.

Abandoned Exploration Sites Program (AMES project)

The Abandoned Mineral Exploration Sites Program, coordinated by Adario Masty, continued to expand its impact in



JBL Camp Visit, October 2024.

Photo Credit: Aurora Maria Hernandez

- Participation in joint working tables on site restoration and tailings risk management
- Support to local governments and tallymen in reviewing mining claims and access requests
- Quebec Plan to valorize critical and strategically minerals 2025-2030

The unit also coordinated with legal and policy teams to develop protocols related to monitoring committees, land access, and emergency response in mining zones.

- 12 sites characterized in two main areas: Mistissini and Whapmagoostui
- 4 sites cleaned, located on traplines previously identified by tallymen. One of the major sites, the Whapmagoostui Rupert site, was partially cleaned and works will continue in 2025
- Waste removed included: full and empty fuel drums, propane tanks, metal scraps, oil containers, and other hazardous materials

Looking Ahead – 2025-2026 Priorities

The Mining Unit enters the next fiscal year with clear goals:

- Participate in the Eleonore Mine Closure Plan
- Expand the Abandoned Sites Program to additional traplines and integrate lessons learned from 2024 fieldwork
- Support the recommendation from the tallymen and land users stemming from Mining Information Session, ensuring that all Cree communities are meaningfully engaged
- Develop a standardized mining information and Q&A portal for tallymen and community members
- Strengthen internal collaboration between ERWD, CTA, and local governments to ensure coherent Cree Nation positions in mining matters
- Assist in monitoring the application and outcomes of the new mining Act (Bill 63).
- Produce and Promote the Tallyman and Community member's video on their experiences under the OEC.

Capacity Building

- The OEC members visited the UQAT mining labs and the Selbaie restored mine to learn more about restoration.
- OEC members presented at the Canadian Mining Institute Environment and Mines Symposium under the session society and governance.
- The Unit supported the mining environment conference developed by the Nemaska Lithium Mine in collaboration with the community leadership.
- Site visits to different advanced exploration activities in support to the Impact Assessment team.

Conclusion

In 2024–2025, the Mining Unit of the ERWD continued to advance Cree priorities in mining governance through direct community engagement, intergovernmental collaboration, and strong technical leadership. The unit remains committed to supporting restoration efforts, promoting responsible development practices, and ensuring that Cree land users and tallymen are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their traplines, communities, and future generations.

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

In 2024-2025, the Environment unit led by the Environment Manager, Cameron McLean, advanced its presence both internationally and across Cree communities, while reinforcing its internal operations and strategic capacity. The year began with participation in the IAIA Conference in Dublin, where staff presented on forest fires and modernizing recycling systems. Members of the Environmental and Social

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The Manager provided coordinated oversight for operations including the Wildlife Management Unit and Community Environmental Services. As part of its mandate the unit continues its support to communities, various environmental initiatives and remedial works, land regime matters, operation initiatives for the department such as budgeting, staffing, cybersecurity preparedness training, and the relocation planning to the new Montreal ODEA office.

The Department offers support to the group of Community LEA/Os, coordinated by Environmental Advisor, Kristy Franks. Assistance is provided with remediating contaminated areas, coordinating Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, providing community trainings and capacity building, and supporting waste management initiatives in collaboration with the Department of Capital Works and Services.

- A composting and food security training in Kahnawà:ke (April 2024)
- A Montreal workshop on water monitoring and infrastructure projects (April 2024)
- The FNQLSDI Waste and Contamination Management Symposium in Wendake (August 2024)

*BEAHR Environmental Monitoring Field Trip, fall 2024.
Photos taken by program instructor Vincent Rain.*

The MCL includes 42 abandoned military sites along the 55th parallel in Quebec. A pilot project is underway to clean 7 sites, including 4 sites which are under Cree responsibility. In 2024, teams in Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi received trainings in workplace safety, handling hazardous materials, fire safety, and wilderness first aid. Site visits, inventories, and planning were completed. We are currently working with the MELCCFP on funding details to be able to conduct the clean-up activities aimed for fall 2025.

Remediation of former Hydro-Québec and SEBJ sites continued across 14 locations throughout Eeyou Istchee. The work includes doing environmental assessments, site characterization, and remediation activities. Local tallymen and trapline representatives are actively involved in verifying progress, alongside Cree Nation Government staff and a third-party verifier. Cleanup efforts are set to continue into 2025 in collaboration with Hydro-Québec and its contractors.

In partnership with BEAHR/Eco Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and Apatisiwin Skills Development, the department delivered Core Environmental Skills and Environmental Monitoring training in fall 2024. The training was hosted in Chisasibi with 21 students graduating. The program integrated technical knowledge with Cree perspectives on environmental stewardship, strengthening local capacity for monitoring and land protection.

The Department continued to advance key land regime files under the JBNQA and related agreements in collaboration with Cree First Nations, Québec, and Canada. This work is led by Mr. Alan Penn, Senior Advisor of Land and Environment Science, assisted by Environment Manager Cameron McLean.



Significant progress was made on the reconfiguration of Category I lands for Waswanipi and Waskaganish. Environmental Site Assessments for Waswanipi are nearing completion, moving the process close to final approval. Waskaganish is also actively pursuing boundary changes to support future community development, despite challenges posed by poor drainage conditions and unstable terrain in the Hudson Bay lowlands.

Boundary discussions also progressed for Nemaska (including the possible inclusion of Lac Némiscau and Jolliet lakes) and for Chisasibi lands adjacent to the James Bay highway. Reclassification efforts are underway for former Roman Catholic Mission lands in Waskaganish and Eastmain, aiming to transfer these to Category IA status, pending federal environmental approvals.

Ongoing work also includes the review of boundaries along the James Bay coast under the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claim Agreement (EMRLCA) and preliminary discussions related to the complex case of Whapmagoostui, where Cree and Inuit interests intersect.

These efforts are part of a broader objective to amend Section 4 of the JBNQA to reflect current realities and support long-term land governance for Cree communities.

PROTECTED AREAS

The Protected Areas Unit, led by the Manager of Protected Areas, Chantal Otter Tetreault who is leading the unit team comprised of Robin Campbell (Conservation Program Officer), Sarah Biron (Financial Program Officer), Allen Matoush (Cultural Conservation Officer), and Christopher Beck (Coordinator of

Marine Conservation), continued its supports to Cree communities and entities in advancing terrestrial and marine conservation efforts in collaboration with government partners.

Terrestrial Protected Areas

With continued support from ECCC's 4-year Indigenous-Led Areas-Based Conservation Fund, the Unit worked alongside Québec to advance the permanent legal designation of 23 new Territories Reserved for the Purposes of a Protected Area (TRPPA) in Eeyou Istchee.

A coordinated workplan has been carried out with communities, focused on:

- Sharing and validating outcomes of the “20% process” and refining TRPPA boundaries based on conservation goals.
- Exploring management, governance, and development visions based on conservation objectives and sociocultural context.
- Identifying new territories or potential expansions for protection through legislative and non-legislative means.

This work will be carried out in four phases—information sessions, data collection, decision-making, and validation. The first phase began in October 2024, providing background on past efforts, introducing new targets and conservation tools, and laying the groundwork for participatory planning and governance.

Phases II & III will begin in the next fiscal year, and phase IV is set to wrap up the following year.

*Protected Areas Info session in Ouje-Bougoumou, February 2025.
Photo Credit: Chantal Otter Tetreault*



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The 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 the management and conservation of wildlife in Eeyou Istchee. Led by our Wildlife Unit Coordinator, Maya Longpré-Croteau, our team includes Eliane Grant (Big Game Wildlife Biologist), Audrey Lauzon (Wildlife Biologist), Jane Voyageur (Wildlife Technician) and support from consultant, Michele Labelle. The team 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.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC)

One of the Wildlife Unit's most important tasks is to support the Cree members of the HFTCC, an advisory body that 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, as well as the provincial and federal governments. The Cree members include our Director of Environment, Isaac Voyageur; Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations, Nadia Saganash; and Grand Chief Norman Wapachee. The members of the Wildlife Unit are advisors to the Cree members of the Committee.

The Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB)

The Wildlife Unit observes on the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board. While the summer meeting had to be cancelled due to forest fires, we attended the previous meetings that occurred in 2023–2024. The EMRWB and Wildlife Unit collaborate on several projects and management files, such as polar bear management.

Polar Bear Management

The Wildlife Unit participated in the first two phases of the Polar Bear Public Hearings held by the EMRWB and Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB). These public hearings were held to evaluate the need for the establishment of non-quota limitations and/or a total allowable take for polar bear in the NMR and the EMR/NMR overlap area.

The Cree Nation Government also approached and joined the Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC) and the Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC). These two committees are forums for the cooperative management of polar bear populations in Canada.

Lake Sturgeon Threat Management Plan

After completing the Lake Sturgeon Threat Management Plan in March 2024, the Wildlife Unit spent 2024–2025 promoting the document. The Threat Management Plan represents a historic collaboration between the Cree and Canada for the development of a document required under the Species at Risk Act. The Wildlife Unit is currently in negotiations with Fisheries and Oceans for the implementation of the Threat Management Plan.

Moose Management in Zone 17

The Moose Management Technical Committee (MMTC), formed by the CNG, CTA, and representatives from communities in Zone 17, has expanded its role beyond the implementation of the Moose Hunting Guidelines. After receiving approval from the community councils of Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waskaganish, and the regional CTA, a mandatory declaration system was established for the 2024 hunting season. This initiative reflects a commitment to effective wildlife management and sustainable harvesting.

Nunavut Fisheries Regulations (NFR)

The Cree Nation Government was invited to participate in the drafting of the NFRs. These federal regulations would replace and modernize the current Northwest Territories regulations to ensure their compliance with treaty rights. A policy intention paper was completed in 2024, and consultations are expected to take place in 2025–2026.

Ptarmigan Project

The Wildlife Unit, in partnership with the local Cree Trappers' Association, participated in a Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP) regional project on ptarmigans. The main goal of this project is to enhance our understanding of the ptarmigan populations that are hunted in Eeyou Istchee. Ptarmigans have a migratory cycle that brings them to the southern limit of their range (Eeyou Istchee/Lac Saint-Jean) every 8 to 12 years. The wings that were collected by the local CTA offices will be used by the regional MELCCFP office to identify the sex and the age of the hunted birds. The data gathered by this project will improve our knowledge of the ptarmigan populations in Eeyou Istchee.

Moose Habitat Under the Adapted Forestry Regime

The Cree Nation Government, along with the CTA, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Mistissini, Nemaska, and Waskaganish, has been collaborating with McGill University and the MELCCFP since 2020 to evaluate the quality of moose habitats within the Adapted Forestry Regime territory of Eeyou Istchee. As



Wildlife Technician Jane Voyageur and Sturgeon Special Projects Officer Michèle Labelle in Waswanipi, October 2024.

Istchee. The aim of the project is in line with a precautionary approach towards woodland caribou conservation. Lastly, we continue to wait for Quebec's Boreal Caribou Strategy for Eeyou Istchee.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2024-2025, the Climate Change Unit advanced planning, capacity building, and policy leadership to support a climate-ready Eeyou Istchee. Grounded in Cree values and driven by community needs, the Unit delivered tangible tools, strategies, and partnerships to support self-determined action in the face of rising climate risks. Pernilla Talec resumed her role of Manager of Climate Change while Olivier Kölmel has been appointed Manager of Eco-Investments & Strategic Partnerships. Killian Abellon has been promoted to Coordinator of Climate Monitoring.

Nation-Level Strategy and Governance

The Cree Nation Government has completed its first greenhouse gas (GHG) audit, establishing a baseline for long-term emissions reductions. This effort led to the release of the first 10-Year Climate Action Plan, aimed at decarbonizing government operations in alignment with the Paris Agreement from COP21. In addition, the ᐱᓂᑦᑕᓄᓇᑦᑐᑦ | Wanishkaakwh (Wake Up) Declaration on climate change, along with its 27 calls to action, and the establishment of a permanent regional Climate Change Advisory Committee were formally endorsed by the Board/Council. These initiatives are designed to guide climate work across Eeyou Istchee.



Cree Regional Climate Forum 2024

In Oujé-Bougoumou, over 165 participants from 10 Cree communities and partner Nations gathered for the first regional forum since 2018. The event created space to reflect on lessons from recent crises, including wildfires, and to advance Indigenous-led dialogue on wildlife and ice monitoring, energy autonomy, EV deployment, carbon markets, and Cree climate governance. The forum closed with a strong mandate for Nation-driven climate leadership.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

The Unit toured Nemaska, Whapmagoostui, and Chisasibi to co-develop a regional weather station network. Moreover, a youth-focused climate education game was piloted in Badabin Eeyou School and Luke Mettaweskum School, and a public video series launched to raise awareness on forest fires, permafrost, and freshwater ice safety. Youth

and knowledge holder delegations were supported at major events to strengthen intergenerational climate leadership.

Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness

A regional EV and Charging Network Feasibility Study was completed to support community readiness and guide future investment and a fair transition across the territory. In Chisasibi, a train-the-trainer workshop on adaptation and environmental emergency response—based on a First Nations-led framework—focused on coastal realities. A follow-up session for inland communities is planned in Mistissini for fall 2025.

Policy, Research, and External Engagement

The Unit submitted 25 policy recommendations to federal Cabinet, inputted into 8 government consultations and engaged with Cree leadership and over 90 First Nations across

Visual Note for CRCF24—Day 1. Illustrated by Marie-Joëlle Fournier



Table 3. Year in Review: Climate Action Highlights

Focus Area	Highlights
Governance & Strategy	GHG audit; 10-Year Climate Action Plan; Climate Declaration & Regional Climate Advisory Committee adopted
Forum & Dialogue	165+ participants; 10+ communities; Indigenous-led solutions
Community Engagement	3-community tour; climate game piloted; public video series; youth & knowledge holders engaged
Infrastructure Planning	EV & Charging Network Feasibility Study completed; guiding local readiness and regional investment
Adaptation & Emergency Preparedness	Coastal workshop delivered; inland session scheduled for fall 2025
Policy & Advocacy	25 federal recommendations submitted; 8 consultations with Quebec and Canada
Research & Knowledge	Projects on risk mapping, food security, natural assets; Cree Lexicon development
Committee Collaboration	Active participation in several committees on climate change assessment, climate governance, education, food, and monitoring networks

Canada. Strategic projects were launched on climate risk mapping, food access and vulnerability, and natural asset inventories research, while work continued on the Cree Climate Lexicon to ensure Cree knowledge guides the region's climate response.

The Unit also contributed to national and regional working groups on climate governance, education, food systems, and environmental monitoring—ensuring Cree priorities shape wider programs and policies.

LAND USE PLANNING

The Land Use Planning Unit supports the Cree Nation Government (CNG) and the Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) in developing land use planning tools that align with Cree goals and priorities. In 2024–2025, the Unit included Manager Jessica Labrecque, Planners Rosanna Wisden and Jules Varin, and Officer Merlin Whiskeychan (until May 2024).

Key Activities and Progress

Eeyou Planning Commission

The EPC is composed of representatives from the nine Cree communities, with an observer from Washaw Sibi. Its mandate is to develop a planning vision for Eeyou Istchee, develop a land use plan for Category II lands, collaborate with other planning jurisdictions in Eeyou Istchee to ensure they reflect the collective vision and aspirations of the Crees, and upon request, advise CNG on matters related to land use planning.

The EPC held four meetings in 2024–2025. Discussions covered the development and harmonization of planning tools across jurisdictions and sectors (forestry, mining, protected areas, the offshore, etc.) and local projects (e.g. waste management, wildfire recovery, land reconfiguration, etc).



EPC Meeting, April 2025. Photo credit: James Saqanash-Bréard

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We look forward to continuing to work with the Eeyou Planning Commission, Cree governments, and planning partners on advancing the development of land use planning tools across the territory that reflect Cree interest, needs, and vision.

Photo: Jane Voyageur

The EPC also passed its first three resolutions recommending:

1. Revisions to the EPC mandate to strengthen community involvement in the development of planning tools related to the Cree Regional Master Plan;
2. The EPC Vision for Land and Resource Use Planning;
3. Planning Goals to guide the Category II and Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) planning processes.

Planning for Category II Lands

The EPC has undertaken the development of a planning tool that would bring a shared long-term vision for Category II Lands by incorporating the EPC’s planning goals of practicing the Cree way of life, environmental conservation, economic development, resource management, and community development. It will act as a comprehensive framework for making informed decisions on development activities and ensuring they are coordinated and aligned. In 2024, the Land Use Planning team supported the organisation of a workshop on municipal powers to better informed concerned CNG department’s involved in undertaking responsibilities in Category II Lands. Work will continue in 2025–2026 with Cree First Nations, CNG departments, and other planning partners.

Planning Harmonization in the Eeyou Marine Region

The EPC and the EMR Planning Commission (EMRPC) collaborated on establishing the Planning Goals for Eeyou Istchee, which will be foundational to both the Category II Lands and EMR planning processes.



Municipal Affairs and Category III Lands

The Unit supports Cree leadership as representatives of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG) by preparing briefings and information on the municipal regime in Category III Lands, attending public consultations, and responding to requests as they arise. This support will continue into 2025–2026 to help Cree representatives engage in planning-related matters on Category III Lands.

Land Use Planning in Kativik

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) has continued to solicit Cree participation in the development of its draft By-Law to enforce its Master Plan. The EPC Secretariat works with the Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations to build constructive dialogue with the KRG, as well as with other Nations affected by the Kativik Master Plan and the draft By-Law.

In the 2025–2026 fiscal year, we look forward to continuing to work with the Eeyou Planning Commission, Cree governments, and planning partners on advancing the development of land use planning tools across the territory that reflect Cree interest, needs, and vision.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) SERVICES

The GIS Unit supports the Environment Department, other CNG departments, Cree entities, and communities with mapping and data management. The team includes Coordinator Jonathan Elkhoury and GIS Analyst Maxine Mark-Stewart.

Geospatial Strategy – Year 2 Progress

Now in its second year, the CNG's 3-year Geospatial Strategy continued enhancing GIS services across the organization, with a focus on delivering tailored GIS solutions.

Key Year 2 Highlights:

- **GIS Workforce:** A centralized GIS team (Manager, Database Administrator, Solutions Architect) will be established in 2025. A new demand management system is also in development.
- **Governance:** A draft governance framework and charter were developed, with early steps taken toward improved data stewardship.
- **Data Centralization:** Progress continued on a centralized spatial data repository, including data inventory, owner assignments, and prototype migration workflows.
- **Community Enablement:** A proposed community of practice will support local GIS capacity and collaboration.
- **Technology Optimization:** A roadmap was drafted to enhance ArcGIS platform governance and use.
- **Cree Nation Basemap:** Initial workshops began for a culturally grounded, standardized basemap.
- **Capital Planning:** A GIS tool was implemented to support project tracking, performance reporting, and infrastructure coordination.
- **Leadership Engagement:** Briefings and dashboards are being developed to improve alignment and promote GIS visibility across CNG.

- **GIS Training:** A role-based training plan is underway to build ArcGIS proficiency among GIS staff.

Looking Ahead to Year 3

The final year of the strategy will focus on launching a GIS services catalogue, expanding self-service tools, and refreshing the strategy to reflect evolving organizational needs.

Capacity Building & Technical Support

Through the SLG-ELA agreement with Esri Canada, the GIS unit manages access to ArcGIS products for CNG staff and Cree First Nations, providing support via email or request form. The team also delivers tailored ArcGIS Online training during onboarding or as needed.

Mapping & Analytics

Notable projects included:

- A large mining map for the Commerce and Industry booth at the Quebec Mines Conference
- Detailed maps for Mid Canada Line cleanup planning (including such data as traplines, camps and airstrips)
- A conference room wall map for the new CNG Montreal office

Web GIS & App Development

- **AMES Cleanup Planning:** Custom apps were developed to support each phase (validation, characterization and cleanup) of the Abandoned Mining Exploration Sites project, with automated reports and a streamlined data visualization dashboard.
- **Cree Land Use Mapping App:** A digital cultural data collection tool is in development to support various projects. It's currently being piloted by the Land Use Planning Unit to document Elders' knowledge for integration into the Cree Regional Master Plan.
- **SEG Permit Tool:** A prototype Survey123 form was created to help the Wildlife Unit track provincial scientific permit requests. A summer student supported testing by entering backlogged data.



CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

Message from the Interim Director Martin Desgagné



THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 WAS A CHALLENGING BUT REWARDING YEAR, AS WE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED MANY PROJECTS, AND ASSISTED VARIOUS REGIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE REALIZATION OF THEIR PROJECTS. ADDITIONALLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES FILLED SEVERAL VACANCIES IN OUR TEAM.



This year, we will present you the activities of the Department of Capital Works and Services in terms of operational services first, followed by the advisory and project management services that the Capital Works and Services team have successfully provided.

Operation Services

The operational services are those needed for the daily operations of the organization, including:

1. Capital Asset & Procurements;
2. Capital Projects & Inspections Services; and
3. Operations and Maintenance of the facilities (regional buildings and housing).

Advisory Services

The advisory services are those provided in support of the operations of the Local Governments, such as:

4. Capital and Urban Planning Support;
5. Fire Protection Support;
6. Housing Support;
7. Project Management Support;
8. Waste Management Support; and
9. Water Support.

Modernization of the Capital Asset Management Project

Under the direct supervision of the Director, CWS has the responsibility to oversee the Modernization of the Capital Asset Management (MCAM) Project as part of the Additional O&M file and as approved by the Board / Council on

March 29 & 30, 2023. The MCAM Project has three main goals, as follows:

1. Create a Capital Asset Database web software for all local and regional buildings and housing; the database is called *Mahikan*, and it will be operational in the first quarter of the year 2025-2026.
2. Facilitate and assist in the implementation a preventive maintenance system, including a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), in all the communities (underway); and
3. Enable the daily monitoring of Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems using a centralized interface, and to enable specialized maintenance under set contracts.

Lastly, CWS would like to thank all the Cree Local Administration staff for their excellent collaboration with our team. Also, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to all the dedicated CWS staff that are involved in making a reality our mission statement.

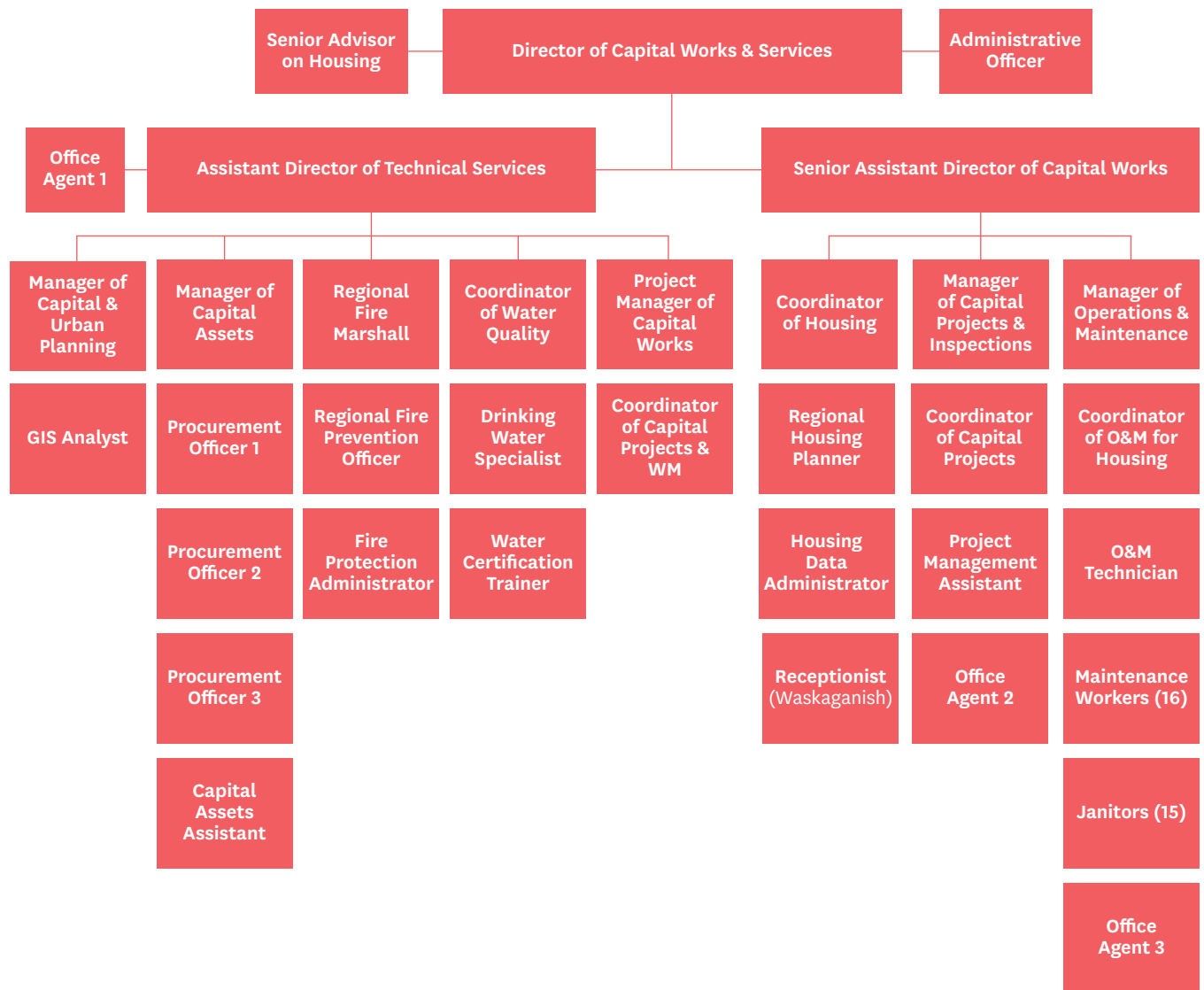
*Martin Desgagné, P.Eng., M.B.A.
Interim Director of Capital Works and Services*

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



The Department of Capital Works and Services, December 2024



CAPITAL ASSETS AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES

The capital assets and procurement team oversee the procurement of goods and services and the management of the leases as per the processes explained below. In terms of volume, the team posted 20 calls for tenders, procured goods for a value of \$30,200,000 and processed 12 leases.

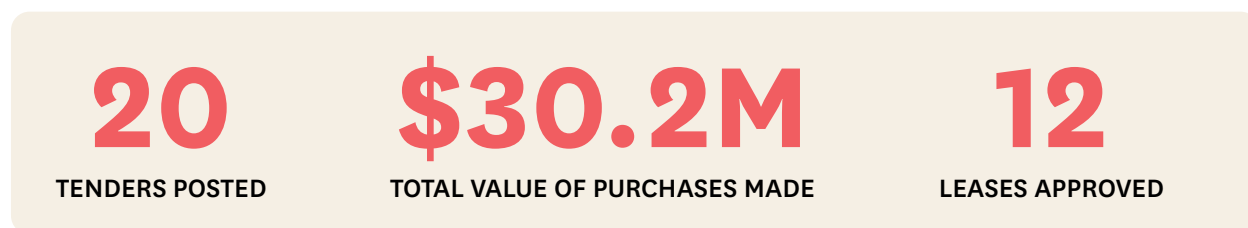


Figure 1. Percentage of purchases made per cost bracket

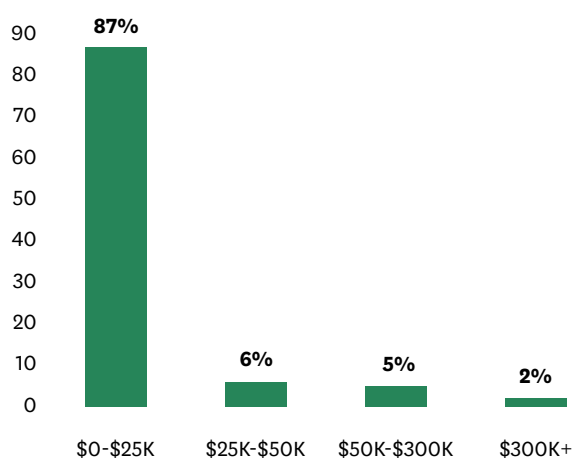
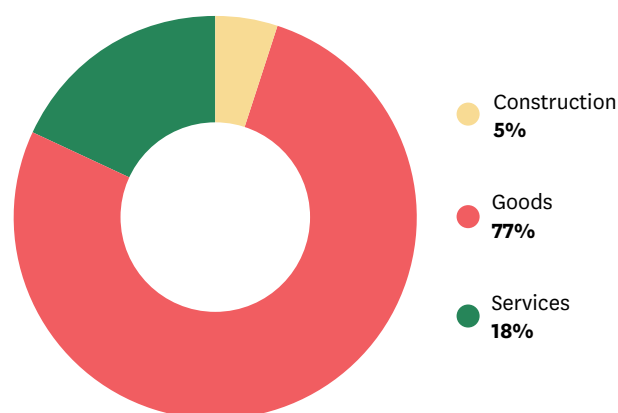
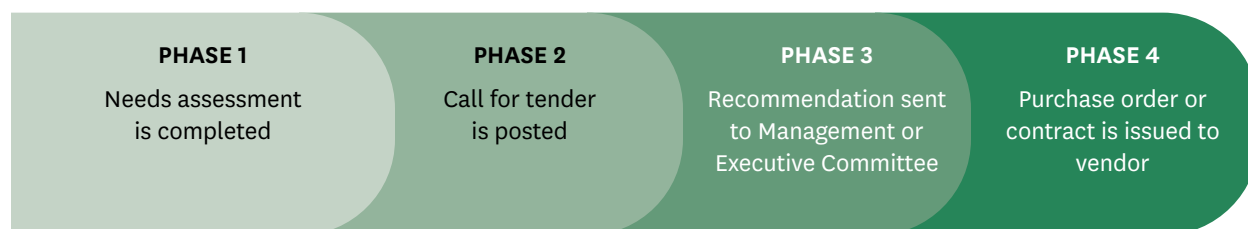


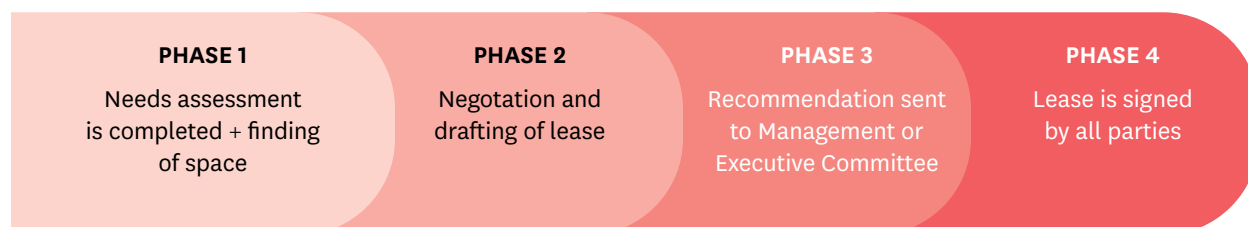
Figure 2. Division of purchases



Procurement projects valued at \$50,000 or more follow the process below:



Renewal or signing of new property lease 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 2024-2025, projects were executed for the Cree Nation Government's Departments as per the table 1.

In addition to the projects listed below, the Capital Projects team worked with each of the Cree Nation Government's departments by assigning architects and engineers to develop their projects with the goal of providing services for the Eeyou Istchee population respective to each department's mandate.

Table 1. Regional Construction Activities

No.	Project Description	Status (2025-03-31)	Contractor
1.0	Department of Justice & Correctional Services (JCS)		
1.1	Community Wellness Housing Mistissini (Tiny Homes & Main Building)	95%	KESI Construction
1.2	Community Wellness Housing Waskaganish (Completion of Tiny Homes)	100%	Wachiya Construction Inc.
1.3	Community Wellness Housing Chisasibi (Tiny Homes)	87%	Chee Bee Cree Construction JV
1.4	Community Wellness Housing in Waswanipi - Civil Works & Main Building - Purchase of Tiny Homes - Installation of Tiny Homes	100% 100% 79%	Construction de l'Avenir VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc. VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
2.0	Forestry Department		
2.1	Triplexes (2) in Waswanipi	100%	Waswanipi Eenuch Constructions
4.0	Cree Nation Administration		
4.1	Nemaska Head Office Landscaping	100%	VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
4.2	Staff Housing Renovations in Nemaska	90%	Project Management Approach
4.3	Nemaska Head Office Renovations	95%	VCC Entrepreneur Général Inc.
4.4	Triplex in Chisasibi	90%	Construction Blackburn & Fils
5.0	Eeyou Eenou Police Force		
5.1	New Detachment in Ouje-Bougoumou	95%	Construction Unibec Inc.
5.2	Duplex in Nemaska	100%	KESI Construction
5.3	Remediation of Detachment in Eastmain	90%	Wabannutao Construction
5.4	Radiocommunications Upgrade	98%	Bell Radio Division
5.5	Triplex and Duplex in Chisasibi	95%	Construction Blackburn & Fils
5.6	Triplex in Wemindji	95%	VCC Entrepreneur Général
5.7	Triplex in Chisasibi	89%	Construction Blackburn & Fils
5.8	Duplex in Ouje-Bougoumou	62%	Consortium Kagoose Larouche



*Eeyou Eenou Police Force Duplex
in Nemaska*



*Community Wellness Project –
Tiny Homes in Waswanipi*



*Eeyou Eenou Police Force
Detachment in Ouje-Bougoumou*



Forestry Triplex in Waswanipi



As of March 31, 2025, CWS oversaw the operations and maintenance (O&M) of 25 public buildings (approx. 253,900 square feet) and 143 housing units (approx. 220,000 square feet) located in the Cree communities as per the table 2. To carry out the works, there is a team of 15 Janitors, 16 Maintenance Workers (two acting as team leaders), an Operations & Maintenance Technician, a Coordinator of Operations & Maintenance to oversee the CNG housing units and a Manager for Operations & Maintenance.

Since April 2016, the O&M team has been using a Computerized Maintenance Management Software (CMMS) and has over 1200 of preventive maintenance templates for the buildings' equipment. During 2024-2025, over 918 work orders have been produced in all categories combined. CWS' O&M staff also answered emergency maintenance calls for the 16 daycare centers located in the Cree communities, following an agreement established with the Cree Nation Government's Department of Child and Family Services.

	Number of Facilities
Regional Buildings	
Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) Office	1
Cree Nation Government Office in Waskaganish	1
Cree Nation Government Head Office Nemaska	1
EEPF Detachments	9
EEPF Headquarter in Chisasibi	1
Justice Facilities	8
Wellness centers	2
Forestry building	1
Warehouse	1
Sub-Total	25
Housing Units	
Cree Nation Government Housing Units	60
EEPF Housing Units	87
Wellness Tiny houses	20
Sub-Total	167
Total	192

Since April 2016, the Operations and Maintenance team has been using a Computerized Maintenance Management Software (CMMS) and has over 1200 of preventive maintenance templates for the buildings' equipment.

First Nation	Seats
Mistissini	124
Ouje-Bougoumou	74
Waswanipi	174
Nemaska	112
Whapmagoostui	89
Chisasibi	121
Wemindji	81
Eastmain	70
Waskaganish	73

Housing Renovations

The table 3 outlines the renovation activities carried out on residential units in 2024-2025. The goal of the renovation projects was to improve the living conditions, address health and safety issues, enhance energy efficiency, and modernize outdated residential designs.

Table 3. renovation activities carried out on residential units in 2024-2025

Community	Address	Type of Renovation	Status
Nemaska	4-A Fox Trail	Interior	complete
Nemaska	4-B Fox Trail	Interior	complete
Nemaska	6 Marten Trail	Exterior & Interior	complete
Chisasibi	206 Shibish	Interior	in progress



Unit 1 Before and After



Unit 2 Before and After



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 \$118,746,553 worth of projects for all nine communities was approved by Board/Council for 2024-2025 for projects relating to: Local Government Facilities, Essential Sanitation Services, Community Centers, Firehalls, Local Heavy Equipment and Housing, as per the Figure 6.

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 2024 Community Tour are included on the following pages.

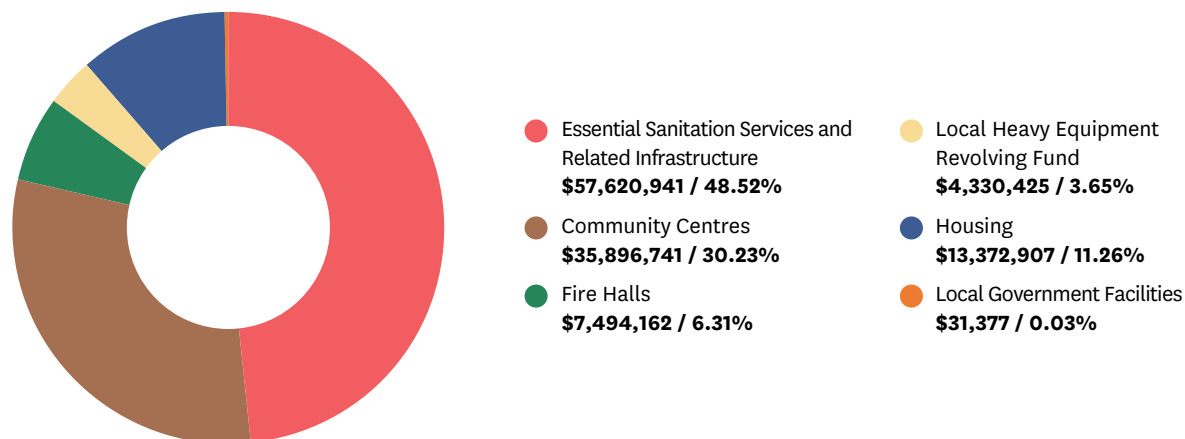


Eastmain Residential Lot Construction,
2024-08-13



Ouje-Bougoumou ASD Training Centre,
2024-09-12

Figure 6. NRA funding approved for 2024-2025, per program





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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.

Geographic Information Systems

Given that GIS technologies can be used for multiple purposes in Eeyou Istchee, the primary responsibilities of GIS service delivery at the department level consist of the following:

1. To compile, maintain, and update spatial data using existing and emerging GIS resources for Cree local and regional governance purposes at the local level.
2. To develop a digital platform which centralizes spatial data from a range of public and private sources.
3. To build local knowledge about community infrastructure and future expansions using GIS technologies.

Other major accomplishments that were achieved comprise of working in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government GIS Working Group. Over the past few years, the role of GIS services has been in high demand which have created collective challenges to the organization at large. Since GIS technologies has evolved into an enterprise system requiring multiple components (technologies, processes and people) to make it viable, it was agreed to work with industry experts in the geospatial community to address these technical issues consistent with in-house GIS resources. Fortunately, Cree Nation Government have engaged the expertise of Esri Canada Consulting Services to work with the GIS Working Group to develop a collaborative strategy of the GIS program and services at the organizational level.

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 2024-2025. Efforts have been particularly focused on supporting Cree communities with a Fire Master Plan, involving equipment procurement and comprehensive training for fire personnel. This is crucial for effective response to fires and emergencies.

Fire Equipment

Capital equipment acquisitions are facilitated through the CWS 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. These assets are instrumental in enabling fire departments to operate efficiently during emergency situations.

Training

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. In 2024-2025, the focus has been on the training qualified Fire Prevention Officers and a new cohort of Fire Officers. Fire Officers hold a leadership role in the Fire Departments and will be able to provide more training to their team, leadership and technical support. The collaboration between CWS and fire departments ensures ongoing training tailored to support 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.

The Fire Prevention Unit has been training local Fire Prevention Officers (FPO) as well as running a mentorship program. The Fire Prevention Officer Mentorship Program, the first of its kind in Canada, will see 10 FPOs from the Cree Nations travelling to Southern Ontario to work in conjunction with 11 fire departments to gain experience in establishing their own programs at home. The program will see each FPO partner with an Ontario fire department for one month and will allow them to bring back valuable fire safety knowledge and experience to their community.

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, safeguarding lives and property.

Conclusion

The Cree Nation Government's dedication to fire protection initiatives, training and improvements underscores its commitment to community safety. Investment in fire stations, fire trucks, equipment, and training reflect 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.



Cree Nation NFPA 1001 Graduation 2025 in Chisasibi, Quebec

HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

The Housing Support Services team provides services related to housing programs. Housing is essential throughout the Cree Nation to accommodate the needs of the growing population. The housing team includes a Senior Housing Adviser, a Coordinator of Housing, a Regional Housing Planner, and a Housing Administrator. The main housing activities in 2024-2025 can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. Housing Team Activities for 2024-2025

File	Action	Details
Community Private Housing Initiative Program 1.3A	Implementation	Approved more than 92 subsidies since the beginning of the program.
Eeyou Miichuwaap Meeting	Quarterly meetings	Hosted regional housing meeting with the Cree Nation Housing Directors.
Radon Study	Implementation	Assisted the <i>Institut Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique</i> (INRS) in conducting a radon study.
Reaching Home Program	Reporting	Collected reports from the Reaching Home Program, a program to builds additional bedrooms and/or sanitation facilities in existing homes.
Regional Housing Radio show	Host	Hosted a monthly housing radio show that has now completed more than 120 episodes and counting.
Renovation and Inspection Services	Implementation	Supported the Urgent Housing Renovation files and coordinating inspections for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Physical Condition Review (PCR), Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) Section 95 final inspections and Insurance Claims.
Social and Rental Housing Program 1.3	Reporting	Assisted with the CMHC On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing Program (Section 95) reporting requirements.
Special Community Social Housing Program 1.3B	Implementation	Reviewed and approved applications from the communities' submissions for Year 3 of the subsidies.
Annual Housing Tour	Site visits	Completed the 2 nd Community Housing Tour.
Eastmain Housing Symposium	Attended	Attended the Eastmain Housing Symposium.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

CWS provides project management services to Local Governments upon request and works on various regional files for the Cree Nation Government in support of the implementation of the New Relationship Agreement (NRA) and other agreements.

In 2024-2025, these activities included providing project management support to the Whapmagoostui First Nation for all projects approved for funding through the NRA since 2008-2009 and for the new housing construction.

The construction of a new landfill was completed and works continued on the construction of a new pool and youth center, the paving of streets, and the cadastral review. Several projects are at the planning stage for the potential construction of a new cemetery, eco-centre, chanel house and new drinking water wells. Additional support was also provided to the Whapmagoostui capital works team for the 2025-2026 NRA funding applications.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Waste management services are provided to both Local and Regional Governments, upon request.

Implementation of the Collection of Recyclable Materials

CWS led discussion with *Éco Entreprise Québec* (ÉEQ) regarding the implementation of the collection of recyclable materials in the region. In 2024-2025, efforts have been made on drafting a financial agreement for 2025 for communities with existing recycling program (Oujé-Bougoumou, Mistissini and Wemindji). This agreement will ensure funding of the recyclable collection for 2025. Draft agreements were sent for comments and approval. Works also progressed on establishing collection and transport scenarios for the recycling program in the region. Finally, work also progressed on the framework agreement that will ultimately uniformized the collection of recyclable materials in the region.



Whapmagoostui's new Pool, new Landfill, and newly paved streets.

Implementation of the Deposit-Refund System

CWS led discussion with the Québec Beverage Container Recycling Association (QBCRA) for the implementation of the deposit-refund system in the region. Regional agreement necessary for the implementation was presented during 2024-2025 Q3 at the Board/Council meeting then to CNG's executive committee. Follow-up with the communities to ensure the signature of the regional agreement was completed. Follow-up with retailers to ensure installation of reverse-vending machines was also completed.

Implementation of Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) programs

CWS led discussion with organizations managing Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) programs to formalize the implementation of EPR programs in the region. An agreement was reached with GO Recycle (refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, storerooms, dehumidifiers and water coolers) and the role of CNG was formalized.

Support to Local Governments

Additionally, technical support was provided to the Local Governments to improve operations at their eco-centers and landfills including, but not limited to:

- Eastmain: Support for the start of the operations at the eco-centre.
- Whapmagoostui: Support for the operation of a new landfill.
- Mistissini: Support for the purchasing of equipment related to waste management.
- Waskaganish: Coordination on miscellaneous subjects (operations at the eco-centre, extended producer responsibility programs, etc.).
- Wemindji: Support for the operation of new waste management infrastructures.

WATER SUPPORT SERVICES

Drinking Water and Wastewater Law

This year the drinking water law was reviewed to include wastewater standards. The law's purpose is to guide communities toward Quebec's provincial and municipal water



Water Support Services Team

quality standards for drinking water production and wastewater treatment. The regional law was adopted in December 2024 by the Board/Council.

Water Operators Trainings

In 2024-2025, exams have been conducted for the Water Operator Certification (“OPA”) for 10 water operators with the collaboration of the *Centre de services scolaires des Trois-Lacs* (CSSTL). This year also marks the first ever cohort of students to attend the water certification program given in Chisasibi. Approximately 12 students from all over the region registered. The second modules of wastewater classes were also given in Shawinigan. Students are scheduled to take the certification exam in the summer of 2025.

Conventions and Training

To improve collaboration between departments and projects flow, a workshop was given in Ottawa at Algonquin College. Directors General and directors of both departments were invited. Also, during this period, water operators were invited to attend the water symposium of the Assembly of First Nations and the Infrastructure Conference.

Technical Support

The table 5 presents the main activities conducted by the water support service team in 2024-2025.

Table 5. The main activities conducted by the water support service team

Community	Activity
Chisasibi	New water treatment plant construction.
Wemindji	Water treatment plant upgrades.
Eastmain	Water supply committee with Hydro-Quebec and Operational Support.
Nemaska	Server replacement.
Oujé-Bougoumou	Drinking water network flushing.
Waswanipi	Lagoons Planning.
Mistissini	Drinking water network flushing and training.



MIYUUHPICHINAAUSUWIN APATISIWIN

Message from the Director Kelly Pepabano



WE ARE PROUD TO SHARE THE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MIYUUHPICHINAAUSUWIN APATISIWIN DEPARTMENT FOR THE 2024–2025 YEAR.



First, we want to thank all the dedicated childcare staff across Eeyou Istchee. Your hard work and commitment to caring for our young children make a big difference every day. You are the heart of our services and the reason we continue to grow stronger as a network.

We also thank our regional and local partners in Eeyou Istchee and the province. Your support helps us provide the best care and learning experiences for children aged 0 to 5.

Our department offers more than just childcare. We manage a variety of programs that support children and families, made possible through two key agreements:

- One with *Indigenous Services Canada*, which includes Head Start, Maternal and Child Health, and Midwifery programs.
- Another with the *Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada*, supporting the First Nations Child-care Initiative (FNCCI) and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Framework.

These partnerships help us provide well-rounded, culturally based support for families.

Thanks to strong teamwork and planning, our childcare centres offer services that go beyond what's found in many other parts of Canada. This includes childcare, Head Start, help for children with special needs, and support for families. Our goal is to meet each child and family's unique needs in a caring and respectful way.

We also worked closely this year with the Maternal and Child Health team at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. This has helped us coordinate services better and avoid overlap, making things easier for families and staff.

Lastly, we thank our Cree leadership. Your support allows us to keep building strong programs that help Cree children and families grow and thrive. We are deeply grateful. *Chiniskuumidinaan mishtee.*

Kelly Pepabano
Director of Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiwin

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

MIYUUPHICHINAUSUWIN APATISIIWIN PERSONNEL

The Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiwin (MA) Department's head office is based in Mistissini and operates with a team of five full-time employees. One employee is located in Waswanipi, three in Montreal, one in Quebec City, and six in Chisasibi. This distribution allows us to maintain presence and visibility in multiple communities throughout our territory, something we value deeply.

The MA Department, under the governance of the Cree Nation Government (CNG), is responsible for 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 across Eeyou Istchee. This includes monitoring service quality in Cree childcare centres, ensuring compliance with applicable acts and regulations, and upholding the highest standards.

We aim 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 the 2024-2025, 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.

Each childcare centre typically hires a director responsible for overall management, including human resources, finance, materials, administration, and service delivery. Directors are supported by facility coordinators and administrative assistants. Centres also employ multiple educators, including resource educators and, in some cases, home visit educators. Cooks and janitors are also part of the regular staff at all centres. In addition, most centres have pedagogical counselors and coordinators specifically designated for their Head Start programs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR ACTION PLAN

Throughout the fiscal year 2024-2025, the Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiwin Department was engaged in a diverse range of activities including the following.

Programs and Agreements

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 Thirty-five million dollars in local services, facilitating renovation projects, and implementing training programs.

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The implementation of these programs and agreements has proven to be instrumental in fostering economic vitality within our communities, injecting a total of Thirty-five 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 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 Cree Head Start provides early learning activities at childcare centres or through home visits for families whose children do not attend. The program supports all areas of child development, including special needs services, playgroups, and parent-child activities.

The Maternal and Child Health, through the *Â Mash-kûpimâtsit Awash* program, promotes the health of mothers and children, focusing on prenatal and postnatal care, newborn health, nutrition, and early learning.

The Midwifery Services offer culturally sensitive prenatal, postnatal, and birthing care, supporting families through every stage of pregnancy and early parenting.

These programs are jointly supported by the CNG and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services to improve the well-being of Cree children and families within the Cree Nation.

Support to Childcare Centres in the Nine Cree Communities

During the 2024–2025 period, we remained committed to supporting management teams across nine child and family service centres and their respective boards of directors. Our assistance focused on helping them effectively oversee operations and ensure high-quality childcare services.

We continued to provide technical and professional support to directors and staff in both 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 and distributed relevant updates and resources.

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.

Additionally, we maintained close monitoring of the routine maintenance needs and essential services required for the optimal functioning of our sixteen childcare facilities to ensure smooth and safe operations.

Accessibility and Affordability of Child and Family Services

By the end of the 2024–2025 fiscal year, a total of 1,208 subsidized childcare spaces were available across the nine communities. In addition, free spaces were allocated for children whose parents or guardians received social assistance or were beneficiaries of the Income Security Program. To further support vulnerable families, each childcare centre designated two to four spaces for children under the care of Youth Protection services, depending on community needs and capacity.

The Head Start program also ensured that families whose children did not regularly attend childcare centres had access to a range of valuable services. It was specifically designed to support low-income families and those with children requiring specialized care due to special needs or challenging circumstances.

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 2024–2025.

During this fiscal year, one ECS training is currently in progress, and three training programs have been successfully completed.

College-Level 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.



Education in Childhood Services (ECS)

In September 2024, thirteen students from the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation began their ECS training. They are expected to complete the program in December 2025.

This year, three graduation ceremonies took place in Eeyou Istchee.

Education in Childhood Services (ECS)

In April 2024, twenty-one students from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and twenty-two students from the Cree Nation of Mistissini graduated from the ECS program.

Management in Childcare Centres

In December 2024, nine students graduated from the Management program, including three individuals from the MA Department.

The ENS and Special Needs 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.

We extend our warmest congratulations to all our graduates who have demonstrated unwavering commitment and dedication to the well-being and education of young children. Through their hard work, they have earned their diplomas and are now recognized as qualified educators, special needs educators and management professionals.



Managers Training Graduates



Chisasibi Graduates



Mistissini Graduates

Our Pedagogical Officers work closely with local counsellors and childcare coordinators to ensure high-quality services, strong educational content, and complete child files. As part of this support, they gathered feedback from coordinators, directors, pedagogical counsellors, Head Start family workers and resource educators on what aspects of the current child files are effective and how progress reports could be improved to be more user-friendly.

IELCC program funding

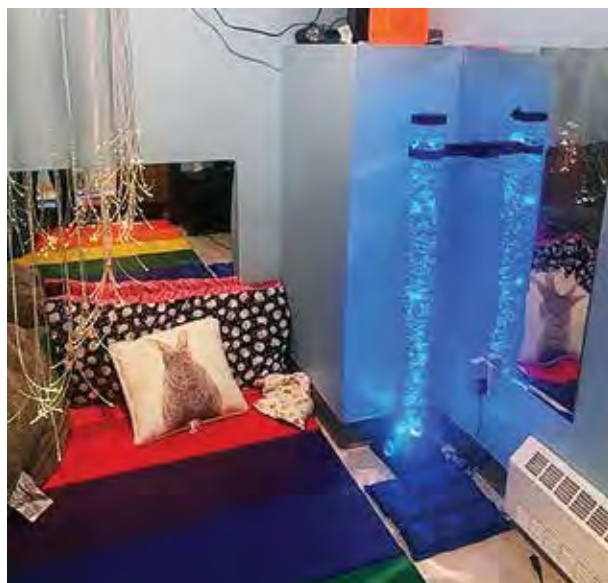
Under the IELCC funding, various projects were supported to enhance the services provided by childcare centres and also other entities. Here are a few initiatives that were carried out:

- 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.

Our Advisor has taken an active role in several initiatives this year, including visiting all communities throughout the fiscal year. The Nurturing Colleges program is also being gradually implemented across all communities.

In addition, our Advisor organized a training session for Head Start educators and other staff members from the centres. The training took place in Kahnawake, behind the school in a wooded area where students regularly engage

A yellow inflatable ring with a black metal frame, set up on a light-colored floor. The ring is inflated and has a black metal frame underneath it. The floor is light-colored and appears to be made of tiles or a similar material. There are some toys scattered around, including a blue toy and a green toy in the background.



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Special Needs Program

Our Special Needs Advisor was very busy this year with her visits to the childcare centres to provide support to all Resource Educators and Educators. She has also facilitated workshops and specialized training for them.

In November, the Directors and Coordinators participated in a training in Special Needs Diagnostics with Expertise which focused on strengthening their ability to support Resource Educators, particularly in the area of special needs. The training provided valuable insight into various developmental needs and how they impact children in childcare settings. Overall, the training aimed to foster a more supportive and nurturing environment for both educators and children.

Our Advisor continued her involvement in the Kate Sharl Foundation, which aims to raise funds to financially support individuals with special needs in achieving opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach, because of their levels of need and of 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 Mashkûpimâtsî Awash program.

In early 2025, the committee held an in-person meeting to discuss upcoming initiatives and future projects for the Maternal and Child Health program in 2025-2026. Plans include a visit to the Harlem Children's Zone, as well as expanding funding for cultural activities throughout the year and not just during Goose Break to support greater cultural awareness and community involvement.

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.

Maintenance of our Facilities

Throughout the 2024-2025 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 thirteen childcare facilities. In addition, the extension project for the childcare Centre in Nemaska is expected to be finished in 2025.

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

During the year, the *Ministère de la Famille* sent their head inspector to provide on-the-job training to our new inspector. This training took place during an inspection of a childcare centre, allowing for both hands-on learning and direct support. The one-on-one experience was highly valuable for the inspector's professional development. Following this training, the inspector conducted full inspections in all communities except Waskaganish and Eastmain, which will be prioritized in the next fiscal year.

Department Activities 2024-2025

Board of Directors Training

The Cree Childcare Centres Board of Directors Training, held from January 27 to 30, 2025, at Manoir Saint-Sauveur in Quebec, brought together board members from across Eeyou Istchee to deepen their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The training offered a structured four-day



Board of Directors Training

knowledgeing their hard work. We also sought feedback from parents, community members, and staff regarding potential changes, their vision for the centres over the next decade, and ways we can offer support.

Following the conclusion of our community tour in fall 2024, we will compile all observations into a comprehensive report, which will include our recommendations.

Our department is participating in a customized continuing education program with Concordia University, focusing on leadership, HR management, administration, and team building. Due to scheduling adjustments, the program is now expected to conclude by September 2025.

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.

Participants attended a wide range of workshops covering essential topics such as financial management, board responsibilities, human resources, and reporting requirements. Specialized sessions also explored the newly launched Cree Educational Program, the revised Nurturing Program, Head Start services, and the inclusion of children with special needs. The final day focused on creating actionable plans and annual calendars, ensuring that each childcare centre left with a clear direction and practical steps for the year ahead.

The training equipped board members with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively support and guide their child-care centres in alignment with Cree values and governance.

To advance our vision and mission, we recognized the importance 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 the Eeyou/Eenou Iistchee.

In 2023, our department embarked on a tour of the nine Cree communities, visiting longstanding childcare centres that symbolize an enduring presence. Our community visits concluded in 2024 with a final visit to Whapmagoostui in September.

As part of these 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 ac-



OUR NETWORK OF SERVICES, 2024-2025



Photo: Katherine Dehm

Photo: Katherine Dehm



Cree Nation Government
Miyuuhpichinaausuwin
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 Shiishiikunkamik 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, M.S.M., B.A., LL.B, B.C.L, LL.M



IT IS OUR PLEASURE AGAIN TO PRESENT IN THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORT, AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES.



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), so our Department started off February with a special event to mark this occasion. It was also the 15th anniversary of our partnership with the Canadian Institute of Conflict Resolution (CICR) and the creation of the Cree CICR Program which continues to grow each year. It is only the 17th year of the Department, but an incredible amount of work has been done to develop facilities, programs, services and staffing during this period. The Department looks forward to continuing this momentum with the objective of improving services to the Cree communities and members in the area of justice and corrections.

Historically and currently, the justice and correctional systems in Canada disproportionately and negatively impact Indigenous Peoples, including the Crees of Eeyou Istchee. The Department advocates for positive changes to these systems, and for more culturally appropriate approaches to better address community safety and well-being.

Over the past year, our staff continued to deliver a number of programs to Cree members ranging from the elementary school level to Elders. Our Department runs more land-based and traditional programs than any other group, as the Elders told us when we began to implement these programs based on the understanding that the healing is in the land. Eeyou Istchee is our greatest resource and a reminder of the key values of our society. So, as we introduce children, youth and adults to programs and services built upon these principles, we have the opportunity to create environments where change can occur. It is about engaging people,

listening, and empowering them to take steps towards recognizing and acknowledging their identity, culture and connections.

Through the Cree CICR program, we continue to provide core training to staff and partners in the Cree Nation. The program was offered again this year to groups from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, the Cree School Board, the Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and the Cree Nation Government Department of Apatisiwin Skills Development. The results of this 160-hour training are always remarkable to not only the participants but also to all others who observe how they interact with family, colleagues and clients. It is an intensive education in key life skills, and Cree Elders are a part of this program throughout. Given it is our 15th year of delivering this program, we have been able to develop and refine incredible tools that build upon our Cree understandings, ways and values.

The Department continues to work towards rebuilding the Whapmagoostui Justice Facility with the Department of Capital Works. While it was a significant loss at the time, it is an opportunity for us to rebuild something of great value to the community and justice system. Hopefully, as we rebuild the structure, we can also have the opportunity to rebuild parts of the justice system itself, to better serve our People. We contributed this year to the development of the federal Indigenous Justice Strategy with the Department of Justice Canada, participating in various meetings over several months. We made recommendations for improvements to youth protection and policing and recommendations concerning the creation of possible legislation on Cree courts and judges. We did this after consulting with communities, leaders, and key Cree entities throughout the Cree Nation.

The Department expanded its youth enrichment services this year to include the Y Mind training program, which helps youth deal with anxiety. This training is available to anyone in the Cree communities who works with local youth. The Director also had the opportunity to attend the Cree Nation Youth Council Treaty Simulation exercise this year,

The Department currently has available positions for hiring to now start opening the transitional Tiny Home Communities in Eeyou Istchee this summer. There are 40 tiny homes for people transitioning from the justice and correctional systems, and also some for homelessness in the communities. It is the start of a response to provide a supportive environment for meaningful change in people's lives. One of the requirements to be admitted to a Tiny Home Community is to participate in workshops and programs offered that facilitate positive change. The Department is hopeful that this transitional type of initiative will encourage and

As provided for in the JBNQA, the Department looks at ways of improving services to clients throughout their interactions with the justice and corrections systems. While the Department does not yet directly operate these systems through Cree-run courts or detention facilities, the staff work hard to advocate for change in the conditions and treatment Crees may receive, and they provide the courts with Gladue reports recommending plans of actions to help individuals. As a part of this, some members of the Department visited the Navajo Nation in January, more specifically, the corrections facilities and programs, along with the courts and policing department. The Navajo Nation public safety department was incredibly generous with their time, and shared information about programming and lessons they have learned in operating their own systems.

A group of eleven people, including students and faculty, posing for a photo. Some individuals are wearing traditional Indigenous clothing, such as a feathered headdress and a beaded necklace. They are standing in front of a wall featuring a large circular seal or logo.

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The former Grand Chief participated in our JBNQA 50th anniversary celebration this year, and spoke inspiring and heartfelt words at our gala. We all look forward to great things in her future, and for the future of the Eeyou Istchee Cree Nation.

The Department would also like to wish the new Minister of Indigenous Services, former Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, success in her new role. She has been an extraordinary leader and advocate for Indigenous People, and she has earned this well deserved position. The former Grand Chief participated in our JBNQA 50th anniversary celebration this year, and spoke inspiring and heartfelt words at our gala. We all look forward to great things in her future, and for the future of the Eeyou Istchee Cree Nation.

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OUR PEOPLE

Our dedicated employees form the backbone of our service delivery and programs, from walking alongside individuals throughout the justice process to fostering healing and prevention across our communities. This year marked a period of transition as we bid farewell to two long-serving team members, Sarah Ottereyes and Anna Neeposh, they will surely be missed and we wish them all the best in their retirement. We also wish to acknowledge our employees who received 10 years of service awards and blankets – Marlene Bearskin, Rachel Mattawashish and Edna Neeposh. We remain committed to investing in our people, knowing that strengthening their skills and well-being enhances both the Department's work and the communities we serve.



More than **THREE QUARTERS OF OUR STAFF** are now trained so they could put these skills to use on a daily basis as employees meet with clients at various points in their healing journeys. Some of those skills are:



CICR REFRESHER



CJC BOOTCAMP



**INDIGENOUS FOCUSING
ORIENTED TRAUMA THERAPY**



**STRATEGIC PLANNING
SESSION**



**FRONT-LINE PSYCHOLOGICAL
SUPPORT TRAINING**



**JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MEMBER FILE MANAGEMENT**

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JBNQA CELEBRATION

On February 5, 2025, staff from the Department of Justice and Correctional Services gathered in Gatineau, Québec for a feast and festivities, kicking off the 50th anniversary of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). Our special guests included Grand Chief Mandy Gull and Deputy Grand Chief Norman Wapachee. As we move through 2025, we hope you will take the time to look around to see what has been accomplished in the last 49 years in your communities and Nation. Wishing you the best of days, and looking forward to the year ahead.





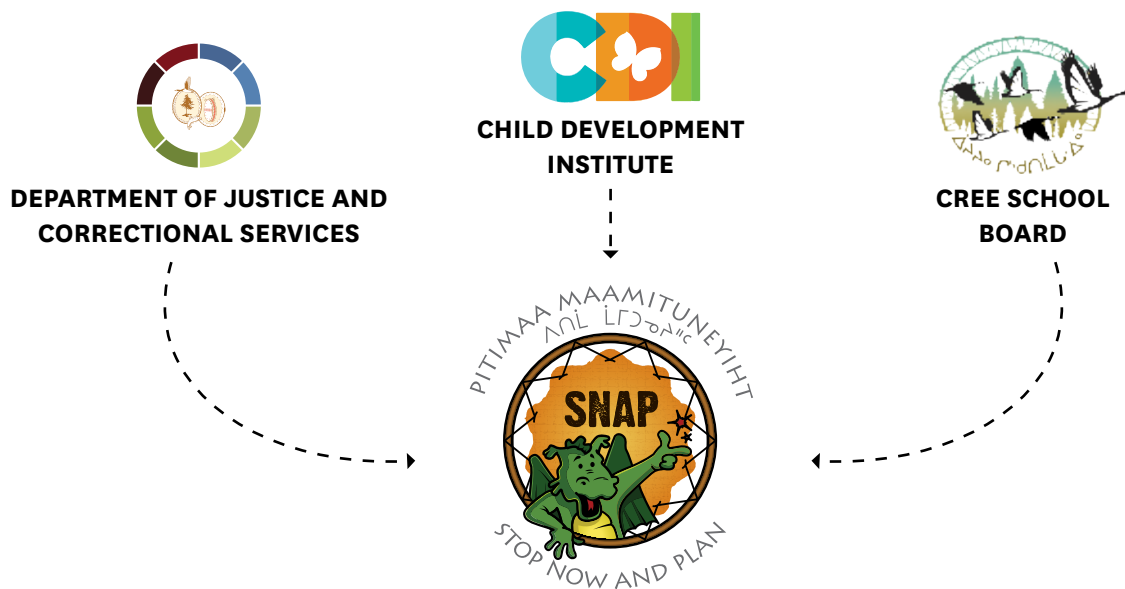
PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Prevention remains a key element of our commitment to community wellness and healing. By building strong connections with those we serve, we tailor our programs to address each individual's unique needs and abilities. We believe the future of safer, healthier communities starts with actions taken today: early engagement with youth fosters positive habits and coping skills. We also emphasize the importance of self-awareness and thoughtful decision-making with both youth and adults.

Through these proactive measures, we strengthen resilience now and pave the way for a healthier and safer tomorrow.

CREE SNAP®

THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, we are collaborating to design and deliver a meaningful and well-rounded program that meets the needs of our communities and our children.



It's inclusive

THIS YEAR we
worked with

1,832

STUDENTS

Throughout **EEYOU ISTCHEE** our staff also offered

761 + 20

SNAP SESSIONS

1-1 SESSIONS

Whapmagoostui = 8
Wemindji = 11
Waskaganish = 1

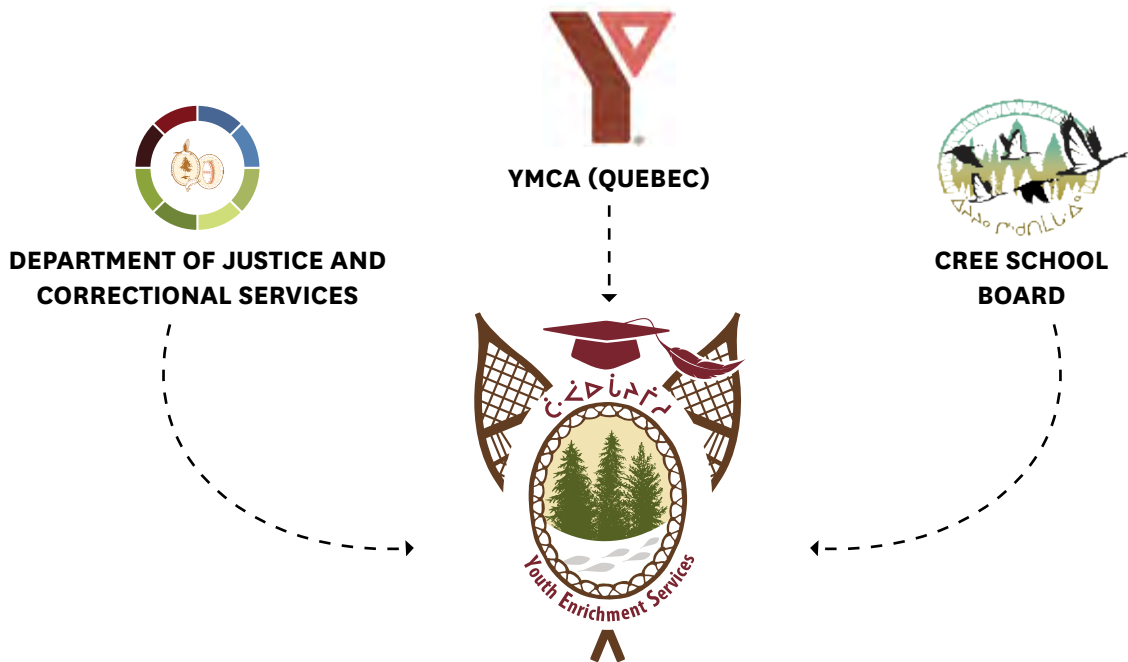




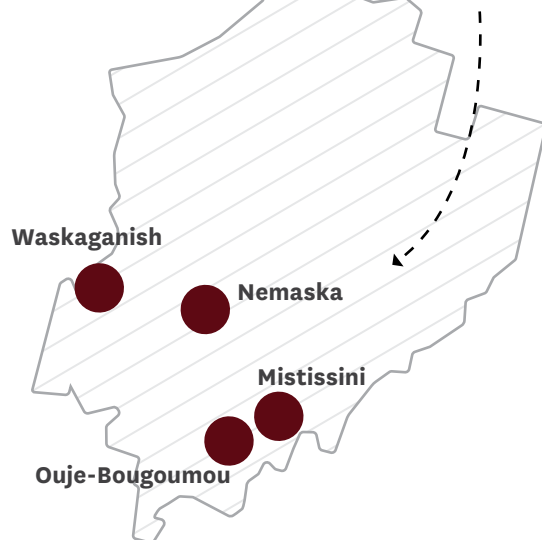
YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) continues to be a vital program providing targeted support to students when teachers or parents identify classroom challenges. Building on its successful foundation in the Cree Nation since 2017, YES programming remains adaptable and responsive, tailored to meet the diverse needs of each community we serve. Our dedicated team applies CICR (Conflict Resolution) training principles to effectively identify and address the underlying needs of individuals, ensuring comprehensive support for our youth.

YES is made possible through the **COLLABORATION** of:



YES IS CURRENTLY IN THESE 4 COMMUNITIES



5 STEPS A CHILD TAKES THROUGH YES

- 1** Referral by teacher or parent.
- 2** Initial Assessment meeting with youth worker.
- 3** Customized Plan goals, workshops, emotional regulation sessions.
- 4** Ongoing Support check-ins, one-on-one mentoring, progress tracking.
- 5** Final Review meeting with parent, school staff, to confirm goals are met.



This year **YES**
SUPPORTED
a total of

31

STUDENTS



BOYS

19



GIRLS

12



ELEMENTARY

7



SECONDARY

24

→ **SOME OF THE REASONS** for referrals were:

DISRUPTIVE
BEHAVIOUR

4

LACK OF
MOTIVATION

3

BULLYING

1

ABSENTEEISM

4

VERBAL
ABUSE

2

PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE

3

PUNCTUALITY

1

THEFT

2

VANDALISM

1

In addition to running the YES student program that supports children in school, our team also organized a **SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM**. The camp's objectives were to:

- Promote healthy lifestyles in the camp setting;
- Create a network for all youth involved;
- Integrate traditional knowledge into daily camp life;
- Promote Cree language, values, and teachings;
- Connect youth with positive role models who demonstrate effective coping skills;
- Build networks and partnerships within the Cree Nation (regional);
- Demonstrate strong community capacity through program hosting;
- Bridge gaps for our target age group.

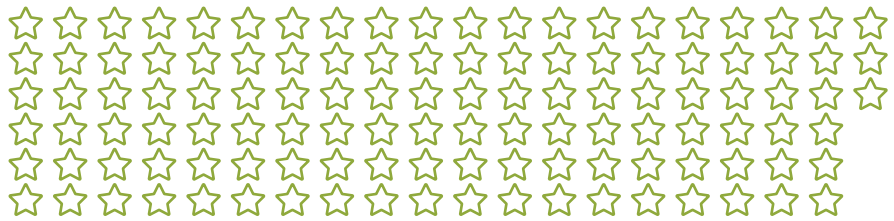


CJC PROGRAMMING & EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES

THIS YEAR we funded

117

PROJECTS



1,800+ COMMUNITY MEMBERS



\$ 1,390,137

IN FUNDING



OLD NEMASKA SUMMER CAMP













Δᐱᐳᐅ CICR

CREE CICR

Our Cree CICR program continues to empower members of the Cree Nation with essential skills and competencies. The program is tailored to honour and uphold Cree values and traditions, while delivering practical, hands-on training in conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, mediation, group facilitation, and various peacebuilding activities. At its core, the program seeks to restore dignity while fostering a deeper understanding of human behavior by addressing fundamental human identity needs.

The **CREE CICR TRAINING PROGRAM** is a collaboration between

**DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE AND
CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES**



**CANADIAN
INSTITUTE FOR
CONFLICT
RESOLUTION**

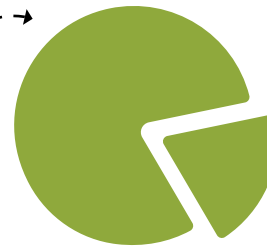


Since its inception in 2011, the Cree CICR program **FULL FOUR-WEEK PROGRAM** has trained

240
INDIVIDUALS

GRADUATE BREAKDOWN

196
Cree Nation
Government
and partner
entities



44
CBHSSJB
Department
Graduates

From our **CONFLICT RESOLUTION ONE-WEEK PROGRAM FOR LEADERS** we have had:

150
GRADUATES



→ Cree School Board Graduates

Cree Nation of Chisasibi Graduates ←

We also collaborate with the **CREE SCHOOL BOARD TO OFFER CREE CICR TRAINING**, we have had:

113 Graduates since 2021-2024 + **14** Graduates in 2024-2025 = **127**
TOTAL GRADUATES

Loved every minute of the program.

“ It opened my eyes and changed my mindset. **”**

Keep up the good work and continue to grow this program throughout Eeyou Istchee.



In Whapmagoostui, a community-led initiative utilizing CICR practices resulted in significant progress in addressing local concerns. Following a request from Deputy Chief Rachel Kawapit, CICR trainers facilitated four successful community dialogue sessions focusing on addictions, mental health, and safety issues.

The program continues to develop new trainers, with recent graduates advancing to leadership positions. This growth ensures the sustainability of the program and its continued positive impact in Cree communities.



GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE) | CREE NATION GOVERNMENT | ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025 | 165

CREE JUSTICE FUNDS

Our Cree Justice Funds program offers community members the opportunity to apply for funding for initiatives in two categories: Youth Engagement and Crime Prevention. This strategic approach allows us to focus our resources on these two vital areas that we believe are pivotal for the improvement and advancement of our communities. Our Justice Funds, a key part of our financial strategy, serve as a source of monetary support to those community members who have the desire and dedication to provide programming in these areas. By offering this financial support, we are not only investing in the present but also the future of our Nation.

This funding model fosters the creation of new relationships and collaborations, effectively strengthening our community ties. All channeled towards our ultimate goal of creating healthier, safer, and more engaged Cree communities, where every individual can feel secure and contribute to the collective well-being.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FUND

The main purpose of the Youth Engagement Fund is to support the development by Cree First Nations, the Cree Nation Youth Council or local youth councils of programs and initiatives designed specifically for Cree youth. Such programs must be related to the administration of justice, in accordance with the provisions of the JBQNA and the Justice Agreement.



CRIME PREVENTION FUND

The primary purpose of the Prevention Fund is to prevent and combat crime and to support the creation of safer communities, in accordance with strategies and best practices in crime prevention and in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Justice Agreement.



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

ᓄᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ SUMMER GAMES PARTICIPATION

The Department was proud to collaborate in supporting the 2024 Eeyou Istchee Summer Games (EISG). This unique event marks the revival of a cherished tradition, with the last games held in 2011. The EISG represents a vital celebration of Cree culture and community spirit, bringing together youth aged 9 to 18 from across Eeyou Istchee. The community of Mistissini hosted over 40 sporting events, including track, field, and aquatic competitions, alongside traditional games for adults. Together, we are investing in our youth and communities, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting healthy lifestyles through sport.

The Summer Games included a **WIDE RANGE OF SPORTS**, such as:



VOLLEYBALL



SOFTBALL



SOCCER



TRACK - 1500M



SWIMMING



TRACK - 200M



TRIATHLON



TRACK - 4X100M RELAY



BADMINTON



TABLE TENNIS (PING PONG)



TRACK - 80M



TRACK - 100M



TRACK - 400M



OPEN WATER SWIM



TRACK - CC2K



FIELD - JAVELIN



TRACK - 1200M



BASKETBALL



TRACK - 3000M



CANOE RACES

\$20,000

JULY 15  COMPASSIONATE TRAINING By Desiree Ottereyes <i>PPRO</i>	JULY 16  HUMAN TRAFFICKING By Anna Neeposh <i>CAVAC Officer</i>	JULY 16  CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS By Viviane Snowboy <i>CAVAC Officer</i>	JULY 17  DRUG USE WORKSHOP By Tyffany & Louie Mianscum <i>Speakers</i>
JULY 18  MENTAL HEALTH COPING SKILLS By Christie Hester <i>PPO</i>	JULY 18  PERSONAL GOAL SETTING By Christine King <i>Program Officer</i>	JULY 19  ASSAULT CHARGES By Amy Linton <i>Mistissini CRO</i>	JULY 19  BULLYING AND RESPECTING AUTHORITY By Ariel Mattawashish <i>PYW</i>

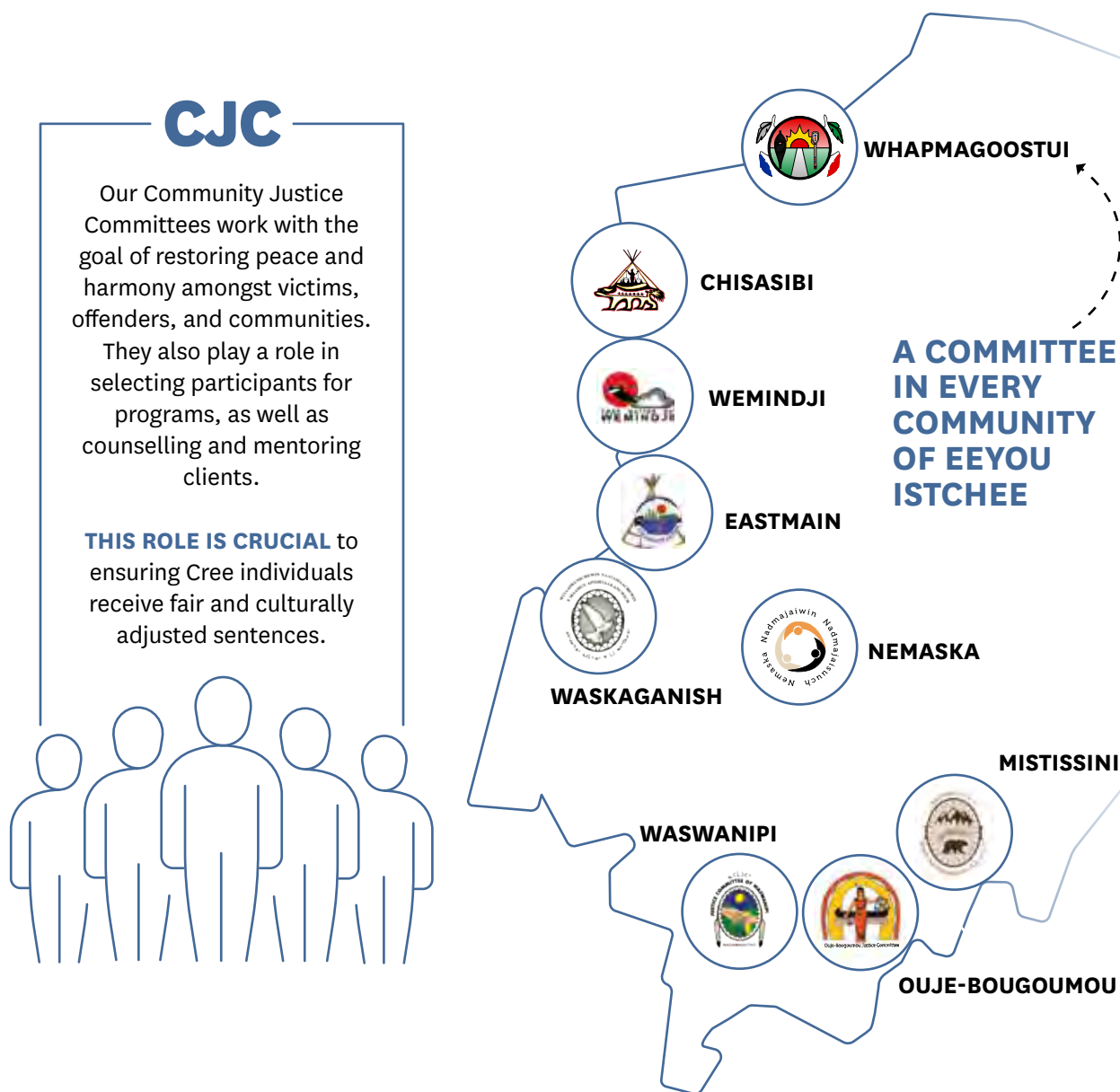




COURT DIVERSIONS

In Eeyou Istchee, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services continues to support a return to traditional Cree values as a way to address conflict and promote healing in our communities. Through local Community Justice Committees—made up of Elders, youth, and adults—individuals are offered an opportunity to take responsibility for the harm they’ve caused, while being supported in their journey to heal and grow.

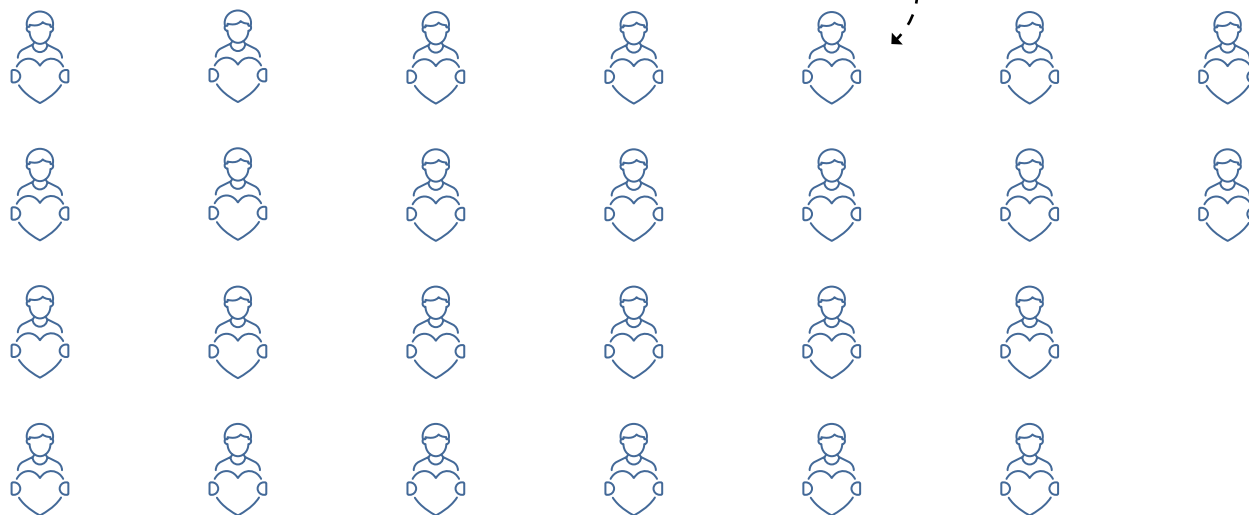
When referred by the court, participants work with the committee to reestablish balance in their lives, address challenges, such as, anger or addiction, and explore meaningful ways to make amends. This process centers on Cree identity, values, and language as key pillars of justice.



THIS YEAR, THE COURTS DIVERTED

26

CASES TO JUSTICE COMMITTEES



Some of the **INTERVENTIONS** included:



Meeting with
an **ELDER**



A **HEALING**
intervention



MENTAL HEALTH
counselling



RESTORATIVE
PROCESSES with
victims of crimes

**FROM SOME
OF THE
SERVICES**
facilitated by
our justice
committees

7.7%
involved
community service

11.5%
were focused on
conflict resolution

34.6%
involved extrajudicial
sanctions for youth

7.7%
involved a meeting
with an Elder

3.8%
was mental health counselling
for addictions or anger

30.8%
were healing
interventions

CAVAC (SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME)

The logo for the Crime Victims Assistance Centre (CAVAC) features the acronym 'CAVAC' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'V' is stylized in yellow with a blue outline and a small blue dot above it. Below the acronym, the full name 'Crime Victims Assistance Centre' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

The diagram illustrates a collaborative network of organizations dedicated to supporting crime victims in Eeyou Istchee. At the center, a person holds a circle containing two hands shaking, symbolizing support and partnership. Below this central figure, the text reads: "To **MEET THE NEEDS** of victims of crime in Eeyou Istchee."

Surrounding the center are five key organizations, each represented by an icon and a label, connected by a dashed circular arrow indicating a continuous cycle of support:

- CAVAC** (top): Represented by an icon of a person holding a heart with the CAVAC logo.
- HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES** (top-left): Represented by an icon of a person with a stethoscope.
- LEGAL COMMUNITY** (top-right): Represented by an icon of a person in a suit.
- EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE** (bottom-right): Represented by an icon of a police officer.
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS** (bottom-left): Represented by an icon of hands holding a heart.

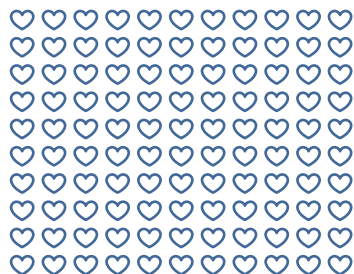
Through our

5

CREE CAVAC
OFFICES

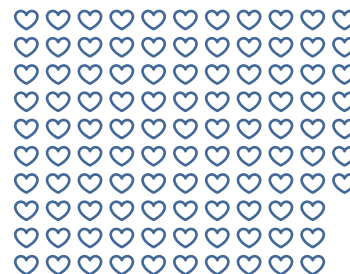


Our **CREE CAVAC OFFICERS** responded to:



217

SERVICE REQUESTS



These requests being composed of
SERVICES SUCH AS:



ACCOMPANIMENT TO
COURT

9



GENERAL
INFORMATION

198



REFERRALS

6



POST-TRAUMAMTIC
INTERVENTION

4

If you or a loved one have been a victim or have witnessed a crime do not hesitate to **REACH OUT TO OUR TOLL-FREE NUMBER** which will put you in direct contact with **ONE OF OUR CAVAC OFFICERS:**

1(877)342-2822

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence continues to be a deeply concerning issue in our Nation, affecting women, men, and children. It manifests in many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and familial violence, leaving lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Our work is ongoing, and we recognize that tackling domestic violence requires a holistic and community-driven approach. By strengthening support systems, enhancing educational initiatives, and integrating culturally grounded healing practices, we strive to bring lasting change and safety to our Nation.



WE COLLABORATE with multiple organizations to tackle Domestic Violence

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP (DVWG) has made significant strides in addressing domestic violence within our communities. In 2024, the group collaborated with **PIRON & ASSOCIATES OF MONTRÉAL TO RESTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENT 44 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**, making them more actionable and community-focused.



In **FEBRUARY 2025** the group adopted a comprehensive definition of domestic violence:

"Domestic violence is a pattern of unwanted and abusive behavior that violates a person's rights and safety to gain control over a person. Domestic violence involves one person exerting power and control over another through various forms of abuse including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, spiritual, financial, virtual or any threatening action that can lead to or cause significant harm and trauma."



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY 2024

- Community-wide walks with purple banners in multiple communities
- Special Elder's feast in Waskaganish
- Educational presentations in Waskaganish and Waswanipi



Launched in June 2024, the BRT campaign focuses on **EDUCATING SECONDARY STUDENTS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION**. This collaborative effort between the Cree Health Board, CWEIA, and the Department of Justice has reached students in Gatineau and Montréal through interactive workshops and safety awareness sessions.

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.

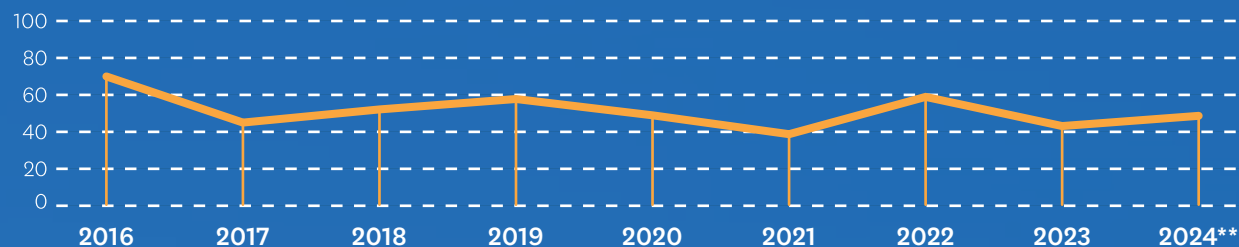
The types of courts that we can host include the Court of Québec, which can hear cases from the Criminal and Penal Division, Civil Division, Youth Division and Small Claims; it can also hold special sessions for Cree First Nation laws. The Superior Court of Québec can also sit and hear cases in the Cree 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 prior to the 2023-2024 annual report 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 the period from 2016 to 2024.



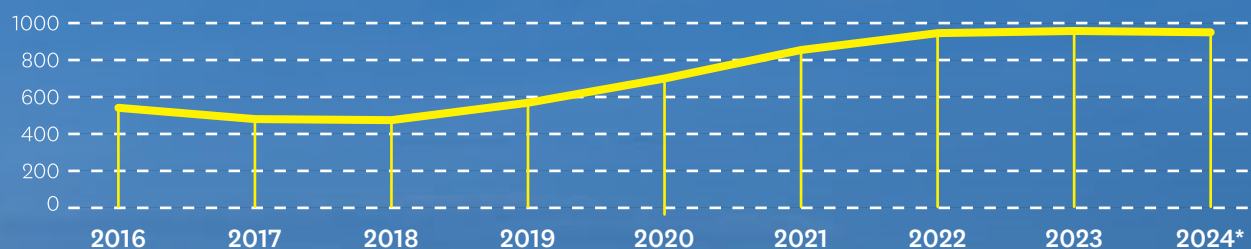
CASES OPENED - YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE*



*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.

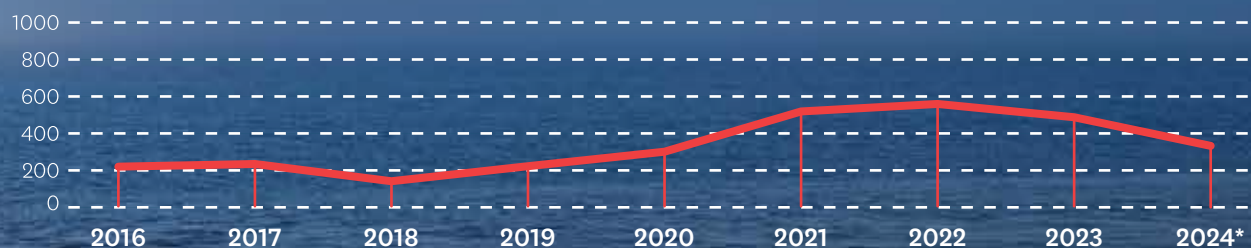
**The data for 2024 is partial and preliminary as of May 6, 2025.

ACTIVE CASES - CRIMINAL OFFENCES



*The data for 2024 is partial and preliminary as of May 6, 2025.

ACTIVE CASES - CREE LAWS AND FEDERAL STATUTORY OFFENCES



*The data for 2024 is partial and preliminary as of May 6, 2025.

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GLADUE WRITING

We continue in our commitment to providing meaningful alternatives to incarceration for Indigenous individuals in the criminal justice system. Building on our successful implementation of Gladue principles established in the Supreme Court of Canada's 1999 ruling in *R. v. Gladue*, we have expanded our capacity and reach in 2025. This work remains firmly grounded in Section 18 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), supporting the Cree Nation's increasing role in justice administration.

JBNQA — Section 18

SECTION 18 OF THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUÉBEC AGREEMENT, deals specifically with the Administration of Justice in the Cree communities, and 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.



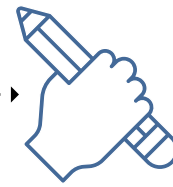
They do this by providing judges with information that **CONTEXTUALIZES THE OFFENSE**, and **RECOMMENDATIONS** to existing community programs that will support the Indigenous offender in **THEIR REHABILITATION**.



To support this important service **OUR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYS**



2



**FULL-TIME GLADUE
WRITERS***

**An agreement with Québec was renewed and we are in the process of hiring two full-time Gladue writers.*

Gladue Reports requested by the Courts from from **JANUARY 1, 2024 TO MARCH 31, 2025:**



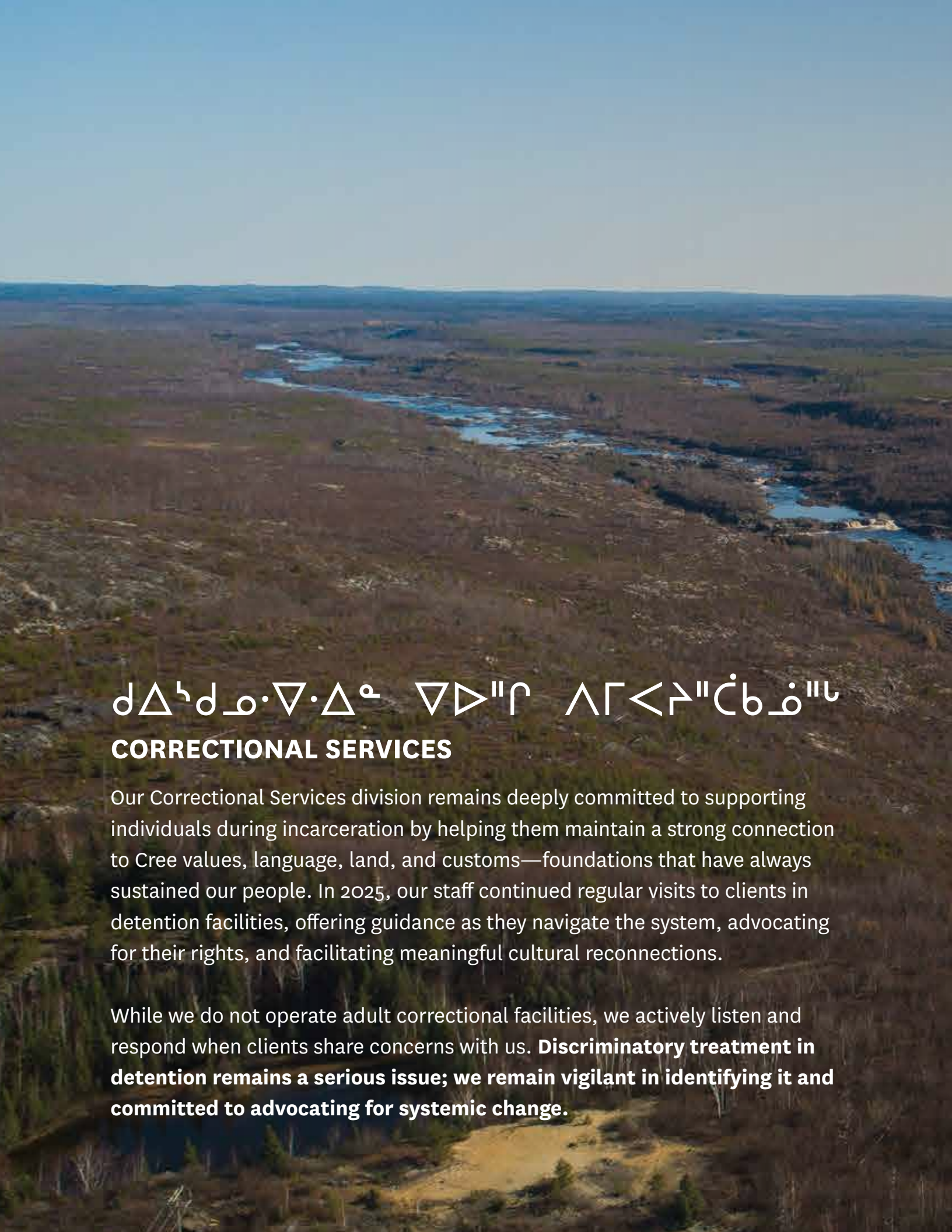
&



We continue to partner with the **CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL PLURALISM AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY**. It provides law interns with Gladue training and the opportunity to write their first Gladue Reports with us to submit to the court. In addition, they also work with the Department on some key national and international issues in justice and law relating to Indigenous Peoples.



Tim Parr is the Manager of Strategic Planning for the Department of Justice and Correctional Services. He actively writes Gladue reports for both the Cree and Inuit. He works closely with the McGill law interns, mentoring them on Gladue.



CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

While we do not operate adult correctional facilities, we actively listen and respond when clients share concerns with us. **Discriminatory treatment in detention remains a serious issue; we remain vigilant in identifying it and committed to advocating for systemic change.**



CORRECTIONS ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAMS

This year, our **CORRECTIONAL SERVICES STAFF** visited:



34



81

CLIENTS IN PROVINCIAL FACILITIES



39

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 Montréal.



4

ELDER VISITS IN FEDERAL FACILITIES



T

ELDER VISIT IN PROVINCIAL FACILITIES

THE TRADITIONAL FOOD IN DETENTION program was our 1st program in

2008



Building on the Elders' knowledge that the **LAND IS A SOURCE OF HEALING**, we aim to bring a part of the Land to community members in detention centres through the sharing of traditional meals.



IN 2024-2025 we provided

14

TRADITIONAL
FOOD
PROGRAMS 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 **APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL EMPLOYERS**, we are helping reduce recidivism, increase healthy pride, and instill hope and optimism.

This year, the **C.R.E.E. PROGRAM** supported:

31

PARTICIPANTS

TRANSITIONAL TINY HOME COMMUNITY

OPENING DATES







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AFFIRMING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF THE EYYOU/EENOU CHILD

At the request of the Office of the Grand Chief, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services was asked to prepare a Declaration on the rights of Eeyou Eenou Children to complement the Cree Constitution. When the Cree Constitution was developed, not enough was mentioned on rights and values distinct to the Cree Nation. To develop the Declaration on the rights of Eeyou Eenou Children, the Department looked at existing Cree laws and agreements, federal and provincial legislation, and international treaties related to Indigenous rights. Then, the Department met with communities, Youth, Elders, CWEIA, Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Social Services, and other Cree organizations to discuss what those rights and values could be. A Declaration was then drafted and presented by the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, Cree School Board, and Cree Board of Health and Social Services and passed by the legislative arm of the Cree Nation Government at Board Council in the Cree Nation of Mistissini on March 27, 2025.

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE)/ CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

DECLARATION: AFFIRMING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF THE EYYOU/EENOU CHILD

WE, the members of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, having since time immemorial, continuously functioned as a distinctive Indigenous People and Nation with its own social organization and distinctive culture, language, spirituality, values, institutions, laws, practices, customs and traditions, hereby declare our intention (i) to affirm and promote the rights of the Eeyou/Eenou child, and (ii) to create a Charter on the Rights of the Eeyou/Eenou Child to be read with our Cree Constitution.

WE acknowledge our sacred relationship with the land that manifests through our culture, ways of life and history, among others. A key part of this sacred relationship manifests through the protection, promotion and development of our children. As a Nation, we recognize that this commitment must be shared by all Cree communities, governments and organizations.

WE recognize that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UN Declaration"), integrated into the positive laws of Canada through federal legislation, affirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world, and represents the minimum standards for their survival, dignity and well-being.

WE recognize that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are also affirmed through the Canadian Constitution, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) ("ILO Convention 169") and other laws and instruments, while the rights of all children are affirmed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other laws and instruments.

WE acknowledge the important contribution of the Cree Nation Government and Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) in the development of the Canadian Constitution, ILO Convention 169, the UN Declaration, and many other human rights instruments.

WE acknowledge that the rights of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee are also affirmed by the Cree Constitution, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and related laws and agreements.

WE recognize however that there is no existing instrument explaining how the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Cree peoples, and the rights of children must be inter-

preted when applying specifically to Cree children, in light of the unique culture, tradition, customs, and language of the Crees.

WE recognize, as a Cree Nation, that respect for the rights of Eeyou/Eenou children is essential for the present and future of the Cree Nation. These rights include but are not limited to:

- The right to education, including the right to retain, practice and access traditional activities and knowledge;
- The right to participate in decisions impacting their rights and interests, in the present and the future;
- The right to both contemporary and traditional economies that are stable and can meet their current and future needs;
- The right to live in an environment free of violence and discrimination throughout our Nation and beyond;
- The right to access appropriate and timely health care and social services, and other services essential for their health and well-being;
- The right to protection of their environment and traditional territories, including access to clean drinking water and protection of the animals, birds and fish that are traditional food staples;
- The right to have their governments and related agencies uphold and advocate for their rights including by ensuring fair, just and timely processes related to justice and by reflecting their values, beliefs and ways of life in all actions and decision-making.

THEREFORE the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Nation Government are committed to working collaboratively with Cree communities, partners and stakeholders on the development of a Charter on the Rights of Eeyou/Eenou Children.

[illegible]

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LEGISLATION, CASE LAW AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS



UNIVERSAL NON-DEROGATION CLAUSE

Canada's Bill S-13, An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other Acts was enacted on November 27, 2024. This Bill added a universal non-derogation clause to the federal Interpretation Act, which reads 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.

This clause will ensure that all federal laws are read and interpreted as upholding Aboriginal and treaty rights.



HONOUR OF THE CROWN IN CONTRACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS

In November 2024, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in Québec (Attorney General) v. Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan, a case concerning the negotiation of funding for the Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation's Indigenous police force. The Supreme Court affirmed that when negotiating contracts that foster reconciliation and relate to Indigenous rights, Canada and Québec are bound by the obligation to negotiate with Indigenous Peoples in a manner that upholds the honour of the Crown. This means the Crown must meet a standard of conduct that is higher than that of an ordinary contractual relationship and avoid the appearance of "sharp dealing." The Crown must act in such a way that maximizes the chances of successful negotiation, without attempting to coerce or unilaterally impose an outcome.

In this case, Canada and Québec were ordered to pay the funding shortfall that prevented the Indigenous police force from providing services comparable to those provided elsewhere in the province. The Supreme Court characterized Indigenous policing as an aspect of Indigenous self-government and left open the possibility that the honour of the Crown may apply to agreements dealing with other types of rights.



CULTURAL SAFETY WITHIN THE QUÉBEC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Québec's Bill 32, An Act to establish the cultural safety approach within the health and social services network came into force on December 5, 2024. The Act recognizes the racism and discrimination experienced by Indigenous people and requires health and social service institutions to adopt a cultural safety approach that ensures equitable access to services without discrimination, and takes into account the cultural, linguistic and historic realities of Indigenous people. Institutions must adopt concrete plans and measures to, among other requirements, promote partnership and effective communication with Indigenous partners; provide mandatory continuing education; hire Indigenous personnel; and provide support resources for Indigenous people, including within the complaints process. Progress on such measures must be reported annually to Santé Québec, the Minister of Health and Social Services, and the National Assembly.

The Act also establishes a national committee on cultural safety to advise the Minister on these matters, with membership including Indigenous representation, and makes amendments to Québec’s Professional Code to facilitate the hiring of Indigenous professionals in the fields of mental health and human relations.



HONOUR OF THE CROWN AND PRINCIPLES OF RECONCILIATION

In a January 2025 decision, the Québec Superior Court affirmed that as an agent of the Crown and when carrying out activities that are in the interest of the province of Québec, Hydro-Québec has an obligation to uphold the honour of the Crown and respect the principles of reconciliation. The Court concluded that this obligation was not upheld in negotiations with the Innu of Uashat and Mani-Utenam concerning the construction of La Romaine hydroelectric complex, overturning the 2015 settlement concluded between the parties, and awarding the First Nation five million dollars in monetary damages.



HIGHER STANDARD OF CONSULTATION IN LIGHT OF THE UN DECLARATION

The Federal Court’s decision in Kebaowek First Nation v. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, issued in February 2025, affirms that the integration of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UN Declaration”) into Canada’s positive law has created an enhanced obligation to consult Indigenous Peoples when considering actions that may adversely affect their rights. This includes the requirement for “robust consultation that is informed by Indigenous perspectives, laws, knowledge and practices” and consultation and negotiation that is “directed toward finding mutual agreement.”

In this case, Kebaowek First Nation asked the Federal Court to reverse a decision of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission authorizing the construction of a nuclear disposal facility within the Nation’s traditional territory, on the basis that the Commission failed to uphold the minimum standards for consultation set out in the UN Declaration when consulting with the First Nation concerning the proposed facility.

The Federal Court agreed with the Kebaowek First Nation that the Commission had failed to consider the UN Declaration when determining the adequacy of their consultation. It ordered the Commission to resume consultations with the Kebaowek First Nation in accordance with the UN Declaration, and to reconsider whether the duty to consult is fulfilled in light of the standard of free, prior and informed consent applicable to the storage or disposal of hazardous materials, pursuant to the UN Declaration.

The Commission has reportedly appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada, while the Kebaowek First Nation has filed a notice of cross-appeal.

This decision represents an important step forward in the evolving landscape of Indigenous rights in Canada. It confirms that the UN Declaration may impose distinct legal obligations on Canadian regulatory bodies and industry stakeholders, including a requirement to employ processes designed to obtain free, prior and informed consent in appropriate cases. However, the decision leaves open certain questions, including the appropriate definition and application of “free, prior and informed consent”, which will need to be further addressed in subsequent court decisions.



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS JUSTICE STRATEGY

Canada’s Indigenous Justice Strategy, released in March 2025, is the product of three years of consultation with Indigenous partners, including the Cree Nation Government, as well as provinces and territories, justice system practitioners and experts, and individuals with lived experience within the justice system. The Strategy aims to further implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and recognizes the necessity of consulting and cooperating with Indigenous Peoples on a nation-to-nation and government-to-government basis. The Strategy includes 26 Priority Actions including expanding rehabilitation, reintegration and healing-focused programming; increasing access to culturally safe victim services; expanding access to community-run pre- and post-sentencing alternative measures and community administered corrections services; and supporting Indigenous Nations in revitalizing and exercising jurisdiction with respect to their Indigenous laws.



SPECIALIZED COURT FOR SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In April 2025, Québec announced that a new division of the court specialized in sexual and domestic violence will be deployed in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, with services offered at the courthouses in Amos, Rouyn-Noranda, Val-d’Or and Ville-Marie. This specialized court was created as a division of the Court of Québec in May 2023 pursuant to the Act to create a court specialized in sexual violence and domestic violence (Bill 92). Judges on the specialized court are required to complete a professional development program on the realities of sexual and domestic violence.

The implementation of the court in Abitibi-Témiscamingue will be supported by five additional victim assistance workers, and five additional workers at the regional crown prosecutor. Twenty-four judicial districts now benefit from the services offered by this specialized court.



UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

On May 30, 2024, Québec adopted Bill 37, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Children’s Well-Being and Rights, which establishes the office of the Commissioner for Children’s Well-Being and Rights. In April 2025, the National Assembly appointed its first Commissioner pursuant to this Act, Mrs. Marie-Ève Brunet-Kitchen, a former municipal councillor who has also worked with several non-profit organizations.

As specified in the Act, Mrs. Brunet-Kitchen is mandated to promote and ensure respect for

the well-being and rights of children in the province. Her responsibilities include analyzing the state of the well-being of children and the impacts of government policies; supporting children in the exercise of their rights; monitoring all child deaths; and forming national and regional advisory committees with representation from children and youth. The Commissioner may also enter into agreements with Indigenous Nations concerning any matter within the scope of the Commission's functions, or any coordinated action to support Indigenous children and youth.

In April 2025, amendments to Québec's Youth Protection Act relating to the rights of Indigenous children also came into force. These new provisions will promote collaboration amongst Directors of Youth Protection, Indigenous children and families and health and social service providers when decisions are made to protect the security and development of an Indigenous child.



TREATY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INVOLVING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

In May 2024, the World Intellectual Property Organization ("WIPO") published the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, which requires that patent applicants disclose if their invention involves the use of traditional knowledge from an Indigenous Nation. The requirement could help to ensure that Indigenous Peoples share in the benefits arising from inventions integrating their traditional knowledge. As of March 2025, over forty countries have signed the Treaty.



UN COMMITTEE RULES IN FAVOUR OF SÁMI LAND RIGHTS

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) concluded in October 2024 that Finland had violated the culture and land rights of the Sámi Indigenous People by granting mineral exploration permits on their territory without an impact assessment or sufficient Sámi participation in the process.

Complaints were brought by several members of the Kova-Labba Siida Sámi semi-nomadic herding community, including three children, on the grounds that Finland had violated their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The CRC in particular affirmed that impact assessment processes must include consideration of the impacts on Indigenous children, and children must be consulted on matters impacting them, including issues concerning their traditional territories and environment.



INDIGENOUS ACCESS LINE

On August 22, 2024, the Barreau du Québec, presented its new Indigenous Access Line to the Department of Justice and Correctional Services. The Access Line provides Indigenous clientele with a safe and efficient means for reporting the misconduct of a lawyer representing their case. Examples of misconduct may include, unreasonable or unusual delays in responding to communications with the clients; rude or discriminatory behavior; not accounting for or improperly handling money; and not reporting to clients on their legal matters. The number for the Indigenous Access Line is 1 855 394 3535.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE STRATEGY

The Indigenous Justice Strategy represents a transformative commitment to address the systemic discrimination and overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples within Canada's justice system. Its primary goal is to advance justice systems that are reflective of Indigenous laws, cultures, and values—systems that promote healing, wellness, accountability, and community-based solutions. The Director and the Manager of Strategic Planning were heavily involved in its development, taking part in consultations with the federal government, specifically the Department of Justice, as well as key internal and external stakeholders.



In **JANUARY 2021, THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA** was mandated with developing an Indigenous Justice Strategy to address **SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION AND THE OVERREPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** in the justice system.



The Government of Canada hopes to align with the **UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)**.

FROM

2021-2024

The Canadian Government worked with Indigenous communities and representatives, as well as provincial and territorial governments, **TO DEVELOP THE INDIGENOUS JUSTICE STRATEGY KEY ELEMENTS CONSULTATION DRAFT** that would provide a basis for continued collaborative action.

GOALS OF THE INDIGENOUS JUSTICE STRATEGY

SELF-DETERMINATION

Support for First Nations jurisdiction over justice systems, laws, and institutions.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

To reduce barriers to justice and provide more Indigenous-led, culturally safe, trauma-informed, justice supports.

JUSTICE AS WELLNESS

To recognize and reflect Indigenous understandings of justice, such as the need to restore individual and collective wellness.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Advance the priorities of Indigenous communities to reclaim jurisdiction over the administration of justice.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP

To recognize and reflect that regular, meaningful, good-faith, and ongoing collaboration is necessary to effect positive change.

LONG-TERM, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING

Indigenous communities require access to financial resources to fulfil their roles and ensure their citizens' wellbeing.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Indigenous peoples have the right to hold the Government of Canada to account in meeting the goals of the Indigenous Justice Strategy.



JBNQA SIMULATION ORGANIZED BY YOUTH



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 INTERNATIONAL WORK

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE UN DECLARATION

On June 18, 2024, Canada published its third annual progress report on the federal government's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UN Declaration"). Notably, Canada has developed an interim guide for officials on how to integrate consideration of the UN Declaration into legislative and policy initiatives. Canada is also training public servants on the importance and application of the UN Declaration, and providing funding to Indigenous Peoples, including the Cree Nation Government, to support their involvement in studying and implementing aspects of the UN Declaration. The progress report also notes commitments that have not yet been realized, but for which planning is underway, including the creation of an independent Indigenous rights monitoring mechanism, and providing guidance on how to engage with Indigenous peoples on natural resource projects in a manner consistent with the UN Declaration.

The Cree Nation Government is studying the appropriate characteristics and authorities for an independent Indigenous rights monitoring mechanism, supported by

funding from Canada's Indigenous Partnership Fund. The Cree Nation Government also regularly provides feedback to Canada on the implementation of various other Action Plan measures. The Cree Nation Government has also advised Canada that the section of the Action Plan applying to Modern Treaty partners must be revised to ensure it respects existing and established bilateral treaty and nation-to-nation relationships and mechanisms.

10TH PERIODIC REPORT OF CANADA TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the “CEDAW Committee”), composed of 23 independent experts on women’s rights from around the world, monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW”) by United Nations Member States. States that consent to be bound by the Convention must eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, ensure women can exercise their human rights to the same extent as men, and allow the CEDAW Committee to review their implementation efforts at regular intervals.



The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, and the Manager of Strategic Planning, Tim Parr, attending the European Union Human Rights Roundtable in Ottawa.



The CEDAW Committee reviewed Canada's implementation of CEDAW for the 10th time during its meeting held in Geneva in October 2024. In preparation for this meeting, the Government of Canada invited the Cree Nation Government to comment on Canada's implementation of CEDAW and its efforts to uphold the rights of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The Cree Nation Government submitted a 14-page report highlighting the need for increased Indigenous representation within police forces and the justice system, to promote cultural safety and restorative justice. The report also highlights the importance of fully implementing CEDAW General recommendation No.39, as well as all recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and Québec's Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec, among other key issues.

The CEDAW Committee released its concluding observations on October 30, 2024, including several recommended actions Canada can take to improve the welfare of Indigenous women and girls. Among other recommendations, the CEDAW Committee called on Canada to more rapidly establish a national oversight and accountability mechanism for Indigenous rights, as recommended by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

ENHANCED PARTICIPATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Two key bodies within the United Nations system, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, have each committed to studying the issue of enhanced representation for Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations. Currently, in order to participate in United Nations meetings, Indigenous representatives must register as Non-Governmental Organizations ("NGOs"), and their participation is limited to meetings and consultations specifically focused on Indigenous Peoples. Advocates of enhanced participation, including the Cree Nation Government, affirm that Indigenous Peoples must be treated as equal partners working in collaboration with Member States to consider and address all issues that impact Indigenous Peoples. This includes full participation in formal and informal events throughout the United Nations system, with the ability to speak and to propose or support resolutions.

This year, the Cree Nation Government participated in several United Nations meetings considering the implementation of enhanced representation at the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and contributed to resolutions drafted on this subject. At these meetings, the Director of the Cree Nation Government's Department of Justice and Correc-

tional Services, Donald Nicholls, highlighted the fact that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to participate in decision-making in matters impacting their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures. He also noted that Indigenous perspectives and contributions are valuable and necessary if we are to tackle complex issues impacting all societies and our planet, including climate change, economic insecurity, war and conflict.

The Director, as an independent expert in this area, also participated in meetings with then Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly to discuss Canada's support for enhanced participation at the United Nations and other international issues.

COALITION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE CANADIAN SENATE

The Cree Nation Government continues to be an active member of the Canadian Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and this year we supported several joint statements prepared by the Coalition on matters including the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the "UN Declaration") by United Nations Member States, peacebuilding, enhanced participation, and Canada's implementation of the UN Declaration Act and Action Plan.

The Director of the Cree Nation Government's Department of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, also presented a witness statement to Canada's Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on behalf of the Coalition in October 2024. This statement highlighted the need for clear and transparent guidelines for consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to guide all federal government representatives; comprehensive training for all federal employees concerning the UN Declaration; and the need to establish independent Indigenous rights monitoring, oversight, recourse or remedy mechanism, a commitment made under Canada's UN Declaration Action Plan. Finally, on behalf of the Coalition, Mr. Nicholls called upon the federal government to affirm that the UN Declaration has been integrated into the laws of Canada, as has been stated by the Supreme Court of Canada, and to communicate the implications of this to all federal government employees.

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is the highest-level advisory body of the United Nations dedicated to addressing matters impacting

Indigenous Peoples. The Permanent Forum convenes annually at the United Nations headquarters in New York City during the last two weeks of April. It provides an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples from around the world to have direct dialogues with the 16 UNPFII members, Member States, United Nations representatives 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 from April 21 to May 2, under the theme “Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within United Nations Member States and the United Nations system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges”. The Cree Nation Government attended the forum with a delegation from the Cree Nation Youth Council, and the Cree youth led a side event titled “From Agreement to Action: 50 Years of Implementation and Indigenous Mobilization Under Canada’s First Modern Day Treaty.” In a panel discussion, Cree youth Carol-Ann Tanoush, Esquay Mast, Tanisha Bear and Kevin-Joe Mianscum reflected on the legacy of the past fifty years under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, and shared their aspirations for the next fifty years. Deputy Youth Grand Chief Jordan Mast also highlighted the anniversary of the

Odeyak coming to New York City to stop the damming of the Great Whale River. Youth Chief of Waswanipi, Sammy Blacksmith, read a statement on the floor of the United Nations on behalf of the Coalition on Indigenous Rights and the Grand Council of the Crees. The Cree youth also met with Indigenous youth from British Columbia and around the world, and participated in Youth, Women’s and Indigenous meetings throughout their time at the United Nations.

The implication and leadership of these Cree youth demonstrates the importance of involving Indigenous youth in Indigenous rights discussions and decision-making, and the bright futures ahead for these young Indigenous rights advocates in Eeyou Istchee.

While attending the UNPFII, the Director met with the new Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr. Albert K. Barume, who discussed an upcoming report on Indigenous connections to the land. Dr. Barume also highlighted a personal sense of close connection to the Cree Nation given that in the 1950s members of the Cree Nation came to visit the Democratic Republic of Congo (then known as Belgian Congo) and the Indigenous Peoples noted strong similarities in their ways of life.



Group picture of Cree Youth who participated in the UNPFII standing with Director of DOJCS, Donald Nicholls.

EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (EMRIP)

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“EMRIP”) is composed of seven independent experts who provide advice to the United Nations Human Rights Council on issues related to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and assists Member States in achieving the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UN Declaration”). Each year, EMRIP holds a five-day session in July at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, which is attended by representatives from Member States, Indigenous Nations, civil society, inter-governmental organizations and academia. The 17th EMRIP session was held from July 8-12, 2024. The Cree Nation Government contributed to several statements made by the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples to EMRIP, on the topics of laws and legal processes to implement the UN Declaration, enhanced participation, and proposed future priorities for EMRIP.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL PANEL ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

The Human Rights Council (“HRC”) is the principal body of the United Nations dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the globe, and is composed of representatives from 47 States. In September 2024, the HRC hosted a half-day panel discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, focused on laws, policies, judicial decisions and other measures States have taken to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UN Declaration”). The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, was invited to speak to the HRC on behalf of the Cree Nation Government, alongside the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and a judge of Columbia’s Special Tribunal for Peace.

Mr. Nicholls’ presentation highlighted the special treaty and Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Crees, Québec and Canada, and how these governments have worked together to increase Cree governance authority through successive tripartite agreements and standing liaison committees. He also highlighted Canada’s recent adoption of legislation implementing the UN Declaration in Canadian law. Mr. Nicholls emphasized that the UN Declaration now sets the standard for meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples in this country, but work remains to be done to ensure the UN Declaration is implemented by all provincial and territorial governments, and to establish an independent accountability and oversight mechanism.

EUROPEAN UNION HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE

On December 10, 2024, the Delegation of the European Union to Canada hosted a discussion on human rights, to commemorate International Human Rights Day. Participants included European Union (“EU”) representatives, Canadian government officials, Indigenous leaders, academics and human rights advocates. The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, was invited to present on a panel exploring how the EU and Canada can work together to promote Indigenous Peoples’ rights in international fora. Mr. Nicholls highlighted the need for an independent Indigenous rights monitoring mechanism in Canada, and the need for enhanced representation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, particularly when decisions are made concerning existential issues such as climate change, which disproportionately impacts Indigenous Peoples.

AFN National Justice Forum

In April 2025, the Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, and the Manager of Strategic Planning, Tim Parr, were invited by the Assembly of First Nations to attend a conference in Vancouver entitled: The National Justice Forum on Revitalization of First Nations Laws and Legal Orders. The objective of this Forum was to provide First Nations an opportunity to discuss the revitalization of First Nations laws and legal orders that will inform the implementation of the First Nations component of the Indigenous Justice Strategy.

Mr. Nicholls presented on the topic of jurisdiction and First Nations Laws. More specifically, Mr. Nicholls presented on Eeyou Istchee and Cree law, the negotiations leading to treaty building (the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement), and a potential mechanism for upholding rights when implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Attendees of the presentation asked stimulating questions, expressing a keen interest in continuing to revitalize their own respective First Nations laws and legal orders.



The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous youth involved in the UN process. The CNG asked Waswanipi Youth Chief, Sammy Blacksmith, to read statement on rights and recommendations.

The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, standing with Kenneth Deer at the United Nations Human Rights Council.



The Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Donald Nicholls, with the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, Leslie Norton.



CLOSING MESSAGE

Our Department is organizing with the Chief Judge of the Court of Québec a meeting in the fall with the Grand Chief and Cree Chiefs to discuss any issues or ways we can

Finally, our Department is working on further defining and advocating for a national monitoring mechanism for Indigenous Peoples that would also serve as a tribunal without the typical costs and delays where Indigenous people can seek redress when their Indigenous rights are violated. The federal government's adoption of a national Act that integrates the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canada's positive law was a concrete step towards the affirmation of our collective and individual Indigenous rights, and we will continue to advocate for a mechanism through which Indigenous People can ensure these rights are upheld.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director Rodney Mark



WACHIYA TO THE CREE NATION, ANOTHER YEAR HAS PASSED AND INDEED IT WAS BUSY AND CHAOTIC WITH PROJECTS, AND MEETINGS WITH ENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES.



These meetings were very productive. Our department has been working closely with the Cree Language Commission team, the Cree Health Board (CHB) and the Cree School Board (CSB).

Our work with the Cree Language Commission is a supportive role, and they are in the process of finalizing the strategic plan. I would like to extend our thanks to Mr. Jamie Moses, our first Language Commissioner, for his dedication in what has been a challenging role.

The Miiyuupimaatisiun Committees initiative, in partnership with the CHB and the local committees is moving forward, and dialogues are happening with all of us involved. Our

objective is to facilitate meetings and support the dialogue between our communities and the CHB in addressing social and health issues that are facing our communities. We would like to thank the Local Miiyuupimaatisiun Committees for their participation and putting forward their plans, as well as to the CHB team for their ongoing dedication and support of this important initiative.

We have also been working with the CSB team to discuss the School Age Community Programs which include Sports, Arts, Personal and Health Development and Traditional Skills Development. This work will soon be presented to the Chiefs.

I would like to thank our team for their support and initiative on various projects undertaken to benefit the communities. I am looking forward to working with our local Social Development Directors, Miiyuupimaatisiun Committees with the CHB team and the CSB team.

Rodney Mark
Director of Social and Cultural Development



FUNDING AGREEMENTS

The Social and Cultural Development 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 commits funding to local and regional programs and projects across Eeyou Istchee. We have four major funding programs within Social and Cultural Development to support these initiatives through a call for proposals process, review, and recommendation to our management committee.

Following are the funding programs and program objectives:

Wiichituutaa Funding Agreement (Previously Cree Alliance for Solidarity)

The Wiichituutaa Funding Agreement (WFA), previously named the Cree Solidarity Alliance, is an initiative used

to fund programs throughout Eeyou Istchee that address Poverty and Exclusion. The WFA framework uses alliances or partners in the region to deliver and co-fund the programs throughout Eeyou Istchee.

The agreement for 2019-2024 has been completed, and we have signed a new agreement under Québec's Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale for 2024-2029. Due to delays in receiving the new 5-year agreement, 2024-2025 program funding includes the Bridge Funding received in fall 2024.

A total of 16 programs were funded in 2024-2025. The total amount of funding provided to the Cree Communities and Cree Entities during this period was \$613,232 which includes the additional seven-month funding (March 31, 2024 until October 31, 2024) and any unspent funds carried over from the 2019-2024 agreement.

Figure 1. Wiichituutaa Funding by Community for 2024-2025

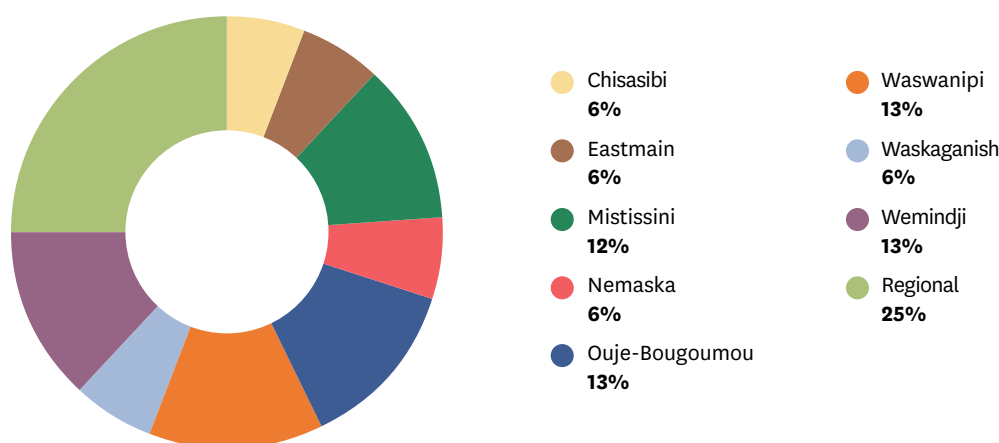


Table 1. Wiichituutaa Funding – Programs and Projects Committed for 2024-2025

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Wemindji	\$17,584
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$22,000
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Eastmain	\$22,000
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Nemaska	\$17,634
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$22,000
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$21,865
Back to School Support	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$22,000
Awashish Kuutikunikankw Shelter	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$18,623
Community Food Bank	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$50,000
Traditional Cooking for Low Income Families	Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association - Regional	\$36,232
Breakfast Clubs of Eeyou Istchee	Breakfast Clubs of Canada	\$90,000
Winter Hunting and Trapping Camp	Cree Nation of Wemindji	\$14,050

Programming Highlight for Wiichituutaa (CSA) Fund 2024-2025

Awashish Kuutikunikankw Shelter

- Location: Cree Nation of Waswanipi
- Project Cost: \$125,000
- Funding: \$20,000
- Time of Delivery: March 1 - October 31, 2024

Overview

The objective of this project is to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with access to temporary shelter, offering a safe, culturally-based home for our community members. We aim to maintain a safe environment for all.

With the funds provided by the Wiichituutaa Fund, we were able to purchase food basics, cleaning products, hygiene products, towel sets, new sheets/pillows for our current clients, and make baskets for future clientele. We prioritized purchasing our food from within the community to support local businesses. We also provided a turkey dinner for Thanksgiving Day.

In addition, we purchased winter gear (hats, gloves, scarves, warm socks, etc.) to be available to those who need it.

Training Achievements

We were also able to do the following training for our staff, including:

- P38 Training for Staff under CHB
- Training for staff on Suicide Prevention
- Four staff members will be attending the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

We had 9 clients stay at the shelter during the period of this report. During their stay in the shelter, we encourage clients to apply for housing and look for work. We have had success, and some have found jobs within the community or under programs at the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi.

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During their stay in the shelter, we encourage clients to apply for housing and look for work. We have had success, and some have found jobs within the community or under programs at the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi.



Photo: Katherine Dehm

Cree Youth Development Fund

The Cree Youth Development Fund is a funding agreement between the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse, the Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC), and the Department of Social and Cultural Development. It is a youth programming funding initiative designed to encourage positive youth development in the four categories listed below:

- **Culture, Language, and Environment:** Creating partnerships that enhance programs and services promoting culture, language, and environmental awareness among our youth.
- **Youth Development:** Supporting programming that aligns with the strategic priorities of youth as both singular and collective goals at the community and regional levels.
- **Capacity Building:** Assisting our youth in mobilizing their skills and knowledge to contribute effectively as community members throughout Eeyou Istchee.
- **Governance and Administration:** Working to develop internal tools and mechanisms that strengthen the administrative capability of the CNYC and the presence of youth leadership across Eeyou Istchee.

Figure 2. Cree Youth Development Fund for 2024-2025

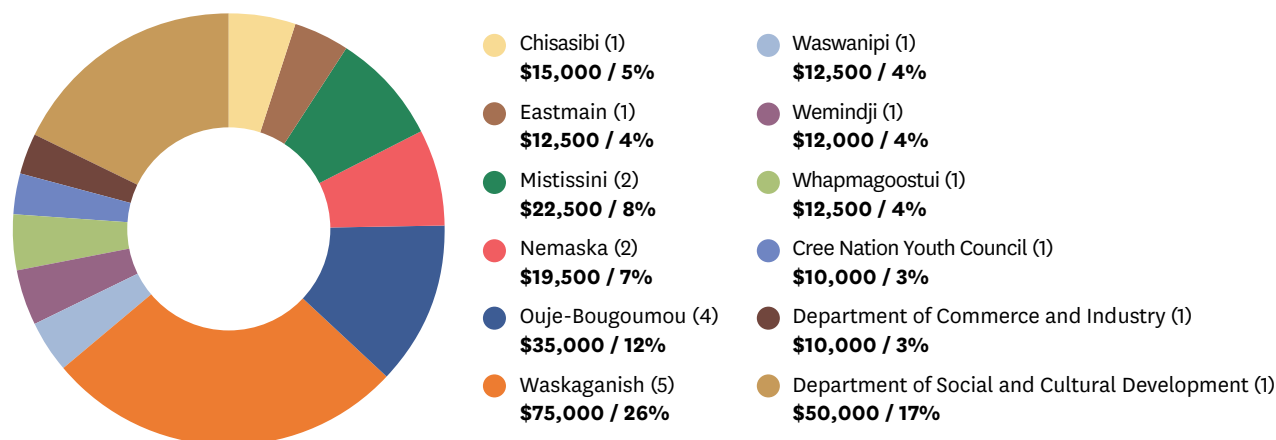


Table 2. Cree Youth Development Fund – Programs and Projects Committed for 2024-2025

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Camp Molly	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	\$15,000
Sports Concentration Camp	Cree Nation of Eastmain	\$12,500
Canoe Brigade	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$10,000
Youth Mentorship through Sports	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$12,500
Paddle Making Program	Cree Nation of Nemaska	\$7,000
Youth Mentorship through Sports	Cree Nation of Nemaska	\$12,500
Education Incentive Program	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$10,000
Joint Sports Camp	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$12,500
Paintball Field	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$5,000
Youth Wellness Program	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$7,500
Aashuumihi Winter Journey	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$15,000
Children / Youth Camp	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$10,000
Fall Hunting Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$15,000
Wall Climbing Gym	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$20,000
Youth Week	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$15,000
Joint Sports Camp	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$12,500
HIP HOP Night	Cree Nation of Wemindji	\$12,000
Sports Mentorship Program	Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui	\$12,500
(Cree Nation Summer Games) Workshops/Concert	Cree Nation Youth Council	\$10,000
Eeyoupreneur Workshops Tour	Department of Commerce and Industry	\$10,000
Training for the Board of Directors of the CNYC	Department of Social and Cultural Development	\$50,000
		Total \$286,500

Elders Program Funding - The Regional Adaptation to Enhance Seniors' Living Conditions in the Cree Communities

The program actively encourages the involvement of our Elders in the community by providing direct support and fostering a safe environment for their full participation. Its goal is to continue delivering essential services and programs aimed at improving the living conditions of Elders across Eeyou Istchee. The program also promotes their inclusion in a variety of community activities, helping them connect with others and share experiences. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle by offering resources and opportunities that inspire physical, mental, and social well-being.

Funding for this program is provided through a project under the agreement between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec. This agreement involves the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH), the Minister responsible for Seniors and the Minister responsible for Health (MSSS), and the Minister responsible for Relations with the First Nations and Inuit (MRCFC), as well as the Minister responsible for Canadian Relations and the Canadian Francophonie (MRCFC).

The five-year agreement allocates \$825,000 for the period from 2024-2025 to 2029-2030, with annual contributions of \$165,000. The Cree Nation Government will also contribute matching funding of \$165,000 per year through its Department of Commerce and Industry.

Physical and Outdoor Activity Fund
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.

As of 2024-2025, the agreement is in its third year under the current funding cycle. Each program can be funded for a maximum amount of \$10,000.

A total of 20 programs were funded in 2024-2025. The total amount of funding provided to the Cree communities and Cree entities over the agreement term was \$178,966.

Programming Highlight for Physical Activity Fund (PAFILR) 2024-2025

Cree Girls and Ladies in Sport (Gals)

- Location: Regional - Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association
- Project Cost: \$50,000
- Funding: \$10,000
- Time of Delivery: April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

Overview

Cree Girls and Ladies in Sport (GALS) is a program developed for women to get back into sports. It is designed to increase participation, engagement, and accessibility to healthy activities for girls and ladies in Eeyou Istchee. The program empowers participants to embrace physical activity, confidence and a lifelong passion for sports.

With the funds provided by the Physical Activity Fund, we were able to implement the 3 phases of the project in the fiscal year:

1. **Cree Nation Pride:** This elite girls' hockey team that attends showcases and invitational tournaments strictly for girls' hockey.
2. **Eeyou Istchee United:** This is an elite girls' broomball team that is selected to participate in the elite categories of the Quebec Provincial Championships and, ultimately, at the Canadian Juvenile Broomball Championships.
3. **Fitness Training:** We recruit and provide training for female employees in the Cree Nation to obtain their Fitness 1 and Fitness 2, on a pathway to becoming Fitness Instructors and towards employment in their community.

We had 65 participants, all female and under 18 (typically school-aged).

Figure 3. PAFILR Funding by Community/Entity for 2024-2025

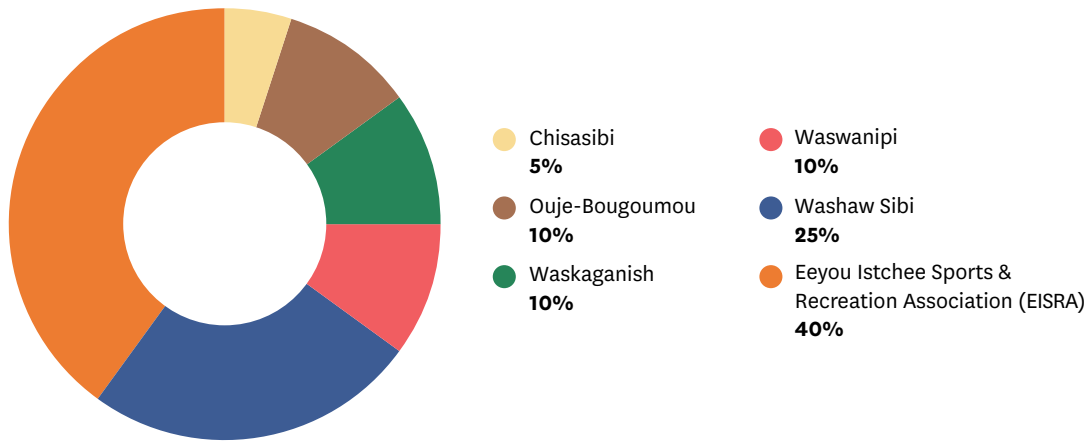


Table 3. PAFILR Funding– Programs and Projects Committed for 2024-2025

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Cultural Outdoor Games	Wiichihiiwewin	\$10,000
Winter Carnival	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$8,000
Hockey Camp	Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	\$10,000
Boys and Girls Basketball Program	Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	\$10,000
Girls and Womens Broomball Program	Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	\$10,000
Soccer Program for Kids	Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	\$10,000
Multi-Sport Program	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$5,000
The Volleyball & Basketball Project	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$10,000
Softball & Fastpitch Clinic/Program	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	\$10,000
Coed Adult Broomball League	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$10,000
Snowshoe Project	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	\$10,000
JBL Softball League	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$10,000
Cree GALS Program	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$10,000
JBM Broomball League	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$10,000
JBM Broomball Festival	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$4,009
JBM Hockey League	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$10,000
JBM Hockey Festival	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$4,050
JBL Softball Festival	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$8,000
Running Program	Eeyou Istchee Sports & Recreation Association	\$10,000
Volleyball Program	Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	\$10,000

MCCQ – Eeyou Istchee Cultural Development Funding
Ministère de la Culture et des Communications de Québec

The Cree Cultural Development Program (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, it now includes an additional year of funding which extends this funding to 2025. The funding agreement is signed with the Minister of Culture and Communications Quebec. All program applications in this fund require a matching Cree contribution.

Programs for this fund support:

- **Cree Community Cultural Programming:** This programming includes Canoe Development in Mistissini, Fall Hunting Program in Waskaganish, and a Traditional Arts and Food Festival by Wiichihiiwewin Centre.
- **Cree Regional Entities Working in Cree Language and Culture:** This programming includes Teaching Arts and Crafts with Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, Eastmain Arts Symposium with Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, and Green Step Project Sustainable Cultural Tourism with Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association.
- **Social and Cultural Department for Innovative Cultural Programming:** This programming includes Cree Cultural Narratives and the Cree Summer Games Broadcast.

Figure 4. Cree Cultural Development Program by Community for 2024-2025

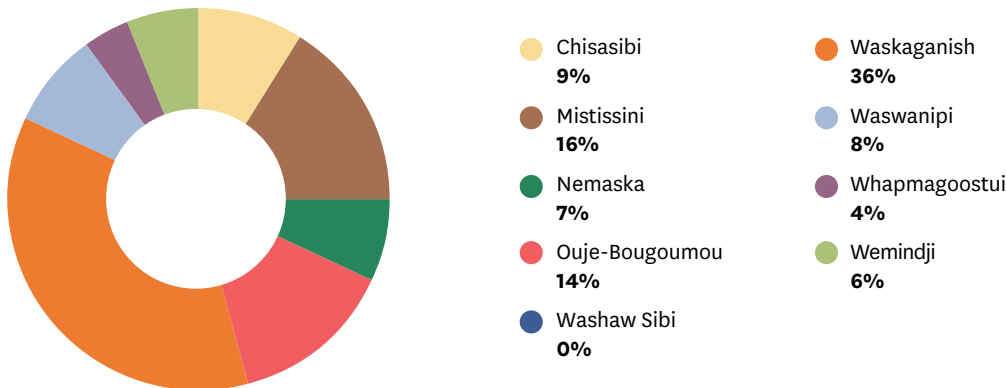


Figure 5. Cree Cultural Development Program Funding by Entity for 2024-2025

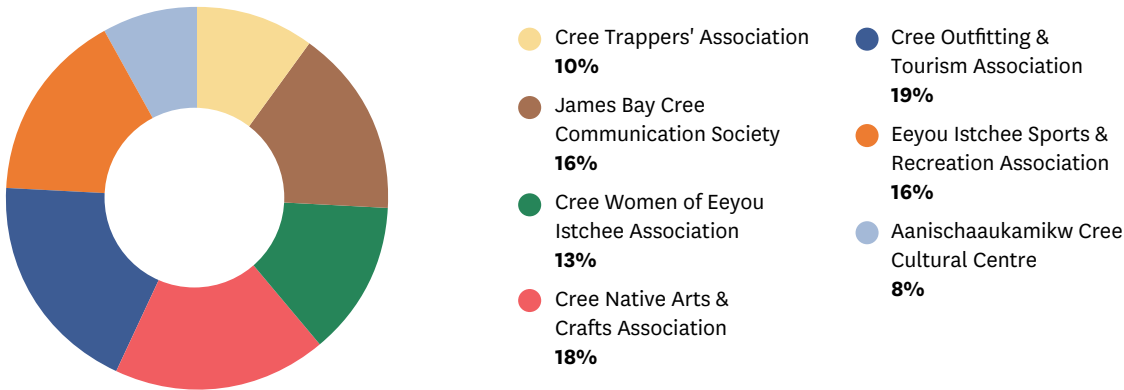


Table 4. Social and Cultural Development for Community-Based Cultural Funding for 2024-2025

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Eeyou Bouldering	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$16,000
Wemindji 65th Birthday	Cree Nation of Wemindji	\$10,000
Elders Consultation - LBC	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$15,000
Youth Land Based Camp	Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou	\$10,000
Aashuumihih	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$15,000
Canoe Development	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$5,000
Fall Hunting Program	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$15,000
Traditional Arts and Food Festival	Wiichihiwewin Centre	\$15,000
Youth Camp	Cree Nation of Waskaganish	\$25,000
Youth Cultural Cabin	Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui	\$25,000
Canoe Brigade	Cree Nation of Mistissini	\$25,000
Cree Storytelling	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	\$20,000
Teaching Moosehide Tanning	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	\$20,000
Cree Traditional Medicine	Cree Nation of Chisasibi	\$20,000

Table 5. Social and Cultural Development for Entity-Based Cultural Funding for 2024-2025

Project Name	Community/Entity	Amount Funded
Teaching Arts and Crafts	Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Centre	\$49,599
Eastmain Arts Symposium	Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association	\$40,893
Maanchadaau	Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association	\$25,000
Green Step Project Sustainable Cultural Tourism	Cree Outfitting & Tourism Association	\$30,000



Photo: Katherine Dehm



Cree Language COMMISSION

**WE ARE GROWING TO MEET THE
NEEDS OF OUR MANDATE TO
ENHANCE, STRENGTHEN, PROMOTE
AND SAFEGUARD OUR LANGUAGE.**



MEET OUR TEAM



Jamie Moses
Commissioner of Cree Language
jamie.moses@cngov.ca



Shannon Atsynia
Coordinator of Cree Language
shannon.atsynia@cngov.ca



Tamara Murdoch
Program Development Officer
tamara.murdoch@cngov.ca



Trudy Mark
Cree Language Resource Officer
trudy.mark@cngov.ca



Craig Ayden Gray
Communications Officer
Craig.gray@cngov.ca



Dana Kakabat
Administrative Assistant
dana.kakabat@cngov.ca

Photo: Phoenix G

”

The Place Names
Program is
working with
Aanischaaukamikw
Cree Cultural
Institute to begin
organizing and
describing several
important archival
collections that
relate to place
names and
archaeological
research in
Eeyou Istchee.

SPECIAL PROJECTS/FILES & 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 the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada'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 survivors' 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 investigation 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 Québec 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 FISHES 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 several 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 the Cree Nation Government's Francesca Menassa-Plourde and 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 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 Anishinaabemodaa app at <https://anishinaabemodaa.app>.

OUTREACH AND WELLNESS

Miyupimaatisiun Committees Gathering 2025

In partnership with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), the Department hosted the 3rd Miyupimaatisiun Committees' Gathering in Quebec City in February 2025. These committees serve as frontline advocates in addressing urgent health and social issues and play a vital role in advancing the strategic regional plan outlined by the CBHSSJB. At this year's gathering, the focus was to support the committees in developing their local priorities and action plans. The CBHSSJB will continue to support the committees in implementing these finalized action plans through financial contributions.

*The Anishinaabemodaa App
a Cree Language App*





FORESTRY

Message from the Director Gillman Ottereyes



IN SEPTEMBER, THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT MARKED ITS 5TH YEAR OF OPERATIONS AND ONCE AGAIN, I AM HAPPY TO SHARE THE HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF OUR WORK.

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EMPLOYEES

The fires from 2023 occupied a large space in the agenda as the department continued overseeing consultations for salvage plans that had been extended into the summer. Like last year, we were able to complete this work quickly, ensuring that the burned wood could be harvested before the wood was infested by insects, thus preserving “green” unburned trees.

With the completion of salvage work in the first quarter of the year, we were once again challenged with holding consultations in the absence of the Wildlife Habitat Development Directives. Aimed at providing additional tools for forest managers to enhance wildlife habitat, the Directives continue to be an outstanding commitment from the Paix des Braves Agreement. The Department made some progress on the file and a proposal from Quebec was accepted by the Forestry Chiefs and Grand Chief in October. This endorsement allowed for the fall forestry consultations to proceed on schedule.

The consultations for Waswanipi land users were aided by the local appointment of Norman Ottereyes as Joint Working Group member. Norman also coordinates our Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement program. His introduction has improved the communication links between the Department and the local Joint Working Group members.

To improve our coordination with the local Joint Working Groups, the Department also instituted new Joint Working Group funding agreements with each of the communities affected by forestry. In the past, the Cree Nation Government would provide annual funding for the Joint Working Groups without specific requirements. In this fashion, we observed that many of the Joint Working Group members funded under the mandate of the Adapted Forestry Regime were often given non-forestry related duties which dis-

tracted from the core mission. To address this, specific deliveries were attached to funding agreements in an attempt to focus the work on forestry. I believe that these coordination measures have yielded noticeable improvements in the local service provided to our land users.

Aside from these challenges, we continued to streamline our efforts in the monitoring of forestry activities and Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement projects. Following from last year, the Department has actively begun using field tablets to enable on-site monitoring data entry. The Department has also purchased tablets for each of the community Joint Working Groups to assist them in their local monitoring. Training for this is ongoing.

In addition to the monitoring of Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement projects, we have also undertaken a project to revise and improve the Forestry Information Management System (FIMS). FIMS is the software that the Department uses to administrate and track projects through to the verification of their completion. Through FIMS, local program officers with Tallymen submit their annual project proposals, track approval, submit receipts and register project completion. Our revisions to FIMS will require all projects to include geo-coordinates, and the program’s eligibility requirements will also be hard-coded into the system to ensure administrative accuracy.

Our progress on the Collaborative Forestry Regime for Category II lands as first set out in the 2012 Governance Agreement with Quebec remains disappointing. As reported last year, the Cree Nation Government and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MRNF) renewed our funding agreement which included an implementation schedule. Despite this renewal and our inquiries, the MRNF has yet to engage with the Department on the Regime’s implementation. We stand ready and hope for more progress in the coming year.

As a final note, on behalf of the whole team, I want to thank my Administrative Assistant, Rachel Diamond for her four plus years of service to the Department. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Gillman Ottereyes, Director of Forestry



MANDATE

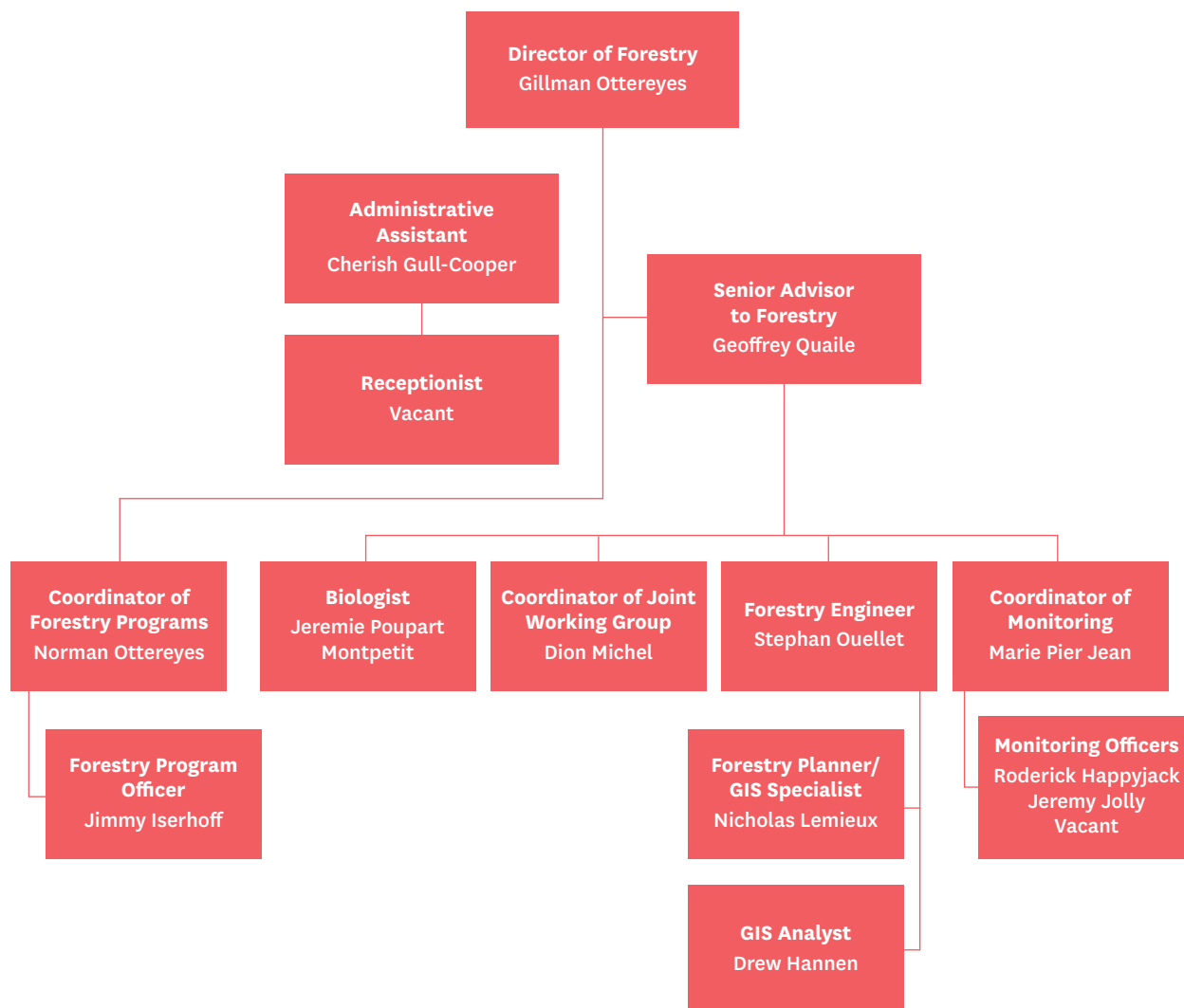
The Forestry Department's mandate is to implement the provisions of the Adapted Forestry Regime set out in the *Paix des Braves Agreement*. In its broadest terms the regime is designed to:

- 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

Under the leadership of Ronald Brizard, the Cree Quebec Forestry Board (CQFB) completed or undertook several important projects. Key among this list was a research project monitoring the implementation of the harvesting rules of the Adapted Forestry Regime for the Cree Areas of Wildlife Interest or the 25% areas.

In a previous effort, the Waswanipi Forest Authority conducted a review of the amount of logging disturbance for these areas and concluded that the basic rules had been transgressed 28 times over 372 areas. To validate the Forest Authority's concerns, the CQFB conducted an extensive study of these areas with the aid of an outside consultant (Forchemex). This work revealed a 97% compliance rate with respect to the 25% areas. The consultant also noted that the difference between the Forest Authority's results was because they had included some areas that had been disturbed by fires before and since the implementation of the Paix des Braves Agreement. The results of this study

were transmitted directly to the Forestry Chiefs and shared with the local Joint Working Groups.

The CQFB has also sponsored an important study into the effects of mosaic harvesting on the quality of moose habitat. This lengthy study has been underway since 2019 with preliminary results being released in March of 2025. The findings essentially reveal that about 15 years following forest harvesting, the moose habitat quality begins improving as the forest stands regenerate toward maturity. These findings confirm the theory that originally inspired the Crees to advocate for the mosaic harvest system that is embedded in the Adapted Forestry Regime.

The final study that the CQFB sponsored last year was in partnership with the Cree Quebec Forestry Economic Council (CQFEC). This project was to gauge the level of participation of Cree businesses in the regional industry and set indicators to monitor the future outlook. This work is currently underway.

FORESTRY PLANNING

Cree Communities Impacted by Forestry

Traplines within the Chapter 3 Territory

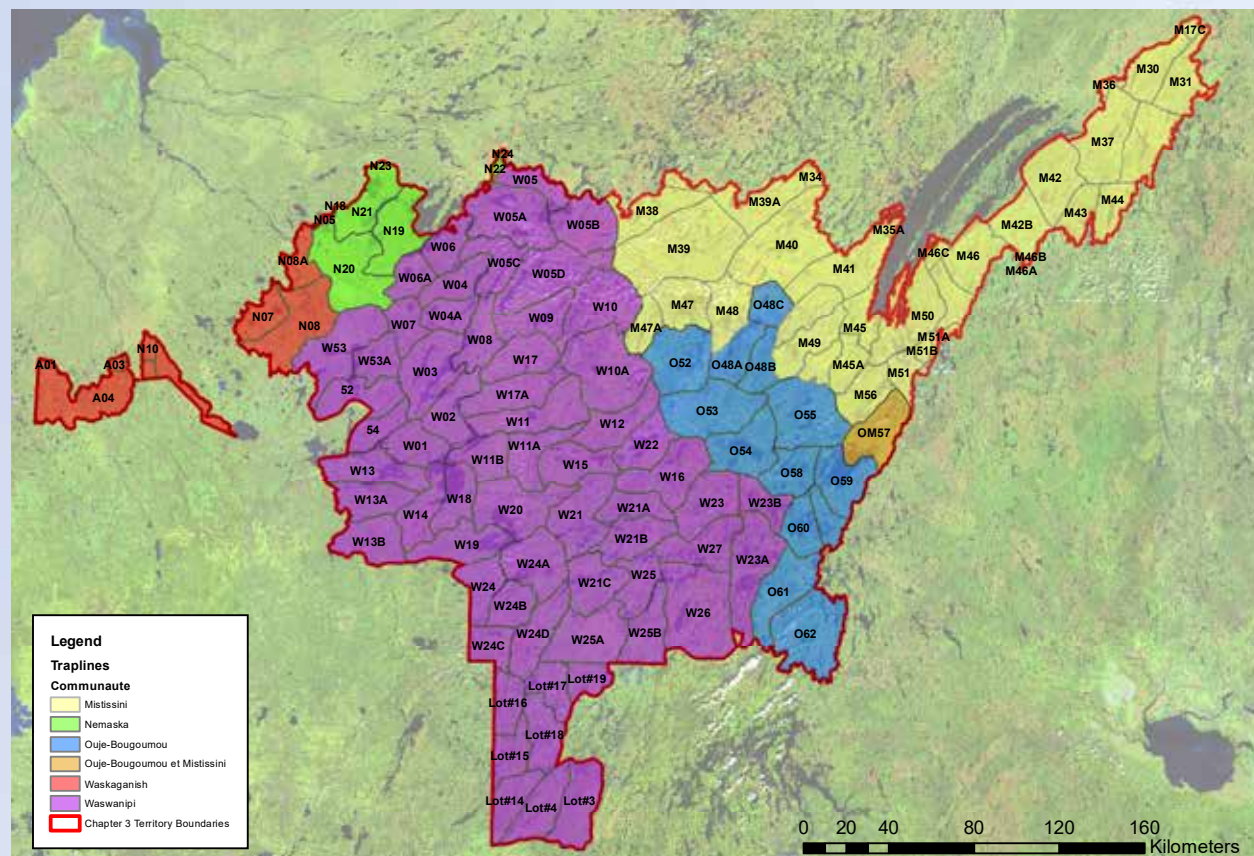


Table 1. Traplines affected by Forestry Activity 2023-2024

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

Baril Moses Agreement

During the year, an update review of the forestry activity statistics table was done in collaboration with the MRNF management office of St-Félicien. The fires of summer 2023 were a good occasion to realize this most needed update. This exercise was a success and the MRNF readily accepted our suggestions for improvement.

From COVID years 2020 until 2023, a tripartite committee with MRNF and the Innu has worked on an agreement for implementing the Baril Moses Agreement modalities for the Baril Moses territory. During this period a lot of effort was made without result. In 2024 the file was reactivated with a different approach. Under the main table of negotiation with the Innu, a forestry committee was established to complete a work plan for 2025. Considering the tripartite negotiations were not yielding success it was decided to change strategy. The work plan now focuses on identifying the sites of special interest to the Cree and Innu (1%) and sites of wildlife interest exclusive of the MRNF. Each nation will also work with land users to locate 12.5% of the territory as wildlife sites of interest. This working plan is complete and will be submitted to the main Innu/Cree table by May for approval.

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 2024-25, \$700,000 additional funding was made available for the region. For the upcoming summer (2025) we anticipate an additional \$731,711 to be added to the existing annual regional budget. We understand that these additional sums of money are tied to addressing the losses from the fires of 2023.

Table 2. Budget 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

Table 3. Proposed distribution for Cree silvicultural enterprises 2025

Enterprise	Budget (\$)	% of the budget
Staakun Enterprise	2,527,385	66
Dooden	203,761	6
Weshthau	227,496	6
Miiyunakutaw	400,378	11
Eenatuk Forestry	384,291	11
Total	3,743,311	100

Photo: Brendan Forward

Fire and Forest Restoration

Late in the fall the MRNF reported that the Region lost \$4 million in funding for tree planting site preparation (3000 ha) or 24% of the annual budget due to land users who refused scarification treatments. Typically, for artificial tree planting to be successful, the soil must be mechanically exposed by heavy machinery in a process known as scarification. In the last 5 years or so, Cree land users in growing numbers have been opposed to this process.

The Crees' reluctance to accept scarification was not a problem prior to the fires of 2023, but with the related forest losses, the MRNF has escalated its efforts to restore the forests, which has resulted in more scarification refusals. The Forestry Department is working with the Cree land users and the MRNF to best ensure that scarification efforts are prioritized for traplines and tallymen who are open to silviculture operations.

Chief Forester's 2nd Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) Revision

In 2023, the Chief Forester revised the AAC following the forest fires. In this first revision the Chief Forester took a precautionary approach in favour of the regional forestry companies and only included 68% of the total fire loss in his calculation. This revision led to a 17% reduction of the regional timber supply. The Chief Forester said this calculation would be further revised in 2024 with more precise data on the fires and the MRNF future silviculture plans.

The Chief Forester's 2nd revision to the AAC in the fall of 2024 was surprising because despite his earlier cautious approach, he was able to increase the AAC by a further 50,000 m³. He also asserted that this new calculation accounted for 100% of the forest fire losses. This revision is difficult to understand as the Chief Forester only applied 68% of forest loss in his 2023 calculation. With this precaution, we expected the 2nd revision to reduce the AAC further, but, instead, it increased.

Traplines where Cree Tallymen refused silviculture scarification 2024-2025



To address these questions, our Forestry Engineer (Stephane Ouellet) and Biologist (Jeremie Poupart Montpetit) met with the Chief Forester's technical team in January to gain a better understanding of these new AAC results. At the meeting, it was explained that the Chief Forester lowered forest age structure and composition targets, in part by extending the timeframe required to reach these targets. These adjustments, along with heightened expectations for additional silvicultural work, were the justification behind the revised AAC. From our perspective, the Chief Forester, at the instruction of the MRNF, modified his calculation parameters to reduce the impact on the AAC as low as possible. This was confirmed by the MRNF during their technical presentation when it was explained that compromises were made to minimize industrial impacts.

The Forestry Department submitted our concerns about the crisis management approach that the MRNF and the Chief Forestry applied to their AAC revision at the Cree Quebec Forestry Board and through the Joint Working Group comments on the related modifications to the 5-year Integrated Tactical Forest Management Plans (PAFIT). We also urged the MRNF and the Chief Forester to include a buffer within the AAC calculations as an insurance against future fire losses. A key part of the 2023 fires heavy impact on the timber supply was because the AAC is geared towards providing the maximum amount of timber to the industry without any supply contingencies for fire losses.

WILDLIFE

This year's efforts on wildlife and habitat protection once again focused on the Wildlife Habitat Development Directives, the completion of a Moose Habitat Quality Index and the development of Biodiversity Indicators in collaboration with the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP).

Moose Habitat Quality Index

This project is linked to the Cree Quebec Forestry Board's study on the impact that mosaic harvesting has on the quality of moose habitat over time. To assess if the post-harvest landscape provides a suitable habitat for moose, it was necessary to develop a moose quality index. The index serves as a tool allowing biologists and forest managers to determine if the landscape has the necessary habitat components that moose require. This index allows for a grading of the habitat. Our biologist, Jeremie Poupart Montpetit, worked with researchers from McGill University, the MRNF, Cree Quebec Forestry Board and community representatives to finalize the index.

Biodiversity Indicators Project

The MELCCFP's Biodiversity Network asked the Cree Nation Government if it could provide support for the collection of data to monitor aspects of its biodiversity indicators. As part of the routine forest monitoring schedule, Marie Pier Jean and our forestry monitors, Rodrick Happyjack and Jeremy Jolly coordinate with the MELCCFP to place and retrieve their monitoring equipment in the field. This work is ongoing.

Wildlife Habitat Development Objectives

After nearly 7 years of work, the MRNF and the Cree technical team completed a set of directives. Unfortunately, the MRNF refused to accept these directives because they could not gauge their impact on the regional timber supply. As reported last year, the Cree leadership and the MRNF agreed to one last attempt at resolving the outstanding Wildlife Habitat Development Objectives by focusing on a tolerable margin of impact that directives could have on the timber supply.

In July, our Senior Forest Advisor (Geoff Quaile) and Forestry Engineer (Stephane Ouellet) met with the MRNF to set out how a margin of “impact” on the AAC could be used to for the implementation of the Wildlife Directives. After two meetings, the MRNF agreed to a 3% impact on the AAC. This proposal was approved at a Forestry Chiefs meeting in October, and the Grand Chief wrote the Minister accepting the offer on the Wildlife Habitat Development Directives. Unfortunately, the letter also referred to other forest matters that were not part of the discussions, and the Minister has yet to respond or authorize the MRNF to implement the Directives. This work will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

GIS ANALYST/DATA MANAGEMENT

Drew Hannen, our GIS Analyst, continues to improve the Department’s capacity for geospatial analysis within the Adapted Forestry Regime.

Field Monitoring Application

Following a comprehensive testing phase through the summer and fall of 2024, the Department made the decision to move forward with the deployment of the field monitoring application to communities under the Adapted Forestry Regime. The mobile field monitoring application is a tool designed to enhance real-time data collection and improve consistency in forestry monitoring across the territory. This

application will greatly improve our coordination with the local Joint Working Group members.

Field testing was spearheaded by our Monitoring Coordinator, Marie Pier Jean and Drew Hannen (GIS Analyst) with critical support from our Forestry Monitoring Officers, Jeremy Jolly and Roderick Happyjack. Their combined efforts validated the application’s usability in various field conditions and ensured that it met the needs of local field monitors.

Early in 2025, we began a series of in-community training sessions aimed at equipping local forestry monitors with the skills to effectively use the field tablets that the Department provided. The training focused on collecting data related to complaints, Cree Traditional Activity Enhancement projects, Harmonization Measures and the identification of sensitive areas with the Adapted Forestry Regime. The successful rollout of this initiative is a major step toward streamlined data sharing and enhanced responsiveness at the community level.

Cree Nation Government Geospatial Strategy

As part of the three-year Geospatial Strategy, year two marked a significant phase of implementation. In collaboration with the Environment and Remedial Work Department’s GIS Coordinator, our analyst participated in several workshops and engagements designed to harness geospatial technology to support sustainable development and governance with the Cree Nation Government.

These workshops emphasized an array of objectives, including empowering local communities through access to geospatial tools, consolidating and standardizing Cree GIS datasets and advancing the development of a long-term GIS workforce training strategy. Each of these initiatives focuses on building a GIS community for the enhancement of local decision-making capabilities and ensuring that the benefits of spatial data and its management are formalized across the organization.



THE FIELD MONITORING PROGRAM

Following last year's structuring phase for the monitoring team, we persisted this year by stabilizing our workflows and collaboration with communities.

We have continued to improve our joint monitoring efforts for complaints, Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement (CTAE) projects, Harmonization Measures and the sensitive areas. We meet with Waswanipi every month, Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou every 2 months, and Nemaska and Waskaganish every three months.

To this purpose, a confidentiality agreement was signed in the fall of 2024 between our department and the 5 communities impacted by forestry, to increase collaboration on field monitoring and access to information via GIS tools developed in collaboration with Drew Hannen.

This year, a lot of energy was put into monitoring CTAE to ensure all project since 2021 are validated. We particularly appreciated the collaboration with Jimmy Iserhoff, who is the CTAE Program Office for the Forestry Department and the community CTAE officers and monitors who assist in these follow-ups.

A great deal of work was devoted this year to improving our field tools and finalizing a new tracking application set up in collaboration with Drew Hannen. We have made these new technologies available to the communities and are continuing to work together to solidify the data processing workflow.

Over the course of 2024-25, Marie Pier Jean, our Monitoring Coordinator, Jeremy Jolly and Roderick Happyjack (Monitoring Officers) and the community monitors have done a colossal amount of work visiting 51 traplines, following up on 41 harmonization measures, surveying 262 sensitive areas, investigating 40 land user complaints and validating 159 completed CTAE projects.

CREE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Context and Objectives of the Enhancement Agreement

The Cree Nation Government and Quebec signed the first Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement in 2005. It has been renewed twice since and is slated to be revised in 2026. The objective of the program is to assist Cree land users who are affected by forestry operations in pursuing their traditional activities. In 2021, the program was expanded to give the Cree communities within the Adapted Forestry Regime the opportunity to use the program's funds for community-oriented enhancement projects. The purpose of this expansion was to ensure that the program's funding is more widely distributed.

Enhancement Funding 2024-25

In total \$3,718,214.93 was disbursed on 462 projects for 107 traplines across the territory. Table 6 shows a breakdown of disbursements by community. The carry forward amount of \$905,087.23 shall be directed at the community enhancement proposals and are no longer directed at the traplines.

These funds were used for projects complementing various harmonization measures identified during the forestry consultations with Tallymen and other land users. 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, 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

Table 5. Monitoring of traplines 2024-2025

Community	Total Traplines	Harmonization Measures	Sensitive Areas	Complaints	CTAE
Waswanipi	25	16	114	27	69
Mistissini	17	20	71	12	46
Ouje-Bougoumou	7	2	66	1	36
Nemaska	1	3	11	0	2
Waskaganish	1	0	0	0	6
Total	51	41	262	40	159



– 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 project funding by community and trapline.

Forest Information Management System (FIMS) Upgrades

A key part of administrating the Program is through collaboration with the local community program officers. These officers use our FIMS platform to track project applications, budgets, and approvals. To improve the delivery of this service we are working with Strata360 to improve FIMS (2.0). The Coordinator of Forestry Programs, Norman Ottereyes, along our GIS Analyst, Drew Hannen, are overseeing these efforts.

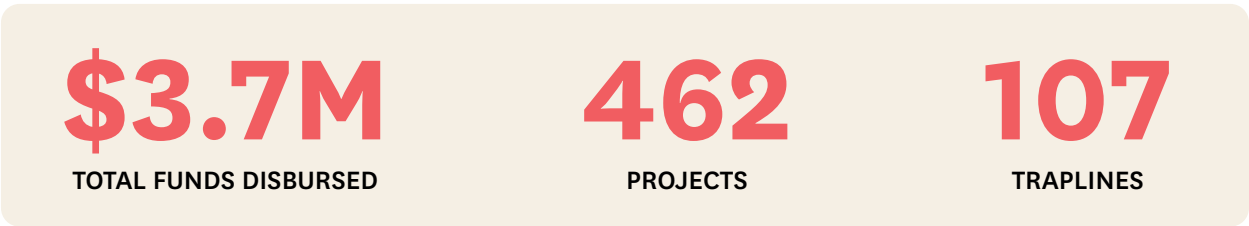


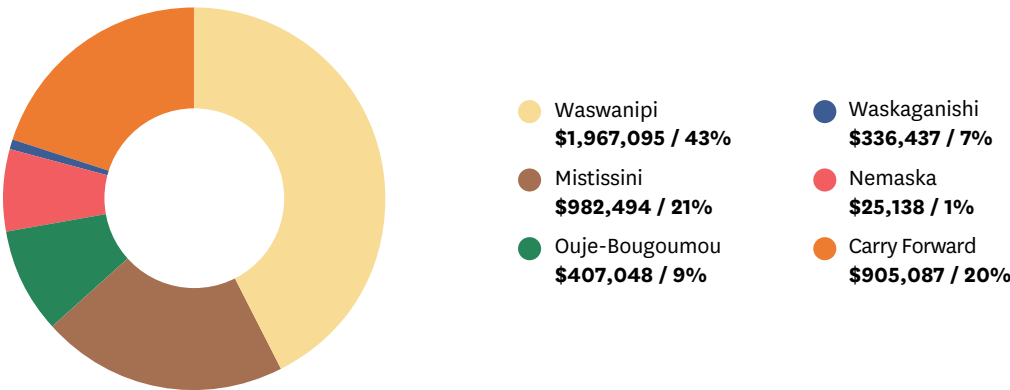
Table 6. Enhancement Funds Available and Disbursed 2024-2025

Community	Funds Available	Disbursements
Mistissini	\$1,025,411.60	\$982,494.90
Nemaska	\$173,600.70	\$25,138.20
Ouje-Bougoumou	\$460,235.37	\$407,048.48
Waskaganish	\$474,014.92	\$336,437.51
Waswanipi	\$2,490,039.57	\$1,967,095.84
Total Funds	\$4,623,302.16	\$3,718,214.93

Table 7. Enhancement Projects 2024-2025

Community	Traplines Enhanced	Total Projects
Waswanipi	33	109
Mistissini	1	1
Ouje-Bougoumou	11	48
Nemaska	1	6
Waskaganish	59	298
Totals	105	462

Figure 1. Enhancement Disbursements 2024-2025





EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Message from the Police Director Shannon Nakogee



WATCHYA, I AM PROUD TO BE ABLE TO SHARE WITH YOU ONCE AGAIN, THE INCREDIBLE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE BY OUR TEAM AT THE EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE.

102

non-civilians

30

civilians

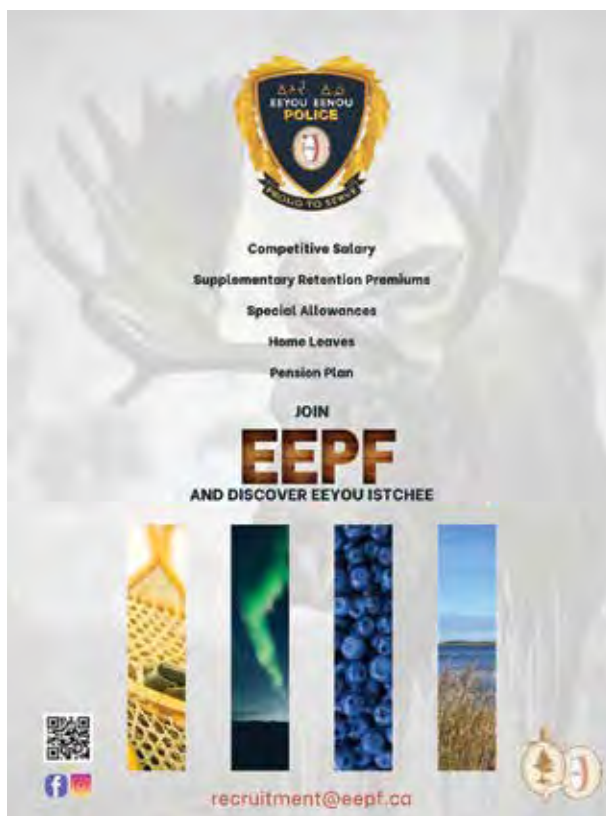


EMPLOYEES

Through dedication, hard work and perseverance, we have navigated different challenges and discovered diverse paths leading to continued contribution to the betterment and well-being of our communities. Policing can have its own set of challenges that we look as a source of purpose that makes us strive to do better, and successes to be proud of. We share with you an overview of the work we've done in the last year.

RECRUITMENT

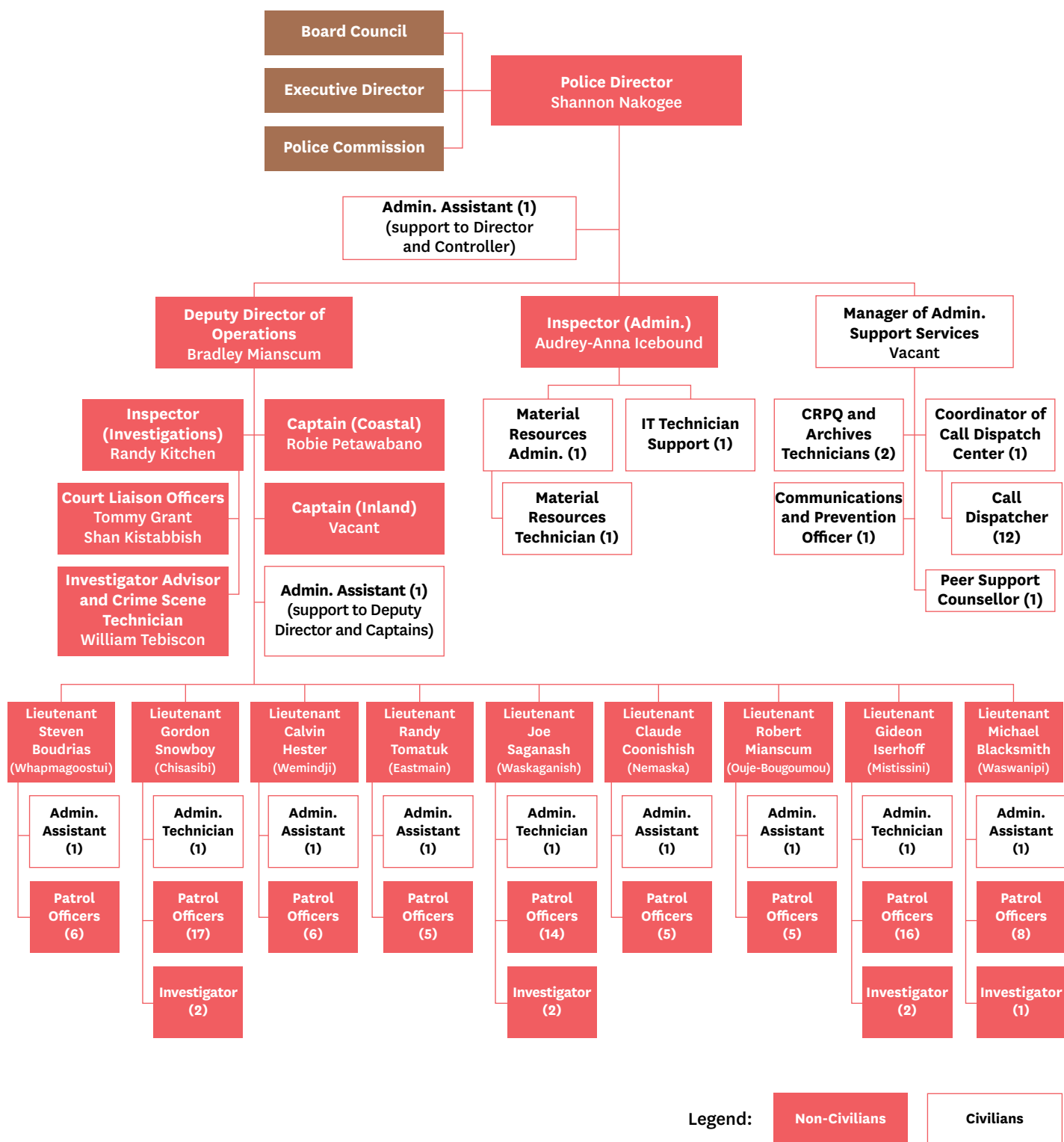
The field of law enforcement has undergone significant changes over the years. As new challenges emerge, we have had to adapt recruitment strategies and provide opportunities for career growth and development for our officers. Radio advertisements and career fairs are some of the classic channels we continue using to promote upcoming cohorts. In the past year, we have increased our use and presence on social media platforms to boost our outreach to all communities and more. Aiming to attract a wider pool of candidates, recruitment advertisements were also tailored to new policing graduates seeking a northern adventure. In this past year, Eeyou Eenou Police Force welcomed 12 new members to the team.



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.

Figure 1. Eeyou Eenou Police Force Organizational Chart





Police Director Shannon Nakogee

EEPF continues, in partnership with the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the efforts to fulfill all patrol officer positions available. In support for enrolled students in the policing program and aware of the challenges that studies and this commitment may bring, we remain available for our potential officers and future colleagues. With new graduates joining EEPF, we look forward to the next cohorts that will work within our ranks, joining our collective efforts in making our communities a healthier and safer place to live.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MSP AND ENPQ

After multiple lengthy discussions with the Ministère de la Sécurité publique and the École nationale de Police du Québec (ENPQ), along with the support of Cree Nation Government's Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director, EEPF worked toward an agreement that would benefit policing cohort students enrolled in the Attestation of College Studies (ACS) program. With the physical testing at the end of the program, students continue their policing training at the ENPQ. In the event that one's test results would fall short, they can continue their training at the ENPQ, with an additional year on the field and an equivalence program evaluation afterwards. This option gives EEPF's cohort students wider chances in becoming full-fledged police officers.

ADVANCEMENTS WITHIN EEPF

This past year, we have witnessed some of our members excel and seize opportunities of professional growth, joining a higher rank within the Eeyou Eenou Police Force. Some advancements include: Inspector of Administrations Audrey-Anna Icebound-Lord; Captain Robie Petawabano; Lt. Gordon Snowboy; Lt. Gideon Iserhoff; Lt. Joe Saganash and Lt. Claude Coonishish.



Captain Robie Petawabano



Lt. Gordon Snowboy

TRAINING

Ensuring public safety and protecting our communities require continuous training. From technical to decision-making skills, our officers and team at EEPF have completed training to help our officers stay updated on the latest procedures, laws and equipment. This past fiscal year, EEPF has completed Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute (CTRI) training; Mental Health 2 sessions; Initial Ground Search Management; Taser X-2; Conjugal Intrafamily & Sexual Violence Situations; Police Traffic Radar doppler; Datamaster instrument & FST screening device; Teaching & Learning Practices and Interview techniques in meeting Victims and Witnesses.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Working in law enforcement comes with multiple challenges that are intricately layered that can affect our officers and their well-being. Eeyou Eenou Police Force continues the promotion of mental health and encourages both our non-civilian and civilian staff to seek the help they may need. In order to facilitate and ease this process, EEPF welcomed our new Peer Support Counsellor Isabelle Natawapineskum to the team. With her extensive experience in policing and counselling, we are glad to have her as our resource for our officers.

QUEBEC ASSOCIATION OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT POLICE DIRECTORS (QAFNIPD)

As members of the QAFNIPD, Eeyou Eenou Police Force have various opportunities to network with many organizations and people to broaden and deepen horizons. During this year's annual assembly, EEPF's senior management had the privilege to meet peace advocate and humanitarian, Lieutenant-General (ret'd) The Honourable Romeo Dallaire, who is known for his role in leading the United Nations in maintaining peace during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: EEPF'S EXEMPLARY SERVICE AWARDS

EEPF officers play a vital role in maintaining peace, order, and safety within our communities. Their bravery, dedication, and commitment to serving and protecting our

communities often go unrecognized. Through our Exemplary Service Awards Ceremony, an initiative by the police commission, their exceptional contributions and sacrifices were celebrated and honored.

Nominations were open to and submitted by the public, sharing eyewitness accounts of different acts of bravery. In the order they were presented: Valour Award was given to EEPF Officer Johnny Kawapit; the Distinguished Service Award was presented to Late Officer Eric Benac, accepted by his son and wife, Hayden Benac and Linda L. Shecapio; a second Valour Award was presented to EEPF's Inv. Derek St-Cyr, Former EEPF Officer Sylvain Proulx and Late Officer Charlie Gunner, accepted by his wife Rachel MacLeod; the award for Meritorious Service recipient is former EEPF Officer Joey Odjick. He was not able to join us for the event, EEPF Director Shannon Nakogee accepted the award on his behalf.

This ceremony also served as means of inspiring and motivating other officers to strive for excellence in their work, to continue serving our communities and Eeyou Istchee with integrity and professionalism. We will continue pay tribute to the women and men who selflessly put themselves in harm's way to ensure our safety and uphold the values of justice and integrity with future ceremonies celebrating our officers.



The Exemplary Service Awards Ceremony



The Honourable Romeo Dallaire during this year's QAFNIPD annual assembly



CALL DISPATCH CENTER (CDC)

EEPF's Call Dispatch Center continues to serve 9 communities in Eeyou Istchee. Under the coordinator of CDC, sixteen dispatchers work rotation shifts, covering twenty-four hours daily, seven days a week to dispatch emergency services needed.

PREVENTION

Police prevention activities serve to build positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities. By working collaboratively with stakeholders, EEPF has collaborated on initiatives aimed at deterring, reducing, and addressing criminal behavior. By engaging with our community members of all ages, identifying potential risks, and implementing preventive measures, we can collectively contribute significantly in creating a safer environment for everyone and our future.

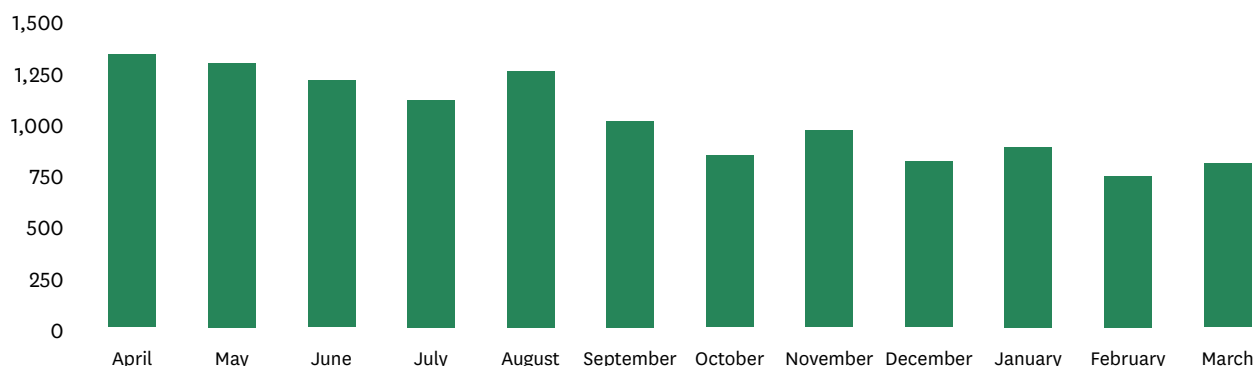
YOUTH

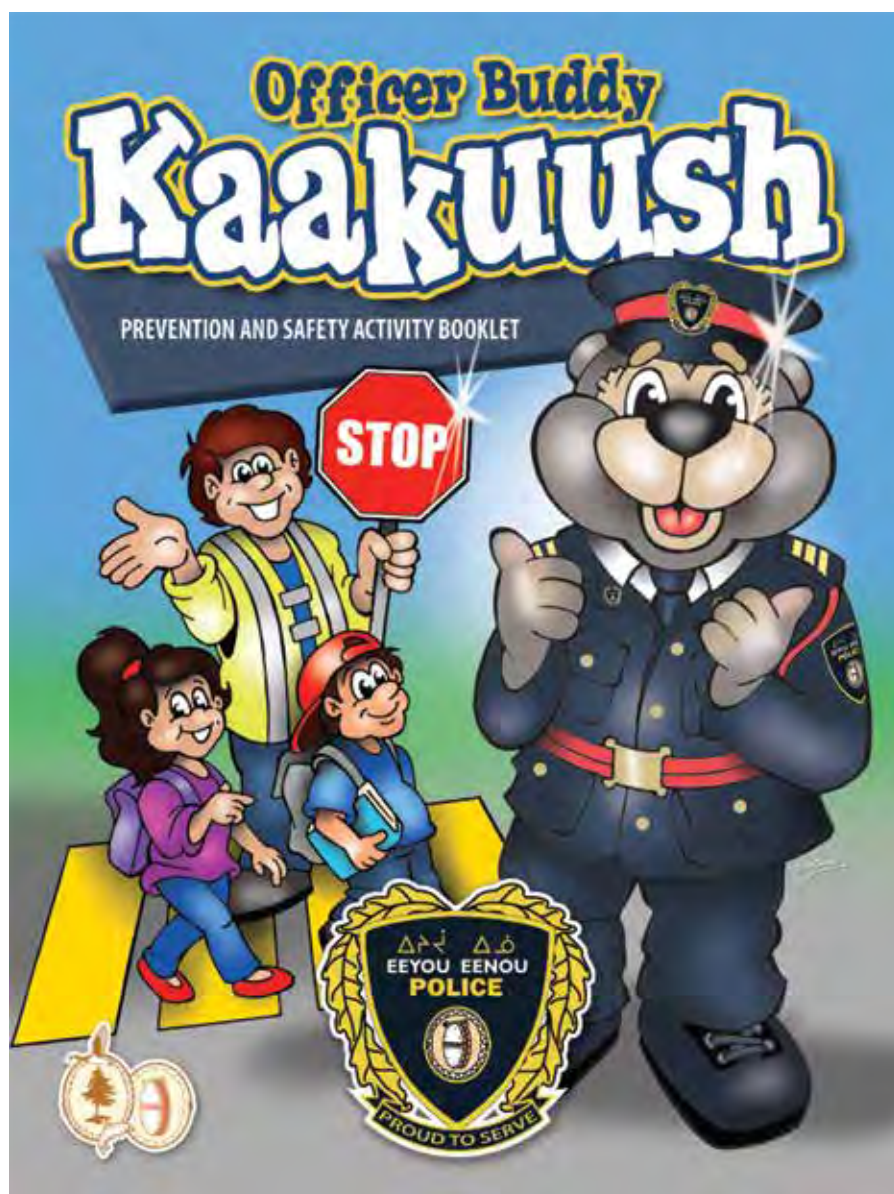
Preventing teen violence has been our top priority over the past year and will continue to be for the years to come. In addition to fostering partnerships with other entities across the territory, we have adopted and implemented an internal action plan to address the issue, this includes increasing our presence in schools and more collaboration with the Cree Nation Youth Council and other entities at public events.

OFFICER BUDDY KAAKUUSH

Our mascot, Officer Buddy Kaakush, has become an effective tool to reach out to younger children this past year. An activity book featuring Officer Kaakush was distributed by our officers to all elementary schools in nine communities. Through the pages and the various topics, our officers use the books to raise awareness on a range of issues from bullying and online safety to bus safety and camp safety.

Figure 2. Call Dispatch Center Number of calls received 2024-2025



Officer Buddy Kaakuush
Activity Book



Road safety collaboration in a week-long prevention awareness with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) and Contrôle Routier Québec.



Waswanipi Community walk on Elder Abuse Awareness day



EEPF participated in the Quebec-wide event "Coffee with a Cop" during National Police Week

SAAQ AND CONTRÔLE ROUTIER

Road safety collaboration took a new level in a week-long prevention awareness with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) and Contrôle Routier Quebec. With EEPF's Chisasibi detachment, a blind spot awareness activity was set up at Big River High School and at Chisasibi's Youth Centre. Community members of all ages were invited to hop on the large vehicle and get behind the wheel to see the driver's perspective and blind spots. An opportunity for pedestrians to see the extent of the space that is hidden from a truck driver's view.

ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS

Eeyou Eeenu Police Force continues to be proactive in the promotion of protecting our Elders and preventing abuse of all forms. Inspector Randy Kitchen is an active member of the Elder's Awareness Committee on behalf of EEPF. Joining collective forces last June, our detachments participated in community walks throughout Eeyou Istchee on Elder Abuse Awareness day. Distributing caps and scarves, listening to our elders sharing their concerns are means that we care for in nurturing this bond.

COFFEE WITH A COP

For the first time, during National Police Week, EEPF participated in the Quebec-wide event "Coffee with a Cop". Although the event took place during a busy time for Eeyouch, most of our detachments opted to reach out to local MSDC's and had tea with Elders. It was another good moment to hear the concerns and ideas shared for their vision of Eeyou Istchee and its future.

REBUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

The success of community building is dependent on the relationships and partnerships that exist within the nation. In order to create an environment that will give room for all to grow, it is essential to create alliances and engage with all stakeholders. EEPF senior officers have an active role in committees such as local Miyupimaatisiin committees, and senior management have a vital role with working groups such as Youth Protection.

In prevention, we continue our joint efforts to tackle major issues such as sexual assault with Cree CAVAC, teen violence with the Cree School Board, head trauma with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and building bridges with organizations such as Rebâtir to offer assistance to victims of domestic violence.

INVESTIGATIONS

The safety and well-being of our communities and its members are at the heart of our mission here at EEPF. We see the effects that drugs and alcohol have on our people, and this on a daily basis. Our investigations team, thanks to their extensive research and help from community members, have conducted seven successful operations that have led to significant drug and alcohol seizures. On April 18, 2024, EEPF intercepted a package via Canada Post; on July 5th a joint

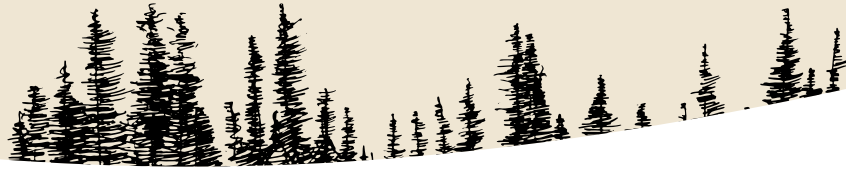


collaboration with Chibougamau's Sûreté du Québec lead to a successful drug operation near Mistissini; a total of four arrests in Waswanipi for drug trafficking; in February 2025, four persons were arrested in Waskaganish in relation to meth-amphetamines causing serious harm; one arrest in Chisasibi linked to drug trafficking in March of 2025.

In addition to this work, our team has opened a total of 12 major files, 6 from coastal communities and 6 from inland communities.

We would like to continue to encourage our community members to report any crime witnessed or to come forward with any tips that may help our investigations team. EEPF also partnered with Crime Stoppers to offer anonymous online reporting. The assistance and information we receive from community members are key factors in helping us carry out successful operations. We would like to thank everyone for their contribution and hope to continue working together to keep our communities safe.

CHIEFS



Chief Daisy House
Cree Nation of Chisasibi
P.O. Box 150
Chisasibi QC J0M 1E0
Tel: (819) 855-2878
www.chisasibi.ca



Late Chief Allan Jolly (1950-2025)
Cree Nation of MoCreebec Eeyoud
P.O. Box 4, 62 Hospital Drive,
Moose Factory ON P0L 1W0
Tel: (705) 658-4769
www.mocreebec.com



Chief Raymond Shanoush
Cree Nation of Eastmain
P.O. Box 90
Eastmain QC J0M 1W0
Tel: (819) 977-0211
www.eastmain.ca



Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi
141, Route 111 Ouest
Amos QC J9T 2Y1
Tel: (819) 732-9409
www.washawsibi.com



Chief Michael Petawabano
Cree Nation of Mistissini
187 Main Street
Mistissini QC G0W 1C0
Tel: (418) 923-3461
www.mistissini.com



Chief Greta Whiskeychan-Cheechoo
Cree Nation of Waskaganish
70 Waskaganish St., PO Box 60
Waskaganish QC J0M 1R0
Tel: (819) 895-8650
www.waskaganish.ca



Chief Clarence Jolly Sr.
Cree Nation of Nemaska
32 Machishtewyah Street
Nemaska QC J0Y 3B0
Tel: (819) 673-2512
www.nemaska.com



Chief Irene Neeposh
Cree Nation of Waswanipi
Diom Blacksmith Building
Waswanipi QC J0Y 3C0
Tel: (819) 753-2587
www.waswanipi.com



Chief Gaston Cooper
Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation
207 Opemiska Meskino, Suite 217
Ouje-Bougoumou QC G0W 3C0
Tel: (418) 745-3911
www.ouje.ca

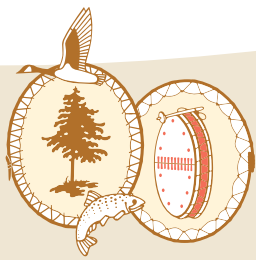


Chief Christina Gilpin
Cree Nation of Wemindji
21 Hilltop Drive, Box 60
Wemindji QC J0M 1L0
Tel: (819) 978-0264
www.wemindji.ca



Chief Robbie Kawapit
Whapmagoostui First Nation
P.O. Box 390
Whapmagoostui QC J0M 1G0
Tel: (819) 929-3384
www.whapmagoostuifn.com





GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

Executive 2024-2025

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty
Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee
Chief Daisy House
Chief Christina Gilpin
Chief Gaston Cooper

Board/Council Members 2024-2025

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
Thomas Neeposh
John Henry Wapachee
Lance Cooper
Deputy Chief Adrianna Trapper*
Raymond Jolly
Romeo Saganash
Brant Blackned
Stanley George
Deputy Chief Kelley Kitchicappo

**Rotating representative Betty Trapper*

Cree Nation Government Head Office

2 Lakeshore Road
Nemaska, QC J0Y 3B0
Tel: (819) 673-2600
Fax: (819) 673-2606
cree@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation – Ottawa

81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 900
Ottawa, ON K1P 6K7
Tel: (613) 761-1655
Fax: (613) 761-1388
gccei@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation - Montreal

270 rue Prince
Montréal, QC H3C 2N3
Tel: (514) 861-5837
Fax: (514) 861-0760
cng@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation – Québec

200 Grande Allée Est
Québec, QC G1R 2H9
Tel: (418) 691-1111
Fax: (418) 523-8478
cree.embassy@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca



CREDITS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty
Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee
Davey Bobbish
Melissa Saganash

Cree Nation Government

Nancy Bobbish
Martin Desgagné
Anthony MacLeod
Rodney Mark
Shannon Nakogee
Donald Nicholls
Gillman Ottereyes
Kelly-Lee Pepabano
Tina Petawabano
Nadia Saganash
Matthew Swallow
Abel Trapper

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Rita Blackned
Patricio Caceres
Pascal Chadronnet
Charlotte Coonishish
Emma Coon Come
Nathan Afilalo
Holly Jackson
Lisa Kastelberger
Melanie Lameboy
Lillian Loon
Kristen Moar
Alexander Moses
Tim Parr
Geoff Quaile

Communications

Brendan Forward
Joanne Ottereyes
Kimberly Wapachee-McDougall

Graphic Design

Beesum Communications

Photo Credits

Brendan Forward
Katherine Dehm
Michael Jolly



