

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Message from the Grand Chief/Chairperson	2
Message from the Deputy Grand Chief/ Vice-Chairperson	16
Message from the Executive Director	26
Message from the Deputy Executive Director	28
Communications	40
Cree-Canada Relations	44
Cree-Québec Relations and Taxation	52
Indigenous Relations	74
Natural Resources	76
International Affairs	78

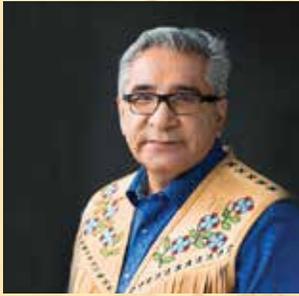
Highlights 80



Cree Nation Government

Finance and Treasury	85
Human Resources	88
Apatisiwin Skills Development	94
Commerce and Industry	114
Environment and Remedial Works	122
Capital Works and Services	132
Child and Family Services	147
Justice and Correctional Services	153
Social and Cultural Development	187
Forestry	202
Eeyou Eenou Police Force	209
Eeyou Communications Network	212
Cree First Nations – Chiefs and Offices	214
Board/Council Members – Executive/ Executive Committee Members	215

Cover Photo: Ernest Webb



Message from the GRAND CHIEF/CHAIRPERSON

DR. ABEL BOSUM

It is with great pride and pleasure that I welcome you, the people of Eeyou Istchee, to the Annual Report of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2020.

This past year has been exciting, dramatic and challenging. We have continued to mature as an Indigenous Nation and government by continuing to increase the scope of areas over which we exercise jurisdiction, and in the effectiveness with which we have taken on these increased responsibilities. All the while, our increasing governance maturity has, as always, been guided by the values and principles which lie at the heart of our traditional Cree culture and way of life.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Indeed, it is precisely those values combined with those increased responsibilities which have provided us with the tools to be able to address the threats posed to our Cree Nation by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Although, at the time of preparing this report we are still in the midst of the struggle to ensure that our communities and our people remain safe, we have thus far been extremely successful in preventing the spread of this virus into our communities. This has required the very close collaboration and commitment on the part of our Cree Nation Government, Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Social Services' Department of Public Health, Eeyou Eenuo Police Force, our communities and our people. We have developed our own guidelines and approaches which were adapted to the realities of our region and the realities of our communities. We have demonstrated once again that, *chiyaanuu*—together—we can overcome the most extreme of challenges and produce results for the positive benefit of our people. I am confident that, with the experience we have gained so far, we will continue to ensure the health and safety of our communities as this global struggle continues.

On behalf of the Grand Council of the Cree of Eeyou Istchee/Cree Nation Government, I would publicly like to express our deepest appreciation to all those Cree entities and individuals who have worked tirelessly and diligently to develop and implement the approaches that have proven to be so successful in protecting our communities. In particular, on behalf of the entire Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, I would like to extend our unending gratitude to the frontline

workers—the nurses, doctors, and other health care workers—in our communities who have risked their personal health to remain in our communities and work with us, side-by-side, to protect our people at this very difficult time.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our response to it, began toward the end of the 2019-20 fiscal year. In other respects, the 2019-20 fiscal year was a year of further advances and successes in addressing our major priorities. I would like to highlight just some of these accomplishments.

CAPACITY-BUILDING CONFERENCE

For quite some time, the current leadership of the Cree Nation, as well as previous leadership, has consistently held the view that there is probably no greater priority and no challenge greater than to ensure that the progress and achievements that our Cree Nation has made over the last five decades are sustained into the future. To do this, we must all do everything we can to prepare our Cree youth to continue our very special and historic journey. Our youth must be equipped with the knowledge, the skills and the abilities to take on the responsibilities and the employment opportunities available in every area of the life of our communities and our region. Our efforts to enhance capacity-building are central to making this happen.

We were extremely pleased to host a Capacity-Building Summit in the Fall of 2019 with the objective of contributing to the mobilization of the entire Cree Nation—individuals, families, communities, Cree entities and the Cree Nation Government—to make this the priority that it must be. This is an initiative that, in order to be successful, must become a “whole-of-Cree-Nation” undertaking that requires all of us working together closely and diligently.

From the time we organized our first Roundtable on Capacity-Building in Ottawa in 2013, our key Cree entities have continued to meet regularly and have initiated a number of important projects related to the enhancement of our capacity-building efforts.

We have, over the last 45 years, made it possible for our people, and especially our youth, not only to dream big about their futures, but we have created the security of the resources that it takes to assist our youth in realizing big dreams. We have begun to see the fruits of these struggles in the professional and skills development of our people. We now have

among us Cree accountants, Cree lawyers and Cree doctors, Cree nurses and Cree entrepreneurs. These individuals have begun to show the way—they have shown that big dreams can be achieved and that we can do it with all of us working together to encourage and support our youth.

We will continue to make capacity-building a major priority as we move forward as a Nation.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

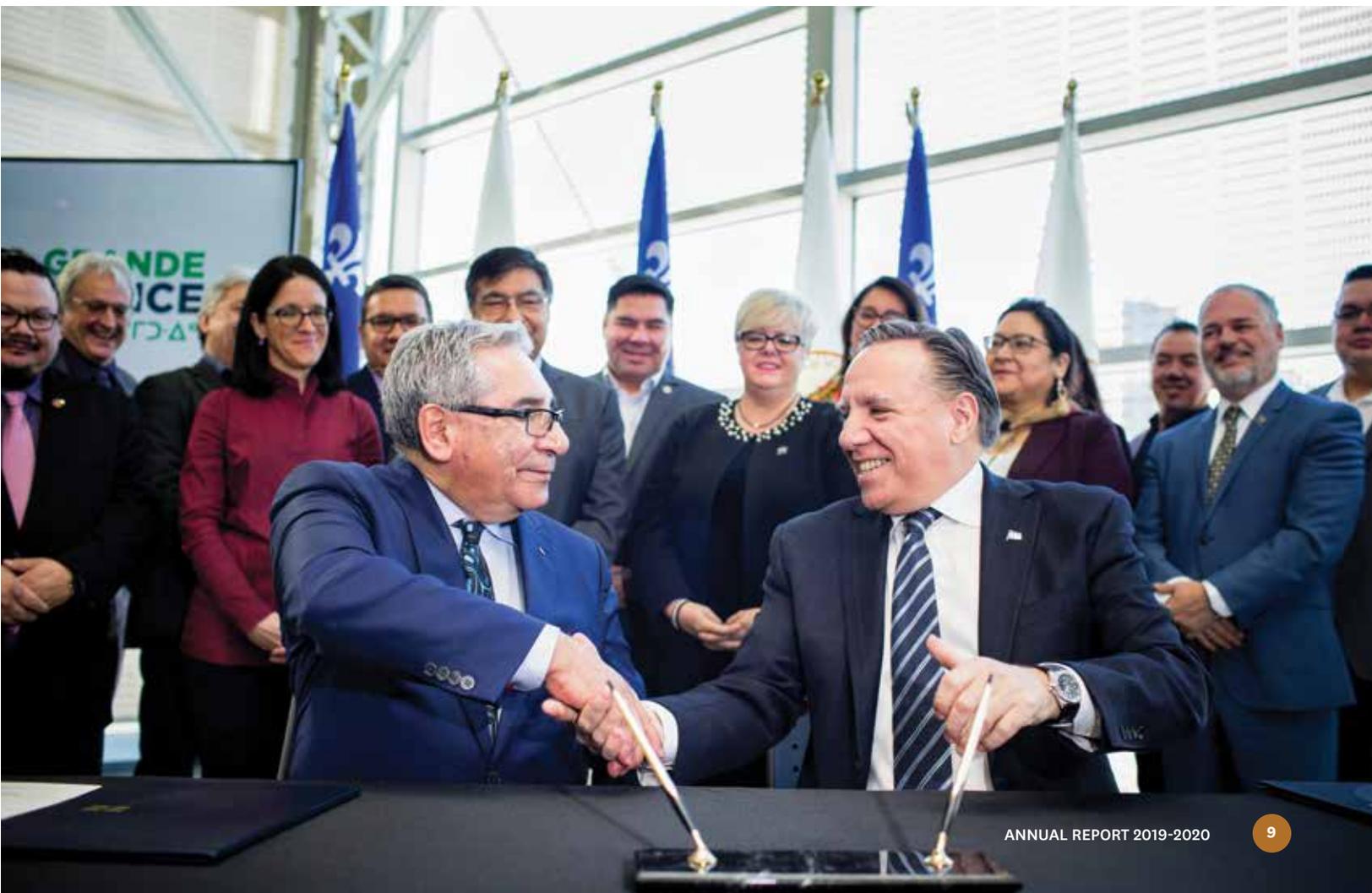
The Cree Nation has historically acted in such a way that each major agreement becomes a platform to build upon and to use in order to conclude other major agreements which, taken together, continually improve the prospects for the growth and development of our communities and our Nation.

In February 2020, the Cree Nation Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Quebec to establish “La Grande Alliance”. This MOU builds upon the 2002 *Agreement Concerning a New Relationship Between le Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec* (the “*Paix des braves*”). It provides for long-term collaboration between our two governments to, among other things, extend the existing rail network to promote

economic development and reduce the impacts of trucking, the electrification of certain projects in the region, the sharing of essential infrastructure in the territory, local labour force training, and the identification of new protected areas which will connect the territory’s wildlife habitats.

The MOU will be followed by technical and financial feasibility studies for various phases of implementation of a plan that will extend over a thirty-year period and will focus on strategic infrastructure for transportation (rail, road, ports), energy distribution and telecommunications. The objective of this initiative is to provide stability for the economic and social development of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory. This “Grand Alliance” balances our profound respect for the environment with the potential for the involvement in the development of the natural resources within our territory.

The Memorandum of Understanding gives further expression to the nation-to-nation relationship between the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and Quebec which was contemplated in our Treaty—the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* and reaffirmed by the *Paix des braves* in 2002.



For the Cree Nation, sensitivity to climate change, sensitivity to environmental changes, and developing approaches to protect the natural environment that we all depend upon, are nothing new. It is, in fact, deeply ingrained in who we are as a people, and it is an essential component of our traditional way of life.

FIRST CREE LAW—CREE LANGUAGE ACT OF EYYOU ISTCHEE

In September 2019, the Cree Nation Government unanimously passed its first law under the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement — An Act respecting the Cree Language of Eeyou Istchee*. The objectives of the Act are to support and promote the use of the Cree language, to support Cree efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen the Cree language, and to plan initiatives and activities for restoring and maintaining fluency in the Cree language.

The Act also will result in the creation of an Office of Commissioner of the Cree Language which will support the efforts of various Cree institutions to implement the Act.

This law is the first piece of legislation enacted by the Cree Nation Government following the 2017 *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* with the Government of Canada, which provided for a range of new powers and jurisdictions to be exercised by the Cree Nation Government and by our Cree First Nations.

I am confident that this Cree legislation will be an important step for us all in our collective determination to vigorously protect and promote our Cree language.

HOUSING

In our continuing effort to identify creative approaches to addressing the shortfall of housing in our communities, we have undertaken a number of important steps.

Since 2011, the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities have worked together to develop our Cree Nation Housing Strategy to address the urgent needs of community members for affordable and adequate housing. A cornerstone of the Housing Strategy is the prioritization of private homeownership by the Crees thereby creating wealth for Cree homeowners and business opportunities for Cree entrepreneurs. This will also free community housing for lower-income individuals, the elderly and our youth. We have long believed that by developing our own approach to address housing needs, and with the support of governments, we will be able to “unlock the wealth” that is associated with housing construction and home ownership.

In April of 2019, in collaboration with the Government of Canada, we agreed to amend the 2017 *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* in a way that will help create a private home ownership market for Crees on our land by removing the previous 75-year term limit on residential land grants for Crees. In addition, we have worked together to find creative avenues by which Canada can contribute financially to our own housing initiative.

We were excited to host an important Town Hall on housing during which we explained the status of our Housing Strategy and also solicited important input from our people across Eeyou Istchee.

At the time of writing this report, we have just announced that the Cree Nation Government is establishing a Private Housing Initiative Fund of \$100 million to subsidize the construction of new privately-owned homes by and for the members of our communities. The Cree Nation Government has also committed significant funds for related infrastructure investments such as drinking water, waste water facilities and civil works projects.

The \$100 million fund will subsidize the cost of construction of new homes to compensate for the difference between the cost of construction in our communities as compared to the cost in similar non-Native communities. In combination with the amendment to the 2017 *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* lifting the time limitation on grants of land to Crees for private homeownership, community members now have the potential to truly own their own houses and to be part of a genuine housing market with real financial benefits and equity for families.

The fund will stimulate new construction, providing economic stimulus to the entire region of Northern Quebec, benefitting not only Cree communities but also our non-Native neighbours. The Cree Nation Government will continue collaborating with the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada to find innovative approaches and partnerships to address the chronic issue of insufficient housing in our communities.

We will keep our members informed as this important initiative moves forward.

RENEWAL OF CREE HEALTH BOARD FUNDING AGREEMENT AND REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN CHISASIBI

On October 7, 2019, in Chisasibi, I had the privilege of signing with Quebec Health Minister Danielle McCann, Indigenous Affairs Minister Sylvie D'Amours and Cree Health Board Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano, a new Health Funding Agreement between the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree Nation Government, and the Government of Quebec. Through this Agreement, we have secured additional funding for the Cree Health Board which will be applied toward a combination of new programs and services and capital projects.

The largest new capital project will be the construction of the first regional hospital centre in Eeyou Istchee, to be located in Chisasibi. The new facility will combine a 52-bed hospital for the population of Eeyou Istchee, and a Community Miyupimaatsiium Centre (CMC), offering frontline services and community health for the local population of Chisasibi. The new Regional Health Centre will be equipped with state of the art medical, telemedicine and diagnostic technologies to serve the population in the region.

We have argued for a very long time that the closer that important institutions such as a new hospital are located to our people, the more effective they will be, and the more responsive our Cree Health Board will be in addressing the needs of our people. We are now seeing this come into being. This will be an example of our work, and our promise, to constantly find ways to bring the benefits home.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In view of our continuing commitment to environmental protection and to initiatives to prevent the negative consequences of climate change, we participated in an important consultation process which took place in Eeyou Istchee under the direction of Quebec's Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, Mr. Benoit Charette.

This event was undertaken in order for Quebec to understand and incorporate the views, the perspectives and the challenges which our people wished to bring to the attention of Quebec as it finalizes its Climate Change Plan. We in the Cree Nation are committed to doing our part in the fight against climate change, and we are ready to be partners with Quebec in this critical and essential undertaking.

For the Cree Nation, sensitivity to climate change, sensitivity to environmental changes, and developing approaches to protect the natural environment that we all depend upon, are nothing new. It is, in fact, deeply ingrained in who we are as a people, and it is an essential component of our traditional way of life.

It was for this reason we initiated our own Regional Forum on Climate Change, which was held in Eastmain and resulted in a report entitled "Envisioning Responses to Climate Change in Eeyou Istchee". This forum developed a number of very significant recommendations which we insisted must be reflected in Quebec's Climate Change Plan. The objective of this gathering held last year in Eastmain

was to support efforts to enable our communities to respond to climate change impacts so that traditional activities on our Traditional Territory remain an option, while at the same time, ensuring that our reliance on the land for our sustenance in the context of contemporary economic activities, also remains a meaningful option.

We have committed ourselves to an ongoing dialogue with Quebec so that we can arrive at a Climate Change Plan that truly reflects Cree perspectives and Cree interests.

INAUGURATION OF THE YOUTH HEALING CENTRE IN MISTISSINI

In keeping with our commitment toward the healthy development of our Youth, I was pleased in March 2020 to join Lionel Carmant, Quebec Minister for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Bella Moses Petawabano, Chair of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, and others in inaugurating a new Youth Healing Centre in Mistissini.

This project is the result of collaboration between the Cree Nation Government's Department of Justice, the Cree Health Board, the Government of Quebec, and local and regional partners. The project came about as a result of our initiative to address the needs of our Youth who come into contact with both social services and the justice system. We realized that when our young people encountered certain difficulties in their lives that brought them to the attention of social services and the justice system, they were often placed in custody and sent to detention facilities in the south, away from family and community support, and very importantly, away from the land and its potential for healing.

We formed partnerships and worked in collaboration with local, regional and governmental stakeholders to develop new programs and safe facilities to receive and care for our young offenders.

Based on the commitment of Quebec to respect the spirit of our Treaty, in concert with our own commitment to address this reality, the Cree Nation Government and the Cree Health Board set aside resources for the construction of our new Youth Healing Centre and the implementation of additional programs and services for Cree youth for the next 20 years.

This important project is yet another milestone on our journey of Indigenous Nation-Building—this time, to reassert our ability to take care of our own youth in our communities, in our own ways and in our own language.

I invite you to carefully review the contents of this Annual Report, which represents a further avenue by which your Grand Council of the Crees and your Cree Nation Government keep you informed about our work in continually striving to improve the lives of our people.

Miigwetch,

Dr. Abel Bosum
Grand Chief/Chairperson ●

Message du GRAND CHEF/PRÉSIDENT

DR. ABEL BOSUM

C'est avec beaucoup de fierté et de plaisir que je présente à tous les habitants d'Eeyou Istchee le rapport annuel du Grand Conseil des Cris d'Eeyou Istchee/Gouvernement de la Nation crie pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2020.

L'année qui vient de s'écouler a été stimulante, remarquable et remplie de défis. Nous avons continué à mûrir en tant que nation autochtone et gouvernement en continuant d'accroître l'étendue des champs dans lesquels nous exerçons notre compétence, comme en témoigne l'efficacité avec laquelle nous avons assumé ces responsabilités accrues. Cette maturité croissante en matière de gouvernance a, comme toujours, été guidée par les valeurs et les principes qui sont au cœur de la culture et du mode de vie traditionnels des Cris.

PANDÉMIE DE LA COVID-19

En effet, ce sont précisément ces valeurs et ces responsabilités accrues qui nous ont fourni les outils nécessaires pour être en mesure de répondre aux menaces que la pandémie mondiale de la COVID-19 a fait peser sur notre Nation crie. Bien que, au moment de rédiger le présent rapport, nous luttons toujours pour assurer la sécurité de nos communautés et de notre peuple, nous avons jusqu'à présent réussi à prévenir la propagation de ce virus dans nos communautés. Pour ce faire, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie, la Commission scolaire crie, le Service de la santé publique du Conseil cri de la santé et des services sociaux, le Service de police Eeyou Eenu, nos communautés et notre peuple ont dû collaborer très étroitement et faire preuve d'un grand engagement. Nous avons élaboré nos propres lignes directrices et approches, adaptées aux réalités de notre région et de nos communautés. Nous avons démontré encore une fois que *chiyaanuu*, ensemble, nous pouvons surmonter les plus grands défis et produire des résultats pour le bienfait de notre peuple. Je suis convaincu que l'expérience que nous avons acquise jusqu'à présent nous permettra de continuer à protéger la santé et la sécurité de nos communautés contre ce fléau mondial.

Au nom du Grand conseil des Cris d'Eeyou Istchee/Gouvernement de la Nation crie, j'aimerais exprimer publiquement notre profonde reconnaissance aux entités et aux personnes crie qui n'ont cessé de travailler avec acharnement et rigueur pour élaborer et mettre en œuvre les approches qui ont été si efficaces pour protéger nos communautés. Et au nom de toute la Nation crie d'Eeyou Istchee, j'aimerais remercier très sincèrement tous les travailleurs de première ligne — les infirmières, les médecins et les autres travailleurs de la santé — qui ont risqué leur santé en restant

dans nos communautés et en collaborant avec nous, pour protéger nos gens en cette période très difficile.

L'émergence de la COVID-19, et notre réaction à cette pandémie ont commencé vers la fin de l'exercice 2019-2020. À d'autres égards, l'exercice 2019-2020 a été une année de progrès et de réussites quant à nos grandes priorités. Je voudrais souligner quelques-unes de ces réalisations.

CONFÉRENCE SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITÉS

Le leadership actuel de la Nation crie, ainsi que le précédent, croient depuis longtemps qu'il n'y a probablement pas de plus grande priorité ou de plus grand défi que de soutenir à long terme les progrès et les réalisations que notre Nation crie a accomplis au cours des cinquante dernières années. Pour ce faire, nous devons ensemble faire tout notre possible pour préparer nos jeunes Cris à poursuivre notre parcours très particulier et historique. Nous devons veiller à ce que nos jeunes possèdent les connaissances, les compétences, et les capacités requises pour assumer les responsabilités et saisir les possibilités d'emploi qui existent dans tous les domaines de la vie de nos communautés et de notre région. Nos efforts visant le renforcement des capacités sont essentiels pour que cela se produise.

Nous avons été extrêmement heureux d'accueillir un Sommet sur le renforcement des capacités à l'automne 2019, dans le but de contribuer à la mobilisation de toute la Nation crie — individus, familles, communautés, entités crie, et Gouvernement de la Nation crie — pour accorder à cette question la priorité qu'elle mérite. Il s'agit d'une initiative qui, pour être couronnée de succès, doit devenir une entreprise de l'ensemble de la Nation crie, ce qui exige que nous travaillions tous en étroite collaboration et avec rigueur.

Depuis que nous avons organisé notre première Table ronde sur le renforcement des capacités à Ottawa en 2013, nos principales entités crie ont continué de se rencontrer régulièrement et ont lancé un certain nombre de projets importants pour améliorer nos efforts de renforcement des capacités.

Au cours des 45 dernières années, nous avons permis à notre peuple, et surtout à nos jeunes, de rêver grand au sujet de leur avenir. Nous avons aussi trouvé les ressources nécessaires pour aider nos jeunes à réaliser de grands rêves. Nous avons commencé à voir les fruits de ces efforts, soit dans le perfectionnement et le développement des compétences de notre peuple. Ainsi, nous comptons parmi nous des personnes crie qui sont des comptables, des avocats, des médecins, des infirmières, et des entrepreneurs crie. Ces

personnes ont commencé à montrer la voie à emprunter. Elles ont montré que de grands rêves peuvent se réaliser, et que nous pouvons le faire en travaillant ensemble pour encourager et soutenir nos jeunes.

Nous continuerons de donner la priorité au renforcement des capacités alors que nous allons de l'avant en tant que nation.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

Historiquement, la Nation crie a misé sur chaque accord majeur pour conclure d'autres accords majeurs, qui, ensemble, améliorent continuellement les perspectives de croissance et de développement de nos communautés et de notre Nation.

Au mois de février 2020, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a signé un protocole d'entente (PE) avec le Gouvernement du Québec pour établir la Grande Alliance. Ce PE s'appuie sur l'*Entente concernant une nouvelle relation entre le Gouvernement du Québec et les Cris du Québec* (la « Paix des braves »), conclue en 2002. Le PE prévoit une collaboration à long terme entre nos deux gouvernements pour, entre autres, étendre le réseau ferroviaire existant, et réduire les impacts du camionnage, afin de promouvoir l'électrification de certains projets dans la région, le partage des infrastructures essentielles dans le territoire, la formation de la main-d'œuvre locale, l'identification de nouvelles aires protégées qui relieront les habitats fauniques du territoire, ainsi que le développement économique.

Le PE sera suivi d'études de faisabilité technique et financière pour diverses phases de la mise en œuvre d'un plan qui s'étendra sur une période de trente ans et qui portera sur une infrastructure stratégique de transport (rail, route, ports), de distribution d'énergie et des télécommunications. Cette initiative a pour but d'assurer la stabilité du développement économique et social du territoire Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. Cette « Grande Alliance » maintient un équilibre entre notre profond respect de l'environnement et la possibilité de participer au développement des ressources naturelles sur notre territoire.

Ce PE renforce davantage la relation de Nation à Nation entre les Cris d'Eeyou Istchee et le Québec telle qu'envisagée dans notre traité, soit la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois de 1975, et réaffirmée par la Paix des braves en 2002.

PREMIÈRE LOI CRIE — LOI SUR LA LANGUE CRIE D'EYYOU ISTCHEE

Au mois de septembre 2019, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a adopté à l'unanimité sa première loi en vertu de l'Entente sur la gouvernance de la Nation crie, soit la *Loi concernant la langue crie d'Eeyou Istchee*. La Loi a pour objectif d'appuyer et de promouvoir l'utilisation de la langue crie, de soutenir les Cris dans leurs efforts visant à se réapproprier et à revitaliser, maintenir et renforcer la langue crie, et de planifier des projets et des activités visant à retrouver et conserver la maîtrise de la langue crie.

Par ailleurs, la Loi aura pour résultat la mise sur pied d'un Bureau du commissaire à la langue crie qui appuie-

ra les efforts de diverses institutions crie pour mettre en œuvre la Loi.

Cette Loi est la première mesure législative que le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a adoptée depuis l'*Entente sur la gouvernance de la nation crie* conclue en 2017 avec le Gouvernement du Canada, qui prévoyait un certain nombre de pouvoirs et de nouvelles compétences que peuvent exercer le Gouvernement de la Nation crie et nos Premières Nations crie.

Je suis convaincu que cette mesure législative crie sera une étape importante de notre détermination collective à protéger et à promouvoir vigoureusement notre langue crie.

LOGEMENT

Nous avons entrepris un certain nombre de mesures importantes dans le cadre d'efforts soutenus en vue d'identifier des approches créatives pour combler le manque de logements dans nos communautés.

Depuis 2011, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie et les communautés crie ont collaboré à l'élaboration de la Stratégie de logement de la Nation crie afin de répondre aux besoins urgents des membres des communautés en matière de logement abordable et adéquat. Une pierre angulaire de la Stratégie de logement est la priorité accordée aux Cris en matière d'accession à la propriété privée, créant ainsi de la richesse pour les propriétaires crie et des possibilités d'affaires pour les entrepreneurs crie. Cela permettra également de libérer des logements communautaires pour les personnes à faible revenu, les personnes âgées et les jeunes. Nous croyons depuis longtemps qu'en définissant notre propre approche pour répondre aux besoins en matière de logement, et avec le soutien des gouvernements, nous saurons faire profiter notre peuple de la richesse relative à la construction de logements et à l'accession à la propriété.

Au mois d'avril 2019, en collaboration avec le Gouvernement du Canada, nous avons convenu de modifier l'*Entente de gouvernance de la Nation crie* de 2017 de manière à aider à créer, pour les Cris, un marché d'accession à la propriété sur nos terres en éliminant la limite de 75 ans sur les concessions de terres résidentielles, qui s'appliquait aux Cris. De plus, nous avons collaboré pour trouver des moyens créatifs par lesquels le Canada peut contribuer financièrement à notre propre initiative d'accession à la propriété.

Nous avons été très heureux d'accueillir une importante assemblée publique sur le logement au cours de laquelle nous avons fait le suivi de notre Stratégie de logement et cherché à obtenir les vues de notre peuple à travers Eeyou Istchee.

Au moment de la rédaction du présent rapport, nous venons d'annoncer que le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a réservé 100 millions de dollars pour le Fonds de l'initiative d'accession à la propriété afin de subventionner la construction de nouvelles maisons privées par et pour les membres de nos communautés. Le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a également engagé des fonds importants pour des investissements dans les infrastructures connexes, comme l'eau potable, les installations de traitement des eaux usées, et les travaux de génie civil.

Le fonds de 100 millions de dollars subventionnera le coût de la construction de maisons neuves pour tenir compte des coûts de construction dans nos communautés par rapport aux coûts dans les communautés non autochtones semblables. En conjonction avec la modification apportée à l'Entente sur la gouvernance de la Nation crie de 2017, qui a éliminé la durée des concessions de terres aux Crie pour la propriété privée, les membres des communautés peuvent maintenant être les vrais propriétaires de leurs maisons et ainsi participer au marché du logement et jouir de réels avantages financiers, en plus de se constituer un avoir propre.

Le fonds stimulera la construction de logements neufs et activera l'économie pour l'ensemble de la région du Nord du Québec, faisant profiter non seulement les communautés crie, mais aussi nos voisins non autochtones. Le Gouvernement de la Nation crie continuera de collaborer avec le gouvernement du Québec et le gouvernement du Canada

afin de trouver des approches et des partenariats novateurs pour régler le manque chronique de logements dans nos communautés.

Nous tiendrons nos membres informés des progrès de cette importante initiative.

RENOUVELLEMENT DE L'ENTENTE DE FINANCEMENT DU CONSEIL CRI DE LA SANTÉ ET DE L'HÔPITAL RÉGIONAL DE CHISASIBI

Le 7 octobre 2019, à Chisasibi, en compagnie de la ministre de la Santé du Québec, Danielle McCann, de la ministre responsable des Affaires autochtones, Sylvie d'Amours, et de la présidente du Conseil crie de la santé, Bella Moses Petawabano, j'ai eu le privilège de signer une nouvelle entente de financement en matière de santé entre le Conseil crie de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie et le Gouvernement du Québec. Grâce à cette Entente,



nous avons obtenu un financement supplémentaire pour le Conseil cri de la santé, qui sera utilisé pour de nouveaux programmes et services et des projets d'immobilisations.

Le plus grand nouveau projet d'immobilisation sera la construction du premier centre hospitalier régional d'Eeyou Istchee, à Chisasibi. Le nouvel établissement de santé comprendra un hôpital de 52 lits pour la population d'Eeyou Istchee, et un Centre Miyupimaatissiiun communautaire (CMC), offrant des services de première ligne et de santé communautaire à la population locale de Chisasibi. Le nouveau Centre régional de santé sera équipé de technologies médicales, de télémédecine et de diagnostic ultramodernes pour desservir la population de la région.

Nous affirmons depuis très longtemps que plus les institutions importantes, comme un nouvel hôpital, sont proches de notre peuple, plus elles pourront être efficaces, et plus notre Conseil cri de la santé saura répondre à leurs besoins. Nous assistons maintenant à cette réalisation. Ce sera un exemple de notre travail, et de notre promesse, de toujours faire profiter notre peuple.

CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Compte tenu de notre engagement soutenu à l'égard de la protection de l'environnement et des initiatives visant à prévenir les conséquences négatives des changements climatiques, nous avons participé à un important processus de consultation qui a eu lieu à Eeyou Istchee sous la direction du ministre de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec, Benoit Charette.

Cet événement a été organisé afin que le Québec comprenne et intègre les points de vue, les perspectives et les défis que notre peuple souhaitait porter à l'attention du Québec avant qu'il ne parachève son Plan sur les changements climatiques. Dans la Nation crie, nous sommes déterminés à participer à la lutte contre les changements climatiques et nous sommes prêts à être des partenaires du Québec dans cette démarche cruciale et indispensable.

Pour la Nation crie, être sensible aux changements climatiques et aux changements environnementaux, et élaborer des approches pour protéger l'environnement naturel dont nous dépendons tous n'a rien de nouveau. En fait, cela reflète ce que nous sommes, et c'est un élément essentiel de notre mode de vie traditionnel.

C'est pour cette raison que nous avons pris l'initiative de notre propre Forum régional sur les changements climatiques, qui s'est tenu à Eastmain et qui a abouti à un rapport intitulé « Envisioning Responses to Climate Change in Eeyou Istchee ». Le forum a débouché sur un certain nombre de recommandations très importantes, et nous avons insisté pour qu'elles soient reflétées dans le Plan sur les changements climatiques du Québec. L'objectif de ce rassemblement tenu l'an dernier à Eastmain était de soutenir les efforts visant à permettre à nos communautés de réagir aux impacts des changements climatiques afin de pouvoir maintenir la pratique des activités traditionnelles sur notre territoire traditionnel, tout en préservant notre dépendance à la terre à des fins de subsistance dans le contexte d'activités économiques contemporaines.

Nous nous sommes engagés à poursuivre le dialogue avec le Québec afin de parvenir à un plan sur les changements climatiques qui reflète véritablement les perspectives et les intérêts des Cris.

INAUGURATION DU CENTRE DE RÉADAPTATION POUR LES JEUNES À MISTISSINI

Conformément à notre engagement envers le développement sain de nos jeunes, j'ai eu le plaisir, en mars 2020, de me joindre à Lionel Carmant, ministre délégué à la Santé et aux Services sociaux du Québec, à Bella Moses Petawabano, présidente du Conseil cri de la santé et des services sociaux, et autres pour l'inauguration du nouveau Centre de réadaptation pour les jeunes à Mistissini.

Ce projet est le fruit d'une collaboration entre le Service de la justice du Gouvernement de la Nation crie, le Conseil cri de la santé, le Gouvernement du Québec et des partenaires locaux et régionaux. Le projet découle de notre démarche visant à répondre aux besoins de nos jeunes qui ont des contacts avec les services sociaux et le système de justice. Nous nous sommes rendu compte que lorsque nos jeunes éprouvaient certaines difficultés personnelles qui attiraient l'attention des services sociaux et du système de justice, ils étaient souvent placés en détention et envoyés dans des établissements de détention dans le sud, loin de leur soutien familial et communautaire et, ce qui est très important, loin de la terre et de son potentiel de guérison.

Nous avons formé des partenariats et travaillé en collaboration avec des intervenants locaux, régionaux et gouvernementaux afin d'élaborer de nouveaux programmes et des installations sécuritaires pour accueillir et prodiguer des soins aux jeunes contrevenants.

Pour donner suite à l'engagement du Québec à respecter l'esprit de notre traité, et à notre propre engagement à faire face à cette réalité, le Gouvernement de la Nation crie et le Conseil cri de la santé ont réservé des ressources pour la construction de notre nouveau Centre de réadaptation pour les jeunes et la mise en œuvre de programmes et de services supplémentaires pour les jeunes Cris au cours des 20 prochaines années.

Cet important projet est une autre étape importante dans l'édification des nations autochtones, cette fois-ci pour réaffirmer notre capacité de prendre soin de nos propres jeunes dans nos communautés, à notre façon, et dans notre propre langue.

Je vous invite à examiner attentivement le contenu de ce rapport annuel, qui représente une autre voie par laquelle votre Grand Conseil des Cris et votre Gouvernement de la Nation crie vous tiennent informés de notre travail pour améliorer continuellement la vie de notre peuple.

Miigwetch. ●

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Message from the DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF/VICE-CHAIRPERSON

MANDY GULL

2019-2020 marks the 45th anniversary of the Cree Nation's creation of the Grand Council of the Crees. The growth in the number of members and Cree communities marks a significant development for our Nation. We are a nation with an abundance of youth and the means to continue teaching a strong connection to the land, which is one of the most important resources for our future. Knowing that there are so many youth to carry on our way of life is an immense source of pride and reassurance for me.

As always, I would like to thank the Grand Chief for his commitment in serving the Cree Nation. He has undertaken a significant workload and met many new challenges. It is a continued pleasure to support him and learn from the progress that he pursues. It is an educational experience to observe and learn about the practices of our government. It is a unique learning experience to serve within the Cree Nation leadership and see what processes he chooses to work towards. It continues to be a pleasure to support that in serving as the Deputy Grand Chief of the Cree Nation.

I would like to highlight the activities of my office and reflect on some notable moments in our Cree history that I believe should be recognized. My role within the Cree Nation Government this past year was focusing on the implementation portion of my files, some of which have transitioned significantly. I have chosen to focus my time on completing the work undertaken by previous leadership regarding environment. Also, I am focused on continuing to work with the application of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the potential outcomes we seek for the Cree Nation. Lastly, the most significant part of my role is to support the Grand Chief and his role in a regional capacity. I am glad to continue focusing on my appointed roles and projects coming out of my Office.

EEYOU LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Land Use Planning Commission focused on finalizing important foundational documents and sharing them on the website. The Land Use planning unit has also developed a Cree terminology glossary and it is available on the website. I invite Cree Nation members to visit the website and learn about the history and work undertaken by the team.

A major training process was launched to enhance the Commissioners and community staff's skills and knowledge. I would like to thank the CNG staff for coordinat-

ing, hosting and completing a successful session of ArcGIS training to the commissioners and local members. This session will be ongoing as we continue to implement new tools and technology within our mandates.

Our pilot project in the community of Eastmain continues to operate in the gathering of traditional and cultural knowledge of the Eastmain territory. This activity is to reflect on land connectivity and knowledge gathering. I would like to extend my special thanks to Raymond Shanush for working closely with the staff and ensuring this project was rolled out and continues to operate successfully.

HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Upon completing a two-year term as Chairperson, I wish to extend my thanks to the Cree members in supporting me during this appointment. As a member of the HFTCC I am pleased to continually learn the wildlife management process of Eeyou Istchee. This committee works on a number of files relating to various types of wildlife, fishing, and linking those activities with the partnering nation of the Naskapi, Inuit and Quebec parties. This past year my highlight was travelling to Kangiqsujuaq – a small Inuit community in Ungava bay. This session not only taught me about the northern realities of our Inuit party members but also the challenges they endure trying to maintain their traditional activities. It has been a major learning experience to sit as part of this committee in the capacity as a Chairperson and now a member. We work on files that will have an important impact on conserving the wildlife habitat and species relating to the Cree diet and way of life.

EEYOU ISTCHEE PROTECTED AREAS

The Protected areas file concentrated on sharing information on the protected areas network created by the communities and funding sources potentially available for projects relating to them. I was invited to present this file and share it within several of the communities. We highlighted this information as part of the Regional Tourism Assembly's agenda in Chisasibi and the Cree Trappers' Association Annual General Assembly in Whapmagoostui. We successfully gathered input and support to proceed in continuing to negotiate and highlight the importance of protected areas in Eeyou Istchee.

The work of the Cree Nation on protected areas is recognized as an ongoing project that focuses on the importance of culture and traditional knowledge in defining the areas of selection. As part of this work, we also share the design process followed, and the continued work on this file as part of knowledge exchange with other First Nations. We highlighted this work at the annual Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives (CICADA) session in Montreal. This work was also selected to be discussed during the Climate Summit week held in New York as part of the Indigenous Climate Defenders – a session that brings First Nations together across North America to share their local projects and contributions to the international fight against climate. We were able to participate in the Nature-Based Climate Solutions Summit in Ottawa that showcased Canadian projects contributing to climate actions which were kicked off by sessions with members of Parliament and MP Jagmeet Singh, the Opposition Leader who graciously made a youth encouragement video via Facebook. Lastly, we highlighted the work of the Cree Nation at the Assembly of First Nations National Climate Gathering in Whitehorse, Yukon. It was a privilege to learn about other Indigenous projects on a national level and discuss the work carried out by Eeyou Istchee.

This year I am extremely proud of the work carried out by Chantal Tetreault and her team, new member Flora Weistche, and our partners at Nature Conservancy Canada in completing and being selected as the top project for the Canada Nature Fund. With support from private funding and provincial partnership – the Cree Nation will be undertaking one of the largest collaborations. This team has car-

ried out some of the most important work – conservation efforts in areas that connect sites of interest and importance to the Cree territory. I want to thank them for their tireless efforts in working with the communities and meeting some of the most challenging deadlines. Excellent job carried out by them!

I am continually pushing the message of the “Say No to Styrofoam” challenge. I would like to extend my thanks to the members who have decided to participate and to the communities that have passed a supporting resolution. Each community has undertaken local objectives to have less waste impact in Eeyou Istchee. I was glad to see Chisasibi take a green approach as part of their local summer event Maamoweedow, as well as a number of communities hosting dish washing stands at local meetings and festivities. The Cree Nation Government also worked with FaunENord to have Mitsun bundles available at the Annual General Assembly in Nemaska to reduce our impact. I strongly urge the Cree Nation members to make use of our traditional knowledge and teaching and minimize our impact on the land and water.

YOUTH

As part of my work to support the development of Leadership in the Cree nation youth, I was really pleased to launch the Regional Cree Young Women’s Leadership Forum with the support of the Department of Justice in November 2019. Without the support of the Justice Department, we would not have been able to deliver this initiative to young women seeking information and knowledge in becoming a leader.





The focus of the event was to bring women in leadership roles and to provide learning opportunities from present women in various leadership capacities. The event provided a panel on Justice, with participants such as justice students, recent graduates that are employed in fields outside of the region but relating to servicing aboriginal clients, and staff highlighting the services in the Cree Nation. With workshops in negotiations and communication, a mock council board, and activities on self-awareness and self-confidence, the participants were engaged in a variety of learning experiences. It also focused on culture and language and the Cree way of life, and the role of women in childbearing was taught by the Cree Health Board and elders. The event also discussed LGBTQ2S members of the Cree Nation and the advocacy work they carry out to help youth in understanding their identity and personal orientations. The evening gala hosted an awards ceremony honouring the work and lifetime contributions of Janie Pachano for her various roles in advocacy for Cree families, and numerous projects on various topics of research. This event was made possible by the hard work of the coordinating committee and I would like to extend a special thank you to Kelsie Jolly and Alycia Lameboy-Dixon for helping take this concept and turning it into a successful event. We were also supported by Shawin Shecapio for communication and marketing. Also joining the team was Emma B. Coon Come who was a pivotal member working from the Cree Nation Government Office in Nemaska. My deepest thanks to these young women, whom I am certain will come into roles of service in various leadership capacities in the future.

Coming into the new year of 2020 we were met with the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic that completely changed the way we operated at the Cree Nation Government. It was extremely challenging for me to see our staff continue heading to work and supporting the service role we have as a Cree regional government. I want to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation for your role in keeping our services continuing in a time of uncertainty and fear. The situation unfolding in the Cree territory during this time was one that was met with frustration and fear and I understand the difficulty and strain it must have been for you and your family – as a leader it was one of the hardest challenges for me to see staff continue their service. I wanted to share my thanks for every moment that you stepped up and fulfilled your role.

In closing, I want to extend my appreciation to the Cree Nation members for being diligent in respecting our new norms and procedures in place to live with a new way of doing things. The Cree territory is recognized for achieving many types of milestones but I am most proud of each Cree member who conducted themselves according to protocol and ensured the safety of Eeyou Istchee and its members.

My deepest regards,

Mandy Gull
Deputy Grand Chief ●

Message de la GRANDE CHEF ADJOINTE/VICE-PRÉSIDENTE

MANDY GULL

L'année 2019-2020 marque le 45^e anniversaire de la création par la Nation crie du Grand Conseil des Cris. La croissance du nombre de membres et de communautés marque un développement important pour notre nation. Nous sommes une nation où les jeunes détiennent l'avenir, une nation qui sait enseigner comment entretenir un lien étroit avec la terre, l'une des ressources les plus importantes pour notre survie. Savoir qu'il y a tant de jeunes qui peuvent poursuivre notre mode de vie est une immense source de fierté et de réconfort pour moi.

Comme toujours, je tiens à remercier le grand chef de son engagement à servir la Nation crie. Il a accepté une charge de travail énorme et a relevé de nombreux nouveaux défis. C'est un plaisir constant de le soutenir et d'apprendre des avancées qu'il cherche à réaliser. Observer et apprendre les pratiques de notre gouvernement est une belle expérience éducative. Il s'agit d'une expérience d'apprentissage unique au sein de la direction de la Nation crie, et j'aime voir les démarches que le grand chef favorise. C'est toujours un plaisir de l'appuyer en tant que grande cheffe adjointe de la Nation crie.

Je voudrais souligner les activités que mon bureau a entreprises, et réfléchir à certains moments notables de notre histoire crie qui, je crois, méritent d'être mis en évidence. Mon rôle au sein du Gouvernement de la Nation crie au cours de la dernière année a porté surtout sur le traitement de mes dossiers, dont certains ont subi une transition importante. J'ai choisi de consacrer mon temps à la réalisation du travail entrepris par les dirigeants précédents en matière d'environnement. De plus, je m'efforce de poursuivre le travail de mise en œuvre de la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois, et de rechercher les meilleurs résultats possibles pour la Nation crie. Enfin, la partie la plus importante de mon rôle est d'offrir du soutien au grand chef dans son rôle à l'échelle régionale. Je suis heureuse de continuer à me concentrer sur les rôles et les projets qui ont été confiés à mon bureau.

COMMISSION EYYOU SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Les efforts de la Commission sur l'aménagement du territoire ont été consacrés principalement aux activités de parachèvement d'importants documents de base, publiés sur le site Web. L'Unité d'aménagement du territoire a également élaboré un glossaire terminologique cri (et en anglais), qu'on peut consulter sur le site Web. J'invite les membres de la Nation crie à visiter le site Web et à en apprendre davantage sur l'histoire et le travail entrepris par cette équipe.

Un important processus de formation a été lancé pour améliorer les compétences et les connaissances des commissaires et du personnel des communautés. Je voudrais remercier le personnel du GNC d'avoir coordonné, accueilli et réalisé une séance de formation réussie sur le logiciel ArcGIS à l'intention des commissaires et des membres locaux. Cette formation se poursuivra au fur et à mesure que nous continuerons la mise en œuvre de technologies et d'outils nouveaux dans le cadre de nos mandats.

Notre projet pilote dans la communauté d'Eastmain se poursuit avec la collecte des connaissances traditionnelles et culturelles du territoire d'Eastmain. Cette activité vise à nous faire réfléchir au lien à la terre et à faire la collecte des connaissances. Je tiens à remercier tout particulièrement Raymond Shanush qui a collaboré étroitement avec le personnel pour la mise en œuvre de ce projet, qui se poursuit avec succès.

COMITÉ CONJOINT DE CHASSE, DE PÊCHE ET DE PIÉGEAGE

Ayant terminé un mandat de deux ans à titre de présidente, je tiens à remercier les membres cris de m'avoir appuyée pendant mon mandat. En tant que membre du CCCPP, c'est avec plaisir que je continue d'apprendre au sujet de la gestion des ressources fauniques en Eeyou Istchee. Ce comité travaille sur un certain nombre de dossiers relatifs à divers types d'espèces sauvages et de pêche, établissant des liens entre ces activités et la nation partenaire qui comprend les parties des Naskapis, des Inuits et du Québec. L'événement le plus marquant de ma dernière année a été mon voyage à Kangiqsujuaq, une petite communauté inuite de la baie d'Ungava. Cela m'a non seulement permis de connaître les réalités nordiques des membres de la partie inuite, mais aussi les défis qu'ils doivent relever pour poursuivre leurs activités traditionnelles. Siéger dans ce comité en qualité de présidente et maintenant de membre a été une expérience d'apprentissage formidable. Les dossiers sur lesquels nous travaillons auront un impact important sur la conservation de l'habitat faunique et des espèces liées à l'alimentation et au mode de vie des Cris.

AIRES PROTÉGÉES EN EYYOU ISTCHEE

Les efforts dans le dossier des aires protégées ont surtout porté sur le partage de l'information sur le réseau des aires protégées créé par les communautés, et sur les sources de financement qui pourraient être offertes pour les projets qui s'y rapportent. J'ai été invitée à présenter ce dossier et à le partager avec plusieurs communautés. En fait, ce dos-



sier a été inscrit à l'ordre du jour de l'Assemblée du tourisme régional à Chisasibi et de l'Assemblée générale annuelle de l'Association des trappeurs cris à Whapmagoostui. Nous avons réussi à obtenir les commentaires et l'appui requis pour continuer à négocier et à souligner l'importance des aires protégées en Eeyou Istchee.

Le travail de la Nation crie sur les aires protégées est reconnu comme un projet continu qui met l'accent sur l'importance des connaissances traditionnelles et culturelles dans la définition des aires choisies. Dans le cadre de l'échange de connaissances avec d'autres Premières Nations, nous partageons également le processus d'élaboration utilisé ainsi que les travaux poursuivis dans ce dossier. Nous avons souligné ce travail lors de l'assemblée annuelle de la CICADA à Montréal. Ces travaux ont également fait partie des sujets de discussion lors de la semaine du Sommet sur le climat qui s'est tenue à New York dans le cadre de la conférence des Indigenous Climate Defenders, qui réunit les premières nations de l'Amérique du Nord afin de mieux connaître leurs projets locaux et leur contribution à la lutte internationale contre les changements climatiques. Nous avons pu participer au Sommet sur les solutions axées sur la nature à Ottawa, qui a présenté des projets canadiens contribuant à des actions climatiques qui ont été mis à l'honneur au moyen de rencontres avec des parlementaires et le député Jagmeet Singh, chef de l'opposition, qui ont gracieusement fait une vidéo sur Facebook pour encourager les jeunes. Enfin, nous avons souligné les travaux de la Nation crie lors du Rassemblement national sur le climat de l'As-

semblée des Premières Nations, à Whitehorse, au Yukon. C'était un privilège d'en apprendre davantage sur d'autres projets autochtones au niveau national et de discuter du travail réalisé en Eeyou Istchee.

Cette année, je suis extrêmement fière du travail qu'a accompli Chantal Tétreault et son équipe, la nouvelle membre Flora Weistche, et nos partenaires de Conservation de la nature Canada dont le projet a été retenu comme meilleur projet de l'année par le Fonds de la nature du Canada. Le projet bénéficiera de financement privé et d'un partenariat provincial, permettant ainsi à la Nation crie d'entreprendre l'une des plus importantes collaborations. Cette équipe a réalisé des travaux parmi les plus importants : des efforts de conservation dans des aires qui relient des sites d'intérêt au territoire cri. Je tiens à les remercier de leurs efforts inlassables pour travailler avec les communautés, et ce, malgré des délais très serrés. Je salue leur excellent travail!

Je ne cesse de pousser le défi « Disons simplement non au styromousse ». Je tiens à remercier les membres qui ont décidé de relever le défi et les communautés qui ont adopté une résolution d'appui. Chaque communauté s'est fixé des objectifs locaux afin de générer moins de déchets en Eeyou Istchee. J'ai été heureuse de voir que Chisasibi a adopté une approche verte dans le cadre de son événement estival *Maa-moweedow*, de même qu'un certain nombre de communautés qui prévoient des postes pour laver la vaisselle lors de réunions et de festivités locales. Le Gouvernement de la Nation crie a également collaboré avec *FaunENord* pour préparer des ensembles de vaisselle Mitsun pour l'Assemblée

Dans le cadre de mon travail sur le développement des compétences en leadership chez les jeunes de la Nation crie, j'ai eu le plaisir d'annoncer le lancement du Rassemblement régional sur le leadership des jeunes femmes cries, qui a eu lieu au mois de novembre 2019.

générale annuelle de Nemaska afin de réduire notre impact. Je recommande vivement aux membres de la Nation crie d'utiliser nos connaissances et notre enseignement traditionnels afin de minimiser notre impact sur la terre et l'eau.

JEUNES

Dans le cadre de mon travail sur le développement des compétences en leadership chez les jeunes de la Nation crie, j'ai eu le plaisir d'annoncer le lancement du Rassemblement régional sur le leadership des jeunes femmes cries, qui a eu lieu au mois de novembre 2019. Cette initiative à l'intention des jeunes femmes qui cherchent à s'informer et à acquérir des connaissances pour devenir des leaders n'aurait pas été possible sans l'appui du Service de la justice. L'objectif de l'événement était de rassembler des femmes qui occupent déjà des postes de direction pour qu'elles offrent des possibilités d'apprentissage aux femmes. L'événement a permis de créer un panel sur la justice regroupant des étudiants en droit, de jeunes diplômés qui travaillent à l'extérieur de la région auprès de clients autochtones, et de membres du personnel qui ont souligné les services offerts à la Nation crie. Grâce à des ateliers de négociation et de communication, à une simulation de réunion du conseil, et à des activités sur l'écoute de soi et la confiance en soi, les participantes ont pris part à une variété d'expériences d'apprentissage. De plus, le Conseil cri de la santé ainsi que des aînées ont parlé de la culture et de la langue, du mode de vie cri, et du rôle des femmes en âge de procréer. L'événement a également discuté des membres de la communauté LGBTQ2 de la Nation crie et de la défense des droits qu'ils accomplissent pour aider les jeunes à comprendre leur mode de vie et leurs orientations personnelles. La soirée de gala a donné lieu à une cérémonie de remise de prix pour le travail et les contributions de Janie Pachano dans ses divers rôles dans la défense des familles cries, et ses nombreux projets sur divers sujets de recherche. Cet événement a été rendu

possible grâce au travail acharné du comité de coordination et j'aimerais remercier tout particulièrement Kelsie Jolly et Alycia Lameboy-Dixon qui ont aidé à prendre ce concept et à en faire un événement réussi. Nous avons également apprécié l'aide de Shawin Shecapio en matière de communication et de marketing. Emma B. Coon Come s'est également jointe à l'équipe comme membre essentielle du bureau du Gouvernement de la Nation crie à Nemaska. J'offre mes plus sincères remerciements à ces jeunes femmes qui, j'en suis convaincue, occuperont un jour divers rôles de leadership.

Au début de l'année 2020, nous avons été confrontés au défi de la pandémie COVID-19, qui a complètement changé la façon de fonctionner du Gouvernement de la Nation crie. S'assurer que le personnel pouvait continuer à œuvrer auprès de nos communautés et à leur offrir le soutien du Gouvernement régional cri a certes été un défi de taille. Je tiens à vous offrir mes plus sincères remerciements pour votre rôle dans le maintien de nos services à un moment marqué par l'incertitude et la peur. La situation qu'on a connue dans le territoire cri a été source de frustration, de peur, et de tension et je comprends que cela ait pu être très difficile pour vous et votre famille. En tant que leader, m'assurer que le personnel pouvait continuer à offrir des services était l'un des défis les plus difficiles. Chaque fois que vous avez mis l'épaule à la roue et que vous vous êtes acquittés de votre rôle, je voulais vous remercier.

En terminant, je transmets mes remerciements aux membres de la Nation crie qui ont fait preuve de diligence en respectant nos nouvelles normes et procédures requises par une nouvelle façon de faire. Le territoire cri est reconnu pour les nombreux événements déterminants qui s'y sont déroulés, mais je suis très fière de chaque membre cri qui a respecté le protocole mis en place pour assurer la sécurité d'Eeyou Istchee et de ses membres.

Miigwetch ●



Message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BILL NAMAGOOSE

It is always a challenge to capture the moments and operations of the Cree Nation Government in a simple message. We have had a successful year, with many activities, projects and programs underway every day. We can take real pride that we are truly functioning as a Cree Nation Government that takes into account our distinctive Cree culture and traditions.

In the past, we did not demand to be recognized as a Government as such, largely because the federal and provincial governments were not yet ready to accept such a relationship. Nevertheless, we acted as a Nation and followed our traditional governance over our vast territory. Over the last 300 years, Canada placed many legal impediments on Indigenous peoples, including the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, but we kept our language and culture largely in place.

It is through this knowledge and awareness of our traditions that we developed a true and robust contemporary governance structure.

How did we get to this point in our long history?

The contemporary governance we now enjoy, where we govern the modern issues that were not part of our traditional governance, is a result of the many governance and development agreements that we signed with Canada, Quebec and industry.

After decades of our operating as a Cree Nation Government, federal and provincial institutions and governments have come to recognize us as a true, mature Government, and to interact with the Cree Nation in a more respectful manner. Many relationship issues are easily resolved when the proper structure or governance framework is in place.

The basic legal and political framework for the Cree Nation is our treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*, the first modern treaty in Canada. This legal and political framework or policy for a comprehensive treaty would no longer be possible since some in government feel that it gave too much to the Cree in 1975.

The maturity and unity of the Cree Nation over many decades have been, and continue to be, the greatest success factor in getting us to this point in time. This maturity and unity got us to where we are now.

It is our maturity and unity that have enabled the Cree Nation to solve many of its issues and to get tangible benefits for our people and communities. The successes we enjoy

in our community development are very visible in the modern facilities built in all our communities.

However, we still have a housing backlog that grows every year. If we do not solve our housing issue, there will be an exodus from the Cree communities and the community development opportunities will not be realized. We need our young people to choose to make their life in our communities if we are to protect our culture and our language. For that to happen, our youth need jobs and housing in our communities.

We have tabled a transformative housing proposal that will both unlock the wealth of homeowners in their houses, and create wealth in the Cree communities through business and job opportunities. We have removed the time limit on land grants to Crees for residential purposes, and we have facilitated mortgage lending for prospective Cree homeowners. These measures will create a housing market, transform the Cree communities and free social housing units for Cree elders, youth, trappers and persons with lower income.

A table on housing has been established with Canada, and Quebec has been invited to set up a similar table. This combination of private and social housing is the only viable approach to the housing shortage. It will solve the backlog and create wealth and economic opportunities at the same time.

The transformative *Paix des Braves* agreement signed in 2002 still largely defines our relationship with the Quebec Government, and it continues to be implemented properly and successfully.

It is hard to imagine what the state of the Cree communities would be without this bold and groundbreaking agreement. Would our communities be impoverished, without basic rights and lacking a legal and political framework for relating with the Quebec Government?

The *New Relationship Agreement*, signed in 2008 with Canada, which fulfills many federal JBNQA treaty obligations to the Cree for a period of 20 years, continues its successful implementation.

The *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, contemplated by the *New Relationship Agreement*, is also being implemented successfully. This Governance Agreement, signed with the Federal Government in 2017, has modernized Cree governance and gives Crees greater autonomy while securing much of our financial arrangements with Canada until 2040. It gives the Cree Nation a contemporary constitution that we can amend ourselves, without the need for Canada's

agreement or amending legislation. It also does not interfere with the traditional governance of our territory.

We were able to change and modernize Cree rights on land lots on Category IA lands by amending this Governance Agreement. This amendment only required the signature of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations to have the force of law.

The relationship between the Cree Nation Government and the local Cree governments is also positive and very functional. We have administrative and community capital planning meetings with the Directors of Operations, Directors General and Treasurers on a regular basis. This forum is critical in managing relationships and implementing community development projects. It also serves as a forum to discuss and exchange on the political and administrative issues of the day.

I want to thank all the Directors of Operations, Directors General, Treasurers and other community capital planning personnel for their collaboration and input to this important forum.

After more than 30 years of service, Brian Craik, the Director of Federal Relations and member of environment committees that reviewed numerous development projects in Eeyou Istchee, has retired. Brian played a critical role in stopping the Great Whale Hydroelectric Project, which in turn propelled the Cree Nation to become an important political actor in Quebec. On behalf of the Cree Nation, I wish to thank Brian for his immense contributions to the advancement of the Cree Nation Government.

Towards the end of the fiscal year, the entire world was dramatically and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a grave threat to our Cree communities and other Indigenous communities since many of our members have underlying health conditions, our housing is severely overcrowded, and, despite recent improvements, we still lack the extensive medical facilities required to treat large numbers of seriously ill persons.

The Cree First Nations, Cree Nation Government, the Cree Health Board and the Cree School Board have taken a proactive approach by organizing regular joint meetings to update each other and coordinate effective preventive measures. As of writing this report, only ten members of the Cree communities have been infected in Eeyou Istchee, and these cases have been successfully resolved. Once again, our unity and reliance on each other have made this possible.

Finally, I would like to thank all the directors and employees of the different Departments of the Cree Nation Government for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Thank you for everything that you do for the Cree Nation Government every day.

It has been my honour and privilege to lead the administration of the Cree Nation Government for the past several decades and to have a front row view of all that has transpired for our Nation.

The best is yet to come.

Meegwetch

THE CREE NATION OF WASHAW SIBI

As it has in previous years, in 2019-20 the Cree Nation Government continued to support the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi in its efforts to identify a site for their new village; to maintain a basic administrative office, and to provide as many programs and services as possible.

During the 2019-20 fiscal year, Washaw Sibi Chief Pauline Trapper-Hester continued working toward the vision that the establishment and the construction of a new village is the primary objective for the 500-plus members of Washaw Sibi so they can finally have a place to call home, and a place where their Cree culture and language can be preserved and flourish.

Once a suitable site for their new village has been identified, and after discussions with both Quebec and Canada on amending the JBNQA, Washaw Sibi will officially become the 10th Cree community under the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*.

During the 2018-19 fiscal year, a promising site was identified south of Matagami, just off Highway 109. A number of activities were carried out in 2018-19 to determine if the site was suitable for construction purposes. Technical studies were conducted and discussions were held with Cree tallymen in the area and the site was found to be suitable. In addition, Washaw Sibi officials met with the nearby Algonquin communities of Abitibiwinni and Lac Simon to advise them that the site was being considered.

While the site is historically and genealogically associated with Cree hunters, competing Cree and Algonquin claims have been a challenge for the Washaw Sibi Cree in identifying a site for their new village. However, this site remains a possibility for the future site of the Washaw Sibi Eeyou.

In order to expand the range of potential options for the establishment of a new village, the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi, the Abitibiwinni First Nation at Pikogan, and the Cree Nation Government, during the 2019-20 fiscal year, began to explore the possibility of a unique solution to the challenge of identifying a village site. In view of the fact that approximately 90 percent of the Abitibiwinni population are currently, or are eligible to be, beneficiaries of the JBNQA, serious exploratory discussions were undertaken about the possibility of creating a single, unified community under the JBNQA at the site of the Abitibiwinni First Nation at Pikogan. This creative approach would involve the transformation of the Abitibiwinni First Nation from an “*Indian Act*” band to a band under the JBNQA. A number of Council-to-Council meetings, as well as community assemblies—both individually and joint community assemblies—have been held to present the concept to the respective members. More discussions on this proposal are expected to take place in the coming year to explore this possibility.

It is the plan on the part of the current Washaw Sibi leadership, led by Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt, who came into office in September 2019, to present to the Washaw Sibi members during the 2020-21 fiscal year for their final decision on the realistic options for a village site. ●



Message from the DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MICHAEL PETAWABANO

Welcome!

As Deputy Executive Director, I have the responsibility to manage and coordinate strategic operational activities with the following departments under my supervision.

- Government Support Services
- Apatisiwin Skills Development Department
- Department of Commerce and Industry
- Child and Family Services
- Social and Cultural Development Department
- Fire Protection Services

As part of the Cree Nation Government Management Committee, I promote the vision and direction of the Management Committee and ensure department objectives are achieved and reported to the proper authorities. I work closely with the Executive Director and take on special mandates when required. In my role as Deputy Executive Director, I have the pleasure to work with a highly dedicated group of employees in the Cree Nation Government Departments that I oversee. I participate in Cree Nation Government committee meetings on a regular basis, with Management meetings monthly and Executive Committee, Board/Council and Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG) meetings held every two to three months. As part of my role, I make sure that the Department Directors under my office are informed of the decisions made by Board/Council and Senior Management and assist them with Human Resources issues.

During the past year, I have continued to provide support to the departments under my portfolio and 2019-2020 represents a significant year in building the capacity of the departments as well as improving service delivery throughout.

In our role of Government Support Services, we continue to provide the framework and logistics that allow the Cree Nation Government to run efficiently. The role that Government Services plays in day-to-day operations is critical but often goes unseen. From Information Technology and Records Information Management to Livestreaming, we are often behind the scenes. At the end of this year we experienced how important the support services we provide are. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the important role the Government Support Services has in maintaining and adapting core infrastructure needed to work and communicate at a distance. I personally thank all the employees for their dedication and for going the extra mile during this difficult and challenging period.

During the year I continued to work with the Cree Nation Government team on many fronts. We strived to progress important files that are critical to the Economic and Social improvement of Eeyou Istchee and the community members we serve. The Cree Housing Initiatives continue to remain an issue of high importance. Eeyou Istchee continues to feel the effects of housing shortages throughout the region and we are focused on advancing real, sustainable solutions that can address current and future needs. Our Town Hall Meeting in April 2019 focused on Housing and Free Trade. This event produced excellent collaboration resulting in many ideas, and demonstrated the importance of working together.

There are many other areas of concerted effort by Cree Nation Government such as Capacity Building. We worked with the Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Apatisiwin Skills Development Department to hold a Capacity Building Conference in Montreal in October 2019, another example of teamwork and collaboration.

As Deputy Executive Director, I have been working with our Cree Nation Government team and communities to continue building our Economies through progressing the Cree Free Trade Agreement. I have also been part of the Cree team working with the Quebec Construction Commission (CCQ) towards an agreement for Eeyou Istchee that protects and benefits our construction workers. In my role I have also participated in the Plan Nord committee. This is important as any northern development plan or discussions requires a Cree presence to ensure we have knowledge of development and a voice that ensures Cree values are part of any northern development decision making process. I also believe that participation on the Plan Nord committee will allow for Cree access to important funding opportunities through the Plan Nord programs.

CREE-QUEBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement

The Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Gouvernement du Québec was signed in 2012. This agreement modernizes the governance regimes in the territory enabling greater autonomy and development of the Cree Nation through governance powers over Category II

lands and shared governance between the Cree and Jamésiens over Category III lands, including, among other things, the planning and use of the territory and resources, as well as the exercise of jurisdiction, powers and functions of municipal nature under Quebec legislation.

The Agreement establishes jurisdiction of Cree Nation Government (Category II lands) and the EIJB RG (Category III lands) to exercise functions and powers attributed to a municipality pursuant to the *Cities and Towns Act* and the other laws applicable to such a municipality. The management of public lands are included as part of these responsibilities, and certain powers such as planning, land lease management and regulations, management of protected natural habitats, etc, may be delegated by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources to the Cree Nation Government and EIJB RG. These responsibilities require that land and resources plans are prepared and accepted by the ministry.

The agreement establishes a governance model that is new and unique particularly regarding its implementation which includes a range of different issues and challenges that need to be addressed for its success.

Some of these challenges can be observed at the level of the EIJB RG, where the governance structure and operational rules, mostly defined by the *Cities and Towns Act*, may have limited open and transparent exchange opportunities between the councillors on important matters of common interest. A review of the operational structure of the EIJB RG in relation to the *Cities and Towns Act* requirements may be needed to enable adaptations permitting more open and transparent exchange opportunities on important matters of governance such as territorial planning and management. Other challenges with respect to planning responsibilities have also been identified. A table with the EIJB RG and Quebec on Implementation of the Governance agreement has been put in place to address these matters.

At the level of the Cree Nation Government, the challenges are mostly in respect to implementation of responsibilities for Category II lands. Planning responsibilities are slowly in progress by the Eeyou Planning Commission but await the harmonization efforts with Category III lands. Delegation of jurisdiction, powers and functions to the Cree Nation Government has not occurred to date but will take place progressively and will be dependent on coordinated efforts between Cree Nation Government departments as well as an assessment of adequate resources to undertake these responsibilities. An organizational strategy and approach will be defined to address this. To that effect, the Cree Nation Government held a meeting with Cree Nation Government concerned departments on the implementation of the governance agreement. It was determined, as an initial step, that the access and occupancy matters should be the first component to this strategy and planning works. The executive committee therefore established the Committee on Access and Occupancy.

Planning of land use and development

The Agreement foresees that the Cree Nation may exercise responsibilities in the planning of land use and development for Category II lands. To this effect, the planning pro-



cess is defined in the agreement and establishes the Eeyou Planning Commission, who must prepare a Regional Land and Resource Use Plan for Category II Lands in consultation with the communities. As for Category III lands, the EIJB RG is responsible for the planning exercise and must prepare a *Regional Plan for Integrated Land and Resource Development*, to this effect the Regional Government has established a Regional Land and Natural Resource Commission (CRRNT) composed of Cree and Jamésiens representatives. The CNG and the EIJB RG must harmonize, as much as possible, its *Plan régional de développement intégré des ressources et du territoire* and the Regional Land and Resource Use Plan (RLRUP).

The progress on territorial planning over Category III lands has been stalled over the last two years. The Regional Land and Resources Committee, initially mandated to develop the Regional Plan for Integrated Land and Resource Development (PRDIRT) and collaborate with Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN) for the Public Land Use Plan, has been for the most part inactive. One of the issues raised was the lack of receipt of funds from the MERN to develop the PRDIRT. Indeed, MERN argued that funds for PRDIRT are no longer available since orientation on the planning tool and process to be used has been changed and differs from that of the agreement. It will be critical that discussions take place at the MERN and EIJB RG in view of resolving these issues and resuming responsibilities for planning activities. Without these matters resolved, much of the agreement implementation, particularly in relation to the delegation of powers, may be disabled as a result.

The land and resource planning work is slowly progressing in Category II lands through the Eeyou Planning Commission and the Environment Department Planning Unit. Implementation of the agreement has occurred mainly at the level of the planning structure and establishment of territorial planning orientations. The Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) has been well established and now ready to begin the process of preparing the *Regional Land and Resource Use Plan* for Category II. In response to the executive directives concerning prioritization of the Access and Occupancy matter, the EPC held a workshop to better define the orientations on this matter.

Given the current lack of harmonization between the activities of the EIJB RG and the CNG, progress on the planning of Category II lands may be hindered if issues on this matter remain unresolved. Moving ahead for Category II

lands without clear process and understanding of harmonization with Category III land is precarious and contrary to the role of the Cree Nation in protecting Cree rights and interest over the entire territory.

Access and Occupancy

The implementation of planning responsibilities has been quite challenging and has delayed solutions to matters such as the moratorium on non-Cree cabin leases, a source of tension between the Cree and Jamésiens. Development and increased access over the years has paved way for many non-Cree settlers in the territory raising many sensitive access and occupancy issues, especially in relation to the conservation of wildlife resources and harvesting rights of the Crees. Inadequate management of cabin leases has been an outstanding issue raised by the Crees and since 2012 a moratorium on the issuance of recreational cabin leases has been put in place.

With the signing of the Cree-Quebec governance agreement, it was expected that the Access and Occupancy issues be in part resolved through the land planning and management responsibilities to be undertaken by the Cree Nation Government in Category II lands and the EIJB RG in Category III lands.

However, delegation of power concerning land planning and management responsibilities is provided under the assumption that there is a regional consensus on the management and development of the territory. In other words, given the lack of a PRDIRT (currently changed to a PRDT), this delegation might be more difficult to obtain on Category III lands unless there is regional harmonization and consensus between the Cree and Jamésiens.

In order to respond to the Access and Occupancy issues, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government Executive Committee has established in November a sub-committee that would be mandated to;

- The development of an *Access and Occupancy policy in Eeyou Istchee* as well as a *Development Access and Occupancy Development Plan*.
- Recommendations and actions towards the exercise of jurisdictions, functions and powers related to access and occupancy on Category II lands.
- Recommendations towards the harmonization of jurisdictions, functions and powers related to access and occupancy on Category III lands.
- Development of a common Cree-Jamésien Code of Ethics for incomers and settlers in the territory.

The Access and Occupancy committee has met three times since its establishment and work is in progress to develop a draft regional policy on access and occupancy and initiate the planning exercise.

Working Committee on Governance Implementation

In view of resolving certain matters concerning the implementation of the governance agreement in Category III lands, a table composed of Cree Nation Government (CNG), Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJB RG), Secrétariat aux affaires autochtone (SAA), Ministère Énergie et Ressources naturelles (MERN), and Ministère des Af-

aires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH) representatives was established. The table has held its initial meeting in October 2019, where several matters were outlined such as;

- Clarifications on role, responsibilities and coordination between each regional body (CNG, EIJB RG, ARBJ)
- The funding obligations for the planning exercise (PRDIRT) in Category III land
- The moratorium on recreation vacation leases
- Clarification on the regional entity responsible for the Agricultural Zone Planning
- The review and renewal of the agreement

The table has agreed to reconvene for further discussions to assess potential issues and solutions.

Wildlife Protection Resources

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JB-NQA), and the Cree-Quebec New Relationship Agreement (CQNRA), and more recently the Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement, establishes specific regimes and obligations distinctly related to wildlife protection resources in Eeyou Istchee. Since the signing of its agreements, some challenges have delayed the implementation of wildlife protection provisions and it is critical that the necessary efforts be made to find acceptable solutions to this matter.

Implementation of Agreement Provisions on Wildlife Protection Resources

In the context of ensuring proper protection of wildlife resources, especially for species of concern such as the Woodland Caribou, the Cree Nation Government initiated discussion with Quebec to address issues of Wildlife Protection Resources in Eeyou Istchee.

As part of the discussions at the Cree-Quebec Table on Caribou, it was agreed to establish a workgroup which would provide recommendations to identify issues and measures for the proper implementation of the agreements provisions as it relates to wildlife protection resources in the territory. The mandate of the Cree-Quebec Wildlife Protection Working Group includes the following objectives:

- To clearly identify issues and propose solutions to improve the training, recruitment and retention of Cree wildlife officers;
- To identify the resources needed to implement the provisions of the Governance Agreement, including those for Cree Wildlife Protection Assistants;
- To identify all other necessary issues and measures related to the implementation of the provisions of the agreements and to ensure the protection of wildlife in the territory of Eeyou Istchee and the proper implementation of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping regime established under Chapter 24 of the JBNQA;
- To follow up and report its recommendations to the Cree-Québec Table on Caribou.

Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers – Wildlife Protection Assistants Program

The Cree Nation Government recently signed a two-year funding agreement with Quebec to conduct a pilot proj-

ect that would initiate a program for the training and hiring of Wildlife Protection Assistants resources in Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Nation has been working to cater the program according to Cree vision, objectives and culture. As such, the program named will put in place Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers which will also be designated as Wildlife Protection Assistants. The Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers will be trained and hired by the Cree Nation Government to provide support and assistance to the tallymen, wildlife protection officers and other concerned Cree and non-Cree organizations in the surveillance, protection and management of land and resources while integrating culturally based responsibilities.

This program is the first initiative that would put in place wildlife protection resources, with certain delegated powers from the MFFP, under the jurisdiction of the Cree Nation Government. This project will also enable the Cree Nation Government to assess the needs and future negotiations for the implementation of section 178 of the Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement, which foresees the training and hiring of 19 Wildlife protection assistants.

The funding for this Pilot Project will serve to:

- Hire a coordinator for the operations;
- Train and hire 4 wildlife protection assistants (two in Mistissini and two in Chisasibi);
- Purchase vehicles and equipment for the Wildlife Protection Assistant operations;
- Assess future training needs and initiate the framework and development of an adapted and solid training program for the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers - wildlife protection assistants in Eeyou Istchee.

Work is underway to train and hire four Cree Wildlife Protection Assistants and one coordinator, who will be responsible to implement and coordinate the operations of the Wildlife Protection Assistant program. The wildlife Protection Assistants will have certain enforcement powers under Quebec legislation, but will also be given certain other responsibilities, such as monitoring and awareness to ensure that Cree traditional values and practices are followed and respected. The program will enable better surveillance of the territory and support to the tallymen and wildlife protection officers.

Development of Wildlife Protection Officer and Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers – Wildlife Protection Assistant training program

The Cree Nation Government is also collaborating with Cegep Saint-Felicien who received funds from Environment Canada to develop a training program (Collegial Attestation Certificate) adapted for Cree Wildlife Protection Officers and Cree Wildlife Protection Assistants. A steering Committee has been put in place by ECC and is composed of representatives from federal and provincial enforcement departments, the Cree Trappers' Association, the Cree Nation Government, Cegep d'Alma and Cegep Saint-Felicien. The steering committee has met once in January 2019. A series of consultations to conduct a job analysis is currently being organized online (due to the COVID-19 situation) with various potential participants with experience in the field of Wildlife Protection.



Woodland Caribou

Quebec's Woodland Caribou Habitat Management Strategy

Highlight 2019

Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers

Building capacity to support the protection and management of our homeland.

The protection of the land and sustainable use of the resources is a fundamental pillar of Cree governance in the pursuit of our Nation's cultural, social and economic development of the territory. Conservation of our land and wildlife resources remains an important condition to any development in Eeyou Istchee. Many wildlife and conservation issues have surfaced especially as it relates to the lack of surveillance and enforcement in the territory. To ensure respect of Cree rights and protection of our homeland, the Cree Nation Government is proud to announce the start of the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers - Wildlife Protection Assistant program. Through a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Forest, Wildlife and Parks, the Cree Nation Government has been working to develop and initiate a program that will train and hire Eeyou Istchee Land keepers who will also be designated as Wildlife Protection Assistants.

This initiative stems from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), the Cree-Quebec New Relationship Agreement (CQNRA) and most recently the Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement, which establishes specific regimes and obligations distinctly related to wildlife protection resources, including provisions enabling the Cree Nation Government to train and hire 19 wildlife protection assistants.

The program is at its initial development stage and will be catered to respond to Cree governance objectives to preserve the land and Cree cultural ways, as well as provide support and assistance to the tallymen, wildlife protection officers and other concerned Cree and non-Cree organizations in the surveillance, protection and management of land and resources while integrating cultural responsibilities.

The program will provide a new land-based career opportunity for individuals aspiring to work on the land, for the conservation of the land and for the preservation of the Cree way of life.

Following the release of Quebec's *Woodland Caribou Habitat Management Strategy*, Minister Dufour announced its intent to conduct consultations and form the Woodland Caribou Operational Regional Group to implement the strategy throughout the regions in Quebec. The Cree Nation Government immediately initiated discussions with MFFP to address the need for better coordination with the Cree Nation, given the particular context of the territory and agreements. A table was put in place with the Deputy Minister Drouin to address Cree concerns and ensure adaptations to MFFP's proposed strategy and process.

The Quebec government initiated consultations in May-June 2019 throughout all concerned regions in Quebec. The Cree Nation Government coordinated consultations in Mistissini where the Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum welcomed Minister Dufour to present the strategy to the communities represented.

In sum, the proposed strategy seeks to 1) maintain large forest tracts combined with the regrouping of cutting blocks into larger cutting areas, and 2) keep disturbance within caribou habitat under 35 percent as proposed in the Federal Recovery Strategy. The strategy proposed to identify three main components by which Woodland caribou habitat would be protected, managed and restored:

- **Large Suitable Areas;** which are areas that have undergone little to moderate disturbance and in which

forestry operations will be adapted to maintain quality habitat

- **Restoration Zones;** which are habitats that have undergone severe disturbance and in which forestry operations will be adapted to encourage active restoration to ensure quality habitat is re-established as quickly as possible
- **Connectivity Zones;** which include habitat that will allow for exchanges between caribou populations as well as provide connections between the large suitable areas and habitat undergoing restoration.
- The Quebec Stewardship Action Plan on Woodland Caribou Habitat Management is currently under review by the Cree-Quebec Technical Committee/Regional Operational Group on Woodland Caribou.

Cree-Quebec Technical Committee/Regional Operational Group on Woodland Caribou

The Cree Nation Government has been collaborating with Quebec on the feasibility and adaptations necessary to ensure adequate management of habitat for the recovery of Woodland Caribou. As part of the Cree-Quebec Caribou Table between Murdoch and Deputy Minister Drouin, it was agreed that the Cree-Quebec Technical Committee would also assume the mandate of the Operational Regional Group for the Nord-du-Quebec Region, a forum as



proposed by the Minister, that would be established for each region to address the issues related to the strategy. Given the minister had proposed the formation of the Regional Operational Group composed of various stakeholder including municipalities, forestry companies, and other concerned associations, the Cree Nation stressed that discussion on the feasibility of the strategy should be taken place first and foremost on the Nation-to-Nation basis, however recognized that these discussions could benefit from knowledge and expertise of other stakeholders and as such they would be invited to feed the discussions at key steps of the process as determined by the Cree and MFFP coordinator of the committees. The mandate of the Technical Committee/ROG was therefore reviewed and adapted to reflect the territorial context and include the following objectives:

- Propose adaptations to the main lines of the Strategy and to the terms of the Adapted Forestry Regime (AFR) that will allow the Strategy's aims to be achieved while respecting the aims of the AFR, the Agreement to resolve the Baril-Moses forestry dispute, and the principles of Sections 22 and 24 of the JBNQA. These adaptations may focus on mutually acceptable management techniques to better protect wildlife habitats of the caribou (see ss. 3.10.5a and 3.11.1c of the AFR) and restore woodland caribou habitats, among other things through dismantling and reforestation of existing and future forest roads.
- Propose a basic caribou habitat management scenario for the area covered by the AFR using the concepts of extensive favourable areas, habitats undergoing restoration, and connectivity zones with different options.
- Assist with the adaptation and implementation of monitoring measures to assess the Strategy's effectiveness, in particular with respect to the woodland caribou population monitoring program (including consideration of Cree and scientific knowledge) and monitoring of woodland caribou habitat disturbance levels.
- Propose solutions to other issues that may arise during consultations/verifications with Cree tallymen,

forestry companies, and the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG), and/or during preparation of the adapted strategy.

Woodland Caribou Workshop

In light of the Quebec Habitat Management strategy, the Cree Nation Government organized a workshop in May 2019 with all concerned communities and tallymen to have their input and concerns on the components and feasibility of Quebec's strategy. This event was made possible with the financial contribution of Environment Canada. The participants raised several concerns and recommendations through round table discussions on the proposed strategy including road restoration, integration of Cree knowledge, access issues, adequate protection of habitat, concerns of large cutting blocks, etc. A report on the result of the workshop is currently being finalized and will help feed discussions of the Cree-Quebec Technical Committee on Woodland Caribou.

Development of Range Plan for Woodland Caribou in Eeyou Istchee

The Cree Nation Government has obtained a 5-year funding agreement (2018-2023) to develop a Range Plan for Woodland Caribou in Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Nation has therefore approached the University of Abitibi-Temiscamingue in Quebec to seek their expertise and support to develop the range plan. The mandate and service proposal are currently in discussion. This work will be coordinated with the work undertaken by the Cree-Quebec technical committee on Woodland caribou.

Migratory Caribou

Influx of hunters in Cree territory

In recent years, there have been several concerns over the drastic decline of the Migratory Caribou. Due to the low population level of the George River herd, aboriginal groups who traditionally depended on the herd could no longer access the



herd. This resulted in an increased interest by these aboriginal hunters from other regions to shift their harvest towards the Leaf River herd caribou which roam in the Cree territory during the winter. As a result, an influx of aboriginal hunters entering Cree territory to harvest caribou was observed. This was further facilitated by the practice of non-authorized guiding where JBNQA beneficiaries were acting as guides for non-beneficiary aboriginal hunters. This raised concerns by the Cree on potential impacts to the health and sustainability of the caribou population, the land, safety, traditional practices and treaty rights and obligations. The Cree Nation denounced and prohibited this practice and further requested collaboration from all other aboriginal nations, including the Naskapi and Inuit, to cease hunting of caribou within Cree territory until adequate protocol and guidelines were established.

Interest to harvest caribou in Cree territory was initially brought through the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Table (UPCART), a forum created in 2013 and composed of the seven Indigenous nations harvesting from the Migratory caribou. In its caribou strategy released in 2017, the UPCART defined the need to establish a Sharing Agreement between the nations. The Cree participated in the development of the strategy and were therefore open to continue discussions towards a Sharing Agreement, which would lead to potential access to the Leaf River herd, but this needed to prioritise the health and conservation of the herd and respect the interest and concerns of the Cree, including our treaty obligations. These concerns were reiterated to the Innu Nation in Quebec following their request to harvest caribou in Cree territory. A meeting with representatives of the Innu nations was held in October 2019 on this matter. During this meeting the Cree Nation Government reiterated the need to take precautions to ensure the health and sustainability of the Leaf River population, and reiterated that discussions with the Inuit and Naskapi were required in order to ensure a common approach to the feasibility of a sharing agreement with non-beneficiaries

of the JBNQA. In addition, the Cree Nation Government presented a draft *Understanding between the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi on the harvest of Caribou in Cree traditional territory*, that could serve as a basis for a sharing agreement with other nations, once the caribou resource is sustained and more available. Although a sharing agreement is not yet in place, the Cree Nation agreed to organise a gifting of 20 caribou to the Innu elder's following a request made by them earlier in the year. The gifting caribou was a symbolic gesture to foster continued nation to nation relations. The Cree Nation Government therefore coordinated with Mistissini and Chisasibi for the delivery of these caribou to the Innu community of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam.

Mutual Understanding between the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi the harvest of caribou

A mutual understanding between the Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi was proposed by the Cree Nation, as a first step to ensure mutual respect and good relations between the nations, with emphasis on the health, conservation, management and harvest of caribou. A series of consultations with the CTA and affected tallymen in Chisasibi were conducted throughout the year. The objectives of the agreement are defined as follows:

1. Establish a mutual understanding as it relates to access and sharing of caribou between Cree, Inuit and Naskapi;
2. Provide a process and framework whereby the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi may harvest caribou outside of their territory (primary and common areas of interest);
3. Establish a common framework and mechanism to ensure respect of each party's respective rights and interests;
4. Pursue common objective with respect to the governance of caribou management in the territory.

This Understanding now clearly defines a protocol and authorization procedure between the Cree, Naskapi and



Inuit when harvesting caribou in each respective Territory. It is hoped that this Understanding will serve as a basis for similar understandings with other nations. The mutual understanding was accepted by the Naskapi and is currently awaiting input from the Inuit party.

In the meantime, the Cree Nation has concluded, as a temporary measure, a Letter of Understanding with the Naskapi in response to their request to harvest caribou in Cree territory.

Implementation of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regime

The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping regime provided under chapter 24 of the JBNQA establishes the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC) who acts as an advisory body to the Governments and local and regional Native authorities on all hunting, fishing, and trapping matters. It has been given the responsibility to review, manage, and in certain cases, supervise and regulate the regimes. It also participates with the responsible minister of Canada or Québec in the management of wildlife species in the Territory, either through decisional or consultative recommendations. The responsible Québec or Federal government is obliged to consult the HFTCC and must strive to follow the

HFTCC advices. For certain species such as the Moose, Caribou and Black bear, the HFTCC have decisional powers to set an upper limit of kill and make management decisions. The mandate of the Coordinating committee is described more specifically through section 24.4.27 to 24.4.38 of the JBNQA.

The coordinating committee is composed of representatives from Inuit, Naskapi and Cree territory as well as provincial and federal representatives. Cree members appointed to the committee are DGC Mandy Gull, Isaac Voyageur and Nadia Saganash. Advisory support is provided by Alan Penn, Emily Sinave and executive members of the Cree Trappers' Association; Fred Tomatuk, Richard Shecapio and Allan House.

The HFTCC meets in person four times a year, with two of those meetings normally taking place in Cree, Inuit or Naskapi territory. Numerous teleconference meetings are held as needed. The HFTCC has several sub-committees and working groups tasked with specific mandates. This past year the HFTCC held its regular meeting in person and teleconference as follows;

- March 28, 2019 – Teleconference
- May 23, 2019 – Teleconference
- June 11-12 – Teleconference
- August 15, 2019 – Teleconference
- September 4-5, 2019 - Kangiqsujuaq
- September 20, 2019 – Teleconference
- November 07, 2019 – Teleconference
- November 27-28, 2019 – Montreal
- February 04, 2020 – Teleconference
- March 12-13, 2020 - Duchesnay

Activities related to the Implementation of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee include participation as a member to the HFTCC, the administrative committee and several work groups including the management of migratory caribou, legislation, and outfitting. As a member of the HFTCC, support to other files such as Lake Sturgeon and moose management have been provided on an ad-hoc basis to the wildlife unit of the Environment department.



Implementation of the Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement – Wildlife Management and Traditional Activities

The Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement, signed in 2018 between the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou, the Cree Nation of Mistissini and Pekuakamiulnuatsh Ilnu Nation (Mashteuiatsh), established several implementation committees to address the main components of the agreement, namely, wildlife and traditional activities management, economic development and forestry management.

Participation in the implementation of the Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement has focused on the coordination and discussions of the Wildlife Management and Traditional Activities Committee. The committee has met sev-

eral times since to review each party's respective structures, territorial context, issues and expectations. Next steps will mainly be focused on developing a recommendation report, which will include amongst others, common rules for management of wildlife harvesting activities and other traditional activities, including access and occupation.

In view of responding to the committees' concern on the need for support to advance, the Cree Nation Government has inquired on additional resources to support the work of the committees. This additional support will also help assist in conducting required consultations with the concerned land users.

The meetings of the Wildlife Management and Traditional Activities Committee are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Meeting of the WMTAC	Topics Discussed
1st meeting: November 5, 2018 Ouje-Bougoumou (Meeting was held following all committees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the intent and spirit of the agreement • Review of section of the agreement • Presentation of participants of committee • Request for extension of deadline • Topic proposal for next meetings in order to better understand our nations structures, practices and realities.
2nd meeting: November 26-27, 2018 Ouje-Bougoumou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of mandate to ensure a common understanding • Prioritization of mandates objectives and tasks • Operating procedures of the Committee (secretary, meeting place, frequency, drafting of recommendations, meeting with land users...) • Decision on the request for extension of deadline • Presentation on profile of the Territory (Nitassinan), structure of Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan and presentation of the Code of Practices on Wildlife Harvesting • Development of list of issues and action plan concerning the development of rules for the management of wildlife harvesting activities and other traditional activities within Peschitaskau, and drafting of recommendations report
3rd meeting: December 13, 2018 Mashteuiatsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of issues raised by the land users that each party met with (meeting of land users by each community) • Presentation of department of territorial officers, work practices, relations with members and of wildlife officers, etc. • Planning and organization of joint meeting with all users concerned • Revision of action plan to develop recommendations report
4th meeting: January 15-16, 2019 Mistissini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Code of Occupation and Use of the Territory of Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan; • Presentation of Cree administrative structures (Ouje-Bougoumou, Mistissini, Cree Nation Government); • Presentation of CTA (constitutions, members, programs, relations with band councils and CTA) as well as of Eeyou indohoh Weeshou-wehwun - Traditional Eeyou hunting law • Revision of action plan
5th meeting: March 12-13, 2019 Mashteuiatsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications needed with regard to migratory bird hunting, moose hunting, as well as use and occupation of Peschitaskau • Discussion to organise meeting between Katipelitak and Tallyman; • Discussion on budgetary issues for agreement implementation; • Compensation given to Cree vs Ilnu land users who participate in meetings, role of Elders; • Sharing of information about land users of each First Nation, (operation and confidentiality) • Feedback on codes of practice and application of rules; • Clarification on cabin management on Nitassinan side

Table 1 (Continued)

Meeting of the WMTAC	Topics Discussed
<p>Technical meeting January 20, 2020, Mistissini (Technical meeting held following the leadership meeting on the implementation update of the MAAMUU WIICHEUTUWIN agreement.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on the work accomplished • Discussion on the action plan for the recommendation report • Item identified for recommendation report to be reviewed with committee.
<p>6th meeting: February 25, 2020 Ouje-Bougoumou</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of completed work and next steps • Review codes of practices and identification of common matters • Elaboration & review of structure for recommendation reports • Planning and organisation of joint meeting with all concerned Land Users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pending budget clarification • Follow-up on budget matter and hiring of support • Revision of action plan
<p>7th meeting: Initially planned in Mashteuiatsh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postponed due to COVID-19 • Conference call to be rescheduled

Outfitting Regime and the Right of First Refusal Negotiations

The Right of First Refusal is a process established in Section 24 of the JBNQA in view of favoring the establishment of outfitting operation by the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi. While in Category II land, outfitting development is exclusive to the native communities, in Category III a process of Right of First Refusal applies to provide priority to native people to establish outfitting operations. Indeed, the JBNQA guarantees that when an outfitting is to be established or transferred the native people may exercise their right to take over such operation. This right may be exercised 7 out of 10 time and the HFTCC oversees the procedures. Since 1996, a moratorium for new outfitting development in Category III has been in place. Consequently, the RFR was only applied when an outfitting business was transferred during a sale. The renewal of the Right of First Refusal as established by paragraph 24.9.3 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was foreseen to expire on November 10, 2015, however section 24.9.4 stipulates that this right shall be renegotiated prior to its expiration. Given the delays and lack of time for proper negotiation, it was agreed between the Natives parties and the government of Quebec to extend the RFR for a period of 6 years. Complementary Agreement No. 25 therefore amended paragraphs 24.9.3 and 24.9.4 of the JBNQA to provide a 6 year extension period enabling the necessary time for Quebec, the Crees, the Inuit and the Naskapis to negotiate the continuation of the Right of First Refusal beyond 2021 on the basis of past experience and actual and future needs.

Negotiation are slowly progressing, however it was recently agreed between the parties that another three year extension may be required in order to complete the negotiations.

Implementation of the Adapted Forestry Regime

Activities related to the implementation of the Adapted Forestry Regime have for the most part been through participation as a member to the Cree Quebec Forestry Board meeting, and providing input and updates on matters related to the Woodland Caribou strategy and works of the Cree-Quebec Technical Committee, and to the development of directives for the protection of wildlife habitats.

Governance on Management of Lake Sturgeon

The recent addition of the Lake Sturgeon as “special concern” under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) triggered the obligation (under article 65 of SARA) for DFO to develop a Management Plan for this species. The unique status of Lake Sturgeon in the territory as a species reserved for the exclusive use by the Cree, as well as the treaty and governance regime in the territory, urged the Cree Nation government to evaluate Cree involvement in the application of the SARA and define a clear framework for the collaboration between the Cree nation and Canada when it comes to Species At Risk in Eeyou Istchee.

Furthermore, certain provisions of our agreements (Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement) relate to a certain extent to the jurisdiction and powers of the Cree Nation to make laws (Cat I and II land), and also potential delegation of powers (namely enforcement) in the application of SARA (Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement).

The initial approach undertaken by DFO was to engage the Cree through its usual consultation process; a format considered inadequate and limited given the specie special status and territorial context. The Cree Nation is seeking to pursue a collaborative framework in which the Cree would take leadership for the development of a management plan for Lake sturgeon in Eeyou Istchee, and certain responsi-

bilities in the application of SARA in general as it concerns species at risk in Eeyou Istchee.

As a first step, given the obligations of SARA to produce a management plan for Lake Sturgeon within two years, the Cree Nation government is pursuing discussion towards a collaborative agreement through section 10 (Administrative Agreement) or section 11 (conservation agreement) of SARA. It is expected that the collaborative agreement for the Lake Sturgeon would lead towards discussions on the feasibility of entering into an Administrative Agreement (defined under section 10 of SARA) for the administration of certain provisions of the act as it relates to present and future species at risk, including the preparation and implementation of recovery strategies, action plans and management. These discussions may also address certain delegation of powers foreseen under section 8 of SARA and the Cree-Canada New Relationship Agreement.

FORESTRY SECTION

Forestry within Eeyou Istchee, specifically the Category II lands, has long been a concern on a local and regional level. During the past year, the mandate to lead the Cree Forestry file has been added to the responsibility of my office. In this role 2019-2020 has produced significant progress on the Cree – Quebec Forestry Economic Council and the Cree Forestry Working Group. Mr. Gillman Ottereyes has joined the Cree Nation Government team, dedicated to the Forestry file.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

With the new structure in place, the Information Technology Department has adopted new centralized systems tools, improved methodology and increased the stability of the various products and services provided.

We have worked during the past year on many projects, we have highlighted some of our best advances below:

Microsoft 365

With the success of last year’s tests, we pursued the migration to Microsoft 365 among other Cree Nation Government Departments. This cloud version of the Microsoft software allows teams a lot of flexibility to collaborate in real time, from anywhere at any time in a secure environment.

By implementing this new software, the organizations capitalize on the benefits of the Microsoft 365 solution that ensures operational continuity during the recent COVID-19 outbreak we encountered. The flexibility of 365 has allowed many of our employees to continue to work productively while staying isolated from the physical work environment.

IP Telephony System

Several add-in options have been explored to take full advantages of the IP telephony systems installed in Montreal, Val-d’Or, and Brossard sites. Among those currently being explored is a new video-conference solution we are testing and planning to install in 2020-2021.

Many other Cree Nation Government sites will be converted to IP phones lowering cost, simplicity of com-

munication and versatility. The implementation of the new infrastructure will allow us to ensure that the existing and new IP telephony sites will be managed from a secure and centralized console.

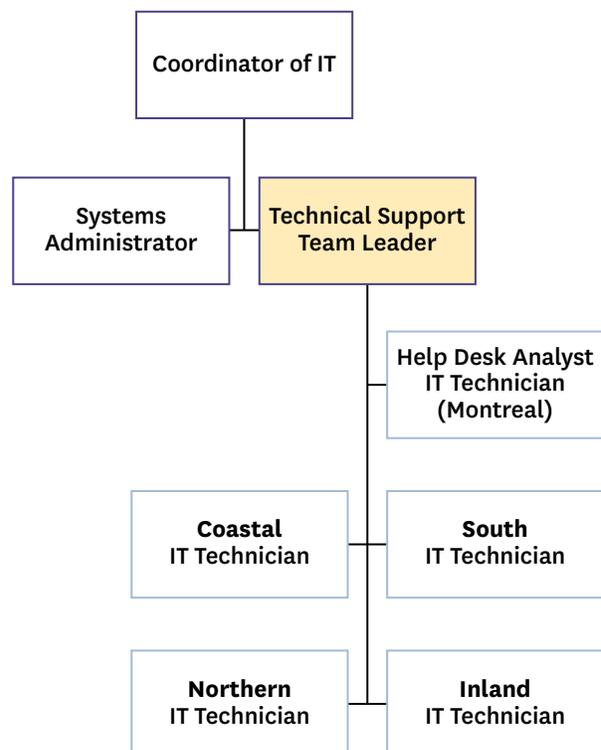
Monitoring, Ticketing and Documentation Systems

The Cree Nation Government Information Technology team installed a monitoring system to ensure a more secure and controlled network environment. By doing so, the IT team can offer the proper functioning of IT equipment, the reliability of networks and systems and take a pre-emptive approach to prevent breakdowns and improve reliability. As a result, our team can devote more time to other important tasks, knowing that in the event of a problem corresponding alerts will be triggered. Monitoring systems have increased coverage and have streamlined our operation.

The IT Department has initiated a ticketing system for services that allows better organized, targeted, effective, and efficient follow-up of incidents and requests. In addition, a new documentation system has been put in place to save time and increase productivity.

As a result of this year improvements, the IT team can offer a more personalized service. The IT employees serve many community locations. We are engaged to continually strive to improve the service delivery and improve customer satisfaction levels.

The organizational structure for the Information Technology Department:



RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM) PROJECT

The Archives – Records and Information Management (RIM) sector can report substantial advances in the RIM project over the 2019-2020 year. The planned Records and Information Management (RIM) project currently underway is now ready to begin the implementation phase of the project.

ANTÈS BUSINESS DESIGN UPDATE

Antès is a company that specializes in Business Design, with strong expertise in defining the optimal use and structure of information within an organization. This past year our RIM team began working with Antès Business Design on the Records and Information Program at Cree Nation Government.

2019-2020 marked the year the Records and Information Management Project between the CNG and Antès ramped up. The vision of the project as well as the optimal framework was defined and approved by Cree Nation Government.

After assessing different options, it was decided in conjunction with the IT team that the SharePoint platform will be the best suited for the project of information management.

To optimize the analysis, design, and deployment for each department, Antès has designed an approach made of six (6) essential steps or milestones that to be executed for a department to be completed and ready. The Cree Nation Government project members will deploy one department at a time.

The first departments targeted are the following (in order): Communications, HR and ASD. Over the course of the exercise, on average over 100 types of documents have been identified, that will be moved and deployed within the new SharePoint platform.

Over the course of the deployment, and because of the potential impacts in the work habits, Antès will be providing the support and the tools for this transition.

During the fiscal year 2020-21, more Cree Nation Government departments will be added to the RIM project as well as the launch of a Cree Nation Government intranet home page, giving Records Management access to all of Cree Nation Government and realizing the full benefits of the project.

In early 2020, the Communications Department will be the first to access their properly classified records according to best practices in SharePoint, thereafter, followed by the Human Resources Department and subsequently Apatisiwin Skills Development Department. We expect that all three departments will be on SharePoint no later than September of this year. Moreover, other departments not yet started in the process will prepare a list based on the types of records generated by the department. This will ensure a smooth transition from one department to another. At this point of the project, substantial progress has been achieved in areas of records classification and retention and disposition schedules.

CONCLUSION

The 2019-2020 year presented many challenges. It is through these challenges that we grow as a team. I can say I am proud of the work we achieved together. We share a common goal to continually improve and to invest in learning and developing our skills. We pride ourselves in knowing that we do our best to serve our members and communities throughout Eeyou Istchee. I believe we can continue to grow our capacity, develop better processes, and continue to deliver excellent services. I congratulate all the team members on an outstanding effort in 2019-2020 and look ahead to an even better year in 2020-2021.

As Deputy Executive Director, I believe that we must continue to emphasize education to all our youth and parents. Our predecessors, negotiators and representatives have provided the agreements that laid the foundation for success as a nation. We as a Government continue to build on that foundation and governance structure. As individuals we must rise to the opportunities available for us. I take this opportunity to encourage all our students to continue to work hard to achieve their goals and make the best of your opportunity and what Eeyou Istchee has to offer you.

Meegwetch ●

COMMUNICATIONS

The communications team carries out day-to-day activities related to the coordination and delivery of information on issues and activities of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Nation Government to people across Eeyou Istchee and the general public. The team also manages the organization's website and social media and ensures that information is made available on all platforms. It also coordinates the issue of press releases and provides assistance in the organization of press conferences and events.

As part of the coordination and promotion of special events, the communications team also assisted the Deputy Executive Director's Office, the Department of Commerce and Industry and Capital Works and Services with the preparation and organization of the *Town Hall Meeting on Cree Priorities, Housing and Free Trade* which took place in Val-d'Or on April 16 and 17, 2019. This event saw over 200 participants from all communities that provided direction and actions for the Cree Nation Housing Initiative. Another event that the team helped organize was the *Summit on Building Capacity for Eeyou Istchee*, which took place on October 23 and 24, 2019, in Montreal. A report on the data collected during the Summit's Cree Café sessions was prepared by the communications team to present to the Cree Leadership. It included responses from community representatives to the questions prepared by the different entities on Capacity Building and provided a portrait of the issues and priorities identified per community.

The team also assists in the preparation and logistics of the Annual General Assembly, which took place last year in Nemaska from August 6 to 9, 2019. The team makes sure that Livestream broadcasts, presentations and the annual reports are made available on social media and the website. On the second evening of the Assembly, a special tribute to former MP Romeo Saganash was organized to acknowledge his contribution to the Cree Nation and his role in advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The team also offers support and services to departments in their communications and marketing needs. This past year, the team assisted the Wildlife Protection Assistants' Project with the development of a logo for the Land Keeper of Eeyou Istchee which will be unveiled shortly.

The communications staff also collaborated with Concordia University, as they offered a course titled *First Peoples – The Crees of Eeyou Istchee*, by providing some of the course materials and helping bring in guest speakers, including Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull, to share their experience in Cree history and way of life with the students.

Another project that the team is working on is the Cree Nation Government's Corporate Video Project, which will

showcase the numerous advancements of the Cree Nation over the past 45 years and will share with the audience the vision that the signatories of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, as well as past and current Cree leaders, had for our Nation. The video will serve as an introduction for the Grand Chief who is often invited to make presentations in a variety of events and conferences.

Under the mandate of the Deputy Executive Director, the communications team has also been taking part in the Records Information Management project to determine the file structure for storing items within SharePoint folders. Updating the filing system of the Cree Nation Government is not a small task and will require adequate time and input from departments. As part of the ongoing effort to receive training and build skills, the communications staff participated in an Office 365 course on January 13 and 14, 2020. Although the team has begun using Office 365 3 years ago as a pilot, this training provided the opportunity for the staff to learn to use new apps within Office 365 and learn new features that will help the team become more proficient using the platform that has now been integrated with other departments. Another course taken by team was a Mobile Journalism (MOJO) training given by Concordia University professor and former journalist, Aphrodite Salas, on February 25, 2020. With the MOJO training, the team has learned to create short videos for social media.

In an effort to help promote the efficient dissemination of information, the Communications team regularly meets with their counterparts from other regional entities to discuss strategies and plans, tools, and upcoming events. The objective of these meetings is to help create a better flow of information between entities and, most importantly, to the people. The last Regional Eeyou Istchee Communications meeting took place on January 15, 2020 at the Cree Nation Government office in Montreal. This was an opportunity for the team to meet with other Cree entities' communications department to promote activities and events, as well as other projects of interest to the Cree Nation in the upcoming year.

Since March 2019, the communications staff has been part of the Cree Nation Government's COVID-19 Response Team put in place to produce and distribute up-to-date information concerning the pandemic. Central to the dissemination of information, this is a concerted effort to keep community members in Eeyou Istchee safe and healthy. A summary of the tri-weekly or bi-weekly calls between the Cree leadership and the entities, the Public Update provides current information on the situation of the pandemic in Eeyou Istchee and the different measures adopted to help reduce the spread of the virus in the region.

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government's Quarterly Newsletter was launched in August 2018 to deliver news articles, promote events and publications in a newsletter format by email for all subscribers. If you have a story or an event to share with Eeyou Ist-

chee, you can contact the communications team to have it included in the Newsletter. To receive the Newsletter with the latest news, information about upcoming events and other updates, you may register on the homepage of the website: www.cngov.ca

SOCIAL MEDIA IN NUMBERS

(April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020)



5.9K
Fans

↑1513
increase this year

The total number of fans (people who liked the Page) for your Pages



2.4K
Followers

↑183
increase this year

The number of people who are following your Twitter accounts



783
Followers

↑188
increase this year

The number of people who are following your Instagram accounts



1K
Followers

↑468
increase this year

The total number of people who are following your LinkedIn account



9.7K
Engagements

The sum of reactions, comments and shares received by content associated with your Pages (for the selected timeframe). Includes comments from the author of the post



1.4K
Engagements

The sum of interactions received for the tweets published in the selected time-frame: retweets, replies and likes



303
Engagements

The sum of likes and comments received by all your Instagram posts



464
Engagements

The sum of reactions, comments and shares received by content associated with your Pages (for the selected time-frame)

LIVESTREAM STATISTICS

(April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020)



13
Broadcasts

By the Cree Nation
Government

VIEWERSHIP

17,214
Views

Viewers watched a total of 294,214 minutes of content this year. With an average watch time of 22:10 minutes

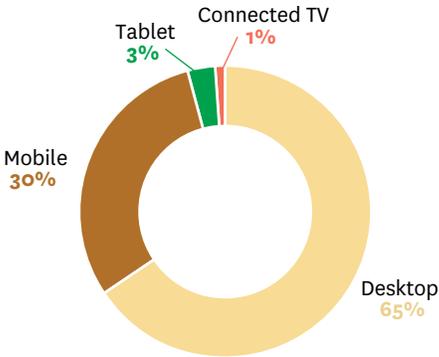
LOCATION

95%
Canadian Viewers

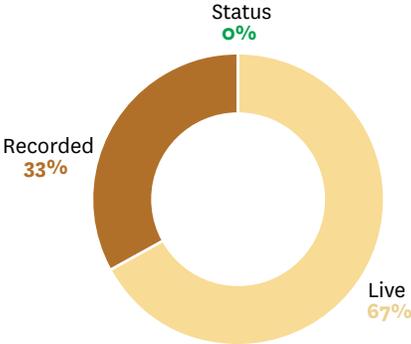
With 70% of that audience being from Quebec, and 23% from Ontario. Top viewers by location are Chisasibi, Chibougamau and Montreal

PREFERENCES

Device Preferences



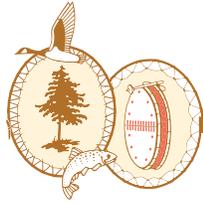
Media Type



Most people watch our broadcasts live and prefer watching on a computer. This closely matches Social Media analytics and demographic information. Our audience is working age, and tend to access content during working hours.

WEBSITE STATISTICS

(April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020)



VIEWERSHIP

66,446

Users

102,481 Sessions (1.54 per user)

Viewing an average of 2 pages per session
for about 1:48 – 2:35 minutes

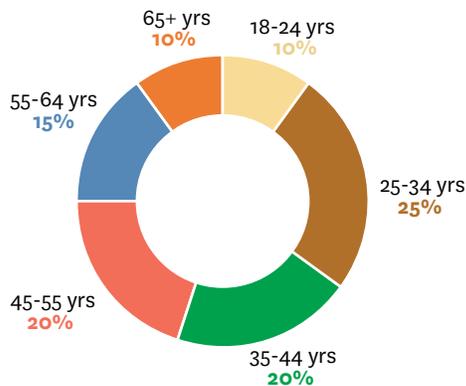
TOP PAGES

1. Indian Day School Settlement (34,021)
2. Homepage (29,468)
3. Careers (20,264)
4. Contacts (6,330)
5. News and Issues (Main) (3,625)
6. ASD Department Page (3,550)
7. FR / Homepage (3116)
8. Council Board (2,897)
9. Police (2,754)
10. Agreements and Governance (2,720)

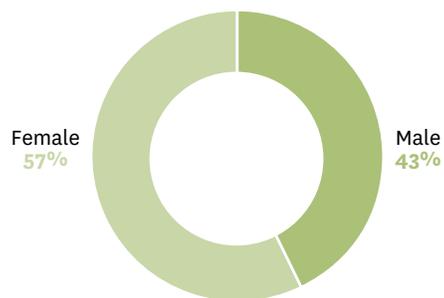
People visiting our site tend to have a 1.5- 2.1 page view flow. Finding information that is promoted directly is significantly higher than organic search.

PREFERENCES

Age Distribution



Gender Distribution



Our audience is primarily within the working population ages 25-64, with a significant percentage being female at 57%. ($p \leq .10$)

CREE-CANADA RELATIONS

SPECIAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

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 *Agreement concerning a New Relationship between the Government of Canada and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee*, concluded on February 21, 2008 (*Federal NRA*), and the *Agreement on Cree Nation Governance between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Government of Canada*, concluded on July 18, 2017 (Cree Nation Governance Agreement).

Based on this special treaty relationship, the Cree Nation maintains a bilateral relationship with the Government of Canada at the highest level. The *Federal NRA* and the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* have settled most of the outstanding governance and fiscal issues between the Cree and Canada. These Agreements include bilateral mechanisms for the implementation of the JBNQA and related agreements and for dispute settlement.

The Cree-Canada Standing Liaison Committee established by the *Federal NRA* provides a forum to strengthen relations between the Cree and Canada, to address issues involving Cree-Canada relations and to resolve differences as they arise. Bill Namagoose is the lead representative of the Cree Nation on the Cree-Canada Standing Liaison Committee. His counterpart and lead federal representative is Assistant Deputy Minister Ross Pattee. Mr. Pattee is responsible for the Implementation Branch within the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA). Bill Namagoose also maintains working relations with Senior Assistant Deputy Minister Joe Wild of CIRNA and Jean-François Tremblay, Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on various Cree matters.

FEDERAL ELECTIONS

The 2019 federal election was held on October 21, 2019. The Liberal Party, led by incumbent Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, won 157 of the 338 seats in the House of Commons and formed a minority government. Romeo Saganash decided not to stand again for election. Ms. Sylvie Bérubé for the Bloc Québécois is the newly elected Member of Parliament for Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou.

On November 20, Prime Minister Trudeau announced his new Cabinet. Carolyn Bennett remained the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Marc Miller became the new Minister of Indigenous Services.

On December 5, Prime Minister Trudeau unveiled his Government's agenda, which contains six key priorities,

including a commitment to continue the work to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples. This commitment builds on the Liberal government's promise made in 2015 of a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Among other things, the Government has promised that it will:

- Ensure that it is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements with Indigenous Peoples;
- Take action to co-develop and introduce legislation to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in the first year of the new mandate;
- Continue work to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and the MMIWG's Calls for Justice, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples; and
- Continue to invest in Indigenous priorities, in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

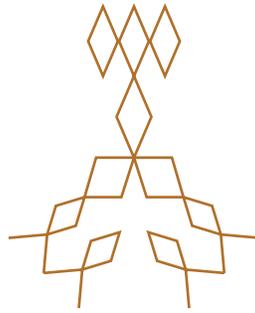
While these promises offer some encouraging signs, vigilance is needed to ensure that Canada delivers on its commitments in the cause of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

CREE NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT AND CREE CONSTITUTION

Cree Self-Government

Although the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, the *Cree Constitution* and the *Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act* have been in effect for over two years, it is important to recall some key points:

- As of their coming into effect on March 29, 2018, the *Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act*, together with the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* and the *Cree Constitution*, replace the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* with respect to the Crees, Cree First Nations, Cree Nation Government and Category IA lands.
- Existing arrangements regarding Cree local and regional governance powers on Category IA lands, as well as the land regime, including access and the grant of rights in lands and buildings, have been largely maintained and transferred from the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* into the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* and the *Cree Constitution*, subject to certain amendments mentioned below.
- Under the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, the Cree First Nations and the Cree Nation Government keep essentially the same powers and responsibilities on Category IA lands that they had under the *Cree Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*. However, both levels of Cree



Government now exercise their powers by enacting laws, not by-laws.

- The existing tax and seizure exemption regimes for Crees and Cree First Nations under sections 187 to 193 of the *Cree Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* continue to apply as set out in Chapters 19 and 20 of the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* and sections 14 to 20 of the *Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act*, the whole subject to Section 9 of the JBNQA, with certain specific amendments mentioned below concerning the seizure exemption.
- The *Cree Constitution* removes the residual oversight of the federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations in respect of certain powers and the financial administration of the Cree First Nations.
- The *Cree Constitution* also removes the requirement for electors' approval for a change of name of a Cree First Nation, local taxation (but only if the council decides by special majority to make a law in this regard), the consent to an individual's waiver of the exemption from seizure for residential mortgage purposes, and long-term borrowing for community housing.
- The *Cree Constitution* sets out new requirements in terms of financial accountability, as well mechanisms for internal appeal and redress and procedures on access to information.
- The *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* has been renamed the *Naskapi and the Cree-Naskapi Commission Act*. The amended Act only applies to the Naskapis, with one important exception. The amended Act provides for the continued operation of the Cree-Naskapi Commission in its "ombudsman" role of investigating representations made by Cree or Naskapi beneficiaries regarding implementation matters.
- With the coming into force of the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, Canada paid to the Cree Nation Trust the last \$200 million provided for in the *Federal NRA*.

The *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, the *Cree Constitution* and the Cree laws adopted pursuant to them

represent another step in implementing Cree self-government in compliance with the JBNQA treaty.

Fiscal Relations

The *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* and the *Federal NRA* have renewed fiscal relations between the Cree and Canada in compliance with the JBNQA. As part of these renewed fiscal relations, and among other things, the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* provides long-term core funding commitments for operations and maintenance and for capital costs until 2040, and sets out the framework for the negotiation of a successor agreement to the *Federal NRA* beyond 2028.

"Treaty Trumps Policy"

On August 27, 2019, the Government of Canada announced a new fiscal policy respecting self-government arrangements for "Modern Treaty and Self-Governing" (MTSG) Indigenous governments, also known as the "Collaborative Fiscal Policy". This new policy was "co-developed" through a collaboration process between Canada and most self-governing Indigenous governments that began in 2016.

Overall, the Collaborative Fiscal Policy does not differ fundamentally from Canada's self-government fiscal policy, in place since at least 2015. These policy statements are based on essentially the same key principles including "shared responsibility" for self-government and the use of Indigenous "own-source revenue" (OSR) to support self-government and services to members.

The Cree position, as communicated to Canada on various occasions during the governance negotiations and after the conclusion of the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, is that "treaty trumps policy". In other words, the JBNQA treaty and related agreements should not and will not be made dependent on federal policy, which can be changed unilaterally by Canada by simple administrative policy change.

Consequently, the Cree Nation has not participated in the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Process nor is it bound by this process or the resulting Collaborative Fiscal Policy. In

The Cree Nation Housing Strategy is a \$1.5B initiative with very significant potential for unlocking wealth for Cree individuals and stimulating the economies of the Cree communities, and of Quebec and Canada, while, at the same time, creating employment and solving a number of persistent social issues related to overcrowded housing.

any case, the *Federal NRA* and the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* have settled most of the fiscal issues between the Cree Nation and Canada regarding governance on Category IA lands that are being addressed for other self-governing groups that participated in the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Process.

After considerable reflection, the GCCEI/Cree Nation Government decided that it was necessary to withdraw from the Land Claims Agreements Coalition (LCAC). This was necessary in order to remove any confusion created by overlap between the members of the LCAC and those of the MTSG groups, as many of these groups that took part in the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Process are also members of the LCAC. The Crees must now focus our efforts on implementing our Treaty through our special bilateral relationships with Canada and Quebec.

Amendment #1 – Cree Nation Housing

On April 17, 2019, the Crees and Canada concluded the first amendment (Amendment #1) of the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* as a key measure to support the Cree Nation Housing Strategy. This amendment to the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* removes the previous 75-year term limit on residential land grants for Crees. This measure will allow Cree homeowners to build up equity in their homes and help to create a private homeownership market for Crees on Category IA lands.

This amendment, which has been in effect since April 17, 2019, enables the Cree First Nations to grant to Crees, with respect to their Category IA lands, perpetual rights of superficies for residential purposes. This applies only for Crees, and only for residential purposes. The 75-year term limit continues to apply to grants of superficies to persons other than Crees as well as to grants for non-residential purposes.

CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

For many years, the Cree Nation Government and the Cree First Nations have worked collaboratively to develop the Cree Nation Housing Strategy to address the urgent needs of community members for affordable and adequate housing.

The Cree Nation Housing Strategy is a \$1.5B initiative with very significant potential for unlocking wealth for Cree individuals and stimulating the economies of the Cree communities, and of Quebec and Canada, while, at the same time, creating employment and solving a number of persistent social issues related to overcrowded housing.

The Cree Nation Housing Strategy is comprehensive, addressing all sectors of Cree community housing. A cornerstone of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy is the prioritization of private homeownership by the Crees. The Strategy will also address social welfare requirements and special needs of Cree elders, trappers, disabled and youth.

Implementation of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy will improve access to housing in Cree communities by:

- Facilitating private homeownership for those Crees who wish to take advantage of this option;
- Unlocking value and creating wealth for Cree homeowners;
- Assuming and enhancing federal community housing programs;
- Freeing social housing units for lower income Crees, elders and youth; and
- Expanding business opportunities for Cree entrepreneurs in, for example, the construction sector and rental housing market.

Under the private housing program, the Cree Nation Government has already set aside very significant resources to facilitate Cree construction and ownership of at least 1,000 new private homes in the Cree communities. The Cree Nation Government has also committed significant funds for related infrastructure investments such as drinking water and wastewater facilities and civil works projects.



To be effective, the Cree Nation Housing Strategy requires partnerships between the Cree Nation and the Federal and Quebec governments, as well as with the private sector, including financial institutions, private homeowners and investors.

Cree and federal representatives have established a special Cree-Canada Housing Table to develop a Cree-Canada partnership to support the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, in compliance with Section 28 of the JBNQA.

For the time being, Cree representatives are pursuing separate discussions with Quebec representatives to address Quebec's participation in the Cree Nation Housing Strategy and to explore the possibility of developing a Cree-Quebec Housing Agreement.

Apatisiwin Skills Development

This year, Cree and federal representatives concluded discussions on the renewal of federal funding arrangements to support Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) for the period 2019-2028.

This funding forms part of what is referred to as the "base funding" to support ASD. The provision by Canada of this "base funding" is a key condition for the Cree Nation Government to assume certain federal responsibilities under section 4.3 of the *Federal NRA* and under Sub-Section

28.9 of the JBNQA. As such, this "base funding" relates to Canada's obligation under section 4.12 of the *Federal NRA* to provide funding for training programs and facilities.

This "base funding" has been provided to the Cree Nation Government through a contribution agreement since the signing of the *Federal NRA*, which contains many terms and conditions. From now until the end of the *Federal NRA* in 2028, Canada will provide this "base funding" to the Cree Nation Government through a "grant funding" arrangement. This new approach will provide greater flexibility in the use of such funding and will streamline administrative and reporting requirements.

Cree and federal representatives have agreed to amend the *Funding Transfer Payment Agreement regarding the Cree Associations (2018-2028)* and use this existing grant funding agreement as a vehicle for the new ASD "base funding" arrangements. These new arrangements provide that federal funding levels for the entire period of the *Federal NRA (2008-2028)* remain an outstanding matter, and that the parties maintain their respective positions as to whether such funding levels comply with section 4.12 of the *Federal NRA*, the whole subject and without prejudice to Cree rights and claims.

Cree and federal representatives have also concluded a companion contribution agreement for Employment

Insurance funding for the period 2019-2028. Federal funding to support childcare is provided through this contribution agreement until next year. Discussions will continue with federal representatives with a view to eventually transferring federal childcare funding through the new ASD “base funding” arrangements instead.

Amendments to the JBNQA

In accordance with the *Federal NRA*, Cree and federal representatives are pursuing discussions on various complementary agreements to the JBNQA regarding changes to (i) the formula to amend the JBNQA, (ii) Section 3 (eligibility) and (iii) Section 4 (land descriptions).

Amending Formula

Cree, federal and Quebec representatives have agreed in principle on certain changes to modernize the formula to amend the JBNQA. In addition, the parties will consider technical changes, such as replacing “Cree Regional Authority” by “Cree Nation Government” throughout the JBNQA.

Eligibility (Section 3)

Cree and federal representatives, with the participation of Quebec representatives, have concluded discussions on the text of a new Complementary Agreement No. 28 to make certain changes to Section 3 of the JBNQA regarding Cree eligibility for benefits under the JBNQA. The changes will confirm that Crees who leave or are relocated from the JBNQA Territory for reasons of education, health or work with certain Cree governmental organizations will not be penalized by the ten-year clause and will continue to enjoy benefits under the JBNQA. The same will apply to their “Cree dependents” who accompany them.

The scope of these changes and the mandate of the parties to make these changes were agreed to in the *Federal NRA*. Consequently, no other changes to Section 3 JBNQA have been made to date.

The Cree Nation Government has approved these changes. Canada and Quebec are in the process of formally approving Complementary Agreement No. 28 for signature by all parties at the earliest opportunity.

Reconfiguration and Final Land Descriptions for Cree Communities (Section 4)

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

- One table to determine the final land descriptions for Cree Category I and II lands with a view to incorporating such final descriptions into the JBNQA and related legislation;
- One table pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves* to address the reconfiguration of the Category I lands of Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Nemaska following the abandonment of the N.B.R. Complex project.

Changes to Section 4 and related provisions of the JBNQA will be made in order to incorporate the final territorial descriptions of the Cree Category I lands. The recent

focus has been on the land reconfiguration of Waswanipi and Waskaganish and, to some extent, Nemaska pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves*. The plan is to finalize these land reconfigurations first in order to include them in the final territorial descriptions of Section 4 of the JBNQA.

The experience with respect to the Ouje-Bougoumou / Mistissini land transfer should pave the way for a process to achieve these land reconfigurations and final descriptions.

Cree, Canada and Québec representatives have reviewed drafts of a proposed Waswanipi reconfiguration agreement. A transitional agreement is also being discussed in order to secure the upcoming opening of a new waste management site in Waswanipi, which would eventually be located on Category IA lands, once the reconfiguration is completed.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration discussions also offer the opportunity to the parties to regularize the legal status of various areas, such as the so-called “Roman Catholic Mission Lands”. The parties have started working on options in this respect.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Police Funding

Under Section 19 of the JBNQA, Canada and Quebec must provide funding to the Cree Nation Government for the Eeyou-Eenou Police Force in accordance with a tripartite funding agreement. The funding agreement shall have a minimum duration of five (5) years, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties to such agreement.

Last year, Cree and federal representatives, in collaboration with Québec representatives, concluded a ten-year tripartite agreement concerning the operational funding of the Eeyou-Eenou Police Force required for the period from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2028.

However, funding for capital expenditures and the transportation of accused persons remains an outstanding matter with Canada and Québec. Cree representatives are pursuing high-level discussions to resolve this matter with federal and Quebec representatives. The parties have examined various options to resolve these matters, secure long-term funding for capital expenditures and the transportation of accused persons, and protect Cree rights. Although negotiations have not yet been concluded, there have been some encouraging indications in the recent past.

Funding for Access Roads

Federal funding to upgrade the access roads to coastal Cree communities remains an outstanding matter with Canada. Cree and federal representatives, in collaboration with Quebec representatives, are expected to pursue discussions in an attempt to resolve this matter, in compliance with Section 28 of the JBNQA. Put otherwise, Canada’s funding for community access roads could assist and promote the efforts of the Crees in pursuing the objectives of Section 28 of the JBNQA relating to the economic and community development of Eeyou Istchee.

Infrastructure Funding

Cree representatives are seeking to meet with officials from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and its Indigenous Infrastructure Program to confirm the status of all approvals, allocations, priorities, and any funds set aside for MTSG or LCAC groups, including funds committed for infrastructure in the 2017 federal Budget. They have also been seeking to engage with federal representatives to further define Cree-Canada relations in terms of “regular programs”, in particular, programs related to infrastructure, and to ensure that Crees receive their fair share.

The Crees have made it clear that other parties (MTSG and LCAC groups and/or the Quebec Region of ISC) cannot speak for the Cree Nation in terms of regular program funding allocations. In this regard, the Crees have raised the option of a separate “region” or Cree “carve-out” of federal infrastructure funding, aside from that earmarked for MTSG groups.

Funding for Cree Customary Adoption and Guardianship Certification

Cree representatives have also asked to meet with ISC officials on recurrent funding to support the Cree customary adoption and guardianship certification process. This process aims to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to find preventive approaches to youth protection, and to keep Indigenous children in culturally appropriate Indigenous settings. This Cree process also aligns with ISC objectives, such as the importance of Indigenous families having rules and systems for these types of matters that reflect their own cultures, identities, traditions and ways.

The intention is that this federal support would complement financial support requested from Quebec to help implement this Cree process.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

During this year, Cree and federal representatives pursued discussions to explore an amendment of Section 22 of the JBNQA as a way of securing Cree participation in the “external” federal assessment of projects in the JBNQA

territory, *i.e.* for those projects subject to review under the newly enacted *Impact Assessment Act*.

Under an amendment of Section 22 JBNQA proposed by the Cree Nation Government, Crees would participate in the “external” federal assessment of such projects through the existing JBNQA treaty bodies, *e.g.* Review Panel (COFEX).

If implemented, the Cree proposal to amend Section 22 JBNQA would be consistent with the 2010 *Moses* decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, and would resolve a key portion of the formal dispute over Bills C-38 and C-45. Discussions with federal representatives to implement the *Moses* decision and to address the dispute over those Bills have been ongoing for several years.

Cree representatives have held several technical meetings over the Cree proposal to amend Section 22 JBNQA with federal representatives of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. Discussions have been constructive, but progress has been limited to date, due in part to the federal elections in November and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic.

EYYOU MARINE REGION AGREEMENT

Implementation and Review

Cree representatives began preparations with a view to engaging with federal representatives on (i) the first periodic review of the *Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement*, and (ii) the renewal of its Implementation Plan for the second ten-year planning period (2022-2032).

The parties signed the *Eeyou Marine Region Agreement* on July 7, 2010, and the Agreement came into force on February 15, 2012. The Agreement’s Implementation Plan identifies activities to be undertaken and estimates of certain costs for the initial ten-year planning period (2012-2022). Most of these cost estimates concern the operation and activities of the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board, Planning Commission and Impact Review Board. Cree and federal representatives will have to determine an appropriate estimate of these costs for the next ten-year period, in consultation with these entities.



Bear and Grey Goose Islands

Over the past year, Cree and federal representatives have completed discussions on a Land Exchange Agreement regarding the designation of Bear Island and Grey Goose Island as “Cree lands”, in exchange for a transfer to Canada of Cree lands of equivalent size on South Twin Island.

During the negotiations leading to the *Eeyou Marine Region Agreement*, Canada took the position that Bear Island (approx. 7.3 sq. km.) and Grey Goose Island (approx. 4 sq. km.) could not be included in the selection of Cree Lands. At that time, Canada was concerned about residual contamination associated with the operation of Doppler relay radar stations on Bear Island, and the possibility of unexploded ordnance (UXO's) on Grey Goose Island.

Consequently, the parties provided at paragraph 5.8.7 of the *Eeyou Marine Region Agreement* that, upon completion of the clean-up of contaminated sites on Bear and Grey Goose Islands, the Cree Nation Government could request that Canada designate such islands as Cree Lands, in exchange for a transfer to Canada of Cree Lands of equivalent size.

Following the clean-up of Bear Island and the confirmation from Canada of the low risks associated with past activities on Grey Goose Island, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government requested that Canada designate Bear and Grey Goose Islands as Cree Lands. Cree and federal representatives developed a Land Exchange Agreement to formalize the designation of Bear and Grey Goose Islands as “Cree Lands” and the transfer to Canada of a parcel of Cree Lands of equivalent size on South Twin Island.

Under the proposed agreement, Canada will remain responsible for any residual contamination on Bear Island, and the presence of any unexploded ordnance (UXO's) on Grey Goose Island, as the case may be. The agreement contains indemnification provisions to protect the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government in regard to residual contamination on Bear Island, and the potential presence of UXO's on Grey Goose Island. However, these provisions would not protect the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government if they, or their representatives, were to remove or handle UXO's with- out reasonable care.

In any case, it is imperative for the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government, and any person or visitor, not to remove or handle UXO's at all. According to the Department of National Defence (DND), it is unlikely that UXO's would be found on the island. However, in the unlikely event that such UXO's are found, DND should be notified immediately so that it can take the required measures to remove them.

Canada will work in collaboration with the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government and the concerned Cree communities to carry out the required measures and activities to ensure that any visitors to Grey Goose Island are properly informed of the potential risk of UXO's. In any case, future use of Bear and Grey Goose Islands should take into account these aspects of the history of this region. Therefore, it is highly advisable that documentation on this history be made available at least in Chisasibi and that all those intending to visit and/or use Bear and Grey Goose Islands in the future be made aware of this background history.

Treaty Implementation – Co-Management Regimes

On October 30, 2019, the Federal Court of Canada released a judgment in a case that examines for the first time the treaty provisions of the Inuit and Cree Offshore Treaties. At stake in this case is the respective role and authority of the Wildlife Boards, co-management regimes created by the Treaties, and of the federal Minister responsible for wildlife. Makivik initiated these proceedings in 2017 by filing an application for judicial review of a decision of the Minister of the Environment, acting under the Treaties, to modify a decision of the Wildlife Boards on the number of polar bears that may be harvested annually in Southern Hudson Bay.

The Federal Court essentially endorsed a view that the Minister, acting under the Treaties, may make substantive decisions on wildlife management in the Offshore. However, the Cree position is that the Treaties provide otherwise – that the Wildlife Boards have sole authority to make substantive decisions on wildlife management in the Offshore, and that the Minister merely reviews those decisions of the Wildlife Boards as part of her responsibility to implement and give effect to those decisions.

Makivik and the GCC(EI) have appealed the Federal Court's judgment to the Federal Court of Appeal. In the appeal, the GCC(EI) will essentially argue that, like the Minister, the Federal Court failed to “breathe life” into the Offshore Treaties and to give meaning, purpose and effective application to the treaty-established Wildlife Boards and related treaty provisions.

This appeal presents an opportunity for the Liberal government to put into practice their recent commitment to a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples. On December 5, Prime Minister Trudeau presented his government's new agenda, including a commitment to continue the work to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples. Among other things, the Government promised to live up to the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements with Indigenous Peoples.

NEW CREE FIRST NATIONS

Washaw Sibi

Cree and federal representatives continue discussions regarding the establishment of a new Cree First Nation for the Washaw Sibi Eeyou. In the *Federal NRA*, it was agreed that the Cree Nation Government would be responsible for any costs associated with implementing any option agreed on by the Cree Nation Government and the Washaw Sibi Eeyou regarding their recognition as a separate Cree First Nation. In the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement*, it was also agreed that the formal establishment of a new Cree First Nation would be subject to the conclusion of agreements between the Cree Nation Government and Canada and Québec regarding suitable implementation arrangements.

Mocreebec

Cree and federal representatives continue discussions regarding the establishment of a new Cree First Nation for the Mocreebec Eeyou. Last year, they established a special Cree-Canada Table on Mocreebec, which will enable Cree

Cree First Nations have received funding under the Indigenous Community Support Fund to assist their efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They have also been able to apply under Canada's Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) if they need additional funds to respond to COVID-19 in their communities.

and federal representatives to explore long-term solutions for Mocreebec and their community.

CREE LAND AND HARVESTING RIGHTS IN ONTARIO

In 2016, the Cree Nation commenced, on behalf of all its members, and in conjunction with the nine Cree First Nations currently recognized under the JBNQA as well as the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi, an action in the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario to obtain recognition of the Aboriginal title and Aboriginal rights of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and Cree collectivities over Cree traditional territory in northeastern Ontario.

The action, filed against the Governments of Canada and Ontario, seeks declarations of Aboriginal title (without prejudice to existing rights of other Aboriginal nations) and Aboriginal rights over approximately 48,000 square kilometres of lands located south of James Bay and immediately west of the Ontario-Quebec boundary.

The Cree Nation's action in the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario is essentially the continuation of claims that were first begun by the Cree Nation against Canada in the Federal Court in 1989, in the *Coon Come Proceedings #3*.

Judicial review proceedings were brought against Ontario authorities in 2017, seeking declarations respecting the duty of the Government of Ontario to consult and accommodate the Crees of Eeyou Istchee with respect to regulatory approval processes required for the planned expansion of the Detour Lake Mine. These proceedings have now been settled. In March of 2018, the Government of Ontario acknowledged a duty to consult the Cree Nation in regard to the expansion of the Detour Lake Mine. A consultation process in respect of this project involving the Cree Nation and

the Cree communities of Waskaganish, Washaw Sibi and MoCreebec was initiated during the 2019-2020 year, and it is expected that this consultation process will continue over the coming year and beyond.

The Governments of Ontario and Canada have now begun including the Cree Nation Government and certain Cree communities in consultation and engagement processes in regard to resource development projects in the relevant part of Cree traditional territory in Ontario.

FEDERAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Government of Canada has taken various measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to support the economy in general and certain groups and sectors in particular. As part of these measures, Canada has adopted a COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to provide support for individuals and businesses. Cree First Nations have received funding under the Indigenous Community Support Fund to assist their efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They have also been able to apply under Canada's Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) if they need additional funds to respond to COVID-19 in their communities.

Crees and Cree businesses can apply and receive benefits under other programs, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy programs, if they meet the eligibility criteria. ●

CREE-QUÉBEC RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The year 2019-2020 presented significant challenges and opportunities for the Cree Nation, including in its relations with Québec. The response of the Cree Nation Government showed its stature as a fully mature government. It demonstrated the capacity to exercise a wide range of jurisdictions to protect the rights, health and security of the Cree Nation, to advance its economic development and to foster conditions to create wealth and opportunity for all its citizens. Events of the past year, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, have forged even stronger collaboration between the Cree Nation Government, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree School Board, enabling them to take comprehensive, integrated action to meet the needs of the Cree people.

The Cree Nation continues to take on additional responsibilities and jurisdictions vis-a-vis the Government of Québec, based on the Nation-to-Nation relationship established by our treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), the *Paix des Braves* and the *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement*.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

On February 17, 2020, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and Premier François Legault opened a new chapter in Cree-Québec relations by signing a Memorandum of Understanding creating “La Grande Alliance”. They were accompanied by the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, Sylvie D’Amours, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Jonatan Julien, the Minister of Justice and Minister Responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs and the Canadian Francophonie, Sonia LeBel, as well as Deputy Grand Chief and Vice-Chair Mandy Gull, and the Chiefs of the Cree First Nations of Eeyou Istchee.

La Grande Alliance envisages a transformative 30-year, \$4.7 billion infrastructure program in Eeyou Istchee. The program’s three phases will improve and extend the transportation network (rail, road, port and airport), improve the standard of living (housing, electricity and internet) and guarantee the long-term protection of the territory (protected areas). In the spirit of the *Paix des Braves*, the objective of La Grande Alliance is to create the conditions required for the strategic, predictable and sustainable development of Eeyou Istchee. This program will shape and secure the future of Eeyou Istchee for generations to come.

As the Grand Chief stated at the signing ceremony, a distinctive feature of La Grande Alliance is that it is an initiative of the Cree Nation itself. It represents the Cree vision of

infrastructure development and sustainable economic development in Eeyou Istchee. It was the Cree Nation that proposed this vision to the Government of Québec, not something imposed on the Cree from outside. This initiative flows from a choice freely made by the Cree Nation itself to implement its own vision of how development should proceed in Eeyou Istchee in a way that respects Cree values and the environment.

La Grande Alliance embodies the original vision of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* of a partnership between the Cree and Québec for the governance and development of Eeyou Istchee. It builds on the partnership in development of the *Paix des Braves* of 2002 and the partnership in governance of the *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement* of 2015.

The infrastructure program aims to facilitate the transportation of people and goods in Eeyou Istchee, and to increase the value of natural resources by lowering their transportation costs. La Grande Alliance will act as a hub in organizing and overseeing the development of infrastructure, in the common interest of the Cree and Jamésien communities and enterprises seeking to establish, consolidate or harmonize their presence in Eeyou Istchee.

Over its 30-year span, La Grande Alliance will oversee or coordinate:

- The development of a network of protected areas to provide interconnected corridors for wildlife habitats, including endangered species, such as woodland caribou;
- Strengthening local capacity for the management of these protected areas and wildlife, and helping to ensure social acceptability for infrastructure and resource development plans;
- A comprehensive transportation, energy and communications Infrastructure Program including:
 - More than 700 kilometres of new railway to reduce reliance on road transportation for resource development projects;
 - A deep seaport so businesses can access new markets more effectively;
 - Thousands of kilometres of new or upgraded roads that will make life easier for community members and developers;
 - Hundreds of kilometres of new power lines to deliver affordable and renewable energy to developers and communities;
 - Better access to communication technologies;
- Job training and creation to meet the demand for labour at new projects;
- A strategic alliance to maximize the value for the Cree and Québec of minerals mined in Eeyou Istchee by encouraging their processing here.



The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) creates the Cree-Québec Alliance Council to develop, propose and coordinate the implementation of the Infrastructure Program. Ideally, within 12 months of signing the MOU, the Council is to complete a technical and financial feasibility study in relation to Phase I of the Infrastructure Program and develop a pre-feasibility study for Phases II and III of the Infrastructure Program.

The Council will also be responsible for creating forums of strategic alliance for energy distribution and mineral transformation; ensuring the development of a network of protected areas and other conservation measures; and facilitating enhancement of the fibre-optic and communications network with a view to providing high-speed data access to residents and developers.

On March 27, 2020, the Cree Nation Government entered into a Contribution Agreement with the Government of Québec under which Québec grants the Cree Nation Government \$15 million in order to carry out the technical and financial feasibility study in relation to Phase I of the Infrastructure Program and, subsequently, to develop a pre-feasibility study for Phases II and III of the Infrastructure Program. The Cree Nation Government has committed an equal amount of its own resources for the same purpose.

Summing up the significance of La Grande Alliance, the Grand Chief stated at the signing ceremony:

“This Memorandum of Understanding marks just the first stage in an ambitious process to transform Eeyou Istchee’s infrastructure and economy. The project will help to unlock the wealth of the

region’s varied natural resources and create jobs and business opportunities for the Cree and James Bay residents, while protecting the environment and wildlife. It paves the way to a bright future for our young people by giving them the necessary confidence to build their lives and start families in Eeyou Istchee. The Memorandum of Understanding gives genuine meaning to the nation-to-nation partnership between the Eeyou Istchee Cree and Québec provided for in the 1975 *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* and reaffirmed by the *Paix des braves* in 2002.”

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been the greatest health crisis the world has seen in the past century. It has affected almost every country in the world, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The pandemic has caused very significant illness and loss of life in much of the world, including in Québec and Canada. On March 9, Canada confirmed its first death related to COVID-19.

On March 13, the Government of Québec adopted its first Order in Council declaring a public health emergency throughout the territory of Québec. The government has renewed this emergency every week since then. In addition, the Minister of Health has issued around 40 orders closing schools, colleges, restaurants, sports centres and many other public places. Travel has been restricted between regions of

Québec, including to Eeyou Istchee and Nord du Québec. Social distancing, confinement, self-isolation and quarantine have been imposed in the effort to restrict the spread of COVID-19, an unusually contagious virus.

The province of Québec has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, despite having imposed early and rigorous restrictions. As of this writing, more than half of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Canada have occurred in Québec, and there have been more than 5,000 deaths in Québec related to COVID-19. According to Québec's Public Health Institute, the COVID-19 death rate per million inhabitants has exceeded that of all the other western countries presented except for the United Kingdom.

The COVID-19 crisis has posed special challenges for the Cree Nation. Overcrowded housing, underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and limited medical facilities and services have made the Cree population of Eeyou Istchee particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Faced with this challenge, the Cree Nation took immediate action to protect the health and security of the Cree communities and people. Starting in mid-March, the leadership of the Cree Nation Government, Cree First Nations, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and Cree School Board met three times a week to take stock of the public health conditions in the communities and to take measures to limit the spread of the virus.

Some of these meetings were live-streamed, with the Grand Chief chairing and the participation, as appropriate, of the Cree Health Board Chair Bella Moses Petawabano, Executive Director Daniel St-Amour and Regional Public Health Director Dr. Faisca Richer, Chairperson Dr. Sarah Pash and Director General Abraham Jolly of the Cree School Board and other leaders and resource persons. Some meetings featured question and answer periods for Cree citizens. Each meeting was followed by a Public Update on COVID-19.

As of this writing, thirty-two of these bulletins have been posted on the internet, keeping the population informed about the situation in the Cree communities, social distancing, self-isolation and other public health measures. These bulletins were issued jointly by the Cree Nation Government, Cree Health Board and Cree School Board.

In addition, public notices were posted on the internet to advise the Cree population about restrictions on non-essential travel between regions, guidelines for the spring goose break and bush camps, and restrictions on entry into Cree communities. The Cree School Board took measures to ensure continued support for post-secondary students outside the communities as well as for their return to the communities. The Cree First Nations established control posts at community entrances and enacted laws requiring mandatory self-isolation for persons entering the communities from areas of risk. All these measures were taken in close consultation with the Public Health Department of the Cree Health Board.

The results of these efforts, combined with the discipline and cooperation of the Cree population, have been

outstanding. Despite having one of the most vulnerable populations in Québec, the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee have had the second-lowest number of cases of COVID-19 of any region in Québec. None of these cases were contracted in the Cree communities, and no COVID-19 deaths occurred in the communities. As of June 8, the situation had improved to the extent that deconfinement could begin, cautiously and progressively, enabling Crees to resume travel between the communities.

The measures taken, and the resulting success in combating COVID-19, show once more the power of Cree unity. The Cree Nation Government, Cree Health Board, Cree School Board and the Cree First Nations united to fight the existential threat of COVID-19, demonstrating their capacity to act as one in effective governance for the Cree people.

CREE-QUÉBEC STANDING LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee established by the *Paix des Braves* continues to serve as the clearing house for relations between the Cree and Québec. It provides a forum to resolve potential difficulties as they arise, and helps to strengthen relations between the Cree and Québec. The Cree representatives are Bill Namagoose, Me Paul John Murdoch and Melissa Saganash. Québec's representative is Me Marie-José Thomas, Associate Secretary General of the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat.

The Standing Liaison Committee met regularly in 2019-2020, focusing on certain priority issues, including the following, some of which are discussed in greater detail below:

- (a) "La Grande Alliance" between the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and Québec regarding infrastructure development, environmental conservation and protected areas in Eeyou Istchee, discussed above;
- (b) Representation on joint Cree-Québec JBNQA bodies, such as JBACE, COMEX, HFTCC, ISP and Cree-Québec Forestry Board;
- (c) Inter-ministerial coordination with various Québec Government Departments, including the Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs, Treasury Board, Health and Social Services, Education, Justice, Public Security, Municipal Affairs, Energy and Natural Resources, Forests, Wildlife and Parks, Transport, and others;
- (d) Section 28 JBNQA issues, including contracting and tendering procedures, Cree priority in contracting, definition of "Cree enterprise";
- (e) Renewal of funding arrangements:
 - i. Cree Nation Government under the *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement*;
 - ii. Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay;
 - iii. Cree School Board;
 - iv. Eeyou Eenuou Police Force;
- (f) Implementation of Viens Commission report and recommendations;
- (g) Legislative review:
 - i. Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay;
 - ii. Cree School Board;

In consultation with the Cree First Nations and other Cree stakeholders, the Cree Nation Government continues to put in place the structures, personnel and processes needed to assume its governance responsibilities and to enable Cree leaders to assume their new functions both on the Cree Nation Government and on the Regional Government.

- (h) Sector tables:
- i. Cree Trappers Income Security Board;
 - ii. Protected areas;
 - iii. Caribou;
 - iv. Cree Nation Housing Strategy;
 - v. Customary adoption;
 - vi. Childcare;
 - vii. Forestry.

CREE – QUÉBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

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

Cree Nation Government

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

The Land Use Planning Unit of the Cree Nation Government Department of Environment and Remedial Works is advancing the work of the Eeyou Planning Commission. The Commission is responsible to prepare, in consultation with the Cree First Nations and other stakeholders, a regional land and resource use plan for Category II lands. The Commission is working, in consultation with the Cree communities, on draft policies, principles and

objectives to guide the development of the regional land and resource use plan for Category II lands. These draft policies, principles and objectives will be submitted to the Cree Nation Government for approval and then to the Government of Québec for its concurrence. This work will also take into account the Memorandum of Understanding on La Grande Alliance concluded between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec on February 17, 2020, discussed above.

Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government

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

On January 1, 2020, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum replaced Madame Manon Cyr, Mayor of Chibougamau, as Chair of the Regional Government for a two-year term. Madame Cyr now serves as Vice-Chair.

The Council of the Regional Government is composed of 22 representatives, half Cree and half Jamésien. The Cree representatives are the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Cree Nation Government and the Chiefs of the Cree First Nations. The Jamésien representatives include elected mayors, councillors and officials of the municipalities and territory.

The Council of the Regional Government meets every second month, after the meeting of the Council/Board of

the Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee). Meetings are held alternately in the Cree and Jamésien communities.

Each year, the Regional Government must adopt a budget that is consistent with the provisions of the Governance Agreement, and taking into account funding allocations provided by Québec. During its first five years of operation, the Regional Government is not required to increase taxes, and any shortfall in tax revenues in relation to expenditures during this period must be funded by Québec. For this reason, and during this first five-year period, Québec is required to approve the draft budget of the Regional Government.

The Regional Government is working on clarifying its roles and responsibilities under the Governance Agreement in respect of governance and regional development on Category III lands. This exercise takes into account the respective responsibilities of the Cree Nation Government on Category II lands and of the James Bay Regional Administration with respect to the Jamésiens. It will also take into account the Memorandum of Understanding on La Grande Alliance concluded between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec on February 17, 2020, discussed above.

The Grand Chief is working with Regional Government Vice-Chair Manon Cyr and with senior officials of the Government of Québec to establish a process to assist in clarifying these roles and responsibilities under the Governance Agreement. The process is also to assist in releasing funds committed under the Governance Agreement to enable the Regional Government to carry out practical projects, such as the regional integrated resource and land development plan (PRDIRT) in respect of Category III lands, for the mutual benefit of Crees and Jamésiens.

Governance Agreement Does Not Affect Cree Rights under the JBNQA

Among other things, the Governance Agreement aims to promote the autonomy and development of the Cree Nation. One of its primary objectives is the exercise by the Cree of greater autonomy and responsibilities in the governance of Category II lands, in particular with respect to the planning and use of land and resources.

The Governance Agreement also modernizes municipal and regional governance regimes under Québec laws on Category III lands in order to ensure the equitable representation and participation by the Cree and the Jamésiens on Category III lands.

In other words, the objects of the Governance Agreement are:

- (a) to increase Cree governance and autonomy on Category II lands through the Cree Nation Government; and
- (b) to provide, for the first time, Cree participation in governance on Category III lands as equal partners with the Jamésiens in the Regional Government.

That does *not mean* that the Governance Agreement limits Cree rights on Category III lands. On the contrary, the Governance Agreement *expressly preserves Cree rights* under the JBNQA and the *Paix des Braves*.

As a result, the Governance Agreement does not affect Cree rights with respect to the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regime under Section 24 of the JBNQA. Nor does the Governance Agreement affect Cree rights under the Environmental and Social Protection Regime in Section 22 of the JBNQA, including the roles and jurisdictions of the various environmental bodies, such as the JBACE, COMEV, COMEX, COFEX and the HFTCC.

Again, the Governance Agreement does not affect Cree rights under the *Paix des Braves*, including under the Adapted Forestry Regime and concerning the responsibility of the Cree-Québec Forestry Board for Cree consultation regarding forest management activities.

As for land and resource planning on Category III lands, the Regional Government must consult the Cree Nation Government and the Cree First Nations with regard to the preparation of the Regional Plan for Integrated Land and Resource Development (PRDIRT) for Category III lands. Québec must consult both the Regional Government and the Cree Nation Government in preparing the provincial public land use plan (PATP) for Category III lands.

Funding

Funding for the Cree Nation Government in relation to the Governance Agreement is addressed in paragraph 11.3.17 of the JBNQA and in section 73 of the Governance Agreement. These provisions state that Québec shall fund the Cree Nation Government in accordance with five-year funding agreements. 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 Québec 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 to enter into a funding agreement for financial year 2019-2020, which was concluded on March 27, 2020. Discussions are to resume with Québec regarding the next five-year funding agreement.

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 has been 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. This matter has been recently discussed at the Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee.

Regionalization of Services

(a) Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ)

The Governance Agreement provides for the regionalization of certain Government of Québec services and offices. A first priority was the Commission de la construction

du Québec (CCQ), with the objective of constituting a new CCQ region for the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory. A special table has been established in this regard, with representation of the Cree Nation, the Jamésiens, the Government of Québec and the CCQ. This new CCQ region is vital to ensure fair access for Cree and Jamésien workers for jobs on construction projects in the region. Progress has been limited as some resistance has been encountered from the CCQ and trade unions.

(b) Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ)

Another priority for the regionalization of services is the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ). Previously, the SAAQ had no office or point of service in any of the Cree communities. Its only points of service were located in Chibougamau, Lebel-sur-Quévillon, Matagami and Radisson.

The Cree Nation of Chisasibi sought the support of the Cree Nation Government and the Regional Government for the establishment of an SAAQ office in Chisasibi. This initiative has been successful in securing an SAAQ point of service in Chisasibi.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

COVID-19

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay has played a pivotal role in protecting the health and welfare of the Cree communities and population throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano, Executive Director Daniel St-Amour and

Regional Public Health Director Dr. Faisca Richer have played central roles in providing guidance to the communities as to how to respond to this crisis. The energetic and expert direction provided by the CBHSSJB, in partnership with the Cree Nation Government and the Cree First Nations, has made possible the exceptional results obtained in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the Cree communities. This matter is also discussed in the COVID-19 Pandemic section on page 53.

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

On October 7, 2019, in Chisasibi, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government and Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay signed with Québec Health Minister Danielle McCann and Indigenous Affairs Minister Sylvie D'Amours an important Agreement with the Government of Québec to renew the funding framework and funding rules for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay for the period 2019-2024.

This new Agreement was the result of discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Services under the leadership of Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano and Executive Director Daniel St-Amour of the Cree Health Board. As these discussions relate to the treaty rights of the entire Cree Nation under Section 14 of the JBNQA, they were conducted in close coordination with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government.

This is the third five-year agreement and funding framework for the Cree Health Board entered into with the



Government of Québec. It will provide \$60 million over five years to further develop 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 will reduce the need for Crees to travel to the south. The Cree Health Board will also advance its work to incorporate traditional Cree healing practices and to provide a culturally safe setting for service delivery to Cree clients.

The new funding framework also provides more than \$600 million over five years for the construction of new health and social services facilities, including a 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 provides \$44 million for information technology assets.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony, the Grand Chief stated:

“This Agreement marks another important step in implementing the health and social services provided for in our treaty, the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* of 1975. The Cree Nation is taking increasing charge of our health and social services and bringing them home to our communities. This Agreement shows what is possible through community-based, Nation-to-Nation negotiations with the Government of Québec in the spirit of mutual respect and partnership of the *Paix des Braves*.”

Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano stated:

“This Agreement and Funding Framework for 2019-2024 give the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay the tools to implement the priorities identified in consultations with the Cree communities and clients and set out in our Strategic Regional Plan. It will help us to both further develop our service offering and improve access to services in the Cree communities.

Our Strategic Regional Plan emphasizes the development of Cree culturally safe spaces and practices as well as partnerships with the Cree First Nations for long-term care and transition services, mental health and birthing homes.”

For an overview of the services and organization of the Cree Health Board, please consult its most recent annual report, for 2018-2019, available online.

New Eeyou-Eenou Regional Health Centre

On October 7, 2019, in Chisasibi, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano joined with Québec Health Minister Danielle McCann and Indigenous Affairs Minister Sylvie D'Amours to announce the construction of a new Eeyou-Eenou Regional Health Centre in Chisasibi.

Funding for the project is from the Québec Government, and is linked to the new five-year Funding Agreement that was signed the same day as the Health Centre announcement. The Cree Health Board will manage the project and will own and operate the new Centre.

The new \$300 million, 20,000 square meter facility will combine a 52-bed hospital for the population of Eeyou Istchee, and a Community Miyupimaatisiun Centre (CMC), offering frontline services and community health for the local population of Chisasibi. The new Regional Health Centre is scheduled for completion by 2025.

This new facility will replace an outdated hospital open since 1980, and community health services that are now housed in trailers. The current hospital has no surgical capacity and very limited space to serve a growing community of 5,000 people in Chisasibi, as well as the other Cree communities that rely on Chisasibi for hospital services.

The new Eeyou-Eenou Regional Health Centre will be equipped with state of the art medical, telemedicine and diagnostic technologies to serve the population in the region. The nearest hospital centre is almost 1,000 km away, in Val-d'Or, making Chisasibi an important regional hub for medical services.

Women's Shelters in Waswanipi and Waskaganish

The Cree Nation Government and the Cree Health Board are committed to addressing the issues of family violence and violence against women in the Cree communities. In the past, the lack of dedicated women's shelters and related programs and services in Eeyou Istchee obliged a number of Cree women to seek shelter outside Cree communities.

The Cree Nation Government and the Cree Health Board are working together with the Ministry of Health and Social Services and other key stakeholders to make available to Cree women in Eeyou Istchee the required prevention and intervention programs and services, as well as adequate facilities, including two women's shelters, one in Waswanipi and the other in Waskaganish.

The women's shelters Piipiichaa Uchishtuun (Robin's Nest) were officially inaugurated in Waswanipi on September 25, 2017 and in Waskaganish on November 20, 2018. Both of these facilities are now operational and offer services and healing methods based on Cree traditions and values, while respecting individual beliefs, for women and their children who experience domestic violence.

These women's shelters form part of a wider range of measures to address domestic violence and its impacts on women and families. Shelters offer immediate relief and can help in the medium and longer term, but they need to be combined with other measures as well. A coordinated effort is required by all stakeholders to implement such measures, programs and services and to address domestic violence through education and sensitization.

Inauguration of Youth Healing Services Centre for Eeyou Istchee in Mistissini

On March 6, 2020, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree Nation Government inaugurated the new Youth Healing Services Centre for Eeyou Istchee in Mistissini.

At an inauguration event at the new Centre, Dr. Abel Bosum, Chairman of the Cree Nation Government, and

Mrs. Bella M. Petawabano, Chair of the Cree Health Board, welcomed Cree and Québec officials including Minister for Health and Social Services Lionel Carmant, as well as other distinguished guests who by their contribution made this project possible.

The new Youth Healing Services Centre for Eeyou Istchee is a residential facility for youth who require intensive healing outside their family setting for addictions, trauma, and other serious issues. When fully operational, the Centre will be able to accommodate up to 20 boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 17 referred under the *Youth Protection Act*. The Centre will replace an outdated Youth Healing Services Reception Centre in Mistissini, while increasing capacity by an additional eight places. The Centre is also adapted to receive a small number of youth in closed custody under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, making it possible for these individuals to carry out rehabilitation programs within the Cree community, for greater cultural safety.

The new Centre is the result of collaboration between the Cree Nation Government and the Cree Health Board. In 2016, they signed a formal Partnership Agreement and set out to work with local, regional and governmental partners and stakeholders. Through extensive consultation and collaboration, they developed the blueprint for a state-of-the-art facility that reflects best practices. Close collaboration among the partners allowed construction to begin immediately, and to proceed quickly.

Under the terms of the 2016 Partnership Agreement, the Cree Nation Government built the new Centre pursuant to a commitment under Section 18 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (1975). The Cree Health Board will operate the Centre and deliver programs to the youth residents.

The new Centre is a regional hub for services and programs for youth in all the Cree communities, including group homes, camps for land-based healing and foster placements. The Cree Health Board offers a Family and Youth Empowerment approach as a way of preventing unnecessary referrals to Youth Protection, as well as community partnerships to give families and youth early intervention to prevent crises.

At the inauguration of the Youth Centre, the Grand Chief stated:

“The new Youth Healing Services Centre illustrates the kind of achievements that are possible when Cree and Québec partners work together

with a shared objective. The new Centre honours the spirit and intent of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* and of our partnership, among Cree partners and with Québec. It also honours the responsibility we have as a nation to care for our youth with services close to their homes and families.”

Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano remarked: “This new Centre will make it possible for our Cree youth to receive services and support in our community, close to the land, in a manner adapted to our Cree culture, values and realities, and in our own Cree language.”

Non-Insured Health Benefits

The Cree Health Board has continued discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Services in 2019-2020 on administration of the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program, including reporting and accountability for expenses relating to the delivery of NIHB services.

The Cree Health Board also provided MSSS with its proposed Cree NIHB Program Framework, with a view to finalizing this framework. This Program Framework includes guiding principles of the program, as well as related Cree Health Board policies and procedures. This Program Framework has been accepted by MSSS, and it has been applied since April 2020. Formal signature of the Program Framework is expected shortly.

Legislative Review

The Cree Health Board is reviewing its governing legislation, the *Act respecting health and social services for Cree Native persons*. An important objective is to ensure that the Cree Health Board's governing statute reflects its character as an institution of Cree self-governance in health and social services. In addition, the Board wishes the Act to take better account of the Cree culture and context, including the integration of Cree traditional healing practices within the Board's operations. The review is also intended to modernize the Act, taking account of developments in health and social service legislation over the past 25 years. As this matter affects Cree Nation rights under Section 14 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, the Cree Health Board is coordinating this work with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government.





The Cree Health Board is developing a proposal for this new legislation for discussion with Québec, under the leadership of Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano and Executive Director Daniel St-Amour. It is expected that this work, and related discussions with Québec, will advance significantly in 2020-2021.

EDUCATION

COVID-19

The Cree School Board collaborated actively with the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Health Board, the Cree First Nations and other Cree authorities in responding to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The Chairperson, Dr. Sarah Pash, and Director General Abraham Jolly took part in the thrice weekly leadership meetings of the Cree leadership to review the status of the Cree communities and make joint determinations on action to be taken. The Board took prompt measures to close the schools in the Cree communities and to extend special support to Post-Secondary students unable to return to their home communities. As noted above, this close collaboration among the Cree government institutions made it possible to restrict the spread of COVID-19 in the Cree communities, with one of the best records of any region in Québec. As of this writing, the pandemic appears largely under control due to effective social distancing and close supervision by the Public Health Department of the Cree Health Board.

Budgetary Rules 2019-2020 to 2023-2024

The Cree School Board successfully concluded negotiations with the Governments of Québec and Canada on the *Budgetary Rules of the Cree School Board for School Years 2019-2020 to 2023-2024*. These negotiations were conducted under paragraphs 16.0.22 and 16.0.23 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, which state that the funding to be provided to the Cree School Board shall be in accordance with a formula to be determined by Québec, Canada and the Crees.

Since the negotiations on the Budgetary Rules of the Cree School Board concern the treaty rights of the entire Cree Nation under the JBNQA, they were conducted jointly by the Cree School Board, led by the former Vice Chair Teddy Wapachee and Director General Abraham Jolly, and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government, represented by Bill Namagoose, Executive Director.

These Budgetary Rules represent a major achievement for the Cree in that, not only has the base funding of the School Board been protected, certain elements have been improved or increased. Significant new or enhanced funding was secured for Adult Education (including a new in-community student assistance program), Information Technologies, Students with Special Needs and the Cree Teacher Training Program. The Budgetary Rules have also finalized an agreement on the remuneration of the Chairperson and Commissioners, another long-outstanding matter.

The Budgetary Rules have been approved by the Government of Québec. As of this writing, they are being submitted for approval to the Council of Commissioners of the Cree School Board and to the Grand Council/Cree Nation Government.

Legislative Review

The Cree School Board has undertaken a review of its governing legislation, the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*. An important objective is to ensure that this legislation better reflects the Cree School Board as a specifically Cree institution of self-governance in education and takes better account of Cree culture.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

A multi-year *Child Services Agreement* was signed by the Cree and Québec on February 11, 2014. Among other things, it provided for a greater regional governance role for the Cree Nation Government and increased delegation of powers from the Ministry of Families to the Cree Nation Government, including for the allocation of funding to Cree childcare centres according to Cree Nation Government standards.

This *Childcare Services Agreement* also provided for increased funding to account for the Cree context. The increase in funding for Cree childcare centres has helped to implement northern allowances to attract and retain qualified and competent personnel. In addition, this agreement secured support from the Government of Québec for the expansion of the childcare facility in Wemindji.

The Cree Nation Government and Québec are engaged in discussions on the next *Childcare Services Agreement* for the period 2019-2024. Québec continues to provide funding for childcare services in Eeyou Istchee, in line with the previous agreement, pending negotiation of this new agreement.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Establishment and Mandate

In October 2015 the media reported on allegations by Indigenous women in Val-d'Or of serious misconduct by members of the Sûreté du Québec, including so-called "Starlight Tours", sexual misconduct and provision of drugs and alcohol. The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, together with the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador (AFNQL) and the Algonquin First Nations of Pikogan and Lac-Simon, called on Québec to establish an independent judicial Commission of Inquiry with a very focused mandate. Intense discussions took place with Québec throughout 2016.

These efforts were successful. On December 21, 2016, Québec adopted Order-in-Council 1095-2016, creating the *Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress* ("**Commission**"). The mandate of the Commission is to investigate and carry out analyses

to make recommendations concerning remedial measures to prevent or eliminate any form of violence, discriminatory practices or different treatment in the provision of certain public services to the Indigenous people of Québec: police services, correctional services, justice services, health and social services as well as youth protection services.

Québec appointed retired Superior Court Justice Jacques Viens as the President of the Commission. The Commission is to file its report with the Government of Québec by September 30, 2019, and the report is to be made public.

Commission Activities

The Commission ended its hearings on December 14, 2018 in Val-d'Or. The Grand Chief, Bill Namagoose and Melissa Saganash appeared at the hearing on behalf of the Grand Council/Cree Nation Government, and Bella Moses Petawabano and Daniel St-Amour appeared for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay.

During the course of its mandate, the Commission heard evidence from more than 1,200 witness appearances (in some cases, witnesses appeared more than once), and received more than 1,300 exhibits.

The Cree Nation thanks all the Cree and Indigenous elders, women, men and youth who had the courage to come before the Commission to tell often difficult and painful stories. The Cree Nation also thanks Commissioner Jacques Viens and his colleagues at the Commission for their diligence and hard work. They carried out their mandate with efficiency, integrity and, above all, respect and sensitivity for the Indigenous witnesses who came forward to share their stories.

Cree Participation

Over the two years 2017-2018, Cree participants engaged actively in the operations of the Commission. The Commission held information sessions in all the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee and public hearings in Mistissini during the weeks of June 11 and 18, 2018.

The participation of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, through its various Cree governance bodies, namely the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree School Board, as well as other Cree entities such as the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, entailed the attendance of many witnesses, listed below, and the filing of numerous exhibits and responses to questions from the Commission.

Issues and Recommendations

On November 30, 2018, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay submitted a joint Final Brief to the Commission. This was followed by a joint final presentation to the Commission on December 14, 2018.

These documents review some of the most critical issues brought before the Commission and make 40 specific

recommendations on police services, justice, and health and social services. The recommendations concerning police services address the following themes:

1. Ending the criminalization of homeless Indigenous persons;
2. Attacking the housing crisis in Indigenous communities;
3. Breaking down public service silos – towards improved service coordination;
4. Changing the model of police services from repression to building relationships with Indigenous communities and persons;
5. Accountability – ending the culture of impunity within the Sûreté du Québec;
6. Cultural training for public service employees regarding Indigenous realities;
7. Increasing support and resources for Indigenous police forces;
8. Improving the police complaints process for Indigenous persons;
9. Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (BEI), in carrying out its expanded mandate to investigate criminal allegations against police officers, should recruit Indigenous investigators on a priority basis and provide its personnel with training on Indigenous realities and culture.

In addition, specific recommendations were submitted for the justice and health and social service sectors:

Justice – making the system more responsive to the needs and realities of Indigenous persons; and

Health and Social Services – enhancing cultural safety for Indigenous clients and providing resources to enable Indigenous people to receive services close to their home communities.

Final Report of the Commission

On September 30, 2019, the Commission released its Final Report in Val-d'Or, the place where the events leading to the creation of the Commission took place.

The Report is comprehensive, issuing 142 Calls for Action to eliminate and prevent discrimination and differential treatment in relations between Indigenous peoples in Québec and the six public services covered by the Commission's mandate: police, justice, correctional services, health and social services and youth protection.

The Report makes a finding of systemic discrimination towards Indigenous peoples in these public services. This discrimination seriously affects the quality of services provided to Indigenous peoples or simply denies them any service at all.

The Calls for Action lay out a road map for reconciliation between Québec and Indigenous peoples. They offer detailed, practical measures to improve relations between public service providers and Indigenous peoples, including the following:

- **Public Apology:** Many Indigenous witnesses stated that there can be no reconciliation until the wrongs of the past are acknowledged. The Commission has

heard their voice, and has called on the Government of Québec to make a public apology to members of First Nations and Inuit for the harm caused by laws and policies, standards and the practices of public service providers.

- **UNDRIP:** The Commission calls on the Government of Québec to work with Indigenous authorities to enact legislation to guarantee that the provisions of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) will be taken into account in its legislation, a measure long sought by the Cree Nation.
- **Housing:** The Commission states that the Indigenous housing crisis has emerged at the epicentre of many of the issues faced by the First Nations and Inuit. The Commission calls on Québec to work with the federal government so that both financially support the development and improvement of housing in all Indigenous communities in Québec.

The Cree Nation applauds this key finding of the Commission; it supports our own recommendations made before the Commission. Until the housing crisis in Indigenous communities is addressed, no lasting progress will be made in addressing the social, health and economic issues facing Indigenous peoples. We are ready to work with Québec and Canada to meet this challenge.

- **Justice and Police:** The Cree Nation strongly supports Calls for Action 46 and 48 to stop the incarceration of vulnerable and homeless persons for non-payment of fines for municipal offences. We also support Call for Action 38 to extend the time limit for complaints of police misconduct from one to three years.
- **Implementation Monitor:** The Cree Nation strongly supports the Commission's Call for Action to mandate the Québec Ombudsman to monitor the implementation of the Report's Calls for Action to ensure that they do not simply gather dust.
- **Culture:** Many deficiencies in public services are caused by a lack of knowledge of Indigenous reality. We welcome the Commission's recommendation to raise awareness of Indigenous reality through education and training in the schools, professions and public services, including the police.
- **Specific Sectors:** The Commission's report sets out concrete Calls for Action for specific service sectors, including the police, justice, corrections, health and social services and youth protection. Many of these recommendations concern cultural attitudes and the need to train service providers in Indigenous realities.

For the first time in Québec, the Commission's report recommends implementation and follow-up measures. One such measure would entrust the Québec Ombudsman with the responsibility to assess and monitor the implementation of all proposed Calls for Action. The Commission also recommends that the summary of its report be translated into Indigenous languages, and be used in a cultural mediation exercise that incorporates the oral tradition of Indigenous peoples.

CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

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

The Grand Chief has raised with Premier Legault the desirability of a Cree-Québec partnership to implement the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, with special reference to the housing needs of Cree elders and persons with disabilities or special needs. 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 Québec legislation conflict at times with the Cree priority in contracts and employment provided for in Section 28 of the JBNQA. They also do not take account of the special status and autonomy of the Cree Nation under the JBNQA and of the special northern context of Eeyou Istchee.

The Grand Chief raised this matter with Premier Legault at their meeting of December 10, 2018. It was agreed to establish a special Working Group of Cree representatives and procurement officials of the Québec Treasury Board to address this matter under the Cree-Québec Standing Liaison Committee. Its mandate is to develop a proposal to adapt public contracting rules to the realities and needs of the Cree communities, the Cree Health Board and the Cree School Board, taking into account the Cree priority provisions of Section 28 JBNQA.

This Working Group held its first meeting at the offices of the Treasury Board in Québec City on June 5, 2019 and has met on several times since then. The Working Group invited Chief Davey Bobbish of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and Daniel St-Amour, Executive Director of the Cree Health Board, to make presentations on their needs and expectations. Good progress is being made at the Working Group, and it is expected to resume its meetings shortly.

ENERGY

The Cree Nation Government is following closely the orientations of the Government of Québec and Hydro-Québec regarding energy development in Northern Québec, including the effects of proposed energy exports to New England and New York. Two officials from the office of the Mayor of New York City visited Eeyou Istchee in the company of Bill Namagoose and Paul John Murdoch to get a first idea of the position of the Cree authorities on the potential export of hydro energy from Québec to New York.

A new CEO, Sophie Brochu, has recently been appointed at Hydro-Québec, replacing Éric Martel. The Grand Chief has written to her and it is hoped to arrange a meeting with her in the near future.

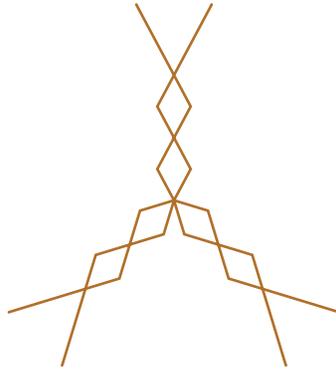
EYYOU COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Fiber-to-the-Home Project

In 2019, Eeyou Communications Network (“ECN”) continued its Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) project, completing the connection of the communities of Chibougamau, Chapais and Matagami to the most powerful and reliable network in the region. This project is funded in part by the *Société du Plan Nord*, the *Ministère de l’Économie et de l’Innovation of Québec*, *Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada* and the *Administration Régionale de la Baie James*.

In Eeyou Istchee, the number of households taking advantage of ECN’s FTTH network doubled since the service’s inauguration last year. Through its partnership with Distributel, ECN is offering in most of the communities of Eeyou Istchee and James Bay high speed broadband Internet (with speeds up to 1 Gbps), home telephone and television services (with more than 100 channels from Canada, the United States and around the world), at prices comparable to similar residential services in Montreal and Québec City.





Whapmagoostui Fiber Optic Cable

The Nunavik submarine cable project, which will connect Nunavik and Whapmagoostui using fiber optic, is still on track to provide service to Whapmagoostui by end of 2021. This will allow ECN to provide broadband telecommunications services in the northernmost community of Eeyou Istchee. This infrastructure is funded by the Société du Plan Nord and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Chamouchouane-Bout-de-l'Île Project

The project to connect the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James region directly to Montréal using optical fibers, through the Hydro-Québec Chamouchouane Bout-de-l'Île high-power line, is underway and should be completed in 2021. This project will greatly increase the autonomy of ECN's network, removing its reliance on third parties for connectivity to Montreal and thus securing the whole region's bandwidth for the foreseeable future.

Éléonore Mine Fiber Optic Project

ECN will deploy 122 kilometres of new fiber optic cable to the Éléonore mine in the summer of 2020 to connect it with broadband telecommunications services. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2020 and should allow the Éléonore mine to implement mining 4.0 technologies. This project is funded in part by the Société du Plan Nord.

Other Projects

ECN has completed a feasibility study to deploy redundancy (back-up) on its transmission network to reduce the impact of optical fiber breaks on some portions of its network and will begin securing the funding to implement this redundancy in the near future.

All these projects are building a solid foundation in telecommunications infrastructure in Eeyou Istchee, which will

benefit both individuals and organizations for years to come, in addition to strengthening the region's socio-economic development potential. ECN's team is proud to be hard at work during this challenging period to keep people virtually closer together with the help of its fiber optic network.

FORESTRY

Agreement to Resolve the Baril-Moses Forestry Dispute

On February 7, 2002, the Crees and Québec signed, in parallel with the *Paix des Braves*, the "Baril-Moses Agreement". This Agreement extended many of the forestry provisions of the Adapted Forestry Regime created by the *Paix des Braves* onto the Cree traplines east of the boundaries of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*.

On July 13, 2015, the Crees and Québec signed the *Agreement to Resolve the Baril-Moses Forestry Dispute*. This Agreement provides for the implementation of the Baril-Moses forestry standards in the affected territory until June 30, 2020. For the period after July 1, 2020, Québec and the Cree will work together on possible improvements of these standards.

The Agreement provides for certain funding by Québec for the enhancement of Cree traditional activities as well as for the implementation of the Collaborative Forestry Management Regime set out in sections 66 and 67 of the *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement*.

The Agreement establishes the Broadback River Protected Area as a biodiversity reserve with an area of 9,134 square kilometers. This measure will help to protect environmentally sensitive areas, including woodland caribou habitats. A joint Cree-Québec task force will work to identify possible additional protected areas in the JBNQA Territory.

On February 7, 2018, Québec adopted Order-in-Council 72-2018, which approved the establishment of temporary protected status for the proposed biodiversity reserve of Chisesaakahikan-Broadback River, aquatic river reserve of

Waswanipi Lake and biodiversity reserve of Assinica, as well as the preparation of conservation plans for these areas.

The Agreement provides that the Innu of Mashteuiatsh (also known as the First Nation of Pekuakamiulnuatsh) may participate in the processes regarding forestry standards and woodland caribou if they wish to do so. The Pekuakamiulnuatsh Nation has confirmed its participation in the Cree-Innu-Québec joint forestry working group to propose consensual measures on forestry in the Baril-Moses territory.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* is significant as it aims to secure the harmonization of forestry operations with Cree hunting, fishing and trapping activities in the Baril-Moses area. It provides a process for the Cree and Québec to work together on forestry measures to ensure this harmonization over the long term.

Agreement with Pekuakamiulnuatsh

Further to Cree-Innu discussions, the Innu of Mashteuiatsh executed a letter on March 19, 2018 confirming their participation in the Cree-Innu-Québec Joint Forestry Working Group to propose consensual measures on forestry in the Baril-Moses territory.

The Cree Nation Government and the First Nation of Pekuakamiulnuatsh have also agreed to propose various measures related to the designation of the territory, territorial reference units, areas of special interest, forest areas of wildlife interest, closing of forest roads and other matters.

The Pekuakamiulnuatsh Nation and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee signed an Agreement on June 21, 2018 dealing with mutual Nation-to-Nation recognition, forestry, wildlife, traditional activities, economic development and other issues.

Forestry Harmonization Agreement

In June 2009, Québec tabled new forestry legislation, the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* (Bill 57), to the National Assembly. The purpose of this Bill was to reform the forestry regime as of 2013. Québec felt it was necessary to plan this reform ahead in order for the changes to be reflected in the planning scheduled to take effect on April 1, 2013.

The *Cree – Québec Governance Agreement* contains measures relating to the harmonization of the Adapted Forestry Regime and the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*. It also provides for the establishment of a collaborative forestry management regime on the territory mentioned in Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves*.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* also provides for negotiations between the Cree and Québec in order to conclude an agreement respecting the harmonization of the Adapted Forestry Regime set out in Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves* and the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*.

Québec and the Crees agreed to:

- (a) an Agreement amending the *Paix des Braves* in order to replace the existing Cree Adapted Forestry Regime by a new one;
- (b) a new *Paix des Braves* Chapter 3 and new Schedules thereto;

- (c) through a new Complementary Agreement to the JBNQA, amendments to Section 30A of the JBNQA which incorporates the Cree Adapted Forestry Regime into the JBNQA; and
- (d) amendments to the Confidentiality Agreement between Québec and the Cree to ensure that the Cree traditional knowledge shared during the preparation phase of the forest planning is kept confidential.

Consequently, 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* has been published in the *Québec Official Gazette* on December 11, 2019.

The Cree Nation Government has submitted to Québec proposed amendments to the *Sustainable Forest Development Act* in order to implement Amendment No. 6 of the *Paix des Braves*.

Collaborative Forestry Management Regime

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

This collaboration has as its objectives to ensure that Cree interests and concerns are taken into account, to determine local objectives for the sustainable development of forests and to agree on measures for the harmonization of uses. This collaboration shall be carried out after the consultations by the Cree Nation Government with the Cree tallymen and other Cree stakeholders concerned.

The collaborative management regime proceeds in two five-year phases. During the first five-year phase, Québec assumes primary responsibility for forestry planning and management, while involving the Cree Nation Government and providing it with financial and technical support to develop additional forestry planning and management capacity. During the second five-year phase, the Cree Nation Government assumes primary responsibility for forestry planning and management, with the technical and financial support of Québec.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* provides for funding by Québec 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.

The Cree Nation Government has established a Forestry Department which will, among other things, carry out the forestry planning and management work.

Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* provides that Québec and the Cree Nation Government shall each make annual contributions under the *Agreement regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement* concluded on July 11, 2013 for the five-year period 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. They are to work together to develop guidelines concerning eligible uses and activity reports in respect of the funding provided for under the Enhancement Agreement.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* provides that the parties are also to negotiate by April 1, 2020 a successor agreement to the Enhancement Agreement, taking into account the average funding level provided for in previous years. Correspondence has been exchanged in this respect.

PADF Agreement

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

The purpose of the 2015-2018 PADF Agreement was to delegate to the Cree Nation Government the management of the PADF program, and to provide it with related funding. The Cree Nation Government has entered into discussions with Québec for the period after 2018.

ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

Cree – Québec Table on the Environment and Protected Areas

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* establishes the Broadback River Protected Area as a biodiversity reserve with an area of 9,134 square kilometres. This measure will help to protect environmentally sensitive areas, including woodland caribou habitats.

The *Baril-Moses Resolution Agreement* calls for a process to identify possible additional protected areas in the JBNQA Territory. It has been agreed at the Standing Liaison Committee to establish a special joint Cree – Québec Table on the Environment and Protected Areas. This Table is to act as a high-level forum to discuss any issues related to the environment and protected areas in the Eeyou Istchee-James Bay Territory. It is to carry out its functions under the Standing Liaison Committee, and is not to duplicate the functions of the environmental bodies established under Section 22 of the JBNQA.

Terms of reference have been developed for this Table on the Environment and Protected Areas and submitted to Environment Québec. As proposed by the Cree, this Table could address the following matters, among others:

- (a) implementation of Cree Regional Conservation Strategy;
- (b) identification of additional protected areas;
- (c) relationship between protected areas and the fight against climate change, including the potential use of the boreal forest for sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide and for carbon storage;
- (d) implementation of measures for the recovery of woodland caribou habitat and of the precautionary approach for the interim protection of woodland caribou habitat;
- (e) integrated management mechanism for water resources on the basis of hydrological units, including watersheds, sub-watersheds and groups of watersheds;
- (f) environmental emergency communications protocol;
- (g) such other matters as Québec and the Cree Nation Government may agree upon from time to time.

This table met in May and November 2018. At the November 2018 meeting, the Cree Nation Government presented various community proposals for protected areas in Eeyou Istchee.

On February 7, 2018, Québec adopted Order-in-Council 72-2018, which approved the establishment of temporary protected status for the proposed biodiversity reserve of the Chisesaakahikan-Broadback River, the aquatic river reserve of Waswanipi Lake and the biodiversity reserve of Assinica as well as the preparation of conservation plans for these areas.



The question of protected areas is a key component of La Grande Alliance, which is expected to address it in a holistic fashion, having regard to the need to promote interconnected corridors for wildlife habitat, especially for woodland caribou.

Gazoduq Pipeline Project

On November 22, 2018, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government received a project notification from Gazoduq Inc. concerning the proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline of approximately 750 km that would extend from northeastern Ontario to a future natural gas liquefaction, storage and export facility in Saguenay, Québec. The construction phase is currently planned to begin in early 2022 and Gazoduq aims to complete the pipeline by the end of 2024.

The preliminary study area that is being analyzed for the construction of the pipeline appears to pass through Cree traditional territory, in the “rights area” of the territory claimed in the context of the Ontario title and aboriginal rights legal proceedings and through the southern edge of the Waswanipi traplines known as the “Senneterre traplines”.

On January 18, 2019, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government notified Louis Bergeron, President of Gazoduq Inc., that this project engaged both the federal and provincial environmental and social impact assessment and review processes set out in Section 22 of the JBNQA as well as the constitutional duty of the Governments of Canada, Québec and Ontario to consult and accommodate the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. To date, Gazoduq has failed to respond to this communication.

On February 4, 2019, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government notified both provincial and federal authorities of the applicability of Section 22 of the JBNQA to the Gazoduq project. On April 4, 2019, the Minister of Natural Resources of the Government of Canada, Amarjeet Sohi, responded that the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee would be included in the consultation process prepared by his ministry, but that the issue of the application of Section 22 of the JBNQA fell within the purview of his colleague, Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

On May 2, 2019, Marie-José Thomas, Associate Secretary General of the Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones, responded that Québec takes the position that Section 22 of the JBNQA does not automatically apply to the Senneterre traplines. However, it appears that the preferred planning area for the preliminary route for this project would be established south of the Senneterre traplines in the event of the project’s authorization.

Correspondence from Gazoduq now suggests that the proposed pipeline route may pass to the south of the Senneterre traplines. The Cree Nation Government is closely monitoring this matter with a view to protecting Cree rights under Sections 22 and 24 of the JBNQA.

EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Funding

On November 26, 2018, the Cree Nation Government, Québec and Canada concluded, in accordance with

Section 19 of the JBNQA, a significant tripartite agreement concerning the operational funding of the Eeyou Eenuou Police Force for the period from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2028.

However, the parties required more time to finalize discussions on various financial matters, including funding for major capital and the transport of accused persons. At the time, it was agreed that the parties would pursue negotiations on these matters with the objective of reaching an agreement by March 31, 2019.

The Cree Nation Government has held discussions with Canada and Québec to resolve these issues even though the March 31, 2019 deadline has elapsed. There have recently been positive developments in this file, which the Cree Nation Government is pursuing vigorously in order to protect Cree treaty rights under Section 19 of the JBNQA.

Unionization

On December 1, 2015, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) filed an application with the federal Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) for union certification of certain members of the EEPF. In August 2016, the CIRB dismissed this application for certification of CUPE in view of the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal in *Nishnawbe-Aski* that the labour relations of the Nishnawbe-Aski police service, a First Nations police force, fall under provincial jurisdiction.

The Association of Eeyou Eenuou Police Officers then filed a notice in certification under Québec labour relations legislation with the Labour Administrative Tribunal to represent all the police officers who were employed with the EEPF. The Union was certified to represent the constables. On January 9, 2018, the Administrative Labour Tribunal rendered a decision concluding that the EEPF lieutenants were representatives of the employer and were therefore excluded from the bargaining unit, along with the other higher members of the chain of command.

As for the employees who do form part of the bargaining union, a first Collective Agreement was signed and filed at the Labour Ministry offices on September 5, 2019. This Collective Agreement shall remain in force until March 31st, 2022 or until the Parties conclude another agreement.

Modalities Agreement, Court Security, Education and Special Constables

Cree-Québec discussions should resume 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.

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

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, effective June 1, 2019. This will be done in collaboration with local committees set up by interested Cree First Nations.

FIREARMS REGISTRATION

The Québec *Firearms Registration Act* came into force on January 29, 2018. This Act requires that non-restricted firearms in Québec, essentially rifles and shotguns, be registered and it establishes related rules. Under the Act, a person who owned a non-restricted shotgun or rifle on that date had one year, until January 29, 2019, to register it.

A special Cree-Québec technical table was established in early 2018 to consider special modalities for the Cree. These discussions resulted in an agreement between Québec and the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA) being signed in April 2019. Under this Agreement, Québec provides funding and other support to the CTA so that it can help Cree hunters to register their firearms.

In August 2019, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government presented a brief to the Committee on Institutions of the National Assembly on Bill 25 (2019), *An Act to amend mainly the Firearms Registration Act*.

This Cree brief set out serious concerns with the Act and regulations regarding seizure and confiscation of Cree firearms in Eeyou Istchee. It also proposed changes to the Act and regulations to protect Cree hunting rights under the JBNQA treaty. This included proposals for seizure and confiscation exemptions for Crees in Eeyou Istchee. These positions aligned with those of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee.

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government continues to monitor this file, in collaboration with the CTA, including the issue of seizure of unregistered firearms by peace officers.

CREE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION AND YOUTH PROTECTION MATTERS

Changes were made to Québec law in 2017 to clearly reflect the legal effects of Indigenous customary adoption and guardianship. This is done through a certification process by interested Indigenous Nations and communities. These changes to the law came into effect in 2018, and require a Nation to opt in by designating a “competent authority”.

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, effective June 1, 2019. This will be done in collaboration with local committees set up by interested Cree First Nations.

Work is underway with certain interested Cree communities to establish their local committees, with a view to allowing their members to have Cree customary adoptions and guardianships certified, for the benefit of Cree children, families and communities.

The Québec Registrar of Civil Status included the Cree Nation Government in its register of Indigenous competent authorities in November 2019. This allows the Cree Nation Government to 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 also collaborate with the Cree Health Board as part of this certification process.

Cree representatives are seeking on-going funding from the Government of Québec to support the Cree customary adoption and guardianship certification process.

Please refer to the section of this report of the Department of Social and Cultural Development for more information on this process.

RECONFIGURATION AND FINAL LAND DESCRIPTIONS FOR CREE COMMUNITIES

Two tables have been established with Québec 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;
- (b) Another table created pursuant to section 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves* concerns the reconfiguration of the Category I lands of Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Nemaska following the abandonment of the N.B.R. Complex.

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

The experience with respect to the Ouje-Bougoumou / Mistissini land transfer should pave the way for a process to achieve these land reconfigurations and final descriptions.

Drafts of a proposed Waswanipi reconfiguration agreement have been exchanged between Cree, Canada and Québec representatives. A transitional agreement is also being discussed in order to secure the upcoming opening of a new waste management site in Waswanipi which would eventually be located in Category IA lands, once the reconfiguration is completed.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration discussions also gives the opportunity to the parties to regularize various areas such as the so-called “Roman Catholic Mission Lands”. The parties have started working on options in this respect.

OUGE-BOUGOUMOU RECOGNITION AND MISTISSINI LANDS

Complementary Agreement No. 22 and the Final Agreement were signed in Ouje-Bougoumou on November 7, 2011. Complementary Agreement No. 22 received its final signature on February 3, 2012 and came into force during the year 2012-2013. These agreements have the effect of legally securing the status of Ouje-Bougoumou as a Cree First Nation under the JBNQA and related legislation, with the same powers, rights and responsibilities as other Cree First Nations, subject to a transitional period necessary to allow for the transfer of lands and the coming into force of amendments to the *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*.

The *Act to amend the Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*, adopted in 2009, amended the *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act* in order, among other things, to recognize Ouje-Bougoumou

as a Cree Band. These amendments came into force on May 15, 2014, the date on which land was formally set aside by the Governor in Council as Category IA land for the exclusive use and benefit of Ouje-Bougoumou pursuant to the Complementary Agreement. Ouje-Bougoumou, like other Cree bands, constituted as corporations under the Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act, was continued as a Cree First Nation and as the same legal entity under the *Cree-Canada Governance Agreement* of 2017.

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Nation of Mistissini concluded negotiations with Québec and Canada and, in September 2013, signed with Québec the *Final Settlement Agreement Related to the Transfer of Certain Lands from Mistissini to Québec*. This Agreement provides for a specific process and schedule which will result in the adjustment by Mistissini of certain Category I and II lands in consideration of the allocation by Québec of an equivalent area of lands to Ouje-Bougoumou through Complementary Agreement No. 22 and in consideration of financial provisions. The Agreement does not contemplate or affect in any way the claim in respect of the Mistissini hunting territories lying to the east of the Height of Land.

The Cree Nation Government, Québec and Canada are in regular communications in order to conclude the land transactions needed to finalize the land transfers. There are currently delays with respect to the adoption by Québec of the required Orders-in-Council. Certain Québec legislation remains to be amended in order to reflect the incorporation of Ouje-Bougoumou into the JBNQA.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH MINING COMPANIES

Newmont/Goldcorp – Éléonore Project

On February 21, 2011, Les Mines Opinaca, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Goldcorp, signed the Opinagow Collaboration Agreement with the Cree Nation of Wemindji, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority (now the Cree Nation Government).

The purpose of the Opinagow Collaboration Agreement is to establish measures for the future operation of the project, which protects Cree traditional activities, and to ensure Cree benefit from various employment, business and training programs. It also ensures that the project will proceed in a sustainable and environmental manner and that it respects all provisions of the JBNQA.

Opinaca estimates that there is a need for approximately 75 to 100 jobs during the exploration phase of the Éléonore project, 200 to 600 jobs during development and construction and 300 to 600 jobs during operation. The estimated life of the project is 15 to 20 years, with potential for an extended life if future exploration is successful.

On April 18, 2019, Goldcorp merged with Newmont Mining Corp., creating Newmont Goldcorp Corp., the world's largest gold-mining company. In early January 2020, as part of a branding exercise, the company simply changed its name to Newmont Corp.

Since the signature of the Collaboration Agreement, the Cree workforce now represents over 18% of the overall

workforce present at the site. In addition, in 2019, construction and services contracts totalling \$110M were awarded to various Cree Enterprises.

On March 13, 2020, Newmont was forced to shutdown its activities at the Éléonore Mine in light of the Orders in Council and Ministerial Orders issued by the government of Québec to face the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-April 2020, Newmont resumed its operations at the Éléonore Mine, after consultation and collaboration with the Cree Nation Government on a COVID-19 management plan.

Stornoway Diamond Corporation – Renard Project

On March 27, 2012, Stornoway Diamonds (Canada) Inc. (“**Stornoway**”) signed the Mecheshoo Agreement with the Cree Nation of Mistissini, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority.

The Mecheshoo Agreement, which will be in effect for the life of the mine, contains various provisions regarding Cree involvement in the development of the Renard Diamond Mine, including employment and business opportunities and training and education initiatives. Moreover, the Mecheshoo Agreement aligns the parties’ respective interests in the economic success of the project and ensures that the Cree will receive financial benefits through different payment mechanisms and participation in the profitability of the mine.

The site is located approximately 290 km north of the Cree community of Mistissini, within the community’s traditional territory. In order for the mine to operate, a road is currently being constructed. While Stornoway was initially to contribute to the construction and maintenance costs of the new road, in November 2012, the company entered into a Framework Agreement and an associated letter of intent with the Government of Québec for the financing and completion

of the extension of Highway 167 under Stornoway’s direct management. The agreement is designed to ensure timely road access to the project and the commencement of mine construction during 2013, as previously contemplated.

The key features of this agreement are that Stornoway will assume the completion of segments “C” and “D” of the extension of Highway 167 as a single lane mining grade road and Québec will provide Stornoway with financing to complete the work.

All Cree representatives have been appointed to the various committees created under the Mecheshoo Agreement, including the Renard Committee, the committee responsible for the implementation of the Mecheshoo Agreement. The Renard Committee has met on a quarterly basis since the signature of the Mecheshoo Agreement.

In April 2014, Stornoway announced a \$944M financing package to fund the construction of the Renard Project, which began in June 2014. Throughout 2019, the Cree workforce averaged around 21% of the total workforce present at the site. In addition, in 2019, construction and services contracts totalling over \$30M were awarded to various Cree Enterprises.

In September 2019, Stornoway sought before the Superior Court of Québec protection under the *Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act* (“**CCAA**”) in order to restructure its business and financial affairs, in light of financial difficulties. In October 2019, the Québec Superior Court approved a transaction by which Diaquem Inc., Osisko Gold Royalties Ltd., CDPQ Ressources Inc. and 10782343 Canada Ltd., the secured creditors of Stornoway and of certain of its affiliated entities, would acquire by way of a share purchase agreement all of the assets and properties of Stornoway and certain of its affiliated entities, other than excluded assets expressly identified and designated as such

in the share purchase agreement. On November 1, 2019, Deloitte Restructuring Inc, in its capacity as monitor to Stornoway under the CCAA proceedings, issued a certificate confirming that all of the conditions of the share purchase agreement had been satisfied and the closing of the transaction had occurred.

On March 13, 2020, Stornoway was forced to shut-down its activities at the Renard Mine in light of the Orders in Council and Ministerial Orders issued by the government of Québec to face the COVID-19 pandemic. While the government of Québec allowed mining companies to resume their operations in mid-April 2020, Stornoway decided not to immediately resume its operations at the Renard Mine, given the difficult conditions of the diamond market (caused in part by the inability to travel which prevents buyers from traveling to Antwerp, Belgium, where the diamonds are traded).

BlackRock Metals Inc. – BlackRock Project FD

In January 2011, BlackRock contacted the Cree community of Ouje-Bougoumou to begin discussions on the BlackRock project. The company is carrying on exploration and pre-development activities to mine an iron ore deposit located approximately 50 km east of the community of Ouje-Bougoumou.

BlackRock filed its Notice of Project with Environment Québec in July 2010 and the company received in December 2010 the directives for the drafting of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment from the COMEV. BlackRock filed its Environmental and Social Impact Assessment in January 2012.

In January 2012, the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government and BlackRock signed a Pre-Development Agreement. On June 20, 2013, the parties signed the Bally Husky Agreement. Since the execution of this Agreement, the parties have appointed their respective representatives to the Implementation Committee, which has met on four (4) occasions. The Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation and BlackRock have engaged in negotiations on the terms of various contracts which could be awarded to Ouje-Bougoumou during the construction phase of the BlackRock project.

On April 26, 2016, the Cree Nation Government invested an amount of \$1.67M in Nemaska Lithium, and the *Administration régionale Baie-James* invested an identical amount. On the same date, the SDBJ also invested a first amount of \$1.5M. On June 8, 2016, pursuant to Order-in-Council 479-2016, the SDBJ invested an additional amount of \$166,667.

Throughout 2017, BlackRock prepared and carried out consultations regarding its proposed ferrovanadium plant in the port of Grande-Anse (Saguenay).

On January 30, 2019, BlackRock Metals Inc., the Ouje Bougoumou Cree Nation and the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government signed a memorandum of understanding in connection with discussions with the Governments of Québec and of Canada, local municipalities and the Canadian National Railway (“CNR”) regarding the

possibility of constructing a 26 km railway spur from the BlackRock mine site to connect with CNR’s railway network as well as that of the Roberval and Saguenay Railway linking Chibougamau, Chapais and the Saguenay port in order to transport the iron ore from the mine site.

On April 11, 2019, following consultation with the Section 22 Review Committee (COMEX), the Deputy Minister of the Environment of Québec delivered to BlackRock Metals Inc. its amended certificate of authorization for the operation of the iron ore mine, which notably authorized an extension of the duration of the operation of the mine from 13 years to 42.5 years and authorized, for a maximum of five years, the transportation of iron ore by truck on existing forestry roads between the mine site and the existing railroad linking Chibougamau Chapais to Lac Saint Jean.

In late 2018, BlackRock Metals Inc., the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation and the GCC(EI) / Cree Nation Government were engaged in a dispute with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the BallyHusky Agreement pertaining to the preferential awarding of sole source contracts to Cree enterprises and Ouje-Bougoumou Cree enterprises. This dispute was settled in June 2019, through the conclusion of a Charter for the Implementation Committee which notably provides for the unbundling of contracts so as to ensure that contract opportunities are accessible or available to Cree Enterprises and Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Enterprises.

Nemaska Lithium Inc. – Whabouchi Project

In 2009, Nemaska Lithium Inc. acquired from Golden Goose Resources a property in Nemaska traditional territory, located approximately four kilometres north of Hydro-Québec’s Albanel substation. While the original intent of Golden Goose was to operate a nickel mine, Nemaska Lithium intends to focus on the exploration and possible commercial production of a lithium ore body discovered on the site (“**Whabouchi Project**”).

Nemaska Lithium Inc. approached the Cree community of Nemaska to develop a memorandum of understanding. Discussions in late 2009 focused on the purchase of shares of Nemaska Lithium Inc. by the Nemaska Development Corporation, which ultimately resulted in Nemaska Development Corporation investing \$600,000 in Nemaska Lithium Inc.

The Cree Nation of Nemaska, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government and Nemaska Lithium Inc. have engaged in negotiations on an Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA). In April 2014, the parties achieved an agreement-in-principle on the financial matters of the final agreement being negotiated. Finally, in November 2014, the parties signed the Chinuchi Agreement, for the development, construction, operation and closure of the Whabouchi Project.

Since the signature of the Chinuchi Agreement, Nemaska Lithium has focused its activities on building a pilot plant in Shawinigan and securing financing for the construction and commission of the mine in Nemaska and the final plant in Shawinigan.

The Pihkuutaau Agreement, signed in July 2019, addresses certain matters of common interest, such as employment, training, business opportunities, social and cultural matters, environmental matters (including progressive rehabilitation, restoration and closure) and financial commitments, and establishes processes for addressing these matters.

On May 30, 2018, Nemaska Lithium announced the completion of its \$1.1B project financing, through notably a \$280M public offering of common shares, an \$80M private placement of stock with the Québec government and a US\$350M bond sale. While this financing was to allow for the construction of the Whabouchi Mine in Nemaska and the lithium hydroxide and carbonate production facility in Shawinigan, Nemaska Lithium announced in February 2019 that another \$375M was needed to enable the company to complete construction of the Whabouchi Mine and the production facility.

In late December 2019, Nemaska Lithium filed court proceedings for protection under the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) in order to restructure its business and financial affairs, in light of financial difficulties. While Nemaska Lithium is still subject to protection under the CCAA, it initiated a Sale or Investor Solicitation Process (SISP) to seek buyers or investors. As of the present date, the SISP is still on going with several interested bidders, as Nemaska Lithium was granted an extension of the SISP bid deadline to July 10, 2020.

Critical Elements Lithium Corporation – Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project

Critical Elements Corporation (CEC) holds mining claims, exploration and other permits on lands located approximately one hundred and sixty (160) kilometres east of the Cree community of Eastmain, in Eeyou Istchee, in Category III lands under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*.

CEC has carried out exploration on the mining claims for spodumene, a source of lithium, and tantalum in this

area which has been named and is known as the “Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project”. CEC is currently engaged in the environmental impact assessment process for the Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project. The Environmental Impact Statement for the Project was deemed complete by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (now the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada) (CEAA) in March 2019. Consultations and assessments by governmental authorities including the Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee (COMEX) are underway.

Representatives of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation of Eastmain and CEC and their respective advisors have negotiated an agreement in respect of the Rose-Lithium-Tantalum Project (Pihkuutaau Agreement), which provides for, among other things, the establishment and development of various processes and committees during the construction, commercial production and closure phases of the Rose-Lithium-Tantalum Project in a manner that benefits all parties and accommodates their respective interests.

The Pihkuutaau Agreement, signed in July 2019, addresses certain matters of common interest, such as employment, training, business opportunities, social and cultural matters, environmental matters (including progressive rehabilitation, restoration and closure) and financial commitments, and establishes processes for addressing these matters.

CEC continues to progress negotiations concerning the funding of the Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project. COVID-19 has impacted expected timelines resulting in delays and negotiation dynamics, due in large part to the current international travel restrictions.

Other Mining Projects

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

- (a) the Montviel project (rare earths) of GeoMega Resources in the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi;
- (b) the Fenelon project (gold) of Wallbridge Mining Company Ltd. in the territories of the Cree First Nation of Waskaganish and the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi;
- (c) the Moblan project (lithium) of Lithium Guo Ao Ltée in the territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini;
- (d) the Windfall Lake project (gold) of Osisko Mining in the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi;
- (e) the Croteau Est and Waconichi projects (gold) of Northern Superior Resources in the territory of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation;
- (f) the Horden Lake project (nickel and copper) of El Condor Minerals in the territories of the Cree Nation of Nemaska and the Cree Nation of Waskaganish;
- (g) the Corner Bay project (copper) and other mining properties of CBay Minerals in the territory of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation;
- (h) the Iron Hills project (iron ore) of Barlow Mine Inc. in the territory of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi;
- (i) the Monster Lake project (gold) of Iamgold/Tomagold in the territory of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation and the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi;
- (j) the Coulon project (zinc, copper and silver) of Osisko Mining in the territory of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi;
- (k) the Philibert project (gold) of SOQUEM in the territory of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation;
- (l) the Anik project (gold) of Kintavar Exploration Inc. in the territories of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation and the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi; and
- (m) the Troilus Extension project (gold and copper) of Troilus Gold in the territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini.

TAXATION

Additional Childcare Contribution

Further to the 2014 Québec Budget, amendments were made to the *Educational Childcare Act* in order to change the rules for determining the contribution required from a parent whose child receives subsidized childcare. Under these changes, a parent whose child is receiving subsidized childcare must pay a basic contribution to the childcare provider and an “additional contribution” to the Minister of Revenue, if required, depending on his or her total annual income.

The Cree had proposed that Québec establish an administrative policy to exclude the tax-exempt income of an

“Indian” earned on reserve (including Category IA land) from the determination of income for purposes of the application of the additional contribution for subsidized childcare services. This proposal was based on the tax exemption in section 188 of the *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*, which continues to apply by virtue of *An Act to give effect to the Agreement on Cree Nation Governance between the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Government of Canada*. This matter had also been raised with the Québec Revenue Agency.

On November 7, 2019, the Minister of Finance of Québec announced the elimination of the additional contribution for subsidized educational childcare for all families as of 2019.

CONCLUSION

The relationship with Québec remains one of central importance to the Cree, both as members of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and as citizens of Québec and Canada.

Since the signature of the *Paix des Braves* in 2002, the Cree-Québec relationship has provided significant benefits for the Cree Nation. The funding provided pursuant to the *Paix des Braves*, the important funding for Cree Health and Social Services, Education, Police, Justice, Childcare Services and the Adapted Forestry Regime all bear witness to an important and fruitful relationship. The *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement* of 2012 has consolidated Cree governance under Québec laws over extensive Category II lands and, for the first time, made it possible for the Cree to act as equal partners in the governance of Category III lands.

More recently, the signature in February 2020 of La Grande Alliance with Québec, at the initiative of the Cree Nation Government, marks its recognition by Québec as a full partner and mature government in planning and coordinating infrastructure and resource development in balance with environmental protection in Eeyou Istchee.

The response of the Cree Nation Government, Cree First Nations, Cree Health Board and Cree School Board to the COVID-19 public health emergency has clearly demonstrated their capacity, as mature government institutions working in partnership with Québec, to protect the health and welfare of the Cree citizens of Eeyou Istchee.

All these experiences show that the Cree-Québec relationship will continue to play a critical role in the political, social and economic development of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and of the entire region of Eeyou Istchee James Bay. ●

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

CREE-INNU OF PEKUAKAMIULNUATSH RELATIONS

The Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement, an agreement concluded in 2018 between the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Nation and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, established a foundation to address issues of mutual concern including land title, forestry management, economic development, wildlife management, protection of environment and the promotion of our language and culture. The Maammu Wiicheutuwin Committee was established to ensure the overall implementation of the agreement and acts as a permanent forum for ongoing dialogue and exchanges. Additionally, the following committees were established in order to address the key areas of this historic Indigenous-to-Indigenous treaty, and on January 20th, 2020 presented an update to the Cree and Innu Leaders:

1. Maammu Wiicheutuwin Steering Committee
2. Wildlife and Traditional Activities Management Committee
3. Forestry Management Committee
4. Economic Development Committee

Since the signature of our treaty on June 21st, 2018, we have shared the experiences, accomplishments and challenges that come with implementing treaties. Implementation is often challenging for many reasons, and the Cree Nation has faced such challenges and struggles ever since the signature of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*. We have witnessed governments simply put aside and ignore their obligations following its signature. It was often challenging for our leaders to ensure that our treaties were respected. We have struggled through and fought many battles with the governments over their failures to implement our treaty. Despite this, we Crees have always seen these struggles as opportunities to learn and move forward in building our nation and our system of governance, often resulting in the successful negotiations of renewed relationships and new treaties.

However, treaties between Indigenous nations, such as the Maammu Wiicheutuwin, are fundamentally different as we are guided by the spirit of our mutual respect and understanding for each other, our customary laws, values and the traditions that are important to us all. This treaty is a steppingstone for our future generations as we continue to build our nation-to-nation relationships with all our neighbours. This important step is a means to maintain our mutual respect, mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence as well as to strengthen our political, economic and social relations. Our treaty promotes positive inter-Indigenous relations.

CREE-NASKAPI-INUIT RELATIONS

In recent years, there have been several concerns raised over the drastic decline of the migratory caribou herds (George River and Leaf River), which took place following the practice of unauthorized guiding on the part of some Cree beneficiaries to accommodate the influx of caribou hunters from other Beneficiary Nations and non-Beneficiary Nations. The impacts of these activities on the health of the caribou population, on the land, on safety concerns, on traditional practices and on treaty rights and obligations have also been raised by the Cree Nation.

In response to these concerns, a mutual understanding between the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi was proposed as a first step to ensure mutual respect and good relations between the three JBNQA Beneficiary Nations, with the emphasis on the health, conservation, management and harvest of caribou populations.

Several meetings between the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, Cree Trappers' Association and the Chisasibi local Cree Trappers' Association were held in order to review this proposed mutual understanding. Moreover, community consultations were held with the communities of Chisasibi, Wemindji and the Cree Trappers' Association Annual General Assembly that was held in Whapmagoostui. In the fall of 2019, a presentation and submission of a Draft Mutual Understanding was presented to Makivik Corporation and the Naskapi First Nation.

In anticipation of the 2019-20 harvest, the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach requested that, while we conclude the Mutual Understanding between all three nations, there be a letter of understanding between the Crees and Naskapis. The Cree and Naskapi parties agreed to enter into a "letter of understanding" whereby there was agreement that the harvest would derive from the respective nation's guaranteed level of harvest. In order to ensure the proper implementation of this initiative, the letter included specific measures related to the logistics and coordination between Chisasibi Local Trappers' Association and the representatives of Kawawachikamach.

CREE-INNU RELATIONS

The decline of the migratory caribou herd populations continues to be a challenge throughout the territory. The critical state and inaccessibility of the George River herd, now estimated to be below 5000 animals, has resulted in several requests from the Innu Nations including the Innu from Labrador to access the Cree territory in order to harvest caribou from the Leaf River herd. The Cree Nation Government, the Cree Trappers' Association and the Cree Nation of Chisasibi have engaged in discussions with the Innu for several years



Top left: Cree-Innu Leadership meeting: Lance Cooper, Deputy Chief of the Cree Nation of Uje-Bougoumou, Chief Curtis Bosum, Cree Nation of Uje-Bougoumou, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum, Chief Clifford Moar, Mashteuiatsh, Chief Thomas Neeposh, Cree Nation of Mistissini and Gerald Longchap, Deputy Chief, Cree Nation of Mistissini.

Top right: Gifting of caribou for the Innu Elders

Left: On December 3rd, 2019, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum, Nadia Saganash, Coordinator of Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement Implementation and Tina Petawabano, Director of Federal and Indigenous Relations met with leaders and representatives from the Iroquois communities of Kahnawake, Akwesasne and Kanehsatake.

in attempt to find an acceptable solution to enable access to caribou while ensuring that any actions ensure the conservation of the herds and the respect of Cree rights and interests.

Discussions were held between Cree and Innu leaders and representatives where matters of the status of the Leaf River Herd, the Cree Naskapi “letter of understanding” and the Innu Elders statement requesting access to caribou were the major agenda items.

As an expression of good faith, the Cree Nation Government made a decision to offer a symbolic gesture of gifting caribou to the Innu Elders. This gifting ceremony was to be organized at a joint event, which would include a cultural exchange followed by discussions towards reaching common objectives and recommendations for long term solutions. A group of Chisasibi hunters harvested and delivered the caribou to the community of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremonial gathering to highlight this event could not take place. However, we look forward to meeting when public health protocols allow it.

CREE-INUIT RELATIONS

Preliminary exchanges took place between the Crees and Inuit related to issues of common interest and the identification of areas of cooperation, including land use planning, land and resources management, local and regional governance. We also look forward to finalizing the initiative related to a mutual understanding on the harvesting of caribou. The Cree team, which includes appointed representatives from the communities of Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui, will continue to work towards productive exchanges with our neighbours to the north.

CREE-MOHAWK RELATIONS

The Cree Nation Government held preliminary meetings and exchanges with leaders and representatives from the Mohawk communities of Kahnawake, Akwesasne and Kanehsatake. Issues that concern both nations were discussed including wildlife harvesting and Kahnawake’s proposed Trade and Commerce Protocol. The proposed protocol identifies potential trade opportunities with respect to economic development initiatives that include education, health, harvesting and conservation.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INDIGENOUS GROUPS

In April 2019, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) invited Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum to share the Cree Nation’s experience with implementation of the JBNQA by ensuring respect for Cree rights, governance and economic development. The AMC represents 62 First Nation communities from the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota peoples across Manitoba.

The Cree Nation Government will continue to work to develop positive and mutually beneficial relations with other Indigenous groups with whom we have begun exchanges in recent years. These include the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council, the Atikamekw and the Illwuk Nations.

We look forward to ongoing discussions leading to the development of further positive Indigenous-to-Indigenous relations. ●

NATURAL RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADAPTED FORESTRY REGIME AND THE CATEGORY II COLLABORATIVE FORESTRY REGIME WITH QUEBEC

This past year was highlighted by several exciting developments with how the Cree Nation Government administers its responsibilities for natural resources in Eeyou Istchee. The provisions of the Cree Quebec agreement on governance (2012) provided for the establishment of shared forestry management for Category II lands with Quebec. This is better known as the Collaborative Forestry Regime (Category II Lands). The Regime contemplates providing the Cree Nation Government the responsibility for developing forest management plans that cover Cree traplines on Category II lands.

In order to fulfill this new responsibility, it was necessary for the Cree Nation Government to increase its capacity with respect to forest management. This is why the Nation opted to create a new Forestry Department within the administrative structure of the Cree Nation Government. In doing so, the Cree Nation Government engaged Gillman Ottereyes as the new Director of the Forestry Department (September) and the four existing forestry positions under the Environment and Remedial Works Department were transferred to the new Forestry Department. It is anticipated that an additional six to eight new positions will be created in the coming year to ramp up the Cree Nation Government's capacity to fulfill its expanding forestry responsibilities.

To support this new Department, the Cree Nation Government has authorized the construction of a new office in Waswanipi. The Cree Nation Government's Forestry Department will share this space with the Cree Quebec Forestry Board's secretariat, who will move their office from Quebec City.

CREE QUEBEC FORESTRY BOARD

The relocation of the Cree Quebec Forestry Board was originally planned in the Paix des Braves Agreement and renewed in the 2015 Harmonization Agreement. To facilitate the planning for this relocation, the Cree Nation Government and the Ministry of Forestry Fauna and Parks (MFFP) created a bi-partite committee and have met several times throughout the last year to ensure both parties were comfortable with the relocation plans.

As noted in last year's annual report, the Cree Quebec Forestry Board continued its supportive efforts toward the collaboration of the parties to establish a regional Mixed Forest Stand Strategy and Wildlife Habitat Directives, both

of which remain ongoing. The Board also continued its effort in the development of a monitoring framework, which not only ensures that the provisions are being implemented, but also strives to gauge if these provisions are effective.

In similar fashion, the Cree Quebec Forestry Board completed its pilot project on assessing the quality of wildlife habitat (mainly for moose) for a trapline that has been harvested under the Adapted Forestry Regime provisions. The results of this assessment were interesting, and the Board hopes to expand this project to a scientifically appropriate number of traplines; however, this progress was cut short by the COVID-19 shut down in March.

The current Cree representatives on the Board are Isaac Voyageur, Gillman Ottereyes, Nadia Saganash, Steven Blacksmith and Geoff Quaile.

CREE QUEBEC OPERATIONAL GROUP (GOR) ON WOODLAND CARIBOU

This technical committee has been active since 2018. Its basic function is to allow the MFFP to present its various proposals on forestry and woodland caribou management to the Cree representatives for technical feedback. As recalled in last year's annual report, the MFFP's plan is to create Immense Spaces where caribou habitat would be protected from forest development both in the long term (150 years) and short term (20-50 years on a rotational basis). These Immense Spaces will also be managed to limit the number of roads to ensure further protection for woodland caribou. To support the forest industry, this plan would offset these larger areas of habitat with equally large blocks of wide scale forest harvesting (clear-cutting).

Considering that the MFFP's approach would represent a departure from the forest standards set out in the Paix des Braves Agreement, this proposal will have to be accepted by the Cree Nation Government through a nation to nation agreement with Quebec. With this in mind, the Cree representatives on the GOR are contemplating ways in which this proposal could be presented to Cree land users for their consideration. As part of these efforts, the Cree Nation Government co-hosted a Woodland Caribou forum in Ouje-Bougoumou in May of 2019. This was the first opportunity to brief land users on the MFFP's developing proposal on a comprehensive woodland caribou forest management plan.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN ONTARIO

In support of the Cree Nation Government's Ontario land claim, the Nation has actively sought to increase its

involvement in resource development activities within the land claim zone.

Its priority here has been the planned expansion of the West Detour Lake Mine, as it has the potential for downstream impacts in Eeyou Istchee as well as Ontario. Over the past year, staff from the Cree Nation Government's Environment and Remedial Works Department and legal counsel (GoldBlatt Partners) have worked together to develop a consultation process which would allow for Cree Nation Government constituents located in Waskaganish, Washaw Sibi and MoCreebec to express their opinions on this development project in Ontario. In the fall of 2019, the Ontario Government agreed to work with the Cree Nation Government on this consultation process and the first public meeting on the Detour Lake Mine expansion was held in Amos in January of 2020. At this meeting, representatives from Ontario and Detour Lake Mine (Kirkland Lake Gold) presented the expansion project and took questions from the Cree participants. A further follow-up meeting is planned for 2020-21.

In addition to the West Detour Lake Mine expansion, the Cree Nation Government is also monitoring proposed mining exploration and forestry operations in Ontario, particularly when these activities infringe upon Cree land users' activities.

GAZODUQ PIPELINE PROJECT

The Gazoduq project is a proposed natural gas pipeline that would run from Timmins Ontario to the Saguenay region in Quebec for export to international markets. The initial project description had the pipeline running through a small southern portion of a Waswanipi trapline in the Senneterre region. In response to the proposal, Cree Nation Government officials and legal counsel contacted the company and the Governments of Quebec and Canada, notifying all parties of the potential triggering of a Section 22 review under the *JBNQA*. In response, the company amended its project description so that no Cree traplines were directly affect and thus removing the need for a Section 22 review.

Given the regional scope of this proposed pipeline, both in Ontario and Quebec, the Cree Nation Government has committed to participating in the Federal environmental assessment of this project. In the fall and winter, the Cree Nation Government and the communities of Waskaganish, Waswanipi and Washaw Sibi engaged with the Federal authorities on the schedule and procedures for the Federal assessment. This Federal review is expected to carry well into 2020-21.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SECTION 22 HARMONIZATION

The Cree Nation Government has had a long-standing dispute with the Federal Government over its approach to Environmental Assessments. Since at least 1992, Canada's law on Environmental Assessments has been out of step with the requirements of Section 22. In 2010 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that while Canada had a right to hold a separate or external environmental assessment process outside of Section 22, this process had to respect the Crees' rights within the *JBNQA*. The Cree Nation Government has had an ongoing dialogue with Canada on this matter ever since.

This dispute reached a milestone in 2019 when the Cree Nation Government informed Federal authorities that it would no longer participate in two ongoing Federal assessments in the Cree territory unless it had a direct and collaborative role in these assessments. As a result, the Crees and Canada entered into an administrative agreement in June of 2019 to amend the structure of the Federal assessment for the Rose and James Bay lithium projects to allow direct Cree participation similar to the requirements of the *JBNQA* under Section 22.

The goodwill expressed in this new agreement encouraged both Canada and the Federal Government to seek a long-term solution to the dispute based on the approach taken for these two lithium projects. Progress on this work was delayed by the Federal election and COVID-19 at the end of the fiscal year. It is hoped that the parties can arrive at solution for this long running dispute in the coming year. ●



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

In 2019-2020, the international human rights of Indigenous peoples continued to make strides in Canada. Currently, nine federal laws expressly state that the “Government of Canada is committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. Six of these were adopted during the past year.

Regretfully, Bill C-262 - the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* – did not succeed in being enacted by the Parliament of Canada. In June 2019, a handful of Conservative Senators prevented the Bill from being completed in the Senate.

However, during and after the 2019 federal election, the Trudeau government promised to introduce legislation to implement the *UN Declaration*. The government declared Bill C-262 “as the floor, rather than the ceiling, when it comes to drafting this new legislation”.

UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In November 2019, the British Columbia government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* by consensus. Romeo Saganash was invited as an honorary guest to witness the historic proceedings in the BC Legislature.

In the same month, Romeo was made an Honorary Member of the Indigenous Bar Association at its 31st Annual Conference in Ottawa, “in recognition of his outstanding achievement in law and politics”. Such work included introducing draft legislation on the *UN Declaration*.

In November 2019, lawyer Paul Joffe and Jennifer Preston (Quakers) made three presentations at the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) in Calgary. The presentations

related to the *UN Declaration* and international and Canadian law. The CER replaces the former National Energy Board and its mandate includes interprovincial pipelines and transmission lines.

In the December Speech from the Throne, the federal government underlined that it will “take action to ... introduce legislation to implement the [UN] Declaration ... in the first year of the new mandate”.

On December 10, Human Rights Day, Paul Joffe and Jennifer Preston were invited by Parliament to present on the need for a legislative framework to implement the *UN Declaration*.

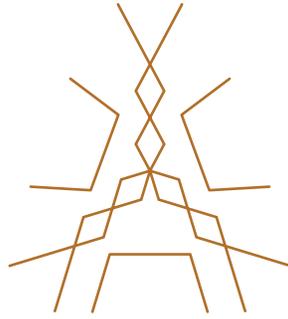
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ACT

In June 2019, the *Indigenous Languages Act* was adopted by Parliament. One of the “Purposes” of this Act is to “contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it relates to Indigenous languages”. The *UN Declaration* includes a number of provisions that relate to Indigenous languages.

In July, as part of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, UNESCO invited Paul Joffe to speak in Geneva on “Legal Perspectives” regarding the *Indigenous Languages Act*.

In December, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the period 2022–2032 as the “International Decade of Indigenous Languages”. A key purpose is “to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages and to take urgent steps at the national and international levels”.





In September 2019, it was a historic occasion when the Cree Government adopted its first law – the Cree Language Act – by consensus. This Act is a comprehensive law that highlights Cree history, values, priorities, rights and responsibilities related to the Cree language.

CREE LANGUAGE ACT

In September 2019, it was a historic occasion when the Cree Government adopted its first law – the *Cree Language Act* – by consensus. This Act is a comprehensive law that highlights Cree history, values, priorities, rights and responsibilities related to the Cree language.

The *Cree Language Act* makes repeated reference to the *UN Declaration* and other international human rights law. This includes the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS). The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) was an active participant in the negotiations for the *American Declaration* over 15 years.

UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (PFII)

The UN Permanent Forum met in New York in April 2019. The theme of the session was “sustainable development”. The delegations from Canada included a 15-year-old Haida youth, Haana Edenshaw, who delivered the joint Statement supported by Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Nation Government. The Statement highlighted that Indigenous peoples are often faced with developments that are not sustainable and that fail to meet international standards.

Too often, States are not including in their domestic laws any references to the *2030 Agenda on Sustainable*

Development – the most important international instrument on this. The Statement also highlighted that, when read as a whole, the *UN Declaration* affirms Indigenous peoples’ right to sustainable development.

UN EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (EMRIP)

In July 2019, EMRIP held its 12th session in Geneva. Indigenous peoples and human rights organizations brought to the attention of all participants that Bill C-262 had not been adopted in Canada as a federal law.

The signatories to this Joint Statement indicated their strong determination to ensure in the future that nothing less than the full contents of what was in Bill C-262 be adopted in legislation.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRE)

Interest in Indigenous peoples’ human rights continues to grow at a rapid pace throughout Canada and internationally. The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Nation Government continue to encourage human rights education at home and internationally.

To date, the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples has distributed more than 500,000 booklets on the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, mostly in Canada. The booklets are also available in e-reader format. ●



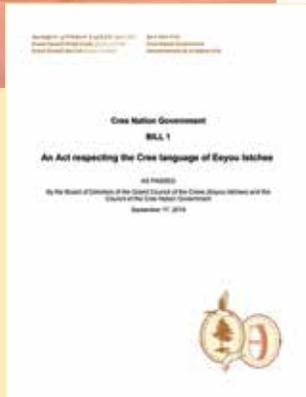
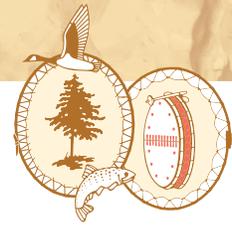
HIGHLIGHTS



SIGNING OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE CREE NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT AS A KEY MEASURE TO SUPPORT THE CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

The Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities have worked together to develop our Cree Nation Housing Strategy to address the urgent needs of community members for affordable and adequate housing. On April 17, 2019, in collaboration with the Government of Canada, we agreed to amend the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* in a way that will help create a private home ownership market for Crees in our communities by removing the previous 75-year term limit on residential land grants for Crees. By developing our own approach to address housing needs, and with the right support of governments, we will be able to “unlock the wealth” that is associated with housing construction and home ownership.

HIGHLIGHTS



LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

On February 17, 2020, Québec Premier François Legault and Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum signed *La Grande Alliance*, an MOU for the collaboration and consolidation of socio-economic ties between the Cree and Quebec nations aimed to connect, develop and protect the territory.

It is a comprehensive plan to extend the transport network, improve the standard of living, and above all, guarantee the long-term protection of the territory through targeted protected areas. It also sets the long-term vision for the strategic, predictable and sustainable development of the territory.

BILL 1: AN ACT RESPECTING THE CREE LANGUAGE OF EYYOU ISTCHEE

On September 17, 2019, Bill 1, the *Cree Language Act of Eeyou Istchee* was adopted unanimously by the Cree Nation Government. It is the first official bill that has been adopted by Cree Nation Government since the signing of the *Cree Governance Agreement* in 2017. The bill was created and adopted with the intent of preserving our Cree language, which is a cornerstone of our culture and identity. The objectives of the Act are to support and promote the use of the Cree language, to support efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen the Cree language, and to plan initiatives and activities for restoring and maintaining fluency in the Cree language.





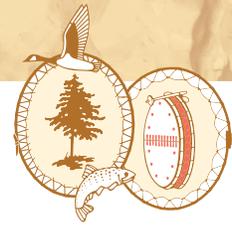
HIGHLIGHTS

THE NEW EEYOU-EENOU REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE IN CHISASIBI

On October 7, 2019, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec signed a new Health Agreement securing additional funding to be applied toward a combination of capital projects, new programs and services, and perhaps most importantly, construction of the first modern hospital in Eeyou Istchee to be located in Chisasibi, complete with state-of-the-art equipment to support medical professionals. The closer that important institutions such as a new hospital are located to our people, the more effective they will be, and the more responsive our Cree Health Board will be in addressing the needs of our people.



HIGHLIGHTS



Me James O'Reilly,
Me Jean-François Bertrand,
Dr. Matthew Coon Come,
Me Jessica Orkin,
Me Natai Shelsen

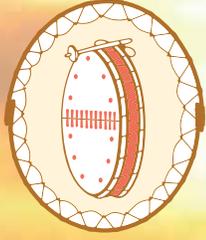
STRATECO RESOURCES' APPEAL DISMISSED

In response to the Matoush Project—located on the traditional family hunting grounds of the Cree Nation of Mistissini—the Cree Nation declared a permanent moratorium on all uranium activities throughout Eeyou Istchee. In November 2013, the Quebec Minister of the Environment refused to grant a certificate of authorization for the Project, citing a lack of social acceptability amongst the Cree Nation.

Strateco launched a claim against Quebec claiming \$200 million in damages for its refusal to authorize the project. This claim was dismissed in 2017 and Strateco appealed this court decision. The Quebec Court of Appeal dismissed Strateco's appeal in January 2020.

“This judgment upholds the integrity of the unique environmental and social impact review process established by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It is a significant recognition and reinforcement of our treaty rights.”—Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum

“The Quebec government – and now, the Quebec Court of Appeal – have recognized that the social acceptability of proposed projects is an essential requirement for development in Eeyou Istchee.”—Bill Namagoose, Executive Director, Cree Nation Government.



Cree Nation Government

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FINANCE AND TREASURY

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Matthew Swallow

The 2019-2020 fiscal year marked a year of continuing evolution in our governance regime with Canada and Quebec. The Cree Nation Government has continued to streamline funding arrangements to respect the Cree Canada Governance Agreement and financial reporting mechanisms inherent with the Cree Constitution.

We have come along way in having Canada and Quebec recognize our rights of self-government and how we must manage our affairs consistent with those rights and responsibilities. Throughout the year, we have been reviewing and renegotiating many sectoral funding agreements outside the scope of the funding arrangements agreed to be extended on a long-term basis with Canada pursuant to the Cree Nation Governance Agreement.

We have also been capable of continuing to revise the reporting obligations of communities to Canada, and wherever possible, with Quebec, to ensure that the Governance Agreement is respected. A number of these new arrangements will only be finalized or applicable in 2020-2021, but we are pleased with the overall success we have had in ensuring consistency of the new arrangements to the principles provided for in the Cree Constitution.

Fiscal year 2019-2020 was particularly challenging because of the pandemic. The Cree Nation Government was able to secure \$8.5M for the communities to address urgent challenges. In addition, resources were provided to the Cree School Board and Cree Board of Health and Social Services.

The leadership of all entities and all communities have worked diligently to address the needs of the population during the pandemic. Our job in finance was to ensure that resources were available and that we continued to function in the challenging environment we were all faced with, and are continuing to address at the date of this report.

We have all learned how to work remotely and still get the job done with all challenges we have been faced with during this time. I am particularly proud of all my staff in Finance and Treasury, who have worked diligently throughout this period, have ensured that we were able to meet our financial needs, and have continued to evolve as a team in this process.

The pandemic has also raised issues and concerns respecting the various Cree investment funds. While the

markets suffered a significant drop in mid-March, at time of writing certain market recoveries have also been experienced. While losses were incurred at various Cree entities, some entities will be able to manage these impacts. The Cree Nation Trust had already begun a process to reduce exposure to equity market investments, and these efforts have been further reviewed by the Trustees considering the pandemic impact on markets. The Wyapschinigun Fund, a truly long term Capital Fund, administered by the Eenou-Eeyou Limited Partnership, will detail certain investment losses for the year ending March 31, 2020. However, given that the fund is a truly long term fund and no disbursements from the fund are intended to be made until 2052, we will see a recovery of these investments over time.

The resources now under the administration of the Cree Nation Government and other Cree entities entrusted with the implementation of the JBNQA are significant. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Board/Council of the Cree Nation Government allocated \$415,595,371 for various programs, services, and responsibilities either under its administration or under the administration of other entities established pursuant to the JBNQA and related entities. These funds are exclusive of the budgets for the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, as well as several other Cree entities.

Over the coming year we will continue to work with all communities to address the evolving financial administrative issues we all face and to ensure that we assist one another in employing best practices being developed both locally and regionally. We continue to be impressed with the exchange of best practices amongst all communities and together we help build our nation's capacity.

As a final note, I wish to express my continuing appreciation to all staff of the Department of Finance and Treasury, who devote their time and extensive efforts to ensuring that we can meet the significant responsibilities entrusted to us by our leadership. Your commitment and efforts are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Matthew Swallow
Treasurer

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

The Cree Nation Government and the Eenou-Eeyou Limited Partnership act as Recipients of Funding pursuant to many agreements with Canada and Quebec. Pursuant to the New Relationship Agreement with Canada, all payments, to the exclusion of the Community Specific Agreements, are made to the Cree Nation Trust, which provides annual disbursements to the Cree Nation Government, which is entrusted with the implementation of the Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities. The Cree Nation Government has also negotiated many funding agreements for the Cree Nation, where the funding flows to the Cree Nation Government, which then reallocates the funds in favour of the local communities and/or in conformity with Agreement guidelines.

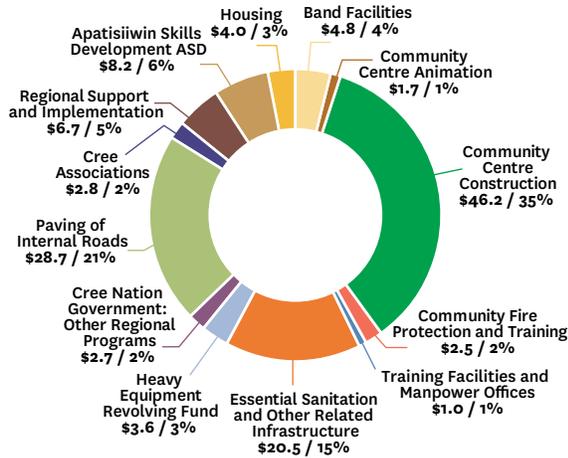
The following summarizes certain of these arrangements for 2019-2020:

Government of Canada	
Cree Act Operation and Maintenance Funding	\$104,361,100
Federal Capital A-Base Funding	\$20,119,514
Agreement respecting the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and Related Services	\$4,852,901
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Funding Agreement	\$4,706,750
Canada / Quebec Joint Funding	
Policing Services	\$20,271,009
Government of Quebec	
Agreement Concerning a New Relationship – Annual Payment	\$102,491,088
Agreement Concerning the Administration of Justice	\$19,909,859
Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee Territory	\$5,000,000
Cree Nation Trust	
Implementation of Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities	\$133,883,150

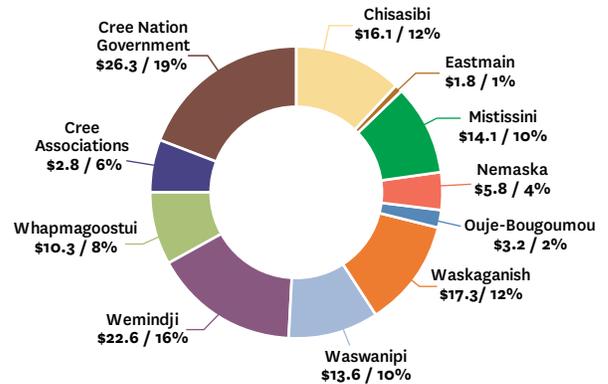
In addition to the funding described above, both Canada and Quebec provide funding in relation to Cree Education to the Cree School Board, and Quebec provides funding for Health and Social Services to the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. Many other program funding arrangements exist between Canada, Quebec and the Crees to implement other special and regular program funding arrangements. ●

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

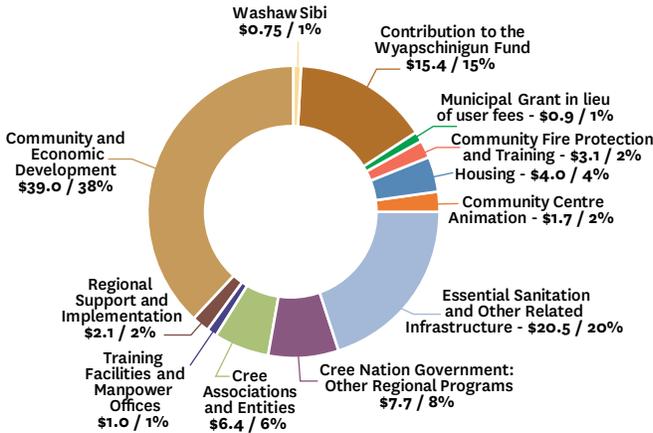
**New Relationship Agreement CANADA
Funding Allocation 2019-2020 by Program
\$133.9 Million**



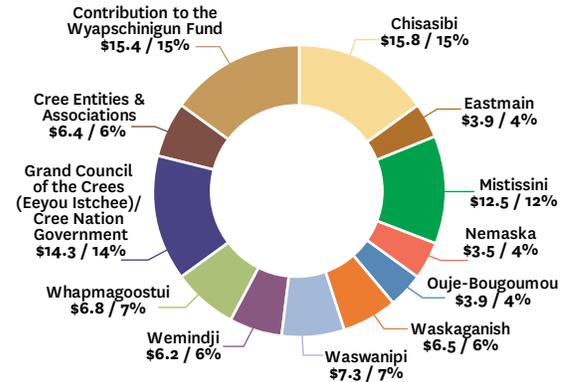
**New Relationship Agreement CANADA
Funding Allocation 2019-20
\$133.9 Million**



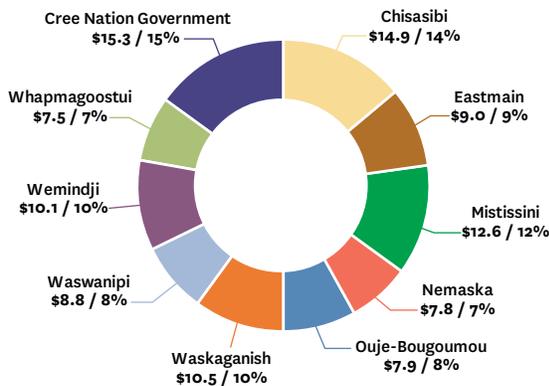
**New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC
Funding Allocation 2019-20 by Program
\$102.5 Million**



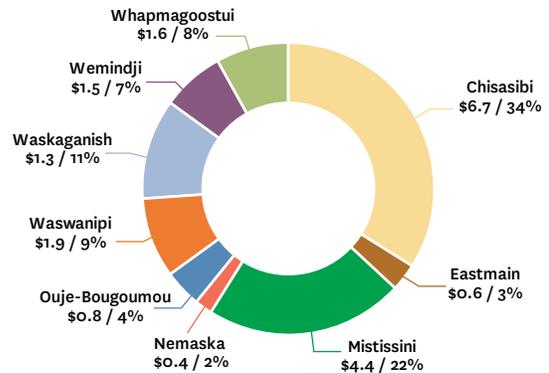
**New Relationship Agreement QUEBEC
Funding Allocation 2019-20
\$102.5 Million**



**O&M Funding Allocation 2019-20
\$104.4 Million**



**Capital Funding Allocation 2019-20
\$20.1 Million**





HUMAN RESOURCES

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Nancy Bobbish

Greetings everyone,

I must say that 2019-2020 was an exciting year in Human Resources.

We have the unique privilege to touch the lives of all employees at the Cree Nation Government – from recruiting and orientation, career advancement, retirement, and all the steps in between. We serve as partners to each department, by providing resources, advice, and management of various topics and policies. Moreover, every day we continue to challenge our practices and policies so as to better reflect an evolving community of supportive, successful individuals, all of whom are valuable members of the Cree Nation Government.

It is my honour to lead our team of more than 12 strong, who make up the Office of Human Resources. We

remain committed to supportive people practices and work thoughtfully and respectfully in every situation to provide information and support, and to find sustainable solutions for our colleagues.

We strive each year to provide a report reflecting the essence of what our workforce is, and we summarize our actions and accomplishments in an annual report. I invite you to view our most recent report.

I would like to thank our employees, along with our management and the many partners and stakeholders who have worked with and supported us through the year.

Kindest regards,

Nancy Bobbish
Director of Human Resources

Every day we continue to challenge our practices and policies so as to better reflect an evolving community of supportive, successful individuals, all of whom are valuable members of the Cree Nation Government.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The Human Resources department is continuously evolving and adapting to life and work's uncertainties and challenges. Every year, we strive to foster better work-life balance, to promote advancement opportunities, and to always aim for equal employment. We are committed in providing an ethically sound, diverse, safe and flourishing workplace for all. By providing many services, not only do we promote a healthy workspace and mindset, we also aim to have our employees' careers grow.

The many services that the Human Resources department provides include recruitment and selection, performance management, an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), health and safety, and professional development and career advancement, along with many others. We highly encourage all employees to use our services, not only for the betterment of themselves personally and professionally, but in terms of bettering the organization.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Activities (excludes EEPF)

For 2019-2020, the Cree Nation Government had 425 approved civilian and non-civilian positions. Among these are 55 employees under Capital Works and Services, 71 under Justice and Correctional, 15 under Child and Family Services, 22 under Environmental and Remedial Works, 11 under Social and Cultural Development, 12 under Human Resources, 7 under Grand Council, 123 under EEPF, 28 under Government Services, 18 under Finance, 10 under Commerce and Industry, 11 under Forestry, and 39 under Apatisiwin Skills Development.

Child and Family Services, 22 employees under Environment and Remedial Works, 11 under Social and Cultural Development, 12 employees under Human Resources, 7 employees under Grand Council, 28 employees under Government Services, 18 employees under Finance, 10 employees under Commerce and Industry, 11 employees under Forestry, and 39 employees under Apatisiwin Skills Development (see Figure 1).

The Human Resources department filled 38 vacant, permanent positions and 11 contractual positions of a duration of six months or more (see Figure 2).

From the 288 civilian, permanent employees, 59 represent male employees and 158 represent female employees in Administrative/Technical positions. Professional roles are held by 27 male individuals and 29 female individuals. 9 male employees and 6 female employees occupy Director/Executive positions (see Figure 3).

The majority of civilian, permanent employees are Cree Beneficiaries (224). The remainder of employees comprise First Nation (17) and Non-First Nation (47) (see Figure 4).

Civilian employees are distributed across a vast geography as follows: Chisasibi (32), Wemindji (16), Montreal (49), Val-d'Or (22), Ouje-Bougoumou (13), Waskaganish (24), Nemaska (39), Waswanipi (19), Quebec (4), Mistissini (70), Ottawa (10), Whapmagoostui (8), Eastmain (9) and Amos (1) (see Figure 5).

Figure 1. Approved Positions per Department
(Civilian and Non-Civilian Employees - Total of 422)

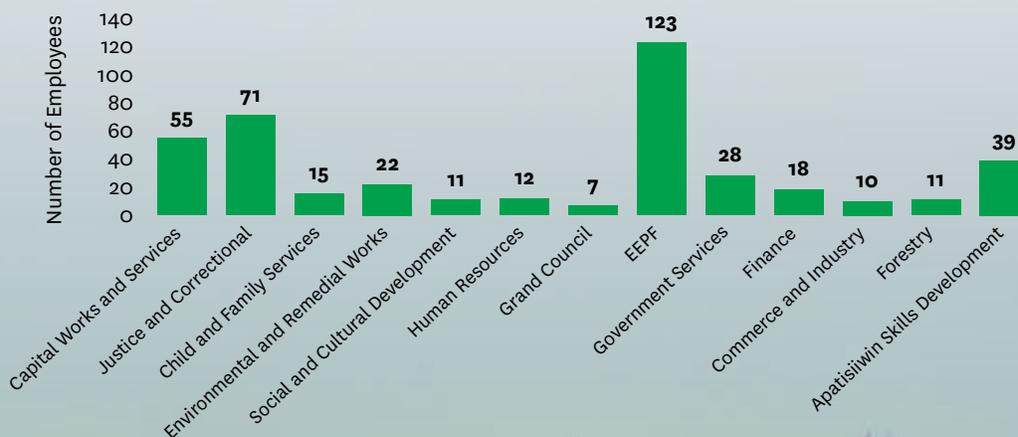


Figure 2. Positions Filled by Department

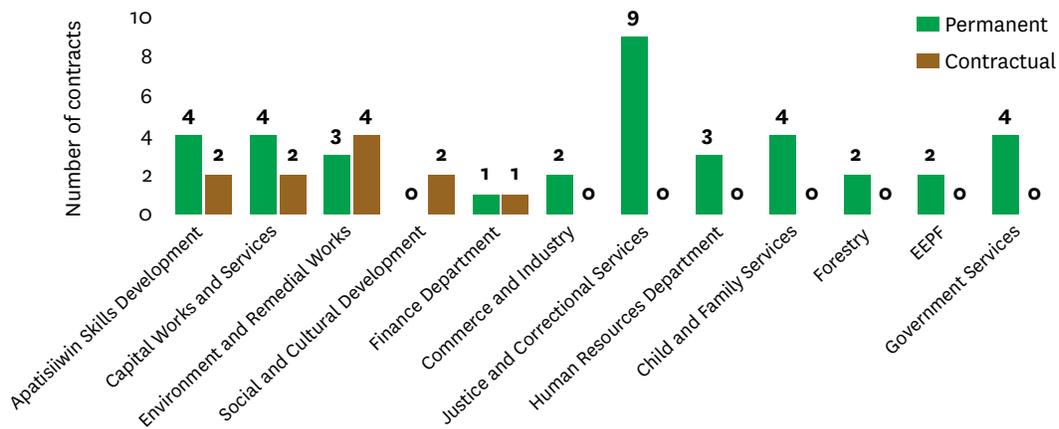


Figure 3. Gender Distribution
(Civilian Permanent Employees)

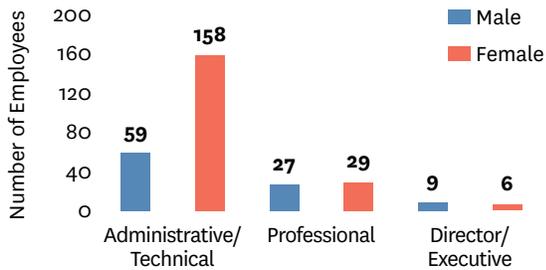


Figure 4. Ethnic Demographic
(Civilian Permanent Employees)

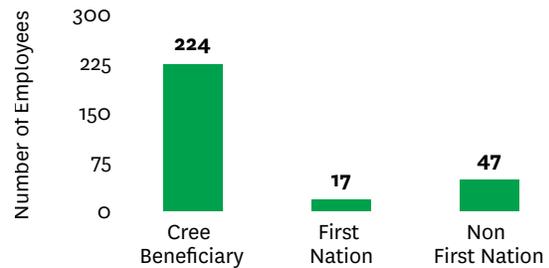
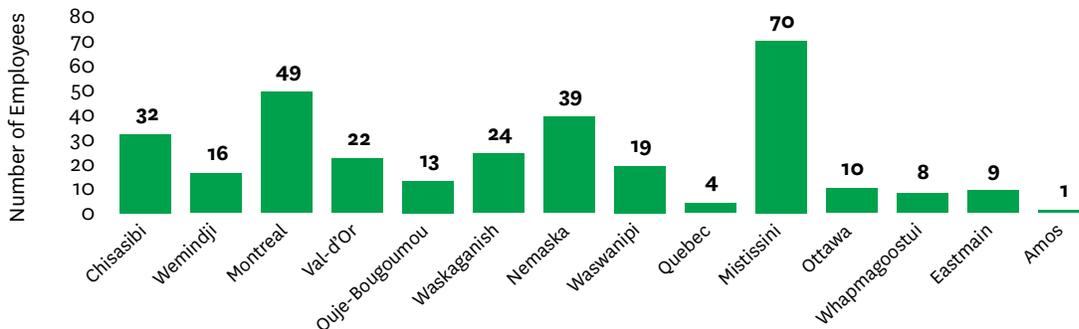


Figure 5. Distribution of Employees
(Civilian)



Recruitment Activities for the Eeyou Eenou Police Force

Non-civilian employees are employed in different communities throughout the James Bay Territory. These individuals are primarily based in Chisasibi (28), Mistissini (19) and Waskaganish (16). Other Officers and Senior Officers work out of Eastmain (6), Nemaska (6), Ouje-Bougoumou (6), Waswanipi (9), Wemindji (7), Whapmagoostui (7), and Amos (2).

The majority of non-civilian permanent and contractual employees are Cree beneficiaries (58), followed by Non-First Nation (30) and First Nation (7). The majority of employees are male (84) when compared to female (11).

For this reference year, the turnover rate was 6.2 percent for permanent Officers and 35.8 percent for contractual officers. Several reasons have had an influence on the EEPF Contractual Officers' high turnover rate, such as being hired by another Police Force, the location of work, and personal reasons.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Cree Nation Government views training and development opportunities as a valuable and strategic investment for all employees. Training allows employees to learn skills that will support their job performance in order to work more effectively in the short-term. Development leads to improvement of employees' existing skills to enable them to prepare for future roles and advance in their careers.

EEPF Cohorts

In order to recruit Cree Beneficiaries to come and work for EEPF, we launched a 6th cohort recruitment campaign and organized selection camps in Chisasibi on September 4, 2019, and in Rouyn-Noranda on January 8, 2020. The selection camps consisted of physical testing, interviews, and medical evaluations with each candidate.

We had a total of 23 candidates that attended the selection camps, and 9 were retained. These students started

Figure 1. Distribution of Officers (Non-Civilians)

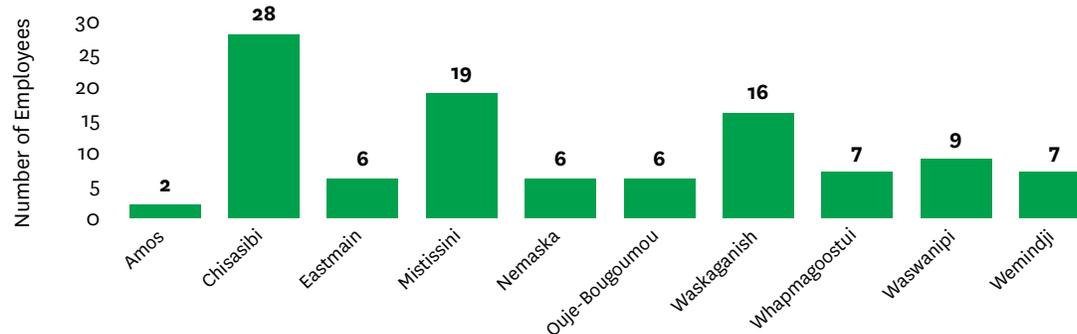


Figure 2a. EEPF Gender Distribution

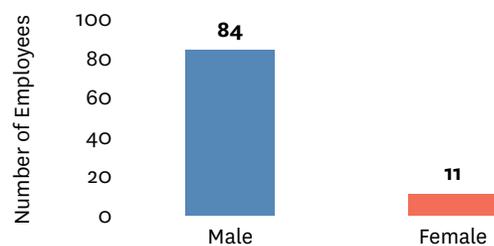
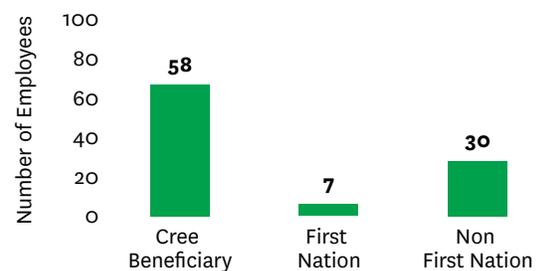


Figure 2b. EEPF Ethnic Demographic



at the *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue* in Rouyn-Noranda on February 17, 2020. However, the AEC Police Technology Program is now suspended until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, we had 9 students out of 14 from the 5th cohort that graduated on October 25, 2019, from the AEC Policing Technology Program. Out of the 9 students, 6 were supposed to graduate from *École nationale de police du Québec* (ENPQ) as of March 20, 2020 and become full-fledged Officers. Unfortunately, the graduation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the interim, EEPF hired the 6 students as Special Constables.

Moreover, we participated and engaged in 2 career fairs:

- Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) Regional Career Fair; and
- ENPQ open house for Police Forces and public security partners.

By attending these career fairs, it provided us access to many candidates in a one-stop environment and helped increase EEPF awareness as an employer. It also provided us a chance to recruit Officers who are enrolled or who had recently graduated from the ENPQ.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

CNG Salary Structure Revision

The Human Resources team is in the last stages of the salary structure revision. Over the last year, 150 positions were evaluated, job titles and job descriptions were standardized and harmonized, a benchmarking exercise was performed, and the salary structure was then adjusted based on the review. Human Resources personnel met with Directors to validate the job descriptions and their positioning within the new salary structure. Each Director also received binders containing all updated job descriptions for their department as well as the tools they will need to respond to employee inquiries once the new salary structure is implemented.

EEPF Salary Structure Revision

The salary structure for Senior Officers was revised and a new premium, titled Growth Premium, was introduced in order to recognize the Senior Officers' years of service with EEPF. Those changes were approved by the Board of Directors of the Grand Council of the Cree (Eeyou Istchee) and the Council of the Cree Nation Government on May 29, 2019.

Creation of Forestry Department

This year we saw the creation of the new Forestry Department within the Cree Nation Government. Human Resources have recruited and hired the departmental Director and Administrative Assistant. Four permanent positions were transferred from Environment and Remedial Works to Forestry.

Dayforce Program

Some employees of the Human Resources department took part in a one-week conference on the Workforce Management system, Dayforce, in October 2019. The purpose of the conference was to impart some knowledge of what Dayforce is capable of achieving and how it could achieve it. The Dayforce system was presented to the whole of the organization in 2015. Although many modules were purchased at the time, only the Time and Attendance module was introduced at first. This year, the system was updated with new functionalities and internal mechanics to ensure that accurate information is recorded daily.

Health and Safety Initiatives (EEPF)

Cree Nation Government/Eeyou Eenuou Police Force is committed to promoting a workplace safety culture in which supervisors and their employees work together to ensure the prevention of occupational illness and injury.

The Employment Injuries Policy and Procedures was revised and intended to increase safety awareness, as well as to report every incident, accident, illness and injury, while ensuring compliance with the Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety (AROS) and establishing safety responsibilities.

In order to provide and maintain workplace safety, all Senior Officers completed a basic occupational health and safety awareness training. Subsequently, Senior Officers implemented the Employment Injuries Policy and Procedures in their respective detachment and communicated the health and safety best practices to their Officers.

We also focused on creating a Joint Committee on the Prevention of Workplace Accidents. The committee is responsible for:

- Identifying actual and potential hazards in the workplace;
- Receiving incident investigation reports, employee concerns, complaints and recommendations for workplace health and safety;
- Discussing and analyzing issues, and finding ways to prevent the recurrence of the accident; and
- Providing recommendations to Senior Management.

Cree Nation Government and EEPF assumes the responsibility for the management of the safety and health programs for its effectiveness and improvement, and for providing the precautions required to ensure safe conditions.

Engagement (EEPF)

Since EEPF policing services are enhanced by the professionalism, dedication, and accountability of its Officers, we believe in recognizing commitment and dedication to the organization through the Medal Ceremony program. Hence, for every 10 years of service, an Officer receives a medal. This year we are proud to announce that Officers Nicole Angatookaluk Sam and Donna Rupert both received a medal for their ten years of service.

The Cree Nation Government and Human Resources department are committed to working alongside its employees and external partners to better our services.

HR POLICY REVIEW

HR Policy and Procedures

The Human Resources staff was actively involved in revising the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Handbook for Employees, to ensure that it reflects the reality of Grand Council of the Crees (EI)/Cree Nation Government employees' work more accurately. Different modifications were made to the edition published back in 2012. Some of the revisions adopted were definition changes, a more expansive benefits package for temporary employees, and modifications to the sick leave, family responsibilities, educational leave, compassionate leave, home leave benefits, work time, duration of probationary periods and performance development and evaluation.

As of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, all permanent employees are granted a paid 1-week cultural leave to practice traditional Cree activities. Contractual employees will have access to unpaid cultural leaves after 3 months of continuous employment.

The HR Policy and Procedures Handbook modifications were presented to the Management and Executive committees in late 2019 and early 2020, and a final presentation is scheduled for late May or early June 2020. The updated HR Policy and Procedures Handbook is expected to be finalized in the first half of the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

During the summer of 2019, the Human Resources department developed a Drug and Alcohol Policy that affects the whole of the Grand Council of the Crees (EI)/Cree Nation Government. This was done in response to the requirement that all organizations develop such a policy following the legalization of cannabis in 2018. The policy was developed with the following ideas in mind:

- To increase employee awareness of the effects of drugs and alcohol use and the risks they may pose to the workplace;
- To make the employees aware of their responsibilities regarding drug and alcohol use, and what constitutes prohibited use with respect to the workplace; and

- To ensure that employees who have a drug or alcohol-related dependence are encouraged to seek the help they need without fear of reprisal.

EEPF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The Human Resources department is responsible for ensuring the Collective Agreements are applied fairly and consistently across the EEPF. Hence, the HR department along with the McGill School of Continuing Studies, planned and prepared a training course for all Senior Officers and the Human Resources staff. The Senior Officers learned how to manage in a unionized environment and the Human Resources staff were trained on labour relations foundations.

We have 84 members under the Collective Agreement and for this reference year. Moreover, no grievances were filed.

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)

Morneau Shepell, our service provider, continues to offer confidential and voluntary services to all our employees and their families. Services offered include family, financial, career and legal issues; critical incidence and mental health; health and fitness coaching, nutritional support, naturopathic advice; effective work habits; and managerial support. Employees can reach the program 24/7 via phone, mobile application or website.

IN CLOSING

The Cree Nation Government and Human Resources department are committed to working alongside its employees and external partners to better our services. We have many projects and visions for the future and are fully committed to accomplishing that and much more. With a new member in the department, we can continue to expand our projects and take on new challenges more easily. We look forward to the new fiscal year and the results from our hard work that it will bring. ●



APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Louisa Saganash

We are pleased to present you the activities of Apatisiwin Skills Development Department (ASD) of the Cree Nation Government for 2019-2020, formerly known as Cree Human Resources Development Department.

This past year, ASD implemented its 5-year strategic plan that included the renaming of the department to Apatisiwin Skills Development. The department's activities have been numerous, from its new website development www.apatisiwin.ca, to its Annual Regional Career Fair held in Mistissini on September 25-26, 2019. This year's Career Fair theme was "Apatisiwin, your success is our goal".

Apatisiwin Skills Development has 40 employees working in all the Cree communities with two offices in Ottawa and Gatineau. The department plays a strategic role in the development of the workforce in Eeyou Istchee. Our mission is to help equip and empower individuals with the skills and knowledge to achieve meaningful, sustainable employment and personal success. Our vision is to help build a qualified and professional workforce to fill any employment need in Eeyou Istchee.

In 2019-2020, ASD had a shared responsibility with Statistics Canada (SC) to provide labour market information data. Labour market data is crucial to ensure that the programs and services delivered by the department and partners are aligned to the needs of employers, as well as to make optimal decisions on how to invest into workforce development training programs. ASD worked with SC in the development of a ques-

tionnaire to use in conducting the Community Employment Needs Assessment (CENA) surveys throughout the communities. The Adult Learning Needs Assessment (ALNA) survey was also a shared responsibility with the Cree School Board that was presented at the Cree Nation Summit on Building Capacity for Eeyou Istchee held last October to start the initiative. Our collaborative efforts will help in the creation of training and employment needs to occupy the learning centres built in Eeyou Istchee. Both the ALNA and CENA reports are to be ready by spring 2020.

As ASD continues its mandate to help its clientele prepare for training with the result of sustainable employment opportunities in Eeyou Istchee, we could not do it without our partners. The Cree School Board Sabtuan Adult Education Services and Post-Secondary Services Departments have been integral to our mission. Cree communities, employers and other training institutions throughout the region also play an enormous part in helping us accomplish our departmental objectives. We look forward to their continued collaborative partnerships.

In conclusion, ASD thanks a very dedicated staff for their continuous contribution, accomplishments each year, and their much-valued commitment to human resources development in Eeyou Istchee.

Meegwetch and God bless.

OUR VISION

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

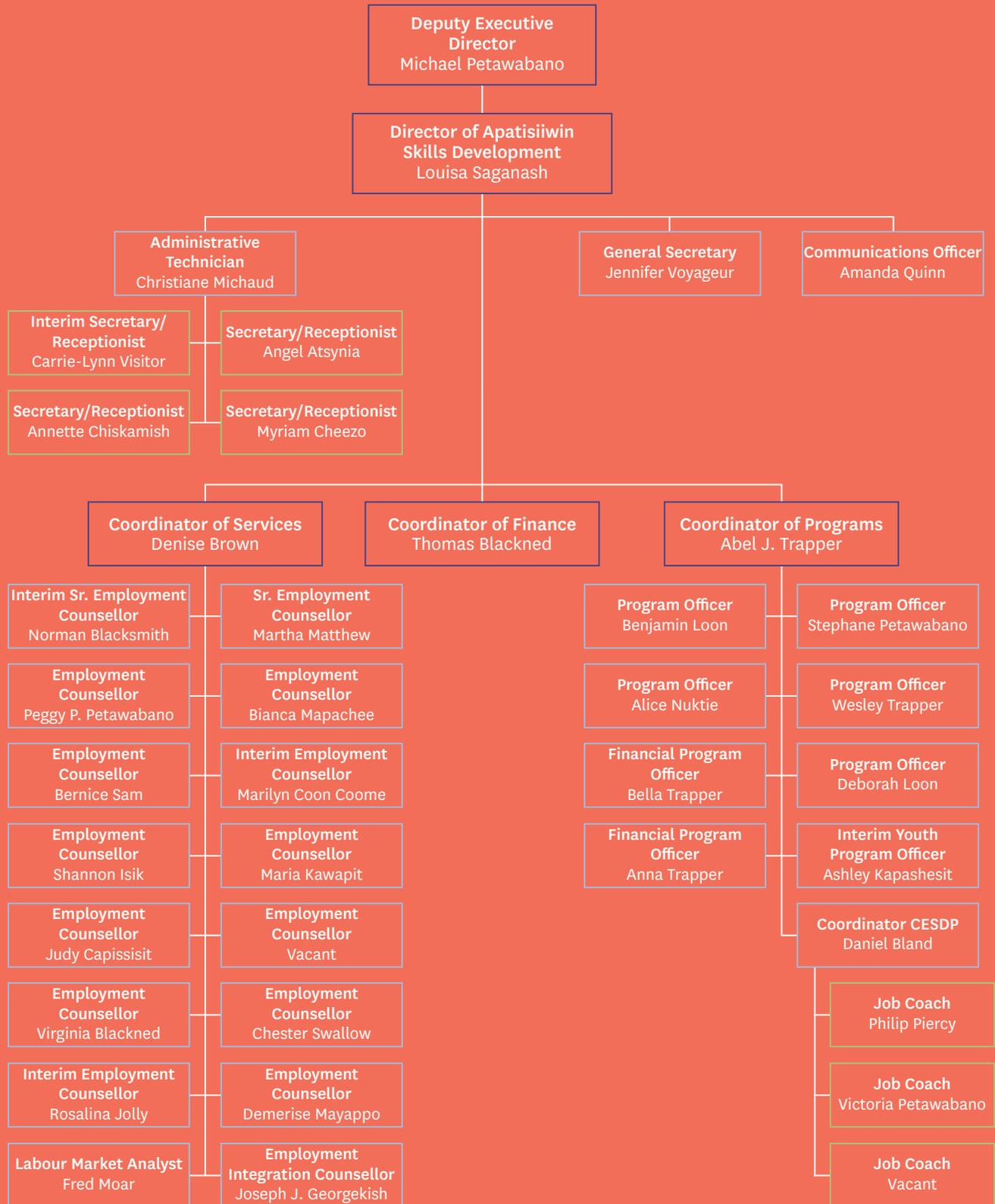
OUR MISSION

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 VALUES

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

**ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE**





ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Our Communities are our Greatest Asset

ASD exists to support the people of Eeyou Istchee; to aid individuals in their search for sustainable employment and career development; preparing them through skills development, job readiness programs, training and special projects that increase the employability and labour market readiness of our people. Our communities and the people that live within Eeyou Istchee are our greatest asset. Their success is our success as a department.

ASD's mandate is :

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

ASD fulfils this role by acting as a liaison between employers and the Cree labour force, offering training employment programs and services targeting sustainable employment.

ASD TEAM

ASD has a large dedicated staff of 40 who oversee and implement local and regional programs and services to clients, that is, job seekers and potential employers, throughout Eeyou Istchee. The department has grown steadily over the last five years, bringing new expertise and services to meet the growing needs of our clientele. ASD has

an office in each of the 10 Cree communities, and 2 offices in Ottawa and Gatineau, which provide employment services while also assisting with the monitoring and intake of participants that are part of ASD programming..

TEAM RECOGNITION AWARDS

Team Recognition Awards were awarded at the annual Winter Planning Session. ASD recognized the efforts of three of its Team members in three areas of service excellence: Teamwork, Community Involvement, and Innovation. The Team Recognition Awards is a peer-to-peer recognition program which allows ASD employees to acknowledge and express appreciation for colleagues who make a difference. In 2019 – 2020, the following staff received the awards:

- Community Involvement: Demerise Mayappo
- Excelling in Teamwork: Peggy Petawabano
- Innovation: Amanda Quinn

We thank our Team members for their initiative and commitment to ASD!



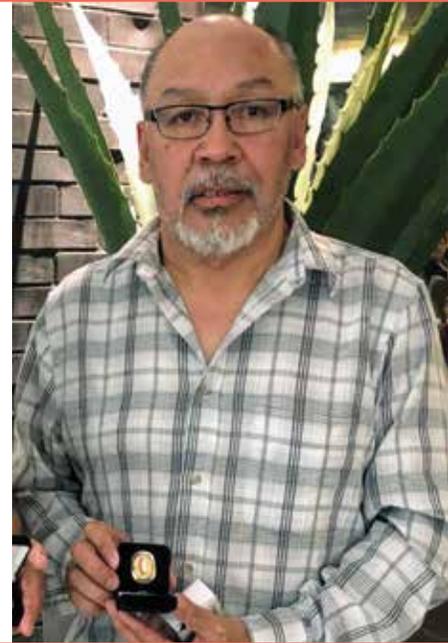
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT

Thomas Blackned, Coordinator of Finance

Thomas Blackned, Coordinator of Finance, started working for the Cree Human Resources Development Department of the Cree Regional Authority in 1998, now named Apatisiwin Skills Development Department of the Cree Nation Government.

He has been there since the beginning, when the transfer of federal program responsibilities to the Cree Nation was occurring. He has seen the evolution of the department from a small team of five employees to 40 employees today.

Thomas played a key role in the financial aspect of the department programs and services and worked alongside the finance department in Nemaska for many years. Thomas then moved back to work from his home community of Chisasibi. Thomas found it very rewarding to have played an important role with ASD, and his contribution to the workforce development in Eeyou Istchee for the past 22 years.



We have an enormous gratitude for Thomas, for his long-time commitment to ASD. We will miss you and we wish you all the best in your retirement while enjoying the land that you love most. Keep safe! Meegwetch and God bless.

- Louisa Saganash, Director

Finally, I can't believe it's already time for retirement! You look like 25 years old. Ok, 35! More seriously, I want to offer a farewell to my dear colleague and friend Thomas. We shared many great moments together, especially the amazing hockey game at the Bell Centre! Thomas was close to perfection; except he cheers for Chicago Blackhawks. No one is perfect, Thomas! It has truly been a pleasure to work with a competent and kind person like you. Thank you for your constant work and diligent presence at meetings. Your help and support during audit periods were well appreciated. Even though it is sad to say goodbye, I wish you the best for your future projects and goals, and lots of wonderful times with your family and friends. This is a new beginning for you with many great possibilities. Take care Thomas!

- Pascal Chadronnet, CNG - Coordinator of Finance

Congratulations Thomas!

It's a wonderful thing you're blessed with, time for yourself and with your loved ones. Go, see, and do everything your heart desires, and cherish each moment.

- Denise Brown, Coordinator of Services

Happy retirement Thomas! It was a pleasure knowing you as a colleague under our department. Now you get to enjoy more of the great outdoors.

- Abel Trapper, Coordinator of Programs

A truly great co-worker is hard to find, difficult to part with, and impossible to forget.

Thomas, working with you was a blessing. Good Luck in your future Endeavors!

- Demerise Mayappo, Employment Counsellor

Congratulations on your well-earned retirement buddy. Let me know what fishing on a Monday feels like, enjoy!

- Joseph J. Georgekish, Employment Integration Counsellor

Happy Retirement Thomas. A job well done, many happy memories at our ASDAC meetings, staff meetings, especially our courses with McGill, and our many Office Christmas parties, lots of fun. And here's to a new beginning, Thomas. Enjoy your retirement.

- Benjamin Loon, Program Officer

Thomas, I will miss seeing you and hearing your jokes. You always brightened up my day! You were a good colleague, one of the best! No one can replace a person like you. Please do not be a stranger if we cross paths somewhere one day. To me, you are a good friend!

*Take and Keep in touch,
Your friend always,*

- Anna Trapper, Financial Program Officer

You are leaving a ton of memories with us today. You'll be missed by each and every one of us. Wishing everything best for you. Take care of yourself!

- Shannon Isik, Employment Counsellor

TRIBUTE TO

PAULINE MOUSHOOM ETAPP

February 16, 1958 – February 11, 2020



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth”*

- 2 Timothy 2:15 King James Version (KJV)



On February 23, 2011, Pauline began her work with the Cree Nation Government at the Justice and Correctional Services Department as a Family Worker under the SNAP Program. She then went on to work at CHRD (now known as ASD) as the Inland Career Counselor in September 2013. She was based in Mistissini.

On February 11, 2020, the Cree Nation Government and Eeyou Istchee felt the sadness in the passing of Pauline Moushoom Etapp. She left behind 5 children, 1 predeceased son, 14 grandchildren, 1 predeceased grandson, and 5 great-grandchildren. Our heartfelt condolences to the family.

Pauline was kind, loving and caring. She loved the outdoors, enjoyed the bush life, traditional and cultural activities, and loved cooking. She loved to help people, she was a great encouragement to anyone who needed it, and even took the time to visit her Mistissini clients during her disability leave.

ASD would like to take this time to remember a friend, a colleague, and share the positive impact she had in her community and in the organization. She will be missed by many.

May she rest in peace.

PLANNING SESSIONS

During the 2019-2020 year, ASD held two planning sessions. These meetings are held on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the team can meet to: plan and discuss community needs for programs/services, and ensure all staff is aware of programs, initiatives, and objectives that exist in the upcoming year. It is an integral part of connecting with our team and establishing a shared direction as a department.

Summer Planning Session

Our Summer Planning Session was from July 3rd-4th, 2019, in Saint-Sauveur, Quebec. The first day was presentations and updates focused. We received updates from the Coordinators of each department at ASD, updates from Communications, and presentations from the Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada. We had a special guest from another department, Anthony Macleod Director of Commerce and Industry, share information about his department and initiatives. The second day was more interactive and hands-on because we had training on our database system and program eligibility.

Winter Planning Session

The Winter Planning Session was on December 17th-19th, 2019, in Gatineau, Quebec. On the first day, we received updates from our Director Louisa Saganash and the adoption of our new branding material from our Communications Officer. In the afternoon, there was a brainstorming session that gave staff the opportunity to share ideas and initiatives. The first day concluded with a Social Media Workshop, everyone learned the functionalities of Facebook and strategies for social media posts. Our special guest speaker at this session was the Director of Social and Cultural Development, Rodney Mark. He shared a presentation of their department and initiatives.

These planning sessions play an essential role in the department's internal capacity-building in response to continual changes within the region.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

Cree Nation Summit on Building Capacity for Eeyou Istchee

The summit was held on October 23 - 24, 2019. It was aimed at building local capacity to ensure better preparation for the future needs of our communities and nation.

At this event ASD launched a one-million dollar internship program for post-secondary students and together with Cree School Board - SAES presented the ALNA survey. Summary reports of the Cree Nation Summit can be viewed on www.cngov.ca

CANNEXUS

Canada's National Career Development Conference (CANNEXUS) is an annual event designed to promote the exchange of information, and explore innovative approaches in the areas of career counselling and workforce development. This year, the event was held in Ottawa, Ontario from January 27-29. Our ASD participants were: Norman Blacksmith, Martha Matthew, Peggy Petawabano, Judy Capissit, Shannon Isik, Bianca Mapachee, Joseph J. Georgekish and Denise Brown.

CNYC Inspire Hope Conference

The Inspire Hope Conference is an annual CNYC event with the goal of bringing youth together in the spirit of establishing goals, encouraging positive esteem, and inspiring through stories and the perspective of youth role models. This year's event was in Gatineau, Quebec from January 17-19th. Joseph J. Georgekish, our ASD Employment Integration Counsellor, was part of the panel and hosted various career development workshops. Several staff members attended the conference.

CANDO

Cando is a national Indigenous organization involved in community economic development. They focus on building capacity that helps strengthen Indigenous economies by providing programs and services to Economic Development Officers. This year's conference was held in Gatineau, Quebec from October 27th to the 30th. The ASD participant was the Youth Program Officer.

2019 Business Exchange

The Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance hosts an annual Business Exchange Conference. Their mission is to promote sustainable relations and socio-economic alliances between the Cree Nation (Eeyou Istchee), Jamésie, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nunavik regions in order to foster their harmonious development. This year's event took place in Val-d'Or on November 27th, 2019. Several staff members attended the conference.

TEAM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Indigenous Business Management Program - McGill

Organizational Learning and Development

September 9th - 14th

This course, taken by the Program Financial Officers, ASD's Coordinators and a few employees from the Cree Nation Government, was the 8th course out of 11. This course presents major models of learning and development from a





The Coordinators, Financial and Program Officers at the Managing in Public and Non-Profit Organizations course

systemic point of view, assessing and understanding the difference between training and development. Topics include learning organizations, training issues, training programs, skills development, transfer of learning, planning, conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluation of training and career development programs.

Social Context of Business

November 18th – 23rd

Program and Financial Officers took this course from November 18th - 23rd, in Mistissini. This course examines how business interacts with the larger society. It explores the de-

velopment of modern capitalist society, and the dilemmas that organizations face in acting in a socially responsible manner. Students will examine these issues with reference to sustainable development, business ethics, globalization and developing countries, and political activity.

Managing in Public and Non-Profit Organizations

January 6th - 11th, 2020

The Coordinators, Financial and Program Officers followed this course, learning a strategic management approach needed to ensure the success of public or non-profit organizations. This course focused on the management techniques needed to effectively manage public and non-profit organizations. The course developed the skills needed to analyze internal and external organizational trends and needs, make appropriate organizational and workforce decisions, develop strategic relationships with key stakeholders, and build and maintain trust.

Employability and Career Development in Aboriginal Context - UQAT

Employment Law Course (Fall 2019)

This course was taken by four Employment Counselors, to familiarize the students with the Quebec Employment Code and the legal framework to which it is connected. The 15-week online course ended on December 10th, 2019.

ASD is currently collaborating with UQAT and the Association Québécoise des profession-



Quebec's Association for Career Development Professionals



nels du développement de carrière to create a Certificate Program, to complete the Micro-program being delivered at the moment.

Employment Counsellors' Professional Membership

The Graduates from the UQAT Employability and Career Development in Aboriginal Context received their Professional Membership attestation from the Quebec's Association for Career Development Professionals. The employment counsellors currently taking the program received their Aspiring Member Attestation. Furthermore, Apatisiwin Skills Development became an Organizational Member of the Provincial Association. Two of the Employment Counsellors attended the Assembly General of the Association in January, in Montreal.

TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

Senior Employment Counsellors Training

The two Senior Employment Counsellors received tailored training on June 18th - 19th, and follow-up monitoring to support them with their new role, in assisting the Employment Counsellors with training, workshop delivery and their caseload, among others.

Employment Counselling Workshop

At the end of August, the Employment Counsellors and Senior Employment Counsellors received a 3-day workshop in Val-d'Or, QC on employment counselling and work search techniques. During this training, the group reviewed the basics of employment counselling, practised interview and counselling techniques (such as Client's employability needs identification and Client Action Plan development). The group was also consulted on their needs, their clients' needs, and services that should be developed to answer them.

Group Facilitator Workshop

The Employment Counsellors attended a Group Facilitating training session on February 27th - 28th, 2020. This training was delivered by the Association Québécoise des



The Employment Counsellors at a Group Facilitator Workshop

professionnels du développement de carrière. This session's objective is to equip the Employment Counsellors with skills and competencies to develop and facilitate Career Development workshops.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In 2019, ASD continued to implement its new five-year action plan; a plan to achieve results in critical areas of importance. The Strategic Plan 2018-2023 is focused on positive changes toward improving service delivery and innovative approaches to program funding. We also realize the need to drive our organization through labour market data, and in working closely with the Cree communities to understand employment needs and training towards the demand. This new plan provides the blueprint to move us forward to accomplish organizational improvement in the following areas:

1. **Realignment of ASD Department Structure** – to better serve our clients and stakeholders.
2. **Labour Market Information** – to put in place better mechanisms to collect, analyze and react to Labour Market Information.
3. **ASD-CSB Partnership** – to develop a revitalized working relationship with our most important partner the Cree School Board.
4. **Communications Plan** – to create and implement a new Communication plan for the department.
5. **Partnership Development** – Bringing together partnerships that bring dialogue and perspective on industry standards, training needs, and labour market information.
6. **Program Development and Monitoring** – All programs require feedback and monitoring on outcomes and deliverable. This requires new partnerships and internal capacity to meet this need.

During the past fiscal year, ASD met the first four of its objectives. The restructuring of the department along with its new name Apatisiwin Skills Development. The CENA survey for the labour market information collection data. Completed the Partnership Agreement with Cree School Board, and finally the communication plan with the new ASD website, and promotional materials development.

We look forward to the continuous realization of this five-year plan that will better position our department to serve the employment needs of Eeyou Istchee.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

This past year, we implemented several new strategies to meet the goals of our 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

For external communication, there was a strong focus on getting our information online. This is part of Action 4.9. We achieved this through our new website, which updated weekly and our several social media accounts. We are on: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Google Business/Maps. This year, there was an emphasis on the rebranding of our name from CHRD to ASD. We also share information and updates through JBCCS, CBC North, and the Nation Magazine (Action 4.8). We also have implemented uniform brand-

ing across our organization, this is to help entities, businesses, and clients to help identify us (Action 4.6).

Internal Communications, we have adopted Microsoft Teams which has an integrated task management system, improves collaboration on projects and internal communications (Action 4.1).

PARTNERSHIPS

Apatisiwin Skills Development and Cree School Board's Adult Education Services continue to strengthen through a collaborative partnership agreement. The ASD/SAES Partnership Agreement was completed at the end of October 2019. ASD and SAES's meet on a regular basis to discuss the ALNA survey that's ongoing and a joint report will be done by spring 2020. Both entities shared their preliminary data at the Cree Nation Government Summit on Building Capacity in Eeyou Istchee on October 23-24, 2019 and it was well-received. We are working on finalizing the report after all the surveys have been completed.

We began discussions with the Cree School Board Post-Secondary Student Services in regard to developing a protocol for initiatives, sharing of information, and the role of the ASD Employment Integration Counsellor (EIC) who is located at the Post-Secondary office in Gatineau. The role of our EIC is to help find work placements for recent post-secondary graduates in their field of studies through the Cree Internship Program.

ASD worked with StatsCan on the CENA Survey. They assisted us in the development of the questionnaire. They also provided a Community Employment Needs Assessment (CENA) report for Chisasibi. Most of the surveys from the communities are now completed and a Labour Market Analyst is analyzing the data and preparing the rest of the community reports to be available very soon.

ASD prioritizes creating partnerships with other entities, communities and educational institutions.

CREE-CANADA RELATIONS

Under the terms of the New Relationship Agreement with Canada, the Cree Nation Government, through Apatisiwin Skills Development, assumes Canada's responsibilities under Section 28 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* for training courses, job recruitment and placement related to the "territorial programs" and "enhanced delivery structure". As part of the conditions to assume these federal responsibilities, Canada must continue to provide to the Cree Nation Government additional funding for training programs and facilities, and job recruitment and placement services on terms reasonably comparable to those in place at the time of signing the New Relationship Agreement.

Until this year, this additional federal funding was provided through an *Agreement respecting the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and Related Services* (AHRDP Agreement). This agreement was initially signed in 2007 and was extended several times until this year.

During this year, Cree and federal representatives concluded discussions to replace the AHRDP Agreement

by longer term and more flexible funding arrangements, subject to certain outstanding matters to be resolved subsequently. Under these new arrangements, federal funding to support Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) for the period 2019-2028 will be provided to the Cree Nation Government through a "grant funding" arrangement. This new approach will provide greater flexibility in the use of such funding and will reduce administrative requirements.

Cree and federal representatives have also concluded discussions on a companion contribution agreement for Employment Insurance funding for the period 2019-2029. Federal funding to support childcare will be provided through this contribution agreement until at least next year. Discussions will continue with federal representatives with a view to transferring childcare funding through the new ASD arrangements instead, as soon as possible.

ASD POLICY ON PROGRAMS

During the fiscal year 2019-2020, ASD conducted an extensive review of its Policy on Programs in order to ensure it meets the evolving needs regarding skills development, training programs and services, and employment insurance services in the Cree communities and throughout Eeyou Istchee. This work was also to ensure the Policy well reflects the New Relationship Agreement, facilitates as much as possible the access of eligible applicants to the different programs, while enhancing the process and clarify the applicable criteria and conditions. These changes should come into effect during the next year.

There was also extensive work and discussions done with the Cree School Board in the spirit of implementing certain recommendations ensuing from the Roundtable on Capacity Building. A Partnership Agreement with Sabtuan Adult Education Services (SAES) and another with Post-Secondary Student Services are being developed in order to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations and provide the best support possible to the students. Several goals are to be achieved with these agreements, more particularly on further developing and reinforcing the working relationship of the respective staff locally and regionally. The position of Employment Integration Counsellor (EIC) to support employment and internship opportunities for PSSS students in colleges, universities and vocational / trade programs, is one example of the type of many initiatives taken by ASD to pursue these goals.

ASD COMMITTEES

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

- a) **Technical Group:** for projects under \$25,000;
- b) **ASDAC:** for projects of \$25,000 and over.

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

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

- a) **Voting members**
 - 9 members appointed by the Chief and Council of each of the 9 communities of Eeyou Istchee
 - Cree Nation Government
 - Cree Nation Youth Council
 - Cree School Board
- b) **Non-voting members**
 - Director of ASD
 - Washaw Sibi appointed member
 - Canada representative

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

The ASDAC has the following mandate:

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

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Labour Market Development

To provide resources to help recipients with their projects through strategic plans, development of the curriculum and delivery of employment services, and provide assistance needed to implement human resource development programs and services.

Example of projects:

- Partnerships such as job fairs and conferences related to capacity building
- Labour market survey
- Coaching, workshop
- Support of development of community profiles

Skills Development

To assist a person without employment to acquire the competencies and essential skills required for a given job or receive institutional training leading to a form of accreditation.

Example of projects:

- Early childhood educators (AEC)
- Coaching, workshop

- Regional or local programs
- Culture & Language acquisition

Employment Programs

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

Example of projects:

- CESP - Community Employment Skills Partnership
- Mentorship program for persons with disabilities
- Adult / summer students' program
- Creation of new jobs
- New business implementation project
- Apprenticeship

Youth Program

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

Example of projects:

- Science & Technology
- Career Promotion and Awareness
- Youth Work Experience
- Student Summer Employment

Cree Internship Program

Increase work experience and employability of post-secondary graduates in their field of study in Eeyou Istchee. ASD will subsidize the intern's salary for 12 months. Once the intern completes the program, ASD can continue to support the employer by subsidizing a percentage of the salary for the next 3 years under the employment program. Internship can be off Territory (within Canada) if internship opportunity is not available in Eeyou Istchee.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Cree Employability Skills Development Partnership (CESDP)

The third year of our 4-year CESDP project was a busy one with new partners and new challenges for our team.

We continued to work with students in Community Employment Skills Development programs -upgrading basic skills and discussing the importance of key work readiness issues -and in customized vocational training programs. Job coaches spent several days with a Trucking Class 3 cohort in Chisasibi, Welding & Fitting and Construction Equipment Mechanics training groups at the SRVCT centre in Waswanipi and with community Housing Inspectors enrolled in the 'Cree Nation Residential Building Inspection' program, which was customized and delivered by Vanier College in Montreal.

We also continued our work with employers and Cree workers receiving ASD wage subsidies. Coaches scheduled regular visits to Stornoway Diamond's Rénard mine and Osisko's Windfall mine where they worked with heavy equipment operators, underground miners and process plant workers as well as janitorial, housekeeping and kitchen camp workers. Their approach, which involves sitting down with workers and supervisors to determine what kind of support would be most important and beneficial to each, and then designing and delivering workshops to small groups onsite, has been well received by employers and employees alike. In a number of cases, coaches have also found themselves serving as a bridge between company HR personnel and workers in disciplinary issues. Feedback we received during the year suggests their ability to remain impartial and professional and, at the same time, act as strong advocates for the rights of Cree workers has been appreciated.

Midway through the year, financial difficulties stalled work on one of our project's major mining partners. Fortunately, ASD's Territorial Programs team approved a number of other projects for wage subsidies and we were able to begin working with a Makahiikaan Construction project in Mistissini. Apprentice carpenters are helping build several triplexes in the community. Because the project is registered with the Commission de la Construction du Québec -the organization which regulates the province's construction industry -workers can use the hours they work on the project to advance toward eventual certification as Journeymen carpenters in the CCQ system. By year's end, coaches also met and began work with two other employers -a forestry road construction and wood harvesting project and a new family restaurant business in Mistissini. We are looking forward to more involvement in all these projects as we help move them forward in the year to come.

Service Canada Outreach Program

ASD and Service Canada have a collaborative partnership to ensure clients receive the best service possible in their community. Service Canada maintains two service centres located within the territory, one in Mistissini at the ASD Head office, and the other one in Chisasibi located at the ASD Chisasibi office. The outreach program was created so other communities can get access to their services.

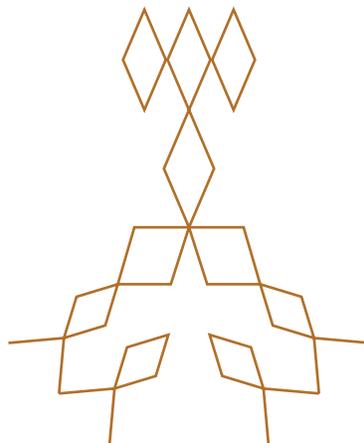
Throughout the year, Service Canada provides scheduled and mobile outreach services. The services offered are assisting with EI applications, Old Age Security Information, checking the status of EI and OAS claims, ROE verification and SIN application/confirmation and Passport applications.

This past year, they visited Eastmain (September 2019), Nemaska (in November 2019), Ouje-Bougoumou (in July 2019), Waskaganish three times (in April, June, and September 2019), Waswanipi (in November 2019), and Wemindji (in September 2019).

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Training & Learning Centres

The Cree Nation Government has built two Training & Learning Centres, one in Wemindji and the other in Waskaganish. Ouje-Bougoumou is the next community to have a centre built. The ASD team, along with Capital Works Services, CSB Adult Education Services and Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, is working together to discuss concepts and structures of the new centre.



SUCCESS STORIES

LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Annual Regional Career Fair

The Regional Career Fair happens every year in one of the 10 Cree communities. This year's event was in Mistissini on September 25-26, 2019. The event grows every year with over 500 participants and 40 booth exhibitors. The theme this year was "Apatisiwin, Your Success is Our Goal". Our guest speakers included: Dr. Sarah Pash, The Nolans (Ted & Brendan Nolan), BettyAnne Forward, Samantha Awashish, Nick Wapachee, Veronica Lefebvre, Joseph J. Georgekish, and Andrea MacLeod.



Community Employment Needs Assessment (CENA)

As a part of their 5-year strategic plan, ASD surveyed businesses and employers in all Cree communities throughout Eeyou Istchee. The goal of this survey is to better understand what the existing employment needs are in our communities and how we can help to better align training to the needs of jobs within Eeyou Istchee.

The CENA was part of the Action 2.5 to Action 2.14 from our 2018 - 2023 Strategic Plan. From June – September

2019, we conducted the CENA surveys in 9 Cree communities (Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Nemaska, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, and Mistissini). In total, 246 businesses/organizations participated in the survey. This coming year we are working on a report for each community as well as a regional report that will be made available to the public. CENA is part of a larger collaboration with the Cree School Board under the ALNA project.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Under the Skills Development Program, we supports clients attending vocational education by providing training allowances and also paying for professional fees that are not normally covered by our partners in delivering training courses.

This is one of the courses that was completed this past fall, the Northern Heavy Equipment Operations at the Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training Centre in Waswanipi.

SUCCESS STORIES

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

This success story is with Cody's Convenience Store located in Chisasibi. The store originally opened back in September 2015. On March 2018, they expanded their business services to readymade food - Fritou chicken. The first project with Cody's food services ended on May 31, 2019. Upon completion of the first year, most of the twelve new employees: assistant manager, cooks, cashiers and janitor remain with the employer. The participants were given health & safety training for handling the food. This year, the readymade food services expansion continues to prosper. There is great demand from the customers. Overall, employees are happy working with their employer. There has been a very low employee turnover rate. This business has succeeded in creating employment and offering new services to the community and tourists.



YOUTH PROGRAM

Over a period of 6 months during the winter of 2019-2020, Elephant Thoughts travelled from school to school to school in Eeyou Istchee to bring a museum quality science centre into every single classroom. This gives every elementary student the best possible curriculum-linked science experience. Eeyou Istchee students do not always have the opportunity to travel to a real science centre and experience it, so we bring the science centre to them!

On February 10, 2020, grade one students from Mistissini, QC conducted two experiments.

The first experiment was a sound wave activity that used slinkies and small screwdrivers to create vibrations and allow the scientists-in-training to hear "laser beam sounds" bouncing off the metal slinky. Students take turns listening and creating sound waves while making observations. The activity made a laser sound like the one in Star Wars!

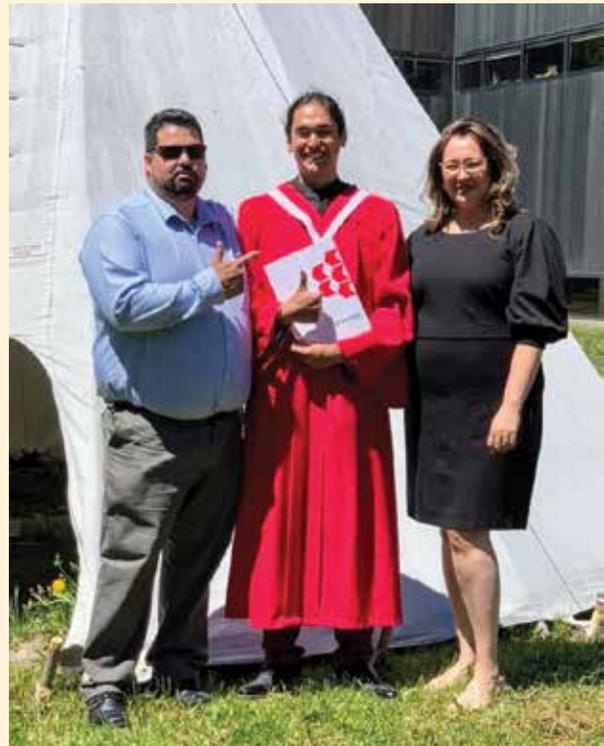
The second activity with the visible spectrum allows scientists-in-training to use their hands to manipulate paints in a clear bag to create new colours. This activity allows students to understand primary & secondary colours while practising their manual dexterity and exploring the visible spectrum of light.

Elephant Thoughts is grateful for the continued collaboration with ASD and schools within Eeyou Istchee!

SUCCESS STORIES

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This year, Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) is proud to have launched for the first time, the ASD Internship Program at the Cree Nation Government's Summit on Building Capacity in Montreal, QC on October 23-24, 2019. This program is specifically designed to assist post-secondary graduates find employment soon after graduating. ASD sponsors up to \$40,000 a year to have graduates placed with employers for a maximum of 12 months. This measure benefits both graduate and employer, as the graduate is given the opportunity to work in their field and gain valuable work experience, and the employer gains a skilled employee for a year. The first two graduates to enter our program were Julie Ann Cooper and Jared Gull. Julie Ann has joined the team at the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, and Jared has joined the Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association. The Internship Program is another important step towards Eeyou Istchee capacity building by helping to ensure that graduates are working and thriving in their field of study, and we look forward to supporting more graduates achieve their employment goals.



Jared Gull with his parents



Julia Ann Cooper with her son Joseph

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT – MISTISSINI



Kwei, from Mistissini Apatisiwin Skills Development Coordination Office! It is with great pleasure that I share some of the events and activities that took place in Mistissini during the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

I've started working for ASD in March 2018 and it has been a great pleasure serving my community. This past year, I was selected to coordinate the 17th Annual Regional Career Fair here in Mistissini. The event was a success, it helped people to find out about employment and training opportunities in Eeyou Istchee.

In our community, we've had many successful programs that were completed during the fiscal year, but sadly due to the COVID-19 pandemic some courses had to be delayed. In the midst of everything, we continue to try our best to empower and support our clients.

Programs our clients completed this year:

- **Community Employment Skills Partnership – 17 participants;** my colleague and I met with the participants, interviewed them, made an action plan, and met with them again before they completed the program.
- **Plastering course (Sabtuan CSB) – 9 participants**
- **Truck Driving (Sabtuan CSB) – 11 participants**
- **People with Disabilities Program – 11 participants**

To the individuals who completed their programs, we would like to congratulate you and we wish you continued success in reaching your career goals!

MISTISSINI ●

Apatisiwin Skills Development support and assistance:

- Introduction to our new clients about ASD support and financial assistance
- Job search in or out of the community
- Assisting clients with resumes or cover letters
- Career Fair 2019/2020
- Individual career counselling
- Extended support and guidance to help build a strong relationship

Thank you to all organizations in our community and region for your continued dedication in building up our Cree workforce.

Lastly, I would like to thank my ASD colleagues for always being there when we need a helping hand and many thanks to the Director and Coordinators for their continued support and guidance in meeting our mission and objectives in building a strong workforce in Eeyou Istchee. Meekwech mistee!

Peggy Petawabano
Employment Counsellor

Each year we highlight one Cree community in our annual report, this year we are pleased to highlight the Cree Nation of Mistissini.



ASD ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS AND GRAPHS FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

Projects and Participant Training Interventions / All ASD Programs

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

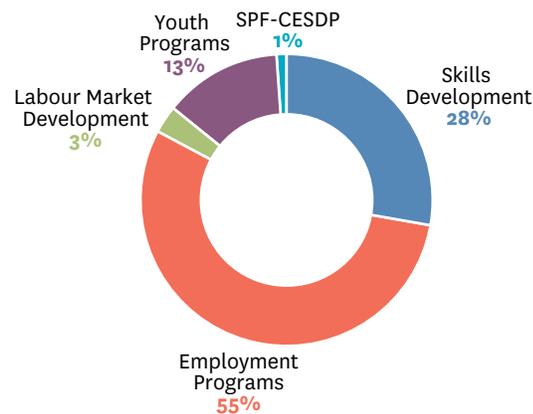
ASD received several projects submissions in 2019-20. A total of 237 projects receiving support from ASD carried out training activities throughout the communities and territory during the fiscal year. There were more than 2,500 participant interventions in these projects. ●

ASD Projects and Participant Interventions by Program in Fiscal Year 2019-20

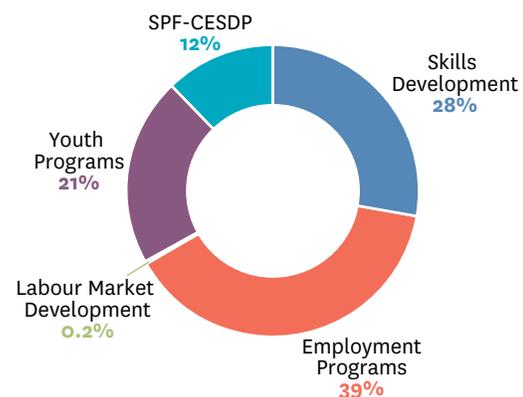
	Number of Projects	Participant Interventions
Skills Development	67	713
Employment Programs	128	967
Special Programs / Disability	3	13
Labour Market Development	6	6
Summer Student Program	11	328
Youth Work Experience	12	173
Cooperative Education	4	11
Science and Technology	3	3
SPF CESDP	3	302
Total	237	2516

Note: Projects with employment and training activities in the fiscal year based on contract dates.

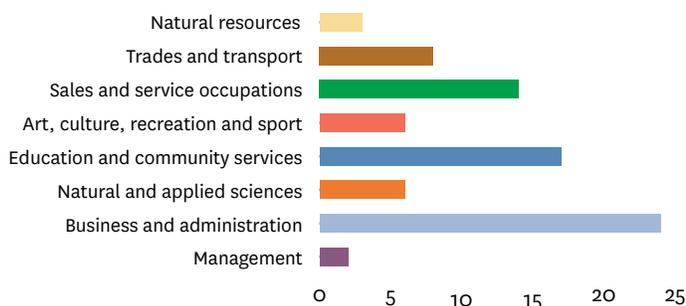
Projects by Program Type, 2019-20



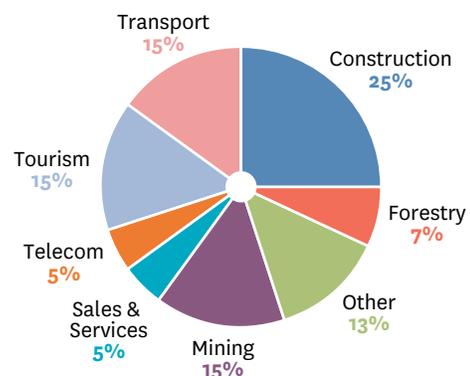
Participants by Program Type, 2019-20



Community-based Projects by Training Field, 2019-20

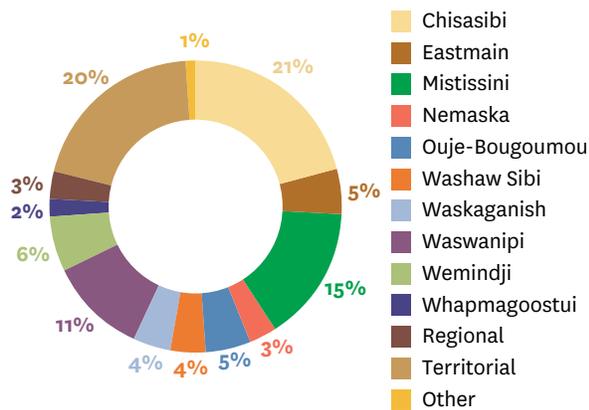


TERRITORIAL PROJECTS Distribution by Industrial Sector, 2019-20



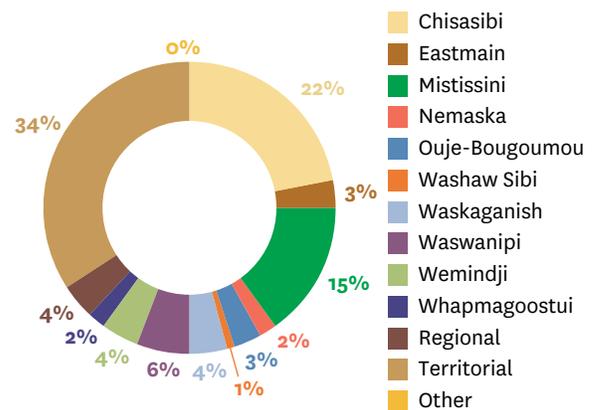
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Distribution of Projects by Community, 2019-20



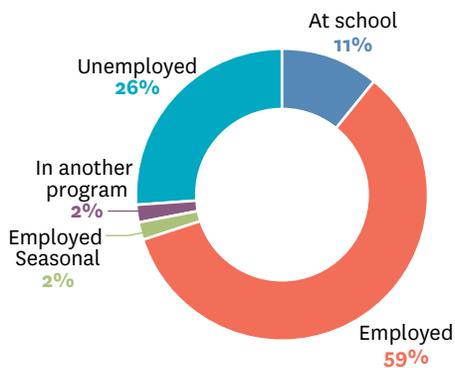
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Distribution of Participants by Community, 2019-20



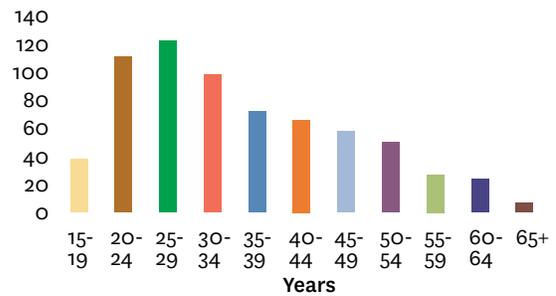
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Participants' Post-training Results, 2019-20



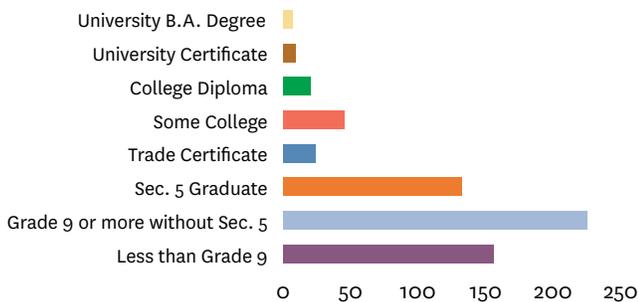
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Participants by Age, 2019-20



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Participants by Level of Education, 2019-20

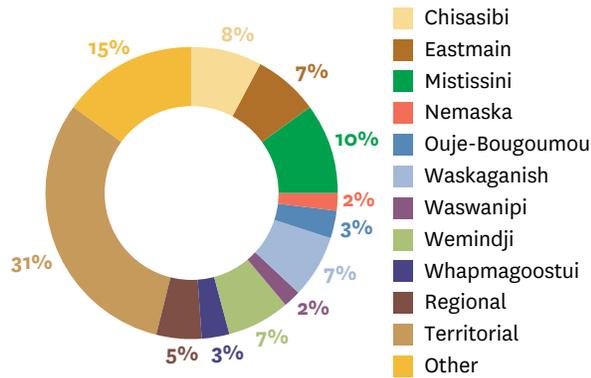


EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

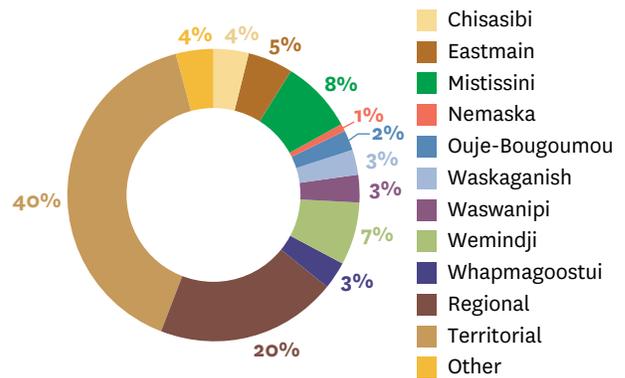
Distribution by Gender, 2019-20



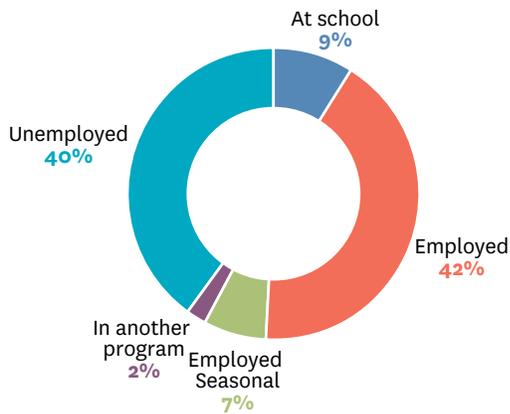
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Distribution of Projects by Community, 2019-20



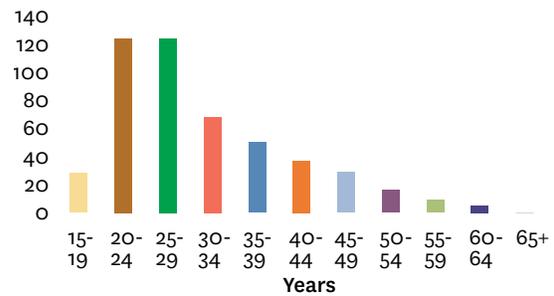
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Distribution of Participants by Community, 2019-20



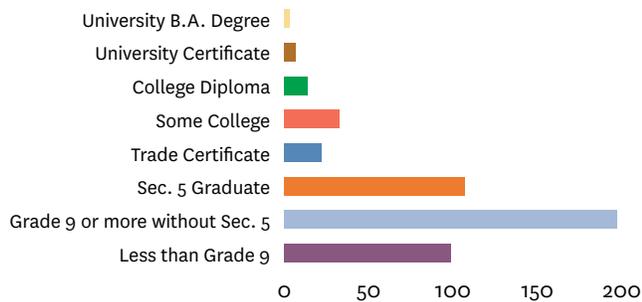
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Participants' Post-training Results, 2019-20



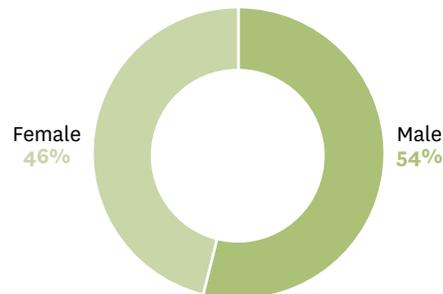
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Participants by Age, 2019-20



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Participants by Level of Education, 2019-20

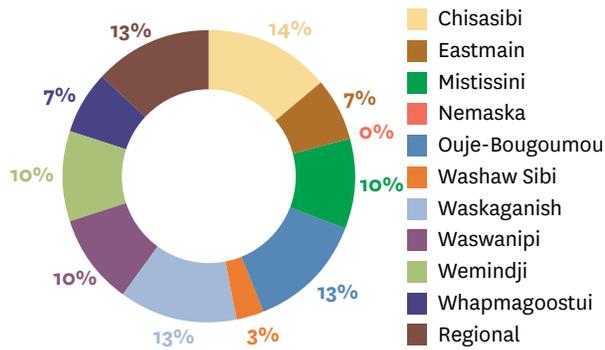


SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Distribution by Gender, 2019-20



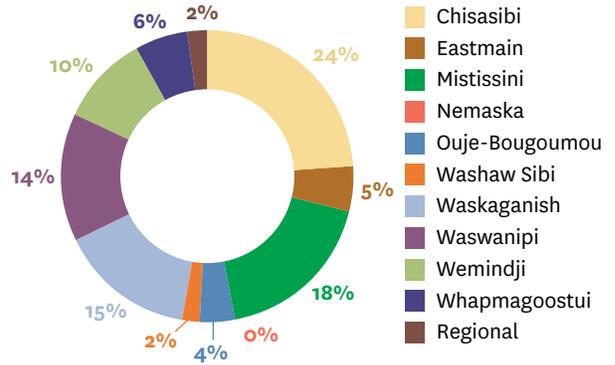
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Distribution of Projects by Community, 2019-20



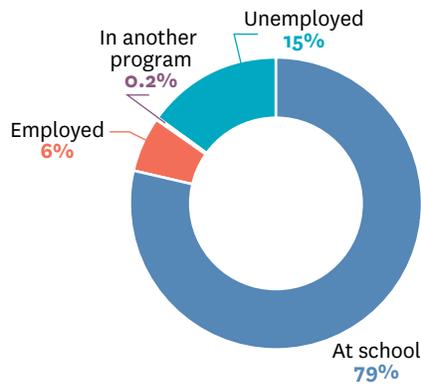
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Distribution of Participants by Community, 2019-20



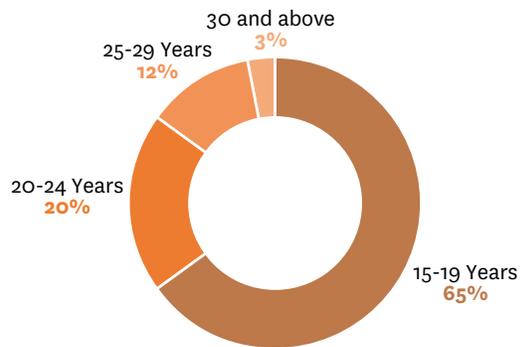
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Participants' Post-training Results, 2019-20



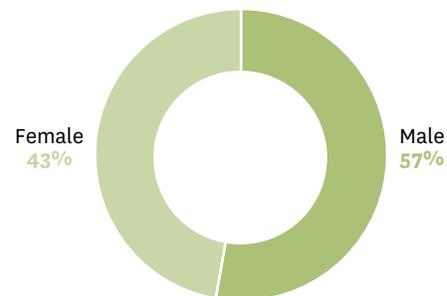
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Participants by Age, 2019-20



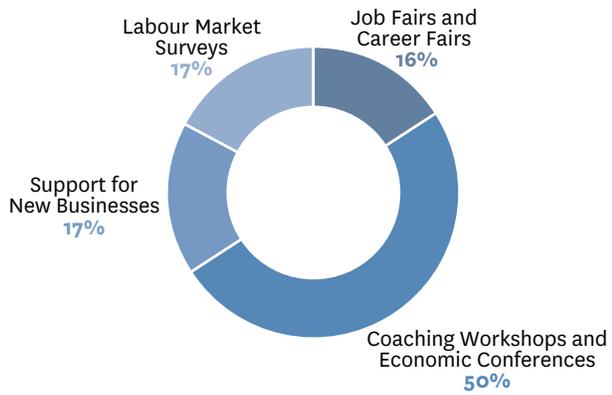
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Distribution by Gender, 2019-20

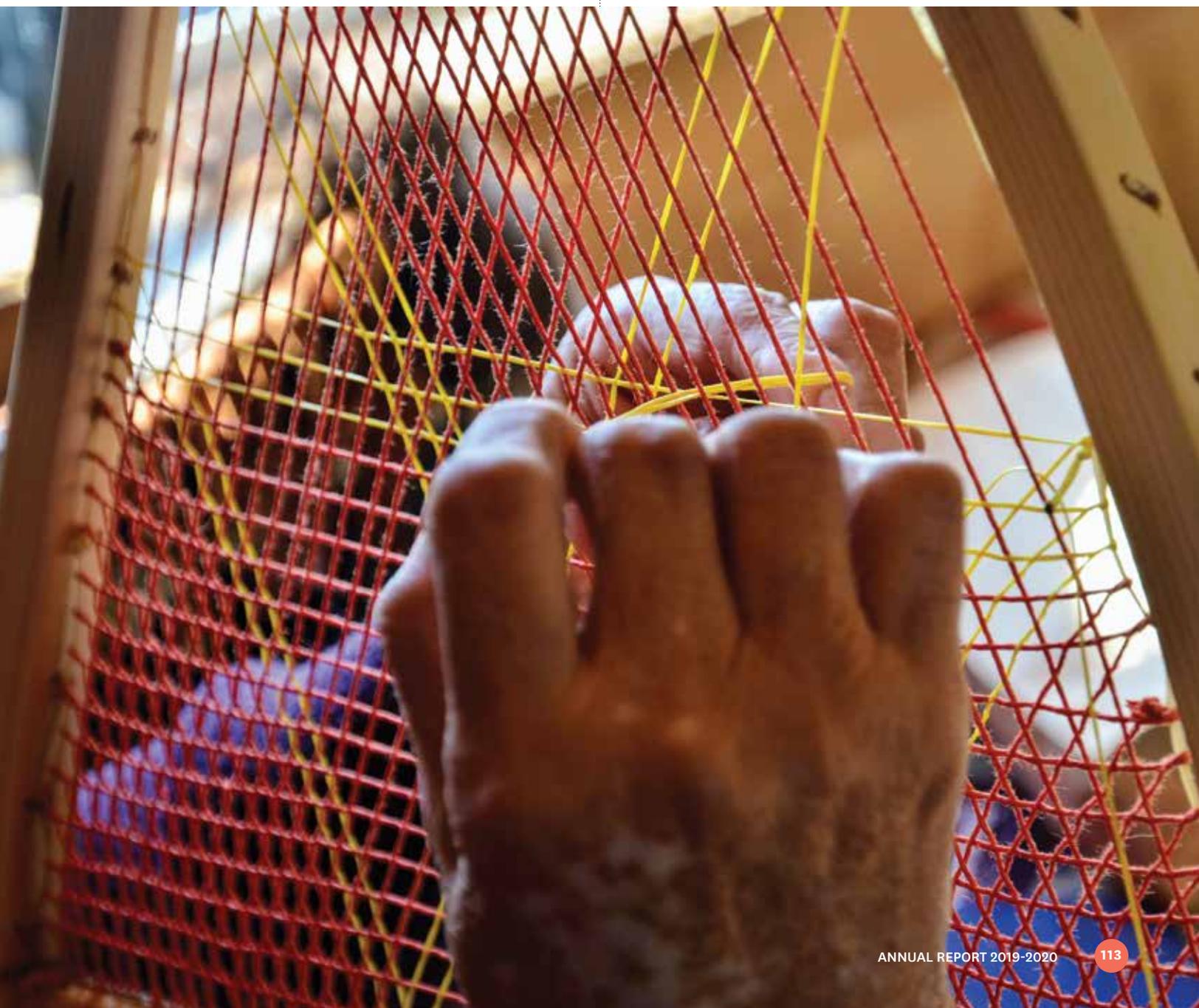
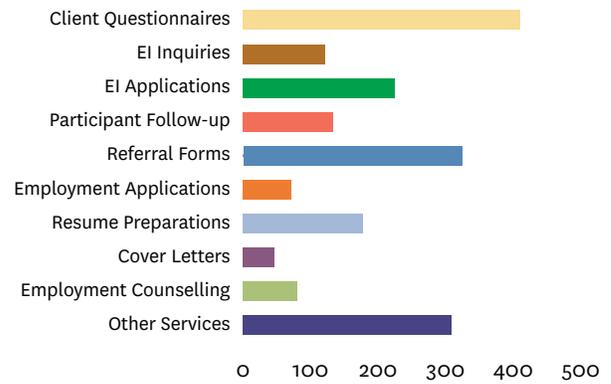


LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS

Projects by Activity, 2019-20



1,896 Client Services in 2019-20





COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Anthony Macleod

The Department of Commerce and Industry (DCI) plays a pivotal role in the economic planning and regional development of Eeyou Istchee. We are involved in many aspects of local and regional economic development. We play key roles in forestry, hydro, mining, telecommunications, and construction/infrastructure development.

The Commerce and Industry team oversees and implements the following funds:

- Regional Development Fund
- Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund
- FARR Fund – Quebec Regional Outreach Support Fund (FARR)
- Social Economy Fund
- Venture Capital Fund

The Commerce and Industry team supports small businesses and development of regional initiatives that promote positive socio-economic outcomes for Eeyou Istchee.

Sectoral Activities Overview

Mining

The DCI team has been very active in projects in the mining and exploration sector within the region. The mining industry can create a lot of jobs and business opportunities, but it is very important to remain vigilant to ensure that this development takes place in a harmonious manner while respecting the population and the territory. We have worked directly with mining and exploration companies to maximize the benefits of this economic sector for our people. Our involvement included working groups, implementation committees, Cree Mineral Exploration Board and development of the Cree Mining Policy.

While the impact on the mining industry remains uncertain due to the ongoing pandemic, we will continue to advance the mining and exploration files in a way that maximizes benefits for the people of Eeyou Istchee.

Forestry

There was concerted activity in the Forestry sector that involved meetings with the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council. A highlight of the year was the Minister's Forestry Summit. This summit allowed us to connect with Saskatchewan and Manitoba First Nations, where they presented on working together in forestry to our forestry

communities, and included a question and answer period with representatives from Mistissini, Nemaska, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou and Waskaganish. This opportunity to exchange experiences in the forestry sector with others allowed us to learn from each other and to gain best practices through our combined experiences.

In our work towards a sustainable Cree Forestry Strategy through the Cree Working Group on Forestry and the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council, we endeavour to balance economic benefits and Cree traditional land use.

Construction

The Cree Nation Government struck a working group that is engaged in discussions with the Quebec Construction Commission. Our involvement, as a department, is to ensure that construction companies based in Eeyou Istchee are prioritized and that we have a registry to track all companies, contracts, and economic data for the region. Our goal is to utilize our agreements to benefit local companies and local tradespeople.

Telecommunications

This year we have taken some major steps to increase our interactions with stakeholders involved in telecommunications in the region. We have spearheaded negotiations to obtain several Hydro-Québec telecommunication towers and commissioned a telecommunications study for Eeyou Istchee. We have focused a large portion the study on work with Land Users and Communications in collaboration with the Cree Trappers' Association. Our Regional Development Fund approved significant funding for the new telecommunication towers in Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini. This past year saw three towers enter operation, and the fourth and final tower is slated to begin operation in the fall of 2020. These towers represent important investments in local and regional communication infrastructure. Equally important, the new infrastructure allows the expansion of the broadcasting range for Cree language programming.

La Grande Alliance

Our department is involved in the planning of key infrastructure for Eeyou Istchee. The main elements of planning center around sustainable development, transportation, electrification of industrial projects, communications, and capac-

ity building. Throughout the 2019-2020 year, the Cree working group concentrated on these key subjects. This work culminated in the announcement in February of La Grande Alliance agreement between the Crees and the Government of Quebec.

Cree Nation Free Trade Agreement

We have continued to progress the Cree Free Trade Agreement and continue to make substantial progress, and are optimistic that this upcoming year we will realize the culmination of years of working towards this agreement. In 2019-2020, DCI activity included meetings, conferences and negotiations including with the Treasury Department of the Government of Quebec to prepare for greater Cree ability to control contracts within the region.

We were closely engaged in the Apatisiwiin Skills Development's Capacity Building conference. We were also active contributors with the Cree Housing Strategy and related Town Hall event. The Department of Commerce and Industry team was also introspective and held internal sessions to update all our funding programs, review our processes, and to build our team approach.

During the past year, Commerce and Industry has experienced some staff turnover and said goodbye to Suzanne Kitchen, Frederick Moar and Christina Jolly. We thank them for their important contributions to the Department of Commerce and Industry. On behalf of the department I also want to thank the entire staff of DCI for their tireless effort.

Looking ahead to 2020-2021, we encourage our regional and local governments, including all community members, to support the local small and medium businesses throughout Eeyou Istchee during these unprecedented times. In order to survive and thrive during the pandemic, they will require our continued support. We can see a glimpse of the economic power we can tap when full support is given to our local enterprises.

Thank you,
Anthony Macleod - Director
Department of Commerce and Industry

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Our Mandate

To diversify and stimulate economic growth in Eeyou Istchee.

Our Vision

To take on a strategic role in the development and implementation of economic initiatives throughout Eeyou Istchee. While working closely with our key partners in the achievement of the collective vision, we also take care to consider the implications of all affected sectors and partners involved.

Our Mission

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

To stay focused, DCI is driven by three economic pillars:

1. Natural resources (including extractive activities such as mining, wind energy or forestry)
2. Cree-owned corporations and entities (including our Band development corporations)
3. Cooperative and sustainable economies

Our Programs and Funds

Of our three economic pillars, cooperative and sustainable economies is the most important one because it defines who we are and who we want to be as a nation. Our vision of social and economic development and growth implies that the two other pillars must enhance, enrich and strengthen the third.

The following are the programs and funds developed to achieve this:

- Social Economy
- Cree Entrepreneur Assistance Fund (CEAF)
- Regional Development Fund (RDF)
- Venture Capital Fund
- Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des régions (FARR) Funds
- Cree Business Registry and Certification
- Consultation – Cree Trade and Commerce Agreement

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

Our New Employees

Yvette Coonishish - Mistissini

Administrative Assistant

Yvette Coonishish is the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Commerce and Industry. She brings over 5 years of experience to the table with expertise in organizing and implementing an effective workplace.

Yvette graduated from Algonquin College with certificates and diplomas from General Arts and Science – English for Academic Purposes, Office Administration – General, Executive, and Legal. After completing her double diploma program, she joined the Department of Commerce and Industry. She is looking forward to her new journey with the Cree Nation Government.

Lucas Del Vecchio - Montreal

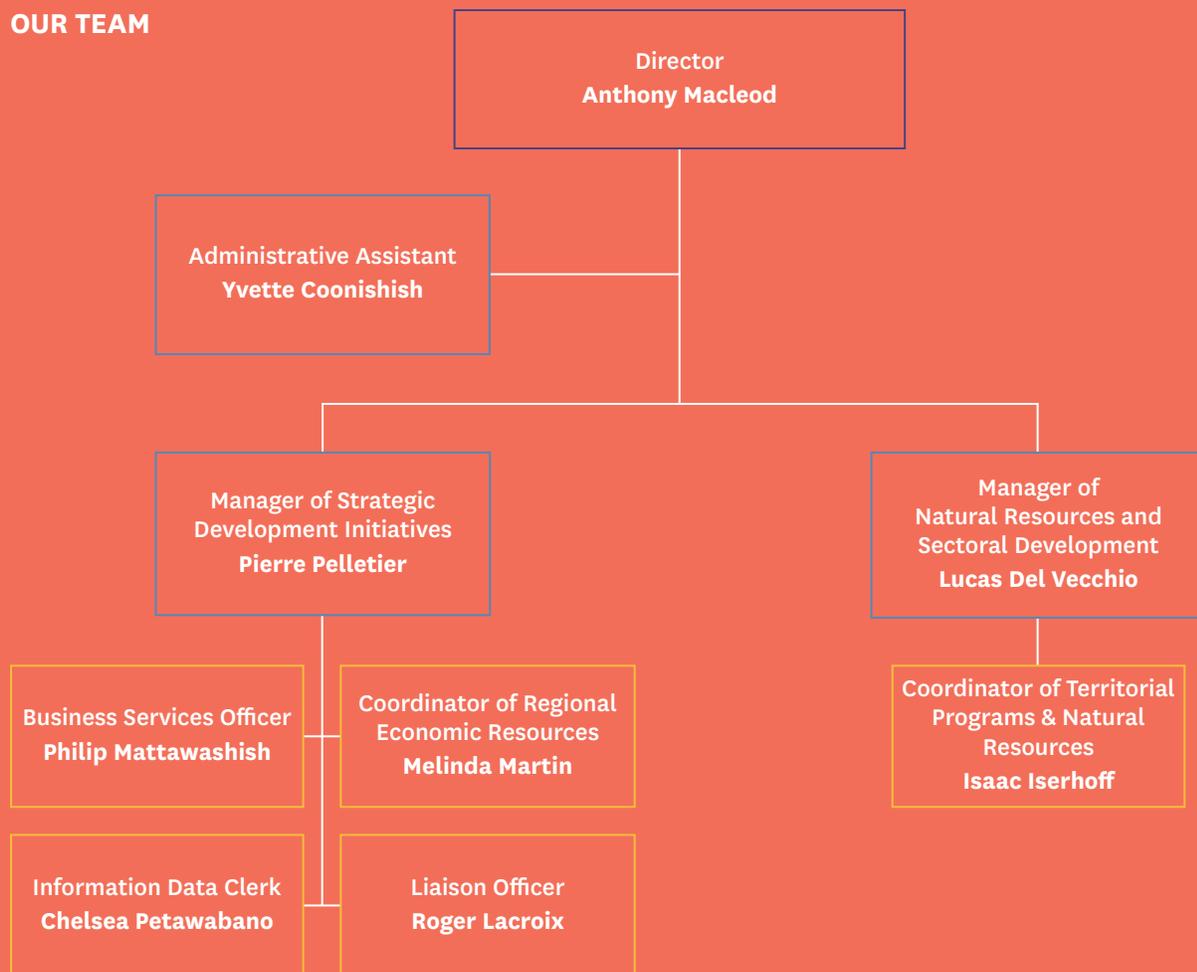
Manager of Natural Resources and Sectoral Development

Lucas is from Montreal and has the misfortune of being a Montreal Canadiens fan. An ex-hockey player, Lucas graduated from McGill University with a B.Eng in Biore-source Engineering in 2014.

Lucas joined the Environment and Remedial Works Department of the Cree Nation Government in 2015 as an intern and in spring 2016 joined the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment team on contract, joining the Department as a permanent staff member in December 2017.

He has developed a familiarity with the natural resource development projects in Eeyou Istchee, the legal

OUR TEAM



framework and the different collaboration and partnership agreements that guide development in the territory. As Manager of Natural Resources and Sectoral Development, Lucas will be bringing his experience to the Commerce and Industry team as he advises on the natural resource files and provides support to communities.

Roger Lacroix – Ouje-Bougoumou Liaison Officer

Roger has been residing in Ouje-Bougoumou from the birth of the community. He played various roles and held many positions in the community of Ouje-Bougoumou. He was the first Economic Development Agent for 5 years and then he moved on to be the Local Environment Administrator. He holds a BBA, and a certificate of Aboriginal Studies and two college degrees in Environment.

Roger carries a well-balanced knowledge in construction and business development, and is currently the Liaison Officer between Services Quebec and CNG. His role as Liaison Officer is to inform and distribute information on the

services rendered by Services Quebec. Roger is very outspoken and he enjoys working with people.

He joined Cree Nation Government in 2016 with ASD and then transferred to DCI.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES 2019-2020

Presence in the Communities

One of our goals starting this year was to increase our presence in communities. Accordingly, the DCI team attended several local economic development conferences, workshops and career fairs in the region. Additionally, team members met with local Economic Development Officers, community representatives, promoters and would-be entrepreneurs. The DCI team made presentations, liaised between stakeholders and funders, and set up departmental information booths to ensure that DCI personnel and DCI programs and services were present and available throughout Eeyou Istchee.

Business Services Workshop

At the 5th annual Inspire Hope conference in Gatineau, Quebec, Philip Mattawashish introduced the workshop, titled “How to unlock your potential, and inner entrepreneur”. The topics covered included how to identify what you’re good at and interested in, how to write a one-page business plan, and how to find a business idea in your community. We also hosted two workshops, piquing the interest of students enough to have them consider business and entrepreneurship. Topics covered included helping students identify possible careers, including identifying their own strengths and interests. They each left with a list of opportunities to take into consideration, as well as creating a list of all the business ideas they could start in their own communities. To finish up the workshop, we put everything together in a one-page business plan. Which led the students to leave with a clear picture of what they might want to pursue in the future, once they complete their studies.

Development of this workshop inspired us to create new tools that will be available both online and in the communities.

PROGRAMS

Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund

The Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF) Program provides grants for Cree business start-ups, as well as assists Cree businesses to expand, and upgrade technology/equipment. The purpose of the investments is to increase the overall economy of Eeyou Istchee through the economic activity of Cree-owned and operated businesses, by creating employment and purchasing of goods and services. The program will also provide investment in developing busi-



Philip Mattawashish, Business Services Officer, doing a presentation on the funding programs and the services we offer at our department at the Local Business Conference in Wemindji, QC, February 2020.

nesses to allow for Cree entrepreneurs to gain experience and realize new services for the communities and region. The circulation of funds and the trickle-down effect of small business is important throughout Eeyou Istchee as a key driver of the economy.

Services, as well as transport, are among the highest requests for funding through the CEAF Funds. Often these include business start-ups, expansions, and modernizing of equipment to improve operations.

Table 1 and 2 are statistics for the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund for 2019-2020.

Table 1. CEAF Projects by Location, 2019-2020

Location	Total # of Projects	Total Contribution
Chisasibi	5	\$383,000
Mistissini	3	\$81,717
Nemaska	2	\$200,000
Waskaganish	1	\$55,000
Waswanipi	2	\$158,731
Whapmagoostui	1	\$100,000
Ouje-Bougoumou	0	
Eastmain	0	
Wemindji	0	
Total	14	\$978,448

These funding statistics represent what was approved for funding disbursement by community of origin. It is worth noting that a disparity in funding from communities does present an opportunity to campaign more actively in less active communities to promote program applications.

Table 2. CEAF Projects by Sector, 2019-2020

Sector	Total # of Projects	Total Contribution
Construction	3	\$217,500
Retail & Restaurant	2	\$77,885
Services	4	\$322,082
Transport	5	\$360,981
Total	14	\$978,448

As the Commerce and Industry database is implemented in the upcoming fiscal year, we will be able to demonstrate in a more comprehensive way how these funds impact sectoral growth over time.

CEAF - Investment and Employment Statistics

The total investment from the CEAF fund to Cree businesses for 2019-2020 was \$978,448. This investment encompassed 14 projects and created an estimated 71 new jobs in Eeyou Istchee. In 2018-19 the total investment was

\$609,878. This represents an increase in investment dollars of 46.4% compared to last year's numbers.

The total number of projects approved this year was 14. In 2018-19 there were 8 projects approved. This represents an increase of six (6) projects approved over last year (See table 3).

Table 3. CEAF Job Creation by Sector, 2019-2020

Sector	Total # of Projects	Reg. Full-Time	Reg. Part-time	Total Positions
Construction	3	23	8	31
Retail & Restaurant	2	6		6
Services	4	14	7	21
Transport	5	9	4	13
Total	14	52	19	71



Philip Mattawashish with Kevin Blacksmith, owner of Kevin Blacksmith Transport, a trucking transport business in Waswanipi, which was one of the projects that was approved for funding under the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund.



Dennis Coon-Come, owner of D.Coon-Come Entreprises, from Mistissini, QC; another business project that was approved under the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund.



Nimistchou Bearskin, owner of Thunder Transport, a business based in Chisasibi, QC. This project was approved under the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund.

Regional Development Fund (RDF)

The objective of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) is to finance economic diversification projects and regional development projects that benefit the territory of Eeyou Istchee. The Regional Development Funds (soon to be called 'Territorial Development Funds') was created with the intent of supporting the expansion of Cree economies within Eeyou Istchee. Generally, these funds are implicated in large scale projects.

The five-year agreement ended in 2017-2018. A one-year funded extension for 2018-2019 was granted to cover the agreement to March 2019. As of 2019-2020, the Cree Nation Government has successfully negotiated to extend the fund for 2020-2021.

Programs funded in 2019-2020 were in the retail, restaurants, services, study, real estate, and tourism industries. Illustrated in tables 4 and 5 is the statistical information for the Regional Development Fund.

RDF Investment

The total investment from the Regional Development fund to Cree businesses for 2019-2020 was \$3,472,783. This year's investment was extended to eight (8) projects in Eeyou Istchee. Compared to 2018-19 there were 15 total projects approved and the 2018-19 investment amount was \$3,742,276. Although there was a slight decrease in the total amount disbursed, the average funding per project was significantly higher; this reflects that projects this year were of a larger scale.

The Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des régions (FARR) (Regional Outreach Fund)

The Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des régions (FARR) is a program managed by the Ministère des Affaires Municipales et de l'Habitation.

It is active in all regions of Quebec except for Capitale-Nationale and Montreal, where other funding is available. The Fund finances development projects that are aligned with the priorities identified by each region and projects that have a significant impact on regional outreach.

The priority areas for FARR funding for Eeyou Istchee from 2017-2020 are:

1. Development and implementation of a strategic housing plan that provides tangible solutions to housing and living conditions in our communities
2. Raising economic and employment activity through the private sector
3. Supporting Cree-owned businesses
4. Developing the Cree workforce
5. Fostering connections and partnerships within Eeyou Istchee
6. Tying economic development with Cree nation-building

Going forward, the Department of Commerce and Industry will work with leadership and stakeholders to consult on the priorities for Eeyou Istchee and to expand the application process to include other organizations and stakeholders.

Sectoral Agreement

At the end of March 2020, the Cree Nation Government signed a sectoral agreement on regional development with the Ministère des Affaires Municipales et de l'Habitation. Funded equally through FARR and CNG, this \$764,000 agreement serves to offer financial assistance to businesses in pre-start-up, start-up, expansion, succession, consolidation or as part of a project requiring administrative support.

Table 4. RDF Projects by location, 2019-2020

Location	Total # of Projects	Total Contribution
Chisasibi	1	\$1,000,000
Mistissini	1	\$190,960
Nemaska	1	\$767,000
Waskaganish	1	\$279,983
Waswanipi	1	\$1,000,000
Regional	3	\$234,840
Eastmain	0	
Ouje-Bougoumou	0	
Wemindji	0	
Total	8	\$3,472,783

These statistics for funding represent what was approved for funding disbursement by community of origin. It is worth noting that a disparity in funding from communities does present an opportunity to campaign more actively in less active communities to promote program applications.

Table 5. RDF Projects by Sector, 2019-2020

Sector	Total # of Projects	Total Contribution
Real Estate	1	\$1,000,000
Retail & Restaurants	2	\$1,767,000
Services	2	\$379,983
Tourism	1	\$190,960
Study	2	\$134,840
Total	8	\$3,472,783

The pandemic has given us clarity. More than ever before, we believe, and we know, that sustainable economic development is an essential foundation for nation building. We need a stronger and more diversified economy in Eeyou Istchee. We need less dependence on outside suppliers and contractors. We need our communities to be more self-reliant.

tive and strategic support, as well as to support the acquisition, repair or construction of infrastructure. The financial assistance provided under the agreement will contribute to the growth of economic activity for Cree entrepreneurs, including social economy enterprises and cooperatives. Administrative framework and guidelines are on track for the deployment of this program in the first quarter of 2020-21.

Social Economy

The Department of Commerce and Industry oversees the Social Economy funding agreement between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec. The funding is intended to support economic activity with social aims carried out in the framework of enterprises whose activities comprise the sale or exchange of goods or services and which are operated according to the following principles:

- The goal of the enterprise is to satisfy the needs of its members or of the community;
- The enterprise is not controlled by the decisions of one or more public entities;
- The rules applicable to the enterprise provide for democratic governance by its members;
- The enterprise aspires to economic viability;
- The rules applicable to the enterprise forbid the distribution of surplus profits generated by its activities.
- The rules applicable to the legal person operating the enterprise provide that, in the case of dissolution, the remainder of its property must be allocated to another legal person having similar goals.

This past year was about collaborating and strengthening ties. One of our main goals is to create jobs, while promoting and upholding traditional Cree activities and Cree culture to ensure that it continues into the future.

Cree Outfitters and Tourism Association (COTA), Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association (CNACA), and the Department of Commerce and Industry combined efforts to take the next step of the Cree Story.

Social economy programming supported the Visitor Experience project. Upon completion, the project will provide Cree artists training on how to best share their culture with visitors. Artists will act as ambassadors for their community, sharing local points of interest including insights about their art such as traditional sewing, beading, snowshoe-making, painting or decoy-making. Visitors will get an opportunity to purchase authentic Cree products and services directly from the Cree artists.

Funds were earmarked for a local economic development conference to highlight social economy for Cree and Inuit communities. Essential work was undertaken, including arranging conference speakers and preparing presentations on cooperatives. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was postponed until a later date.

Eastmain hosted a local economic development conference. The Department of Commerce and Industry hosted a session on cooperatives for community members from the coast, with special interest from Eastmain, Waskaganish and Chisasibi. More social economy sessions are planned in the coming year.

The Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) is the provincial resource hub for social economy. The Chantier

helps to inform the 22 regional organizations, known as poles, about social economy resources and provincial-wide activities. Eeyou Istchee is represented by the “Cree pole”. Provincial entities that fund social economy enterprises, such as RISQ (Réseau d’investissement sociale du Québec) or CSMO/ESAC (Comité Sectoriel de main-d’œuvre) that provide training, are working with the Cree pole to identify opportunities for socially engaged projects.

The Cree Pole is being represented at various conferences and meetings such as, CANDO (national Indigenous Economic Development organization), First Nations Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC), Cree Social Alliance committee, and the Cree Nation Youth Council’s “Inspiring Hope” Summit.

In this unprecedented time, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the Canadian, Quebec and Cree economies. Businesses are forced to find novel ways of operating to meet consumer wants and needs. Social Economy may offer dynamic, greener, socially responsible,

sustainable, collective solutions to deal with the pandemic fallout. The Cree Pole is there to help Eeyouch, Enough get involved, think collectively, and to shop locally.

CLOSING REMARKS

The pandemic has given us clarity. More than ever before, we believe, and we know, that sustainable economic development is an essential foundation for nation building. We need a stronger and more diversified economy in Eeyou Istchee. We need less dependence on outside suppliers and contractors. We need our communities to be more self-reliant.

Although supporting business creation through financial means is a proven way to accelerate economic growth, it is not enough to achieve sustainable development. Strategic planning, creative and innovative thinking, combined with targeted investment, are still essential to reach our full potential. ●





ENVIRONMENT AND REMEDIAL WORKS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Isaac Voyageur

As Director of the Department of the Environment and Remedial Works, I am pleased to offer this report on our accomplishments in 2019-20.

In April 2019, we revised the organizational structure of the Department and created mid-level supervisory positions in order to reduce the managerial burden on the Director and better streamline our workload. Experienced Department staff moved into new positions of greater responsibility: Cameron McLean is now our Coordinator of Environment, supervising our Mining, Assessment, and Wildlife files; and Jonathan Elkhoury is now our GIS Coordinator, responsible for all aspects of the GIS Mapping and Information services that support the work of the ERW, other Departments, Cree entities, and the Cree communities. The Department saw further restructuring in September 2019, when our former Forestry Unit transferred into the new Forestry Department directed by Gillman Ottereyes.

While these structural changes were happening over the course of 2019-20, the Departments' many teams were working as always to further our objectives. Our GIS and Land Use Planning units developed several new tools as part of the collaborative pilot project between the Eeyou Planning Commission and the Cree Nation of Eastmain. These include Story Maps, Cree Land Use and Occupancy Maps, and ArcGis Online, all of which will enhance our ability to collaborate on land use planning with the communities for years to come.

Our Wildlife Unit worked with the communities on a range of projects this year, from consulting on Quebec's Boreal Caribou Strategy and the Mixed Stand Strategy—both drafted this year—to collaborating on research in coastal environments and northern biodiversity.

Our Protected Areas (PA) staff spent months consulting with the Cree communities on PA proposals in 2019-20. Our ESIA Unit completed the final community *Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan* with Whapmagoostui. In addition, we launched a new seawater monitoring program with the LEAs this year.

Knowledge is power, and our people hold a wealth of information that spans a vast geography and history. We combine local, community-based, and on-the-ground research and consultation with state-of-the-art tools and policies that connect the entirety of Eeyou Istchee. In doing so, this Department works to ensure that our people can retain, update, share, access, and protect our knowledge as we plan our future and develop our territory in a way that benefits the Cree people and conserves our lands, waters and ways of life.

I am proud of the many ways our Department is working to increase our capacity to safeguard Cree lands and waters for generations to come.

Meegwetch.

Knowledge is power, and our people hold a wealth of information that spans a vast geography and history. We combine local, community-based, and on-the-ground research and consultation with state-of-the-art tools and policies that connect the entirety of Eeyou Istchee.



INTRODUCTION

The Environment and Remedial Works Department (ERWD) is responsible for implementing Sections 4, 5, 8, 22, 24, and 30A of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)*, pertaining to lands and land management, hydroelectric development, environmental policy and impact assessment, and wildlife management. It is our mission to protect the air, lands, and waters of Eeyou Istchee for the benefit of all Cree people, today and tomorrow.

The Department's staff work mainly from the Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Montreal offices. Our team includes biologists, analysts, engineers, administrators, technicians, planners, project coordinators and management specialists, supported by our administrative assistants, Sharon P. Matoush and Robin Campbell.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (ESIAs)

Section 22 of the *JBNQA* establishes an ESIA procedure requiring that most proposed development projects affecting the territory undergo assessments to identify and mitigate environmental and social issues before a project is authorized. The ERWD maintains the Cree Nation Government's ESIA Secretariat, which participates in the assessment and review of all projects submitted to the ESIA procedure. Our

ESIA Unit is comprised of our ESIA Coordinator, Kelly LeBlanc, and Environmental Analysts Lucas Del Vecchio, Kaitlin Lloyd, and Erica Guth. We help produce the necessary analyses for the Cree members of the provincial and federal review bodies: COMEV, COMEX, and the newly created joint Assessment Committee comprised of the Cree Nation Government and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (formerly CEAA). We keep in continuous communication with the Cree communities, other Departments, and Cree entities to ensure that Cree concerns are addressed at all stages of the assessment process.

In 2019-20, we assessed 22 proposed projects for the Evaluating Committee, COMEV, which deals with projects at the first stages of the ESIA procedure: Preliminary Information & Directives. Nine of the 22 projects were exempted from ESIAs; 7 remain under analysis; and 6 were given directives to proceed with an ESIA (see Table 1 on the following page).

We assessed a further 20 projects this year for the Provincial Review Committee, COMEX, which deals with the later stages of the ESIA procedure: Impact Statement Review and Follow-up. Of these, 1 new project was authorized; 2 requests for modification were approved; 6 projects were assessed and monitored for follow-up; and 11 projects and modification requests remain under review (see Table 2 on the following page).

Table 1. Select Projects (11 of 22) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEV in 2019-20

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community
Sewage treatment system for La-Grande-1 community centre	Hydro-Québec	Exempt	Chisasibi
New Landfill in Wemindji	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Directive Sent	Wemindji
Coniagas Site Rehabilitation	Galaxy Lithium (Ontario) Inc.	Under Analysis	Waswanipi
Dewatering project at the former Troilus Mine site	Troilus Gold Corporation	Directive sent	Mistissini
Gladiator Mining Site Development	Bonterra Resources	Under Analysis	Waswanipi
New Landfill in Nemaska	Cree Nation of Nemaska	Directive Sent	Nemaska
Woodyard expansion project	Chantiers Chibougamau Ltd.	Under Analysis	Ouje-Bougoumou
Bulk Sampling & Fenelon Mining commissioning project	Wallbridge Mining Company Limited	Directive Sent	Waskaganish and Washaw Sibi
Bulk Sampling at Windfall Lake	Osisko Mining Inc.	Under Analysis	Waswanipi
Wastewater Treatment Plant	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Directive Sent	Wemindji
Waste Incineration Plant	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Directive sent	Wemindji

Detailed information on all projects is available on the COMEV website at <http://comev.ca/en/>

Table 2. Select Projects (10 of 20) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEX in 2019-20

Project	Proponent	Status	Cree Community Affected
James Bay Lithium Mine	Galaxy Lithium (Canada) Inc.	Under Review	Eastmain
Rose Lithium-Tantalum Mine	Critical Elements Corp.	Under Review	Eastmain, Nemaska, Waskaganish
Renard Mining Project	Stornoway Diamond Corp.	Follow-up & modification request Approved	Mistissini
Whabouchi Mining Project	Nemaska Lithium Inc.	Follow-up & modification request Under Review	Nemaska
Mine Principale Restoration	Québec (MERN)	Modification request Under Review	Ouje-Bougoumou
Forestry Roads H-West & I	Matériaux Blanchet	Follow-up & modification request Under Review	Waswanipi
Bachelor Lake Project	Bonterra Resources	Under Review	Waswanipi
Eleonore Mining Project	Les Mines Opinaca (Newmont)	Follow-up & modification request Approved	Wemindji
Moblan Lithium Project	Lithium Guo AO	Under Review	Mistissini
Whapmagoostui Landfill	Whapmagoostui First Nation	Authorized	Whapmagoostui

Detailed information on all projects is available on the COMEX website at <http://comexqc.ca/en/>

ESIA Project Highlights

- **James Bay Lithium Mine:** Galaxy Lithium (Canada) Inc. responded to information requests from COMEX and the joint Assessment Committee established to conduct the federal review of this proposed mine on Eastmain territory. Following federal consultations in Waskaganish and Eastmain, further information was requested in March 2020 by the joint Assessment Committee. Additional consultations are to come as the project advances through the federal and provincial assessment processes.
- **Rose Lithium-Tantalum Mine:** In December 2019, Critical Elements Corporation submitted its first responses to COMEX and the joint Assessment Committee established to conduct the federal review of this proposed open-pit mining complex on Eastmain territory. Federal consultations in Eastmain, Waskaganish, and Nemaska led to a second information request sent to the proponent in March 2020. Additional consultations are to come as the project advances through the Federal and Provincial assessment processes.
- **Renard Mine:** Stornoway Diamond's modification request—to increase the rate of extraction and processing at this mine on Mistissini traplines—was approved in December 2019. The Mecheshoo Environment Committee met four times this year and the members were given a tour of the underground mining facilities



Staff members from the Eleonore mine demonstrate groundwater sampling at the mine site, June 2019.

in September 2019. Cree members of the Committee met with the tallyman in January 2020 to discuss his concerns about fish. Stornoway plans to conduct its promised fish study this summer.

- **Whabouchi Mine:** Construction of Nemaska Lithium's spodumene mine was put on hold in 2019-2020 due to financing issues. The Chinuchi Environment Committee met throughout the year to oversee monitoring requirements.
- **Forestry Roads H-West and I:** Construction of these access roads over 126 km of Category III lands began in July 2019. Following difficulties finding gravel within the authorized locations, Matériaux Blanchet Inc. requested modifications to open borrow pits and upgrade a portion of the road.
- **Bachelor Lake Project:** In December 2019, Bonterra Resources submitted its ESIA for the proposed re-opening of the Bachelor Lake mill, 30 km south of Waswanipi, to exploit gold deposits located on site (Moroy deposit) and at the Barry Site 110 km further southeast. The project remains under review.
- **Eleonore Gold Mine:** Les Mines Opinaca's modification request—to increase the quarry C-02—was approved in August 2019. Activities initiated through the Opinagow Environment Committee in 2019-20 included a demonstration of surface- and groundwater at the annual site visit; an aerial survey to assess the problematic bear presence on site, and initiation of an information review of Lake Sturgeon in the Opinaca system, contracted to address the concerns of impacted families.
- **Moblan Lithium Mine:** In March 2019, Lithium Guo AO submitted its Impact Statement to COMEX for this proposed open-pit mine and spodumene concentrator on Mistissini territory. A first set of questions was sent to the proponent in August.
- **Whapmagoostui Landfill:** Whapmagoostui First Nation and the Cree Nation Government will develop a landfill on Category IA lands, with access roads on Cree and Inuit territories, for use by the Cree community of Whapmagoostui and the Inuit village of Kuujuarapik. After review of the impact statement and responses to a first set of questions, the project was approved in 2020, contingent on following 10 conditions.

Climate Change Projects

The ESIA Unit continued its work with the Cree communities to identify appropriate solutions to cope with climate change impacts and build community resilience. We completed the third and final "Community Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan" and participatory video this year, working with Whapmagoostui First Nation. The report is available on the Cree Nation Government website at: <https://www.cngov.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/cng-whapmagstooui-report-final.pdf>. The video is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLfg5GF8fXk>.

In July 2019, we completed the final report from the Climate Change Regional Forum held in Eastmain in



Filming the Whapmagoostui Climate Change Adaptation project, Summer 2019.

November 2018; the report is available on the Cree Nation Government website at: <https://www.cngov.ca/environment/climate-change-report/>.

MINING

The ERWD supports Cree communities impacted by mining activities by monitoring projects under ESIA processes and participating in the environment committees derived from Impact Benefits Agreements. In 2019-20, the most essential aspects of this work normally handled by our Mining Engineer, Aurora Hernandez, were undertaken by our ESIA Analyst, Lucas Del Vecchio. As well, our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, networks with the Cree Mineral Exploration Board and participates in the planned remediation for abandoned mines in the territory.

The Department oversees implementation of the 2018 *Agreement for the clean-up of abandoned mining exploration sites*, which has a duration of 11 years and a budget of \$11 million. Our Coordinator of Environment, Cameron McLean, sits on the *Agreement's* Steering Committee, which includes representatives from the Cree Nation Government, the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government, Quebec, and FRAC (Fonds Restor-Action Cri). Following up on earlier studies commissioned by the ERWD, the Committee detailed its preliminary “General Action Plan” in December 2019. A number of sites were identified and visited this year as a first step in the clean-up preparations. A Coordinator for the Clean-up of Abandoned Mine Exploration Sites, Adario Masty, was hired this year to assist with this important work.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Department Director, Isaac Voyageur, is the Regional Environmental Administrator for Category I lands, assisted by our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, and our Coordinator of Environment, Cameron McLean. We provide guidance, coordination, training, and technical support to Local Environmental Administrators (LEAs) in each community. In December 2019, for example, we launched a program with the LEAs to monitor the spring

melt in coastal communities, thanks to funding from the Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program and the federal government, to address the safety concerns of Cree land users regarding changing ice conditions. We hired Sammy Blackned to be the Ice Monitoring Coordinator for the remainder of the program.

The ERWD undertakes environmental tasks that would be incumbent on any government environment department. This year, and every year, we provided technical guidance on issues of contaminated site management and remediation; we carried out Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments; we monitored the annual inventory and cleanup of former Hydro-Québec sites and camps; and we monitored drinking water quality in the Cree communities. We continue working with Capital Works and Services to make effective use of local and regional regulatory powers over water supply, the conservation of potable water resources, and the management and disposal of wastewater.

LAND SURVEYS

The Department is responsible for work on land surveys and implementation of related aspects of the land regime defined by the *JBNQA*. This work is led by our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, and our Coordinator of Environment, Cameron McLean, in collaboration with the Cree communities. In 2019-20, we worked closely with Waskaganish and Chisasibi, which face a number of boundary reconfiguration issues, and our work continued on boundary modifications for Waswanipi to reflect the cancellation of NBR projects and the reallocation of areas formerly scheduled for flooding. These files are moving slowly through the many steps of a complex legal, notarial, and administrative process, including the preparatory work required by provincial and federal governments prior to passing Orders in Council.

GIS MAPPING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Department's GIS Coordinator, Jonathan Elkhoury, and GIS Analyst, Maxine Mark-Stewart, support all ERWD files and assist other Departments, Cree entities, and Cree communities with mapping and data management needs. Following are select achievements from 2019-20.

Monitoring Wildlife Harvesting: We assisted the Department's Wildlife Unit and its partners, the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA) and the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) Wildlife Board, in developing a mobile application that allows Crees to record information about wildlife harvests and sightings in Eeyou Istchee and the EMR. The app features an interactive map, a photo upload option, and an offline mode to record information without cellular signal. A prototype is under review by the project partners.

Cree Cabin Survey Pilot Project: We built an application to assist the CTA and the ERWD's Land Use Planning (LUP) Unit in mapping almost 350 cabins in Waskaganish territory—critical information for the Cree Health Board to distribute emergency medical bush kits. We will pursue this project with other communities in years to come.

ArcGIS Online: In collaboration with the LUP Unit, we prepared a training document and delivered a course to 20 participants at the Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) meeting in February 2020 on ArcGIS Online. (See highlights from the LUP Unit, below.)

All Data App: We created the All Data App this year, an all-in-one web-mapping application that portrays multiple layers of information related to mining, forestry, energy, conservation, wildlife and occupancy in Eeyou Istchee.

Eastmain Land Use Mapping Pilot Project: In collaboration with the LUP Unit, the EPC, and the community of Eastmain, we produced custom basemaps used in interviews with local elders and land users to assist in marking almost 2,000 sites of special interest to the Crees of Eastmain. We digitized the collected data and made Cree Land Use and Occupancy maps for each trapline, to be validated by the tallymen and families.

Eastmain Story Map: The GIS and LUP Units, along with representatives from Eastmain, received training this year in the creation of Story Maps. In December 2019, GIS

Analyst Maxine Mark-Stewart travelled to Eastmain to record and map stories from elders, to be made available online through the Eastmain Story Map, through which listeners can hear the stories and see where they happened.

LAND USE PLANNING

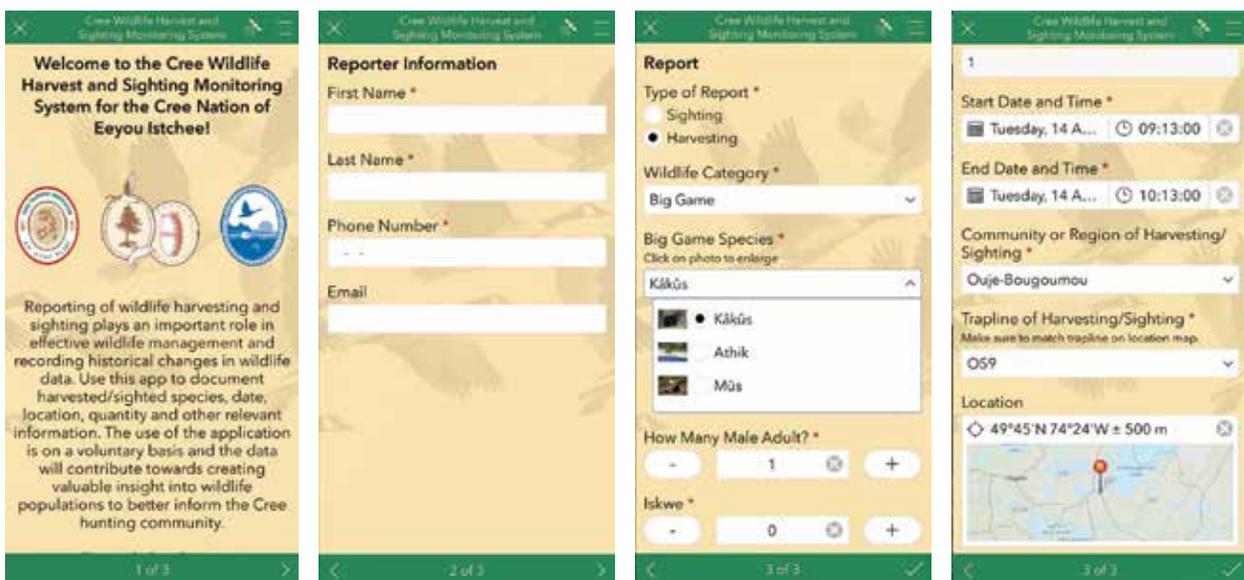
The Department's Land Use Planning (LUP) Unit acts as secretariat and staff support for the Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) and supports Cree participation in land use planning across Eeyou Istchee. The LUP Unit is composed of Christopher Beck (Coordinator of Land Use Planning), Sarah-Anne Brochu-Hébert (Land Use Planner), Merlin Whiskeychan (Land Use Planning Officer), and Jessica Labrecque (Land Use Researcher). We provide advice and technical support to the Cree Nation Government, facilitate the extensive collaborations required to advance Cree interests in land use planning, and support community-level initiatives to attain land use planning objectives. In 2019-20, we advanced the work of the EPC on a range of initiatives including the following.



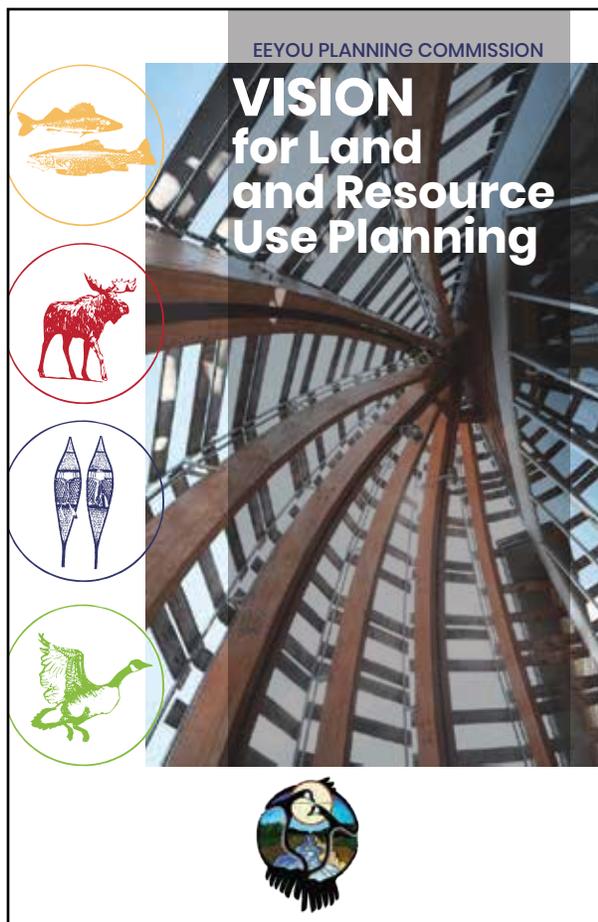
Florie Mark Stewart helps her granddaughter, GIS Analyst Maxine Mark-Stewart, map stories in Eastmain, December 2019



GIS Coordinator Jonathan Elkhoury trains the EPC on ArcGIS Online in Montreal, February 2020



Screen captures of the Wildlife Monitoring mobile application.



The EPC Vision is available online at <https://eeyouplanningcommission.ca/vision-for-land-and-resource-use-planning/>

EPC Vision: In early 2020, the EPC published its *Vision for Land and Resource Use Planning* to help shape future planning processes in the territory. Drawn from 2017 community consultations, the *Vision* provides guidance and supports efforts to give the Cree Nation a stronger voice in our collaborations with other government bodies and to ensure that any land use plans affecting the territory are consistent with the priorities of the Cree people.

EPC Eastmain Pilot Project: This year, the EPC engaged in a pilot project with the Cree Nation of Eastmain to provide the community with key tools and information to support decision-making with respect to land use planning and lands management. As described above in the GIS Unit highlights, we developed the Eastmain Story Map, the Eastmain Land Use and Occupancy Maps, and ArcGIS Online, through which the community can access up-to-date spatial data on the activities and features of its territory. We collected Cree cultural land use information for all of Eastmain's traplines and the offshore region this year, using rigorous, standardized mapping methods developed within the Cree Nation Government, tailored according to Eastmain's needs. Further research was carried out on mining activities in Eastmain territory, providing information and analysis that will frame discussions on mining



Recording land use information in Eastmain, June 2019
(Photo by Jessica Labrecque)



Land Use Planner Sarah-Anne Brochu-Hébert assists participants with ArcGIS training in Montreal, February 2020
(Photo by Christopher Beck)

exploration, transportation, and cleanup of abandoned sites. The tools and experiences gained from this pilot project will be used to support lands planning and management in the other Cree communities over time.

ArcGIS Online: ArcGIS Online is a cloud-based, user-friendly GIS platform that will promote collaboration in lands management and land use planning by Cree governments, entities, and communities. Managed by the Cree Nation Government, ArcGIS Online will facilitate Cree access to view, create, analyze and share spatial information, including the most current data on mining exploration, road networks, watersheds, cabin leases, forestry, archaeological sites, and other features of Eeyou Istchee. In February 2020, we partnered with the GIS Unit to train more than 20 EPC Commissioners and staff in using this web-based platform. Participants learned how to access information, carry out analyses, and make and share maps in a way that showcases Cree land use information while protecting its confidentiality.

Access and Occupancy Workshop: Following a February 2020 workshop in which EPC Commissioners and their alternates shared feedback on non-Cree vacation leases and related topics, we drafted land use planning orientations to address the pressing issue of non-Cree access and occupancy in the territory. A discussion document

released this spring addresses the issues of noncompliance with regulations, the allocation of new non-Cree cabin leases, challenges related to rough shelter leases, and camping on public lands in the territory.

PROTECTED AREAS

The Department's Protected Areas (PA) Coordinator, Chantal Otter Tétreault, works with the Cree Nation Government, Cree entities, Cree communities, and the EPC to develop and implement protected areas in the territory. Flora Weistche, Conservation Program Officer, joined the team to spearhead our consultations in the communities. Here are some highlights from 2019-20.

Community Consultations on Provincial PA Proposals

Throughout 2019-20, we worked with the communities to reduce PA proposals to match Quebec's goal of allocating 20% of Eeyou Istchee as Protected Areas—just 5% more than is currently protected. The Cree-Quebec Environment Table initiated several rounds of proposals, which we took to the communities for consultation from June to November 2019. We delivered PowerPoint presentations at the Local Annual General Assemblies and at meetings of the tallymen and land users; we distributed information pamphlets and made community announcements via local radio stations and social media; we developed community- and trapline-level maps for each PA proposal; and we conducted focus groups with youth, women,



PA consultations in Ouje-Bougoumou, Fall 2019



PA consultations in Wemindji, Fall 2019



PA consultations in Waskaganish, Summer 2019



PA consultations in Mistissini, Summer 2019



PA consultations in Chisasibi, Summer 2019



PA consultations in Eastmain, Fall 2019

and elders. Meetings and presentations for specific groups were also conducted as needed, e.g., to local CTA representatives, regional CTA Annual General Assemblies, key community resources, Band Council staff, and the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association (CWEIA) General Assembly.

Issues raised in the initial round of community consultations allowed us to map key information, including important cultural features, and to delineate areas of conservation value as counter proposals to Quebec. Initial attempts to prioritize proposals through Quebec's territorial subdivision based on biophysical features was abandoned in favour of catchments and the BEACONS tool. Throughout the consultations, it was clear that the Cree communities have a common concern for preserving water quality and protecting watersheds as a key to a healthy environment and life on the land. All of the information to come out of these consultations will be integrated into this year's PA planning, and further community consultations will guide our work to finalize PA proposals.

Protected Areas Collaboration

We are collaborating with the Cree communities, the CTA, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, Nature Canada, and the Cree Nation Youth Council, working together under the umbrella of the Cree Nation Government, with funding acquired from private, provincial, and federal sources including the Canada Nature Fund, which supports provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments in achieving the federal target of 17% terrestrial protection and 10% marine protection. This collaborative 4-year project has two core missions: to finalize and validate the PA network in Eeyou Istchee; and to form a Land Keeper Program for long-term PA management.

Our first 2 years will focus on the establishment of the PA network, including projects that support the protection of areas identified by the communities through the proposed provincial network of protected areas (20%) and Plan Nord's designation of areas sheltered from industrial activity (30%). We will conduct sub-regional projects based on three streams: cultural projects in Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi; hydrology in upper Mistissini, Eastmain, Nemaska and Wemindji; and wildlife projects in the southern communities affected by forestry.

Plan Nord's 30%: After a 4-year pause, Quebec and the Plan Nord Society resumed the working group on the priority allocation of 30% of the territory of Plan Nord as areas sheltered from industrial activity. The first inaugural meeting took place in Summer 2019, when an ambitious work-plan of the upcoming phases was presented.

Tawich: A feasibility assessment is underway for the creation of a National Marine Conservation Area in James Bay as part of the implementation of the *Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement*. The process is being led by Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull and PA Coordinator Chantal Otter Tétreault, with support from our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn. An MOU between Canada and the Cree Nation Government was signed in Summer 2019 to conduct the feasibility study in areas of the Eeyou Marine Region and Eastern James Bay with no overlap with the Inuit (from Waskaganish to south of the La Grande River).

This will be a first phase study, so as not to impede any development of this file should Makivik become interested in seeking a marine protected area in the overlap areas.

WILDLIFE

The Department's Wildlife Management and Conservation Unit ensures the implementation of the Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Regime established under Section 24 of the *JBNQA* and Part III of the *EMR Land Claims Agreement*. Our Wildlife Team is composed of our Wildlife Administrator, Emily Sinave, our Wildlife Biologist, Tania Couture (temporarily replacing Aurélie Bourbeau-Lemieux), our Wildlife Technician, Anderson Jolly, and our Science Advisor, Alan Penn. We provide support on wildlife matters to other Departments, Cree communities, and Cree entities, working to conserve healthy wildlife resources and to safeguard Cree rights and interests. Every year, we respond to a multitude of wildlife matters at the local, regional, provincial, and federal levels. Here are some highlights from 2019-20.

HFTCC: Our Department Director, Isaac Voyageur, sits on the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC), comprised of representatives from the Inuit, Naskapi, and Cree nations and the provincial and federal governments. The Wildlife Team supports the Cree members of the HFTCC, which has the responsibility to review, manage, and in certain cases, regulate the hunting, fishing, and trapping regimes in the Territory. HFTCC sub-committees and working groups are tasked with specific mandates. Files addressed in 2019-20 include Woodland Caribou; the Atlantic Population of the Canada Goose; the Black Bear Management Plan; Lake and Brook Trout Management Plans; and Quebec's Wildlife Policy.

Boreal Caribou Habitat: The Wildlife Unit put important effort into this file in 2019-20 under the Cree-Quebec Woodland Caribou Committee, which works to review and adapt the proposed *Quebec Boreal Caribou Habitat Management Strategy* within the context of the Chapter 3 Adapted Forestry Regime of the *Paix des Braves*. Quebec's strategy aims to cover 80% of the areas heavily used by woodland caribou, and includes proposed measures of "Extensive Favorable Areas" (large forested tracts in which disturbance levels will be kept under 35%); "Habitats Undergoing Restoration" (featuring road dismantlement); and "Connectivity Zones" (to ensure genetic exchanges between local populations of caribou). The *Strategy* was presented at a May 2019 workshop hosted by the Cree Nation Government, which gathered more than 60 tallymen, elders, and land users from Mistissini, Nemaska, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waskaganish and Waswanipi to elicit their concerns and recommendations.

Woodland Caribou Aerial Survey: We collaborated with Quebec's aerial survey of the northern distribution of the woodland caribou population in February and March 2020. Traditional knowledge from observation reports of tallymen and land users was used to validate the sampling plan. Four teams were deployed in different regions. Six Cree land users and 3 Cree Nation Government staff participated in the survey, which included collaring caribou for future tracking.

Wildlife Directives and Mixed Stand Strategy: A joint Cree-Quebec committee was created to elaborate wildlife habitat directives to guide the forestry planning process under the Adapted Forestry Regime. Analysis of habitat needs of key species of Cree concern was undertaken this year, and a draft “Mixed Stand Strategy” was presented to the communities at a workshop in May 2019. Concerns and recommendations were gathered from the tallymen and land users, feeding new discussions with Quebec and modifications to the Strategy. Wildlife Directives will be validated with the Cree communities through the Joint Working Groups.

Species at Risk in the Apishikimiish Area: We received funding from the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk to gather traditional ecological knowledge of species at risk in the Apishikimiish area (Lac Bienville), valued for its unique ecological habitats and its extraordinary cultural significance to the Crees of Whapmagoostui. The area is within the range of the endangered freshwater seal subspecies, and in the 1970s, it likely supported a discrete herd of woodland caribou, now a threatened species. Community interviews and a literature review were conducted this year to collect data on the presence of these two species at risk. An expedition to collect DNA samples and conduct aerial surveys in April 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coastal Habitat Comprehensive Research program: The Cree Nation Government, Niskamoon Corporation and Hydro-Québec are collaborating with academics, scientists, and Cree experts on a comprehensive research program to study the effects of environmental changes in the coastal marine ecosystem. A Cree land use research component has been added to the research program; extensive interviews were conducted this year with coastal land users, and more interviews will be conducted next year with tallymen, elders, women, and youth, to document Cree traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of changes in coastal habitats, including eelgrass and waterfowl distribution, and resultant changes in Cree land use and harvesting activities. Collaboration with tallymen and land users on bird band recoveries and a related waterfowl harvest study also continued this year. And, following recommendations from last year’s Symposium on Eelgrass, workshops with high school students were held in the four participating communities in Fall 2019 to introduce Cree youth to scientific research carried out in James Bay and the integration of TEK as a fundamental component of the research program.

Industrial Research on Northern Biodiversity in a Mining Context: As part of the wetland compensation plan for mining companies, a research Chair was created last year to integrate scientific and traditional knowledge of northern biodiversity in order to develop strategies to reduce the impacts of mining. Through the Wildlife Unit, the Cree Nation Government is represented as a full partner in the committees governing this research. Interviews with Cree community members were held this year as part of a project to document the use and importance of wetlands in Eeyou Istchee. Also in 2019-20, communication began with the communities of Mistissini and Nemaska to engage the collaboration of hunters in a project to study the level of



Woodland Caribou aerial survey, March 2020

stress in moose near mines by measuring the level of cortisol, a stress indicator, in fur samples from moose harvests.

FISHES: The FISHES project (Fostering Indigenous Small-scale fisheries for Health, Economy, and food Security) was approved for funding from Genome Canada in June 2019 and was formally launched in October 2019. The Wildlife Team is collaborating with renowned fishery biologists, Louis Bernatchez and Dylan Fraser, on a 4-year study to integrate traditional ecological knowledge and western science to identify important fisheries resources in the territory, to better target management and conservation efforts. Through the development and application of genomic approaches that integrate TEK, the project will improve our understanding of the genetic distinctions within populations of Brook Trout, Lake Trout, Walleye, White Fish and Cisco. Project partners—including the Cree Nation Government, the EMR Wildlife Board, Niskamoon Corporation and the CTA—met in 2019-20 to discuss the FISHES framework, upcoming community consultations, and sampling protocols.

Working group on Moose management and conservation: A working group with Cree Nation Government and CTA representatives was established this year to address growing concerns related to moose population and management in Eeyou Istchee. The group held its first meeting in March 2020 to discuss initiatives including a potential aerial survey next winter. ●



CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

Martin Desgagné, Engineer, MBA

This year brought us to the 2nd decade of the 21st century. I can tell you that time goes by fast when we have challenging tasks to do that keep us busy. I remember back at the end of the 20th century, in 1999, when we had the Y2K computer bug issue. At that time, while I was a younger engineer for the Cree Regional Authority based in Nemaska, I toured the Cree communities to ascertain that all the equipment working with programmable logical controllers (PLC) in the Cree communities would not have problems on December 31, 1999 and it feels like it was yesterday. At the end, there was no Y2k computer bug problem in the Cree communities linked to going from XX99 to XX00, and linked to the year 2000 being a leap year according to the Gregorian calendar system and being a non leap year in computer programs. This year, I would like to report to you on two key roles of the department of Capital Works and Services (CWS) and the advancement of the strategic planning.

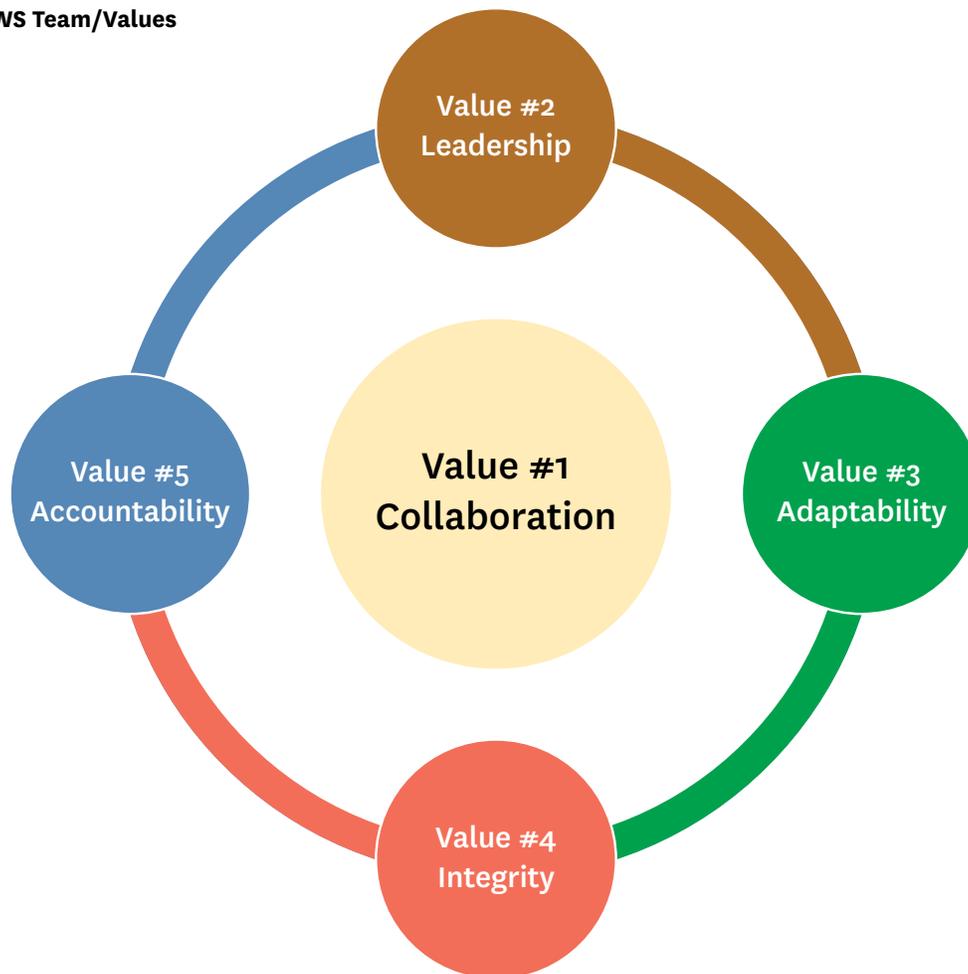
NRA agreement implementation for essential sanitation and some local responsibilities

In 2020, there are now 8 years left for the implementation of the 2008 New Relationship Agreement with Canada (NRA). Capital Works and Services (CWS) oversees developing and recommending to the Cree leadership a rolling NRA Five-year Capital Plan for NRA fundable capital projects in the Cree communities to make sure that the obligations such as essential sanitations, local administration offices, community centres and fire protection are fulfilled. This is done in very close collaboration with the Cree local administrations, the NRA technical committee and the Directors General, and the Treasurers' forum. This is one of the key roles of the department.

CWS Management Team in strategic planning session



Figure 1. CWS Team/Values



Different regional forums of exchange

Another key role of the department is to promote the exchange of information and knowledge amongst different key staff of the Cree communities in its field of expertise. This is done through different forums of exchange which also serve to coordinate the implementation of different NRA obligations in the Cree communities including capital projects and housing, operations and maintenance, training, developing of regional and local guidelines and directives, and other issues.

Thus, on top of its participation to the Directors General and the Treasurers' forum, which is led by the Executive Director of Grand Council of the Crees, CWS coordinated a few regional forums of exchange as follows:

- Eeyou Miichuwaap Regional Forum which deals with housing issues
- Cree Fire Chief Regional Meetings
- Fire Prevention Officers Regional Meetings
- Drinking Water Plant Operator Regional Forum
- Public Works Regional Forum

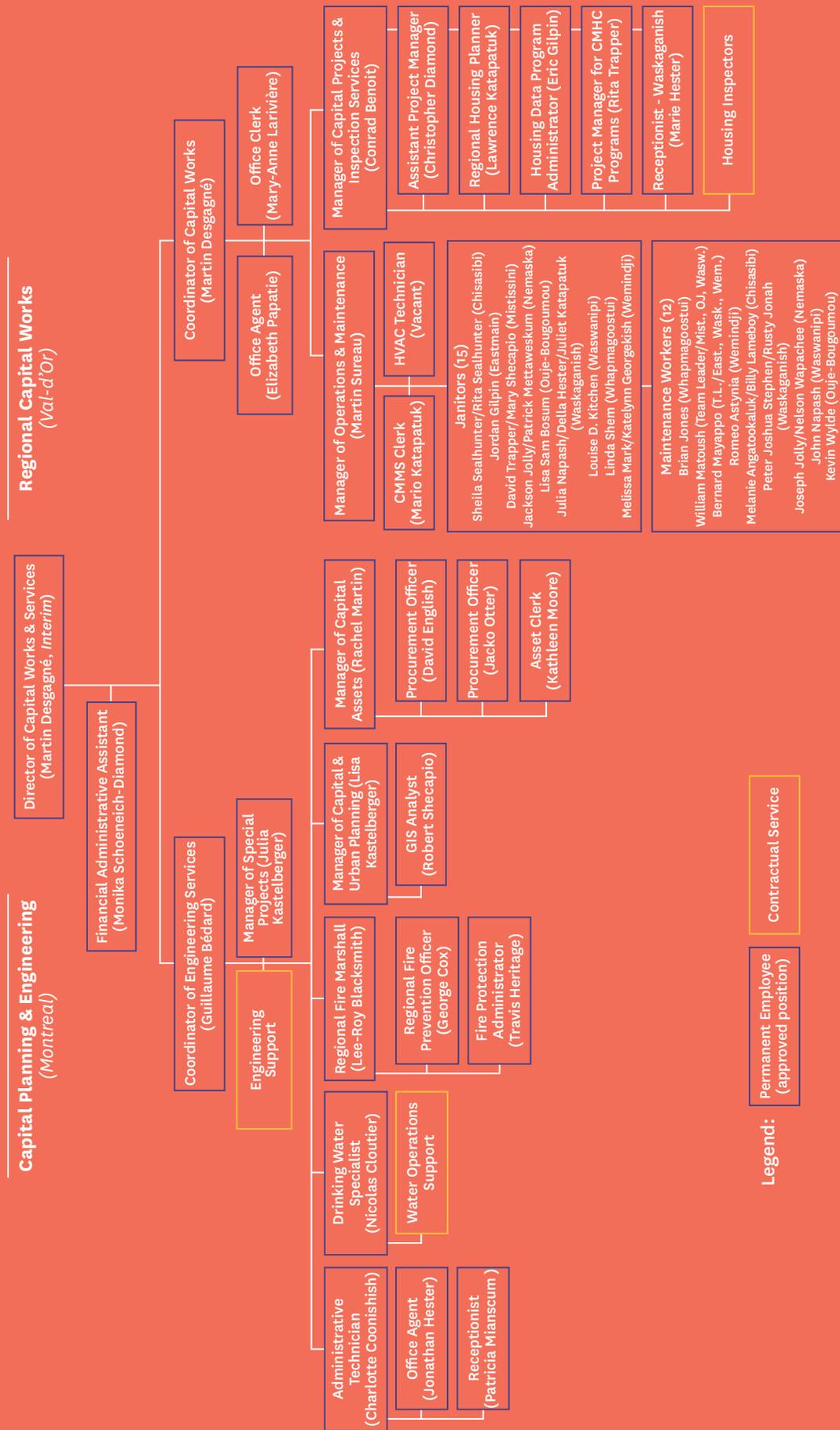
CWS Strategic Planning

Over the last few years, CWS developed its mission statement – Ensuring that the Eeyou/Eenou local and regional governments' infrastructures and related services enhance people's quality of life. Last year, the five values of the department were identified as follows:

Next fiscal year, in 2020/2021, the CWS management team will use the management by objectives (MBO) approach to develop its vision through objectives within each section for all the NRA obligations related to its field of expertise, aiming at fulfilling the objectives by 2028.

As a conclusion note, you will find in the next few paragraphs the activities that CWS performed over the year 2019/2020. All that work was possible because of the dedication of the CWS staff and the strong collaboration that they received from the Cree local and regional administration staff, the government officials and the different consulting firms. Thank you to everyone involved in the CWS files. Lastly, I want to thank the Cree Nation leaders for their confidence in CWS.

**Figure 2. Organizational Diagram
Personnel Structure 2019-2020**



Legend:
Permanent Employee (approved position)
Contractual Service

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the responsibility for general administration, CWS collaborates with the appropriate committees for reporting functions as well as the overall operations. The organizational structure of the department personnel reflects the two main mandates of the Department: a) Capital Planning & Engineering Services and b) Regional Capital Works Programs and Services. The Department has been divided between two offices for efficiency purposes with partial decentralization to Val d'Or as shown on Figure 2, "Organizational Diagram: Approved Personnel Structure for 2019-2020".

CAPITAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES

CWS has been actively planning and monitoring the capital projects carried out at the local administration level through funding provided by the Canada-Cree New Relationship Agreement (NRA).

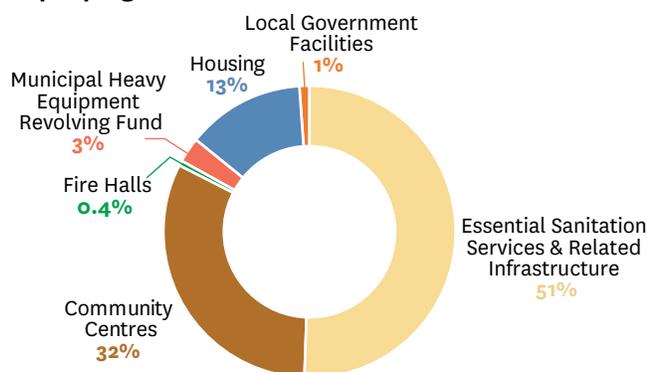
CWS manages the administration and annual update of the NRA Five-Year Capital Plan, incorporating local government projects from all nine communities. The department ensures that various technical standards are respected per project, prior to the recommendation of projects for funding. The final budget is approved by the Council of the Cree Nation Government Board in December of each year for the upcoming fiscal year's projects.

A total of \$145,780,631 worth of projects for all nine communities was approved for 2019-2020, as follows:

Table 1. Approved 2019-2020 NRA Local Projects, per Program

	2019-2020
Local Government Facilities	\$1,596,690
Essential Sanitation Services & Related Infrastructures	\$74,933,465
Community Centres	\$46,241,677
Fire Halls	\$558,679
Municipal Heavy Equipment Revolving Fund	\$3,646,672
Housing	\$18,803,448
	\$145,780,631

Figure 3. Approved 2019-2020 NRA Local Projects, per program



Top photo: The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi team guides the tour of Waswanipi's infrastructure projects.

Bottom photo: The Cree Nation of Waskaganish team guides the tour of the future pool.

Project Reporting & Monitoring

CWS is responsible for maintaining an ongoing record of all capital projects realized with NRA funding. This entails keeping an inventory of supporting documentation for all projects funded through the NRA, including copies of contracts, proposals, cost estimates, tender and as-built plans and specifications, final completion certificates, etc. The information collected will support the renewal negotiations with an accurate and detailed account of how the NRA funds were used. The collection of reporting documents is an ongoing task for CWS.

In addition to collecting reporting documents, CWS conducts a Community Tour of all NRA-funded facilities each year. The purpose of the tour is to ensure proper execution and maintenance of the capital projects. Below is a selection of pictures from the Fall 2019 tour, which took place August to September 2019.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

In order to provide useful mapping information about the existing nine Cree communities, GIS technologies were a practical solution in the development and delivery of spatial

data, maps and information products concerning essential sanitation services and related infrastructure data. In 2019-2020, the community maps displaying base map data of the existing nine Cree communities were updated using the latest digital data. Parallel work includes maintaining the municipal infrastructure maps for Whapmagoostui, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waswanipi and Mistissini. The goal of these efforts is to create a digital platform which integrates spatial data from a range of public and private sources. Subsequently, the spatial data and maps will be useful to build local knowledge about community growth and development. In addition, this process will also provide a framework in the ongoing acquisition, management, analysis and display of geographic information which will help the local governments in the future planning of capital projects and community development. These maps incorporate all information already collected through past-funded and ongoing NRA projects (building plans, as-built drawings displaying municipal infrastructure, and community master plans) with interchangeable and overlapping layers to create a comprehensive planning tool.

WATER TREATMENT

Water Treatment Specialist

This year, the CWS' mandate to support the water treatment staff throughout the nine (9) Eeyou Istchee communities was carried out like so; work visits, review of standard

operations and maintenance of water infrastructures and preparation of call for tender of Regional Sampling Program.

Circuit Rider Training (CRT)

The CRT program mandate covered two specific aspects of water treatment operation; distribution network leak detection and lagoon sludge level monitoring. This professional service was provided to all communities by Aquatech Water Management Services inc., which subcontracted the leak detection portion of the mandate to the firm InnovLogic. There were two site visits per community, one by the leak detection technician and the other by the wastewater technician.

Water Operator Training

A water operator training class was organized at the Centre de formation professionnelle Paul-Gérin-Lajoie (PGL) in Vaudreuil-Dorion. There were 12 students who enrolled from Whapmagoostui, Waswanipi, Nemaska and Mistissini. For this training session, 3 profiles were offered to the students; aqueduct attendant (OPA), water operator groundwater without filtration (OTUND) and water operator groundwater with filtration (OTUFD). Each participant followed the profile which was suited for the needs of their respective community (see table 3).

Table 2. Circuit Rider Work Visits

Location	Activities	
	Leak detection	Lagoon sludge level survey
Whapmagoostui	July 8-12, 2019	Operated by Kuujjuarapik
Wemindji	July 22-26, 2019	August 6-9, 2019
Waskaganish	October 4-11, 2019	July 30 – August 2, 2019
Mistissini	September 23-30, 2019	July 16-19, 2019
Chisasibi	August 5-16, 2019	September 10-13, 2019
Eastmain	August 26-30, 2019	August 20-23, 2019
Ouje-Bougoumou	June 10-14, 2019	July 9-12, 2019
Nemaska	June 24-28, 2019	September 17-20, 2019
Waswanipi	September 9-13, 2019	September 24-27, 2019

Table 3. Water treatment training programs and number of students enrolled

Communities	OPA	OTUND	OTUFD
Nemaska	2	1	-
Mistissini	2	2	-
Waswanipi	-	-	3
Whapmagoostui	-	2	-



Top and bottom left: Water distribution network practical training – PGL vocational training centre Vaudreuil-Dorion

Bottom right: Water distribution valve maintenance and one-way flushing procedure - Mistissini

Cree Water Operator Convention

The Cree water operator convention was held in Eastmain. The local water treatment staff organized a tour of the installations followed by technical presentations. A special thanks must be awarded to all Eastmain water treatment crew; Curtis Mark Stewart, Alfred Moses, Karine Croisette and Maxime Poirier.

Regional Water Sampling Program (RSP)

The Capital Works and Services department elaborated the Regional Sampling Program (RSP) to help each community to standardize its water sampling procedures. A call for tender was drafted in order to mandate an accredited laboratory to analyze all samples for a year. The initiative will help simplify local administrative procedures related to each type of water quality monitoring.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

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 NRA and other agreements. In 2019-2020, these activities included the following:

Support to Local Governments

Project management support was provided to the Whapmagoostui First Nation for all projects approved for funding through the NRA since 2008-2009. Additional support was provided to the local capital works team for the 2020-2021 NRA funding applications.

CWS also assists Local Governments in their applications to alternative sources of funding accessible to the Crees through punctual federal funding initiatives. In 2019-20, support was provided to the Cree Nation of Nemaska to complete a study on alternative technologies in waste management.

Lastly, in January 2020, CWS held its second annual Regional Public Works Forum. All Local Director's of Public Works and pertinent public works staff were invited to attend a two-day session in Montreal, QC of various train-

ings and workshops. This forum provides the Local Public Works Departments of the Cree Nation with a chance to enhance skills, exchange knowledge and to identify opportunities for synergy between governments.

New Relationship Agreement (NRA) Capital Planning & Program Development

To work towards fulfilling all of the NRA obligations prior to the renewal of the Agreement in 2028, CWS prepared a long-term NRA draft scenario scheduling all foreseen capital investments required in the nine (9) Cree communities.

As part of the development of the Parks and Playgrounds NRA program, CWS participated in a Health Impact Assessment funded through the Quebec Government and spearheaded by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB). Participation in this Health Impact Assessment involved partaking in the CBHSSJB's annual community tour to present the draft program, assess the community's current outdoor recreational facilities and gather feedback from various community member groups.



Regional Public Works Forum in Montreal, QC

PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

CWS is responsible for managing procurement activities, leasing agreements and the tracking of assets for the Cree Nation Government. An inventory of all Cree Nation Government moveable assets is in the process of being compiled and CWS is currently looking into acquiring an asset in-

ventory software to better track all moveable goods as the organization expands. The procurement team is responsible for the acquisition and delivery of goods and services as well as the tendering of construction projects. In 2019-20, over \$39M in purchase orders were issued by CWS for goods, services and construction contracts.

Figure 4. Breakdown of Purchases Made

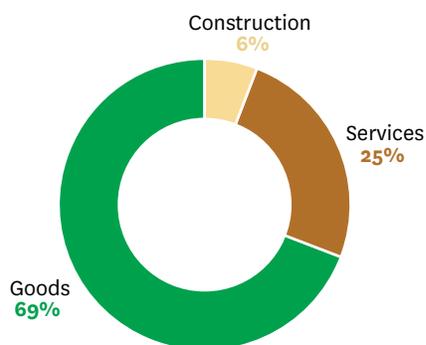


Figure 5. Percentage of Purchases Made Per Cost Bracket

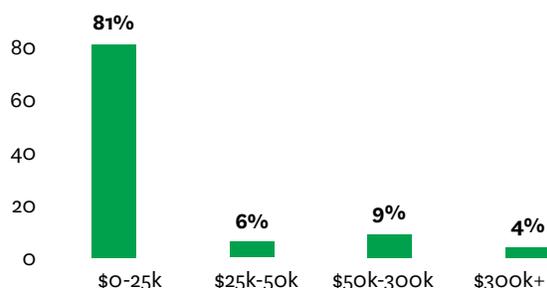


Table 4. CWS issued 22 Call for Tenders in 2019-2020

Whapmagoostui First Nation (WFN)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity & Heating System for Warehouse Materials for Correction to Water Service Entrances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Aggregates for Paving Arena Renovations
Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EPPF)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units in Eastmain Housing units in Mistissini 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Sale of Vehicle in Whapmagoostui
Capital Works and Services (CWS)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daycare renovations in Ouje-Bougoumou Paving of four parking lots in Waskaganish EPPF and Cree Nation Government housing units in Chisasibi Circuit rider training program for drinking water & wastewater operations Purchase of pumper truck & aerial fire truck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circuit rider training program and technical support for HVAC operations of the buildings in the Cree communities of James Bay and Northern Quebec Self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA) Fire Department Extrication Tools 2020 Regional Water Sampling Program
Department of Justice and Correctional Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of the wood siding and expansion of the Justice Warehouse in Whapmagoostui Replacement of the wood siding and expansion of the Justice Building in Waskaganish Replacement of the wood siding and expansion of the Justice Warehouse in Eastmain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of the wood siding and expansion of the Justice Warehouse in Nemaska Replacement of the wood siding and expansion of the Justice Warehouse in Chisasibi, Mistissini, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waswanipi & Wemindji Community Wellness Project

FIRE PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

The application of the Regional Fire Protection By-Law continues to show positive results for the local Fire Departments. In 2019-2020, the CWS Fire Protection Staff introduced new files relating to trainings, meetings, equipment purchases and community touring to support the local fire departments. CWS continued to coordinate training initiatives with the École National des Pompiers du Quebec (ENPQ) and the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC). The CWS Fire Protection Staff had yet another successful fiscal year showing progress on several files. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) training standards continued to be implemented and the collaboration between the CWS Fire Protection Staff and Local Fire Officers was maintained through community tours to provide in-house training. In addition to the above, two (2) new fire trucks were purchased for two Local Fire Departments.

Equipment Purchases

All Fire Department equipment purchases followed a tendering process through the CWS procurement division. The Regional Fire Marshall reviewed all documents prior to recommending purchases.

Fire Apparatus

The purchase of fire trucks was approved for two (2) communities. An aerial ladder was purchased for the Eastmain Fire Department and a pumper truck was purchased for the Waswanipi Fire Department. Ghyslain Roberts, a fire equipment procurement consultant, was hired to assist the Regional Fire Marshall with the plans and specifications for the fire apparatus purchases.

Local Fire Department Equipment

In 2019-2020, the Regional Fire Marshall authorized the procurement of Bunker Gear for two (2) communities, SCBA's with Cylinders for two (2) communities, various Fire Hoses and Hydraulic Rescue Tools for two (2) communities. The procurement of fire protection equipment for the local fire departments is ongoing to maintain well-equipped local fire protection services for the communities.

Local Fire Department Personnel Training

The CWS Fire Protection Staff in collaboration with local Fire Chiefs and Cree Fire Instructors voted on the location of the trainings which resulted in the organization of a Coastal training and an Inland training. Candidates had the choice to attend trainings hosted by the Chisasibi Fire Department or the Mistissini Fire Department. The goal remains to maintain a minimum level of fifteen (15) trained and certified Fire Department personnel in each Local Fire Department.

On March 21, 2019 the CWS Department hosted a graduation at the Hilton Lac Leamy in Gatineau, QC to celebrate the completion of the programs for both the NFPA 1001 and NFPA 1021 groups. This celebration recognized the efforts of

twenty (20) candidates successfully completing the Fire Officer Professional Qualifications Program (NFPA 1021). This Professional Fire Officer Course was offered by the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) for a period of four (4) months. The training took place in Val-d'Or and was given by JIBC instructors.

Fire Department Management Software

The Regional Fire Marshall hired a Cree Consultant with the task of implementing the Regional BeeOn Fire Protection Software. The consultant offered support to the local fire departments via face-to-face visits or remotely to set-up the BeeON platform to monitor personnel and equipment needs. This platform is important as it will serve as a real-time link to local Fire Departments facilitating the future procurement of goods and services and better estimating the CWS Fire Protection budget projections. The local Fire Departments expressed such gratitude for the consultant's professional services.

Fire Prevention Activities

All of the training that has been provided by CWS for fire prevention is outlined within the Regional Fire Protection By-Law as it relates to the duties and responsibilities of the local Fire Prevention Officers.

In 2019-2020, CWS continued improving and establishing fire prevention programs for the Cree Nation. The Board of Compensation (BOC), which administers the Insurance Program for the entire Cree Nation, confirmed that fires still remain the highest dollar losses for the Cree Nation, therefore the fire prevention team is working diligently on trying to reduce the frequency of fire losses by developing and implementing the Cree Nation Fire Prevention Program. CWS supports the local band administration by providing yearly funding to hire local Fire Prevention Officers to work closely with the Regional Fire Prevention Officer, to coordinate the prevention activities across all nine (9) Cree communities.

Regional Fire Protection Community Tours

The Regional Fire Marshall scheduled community tours to visit each fire department to gather information and to assess the local Fire Department operations. The Regional Fire Protection file continues to be closely monitored through bi-weekly meetings between the Regional Fire Marshall, the Regional Fire Prevention Officer, and the Fire Protection Administrator. Quarterly meetings with the Fire Chiefs, Fire Prevention Officers (FPOs) and Cree Nation Government fire protection staff are also held. The purpose of these meetings is to provide updates and to ensure the progression of each file.

Emergency Preparedness and Planning

Throughout the 2019-2020 fiscal year, CWS continued to collaborate with various stakeholders in the development of emergency preparedness and response plans on behalf of the nine (9) Cree communities. The COVID-19 pandemic

required a coordinated Public Health response, which resulted in the creation of the Regional Emergency Core Group whose task is to exchange information with health professionals and to assist the local first responders on how to best serve the public. The CWS Fire Protection Staff participated in daily briefings via conference call to effectively disseminate information across department lines.

Domestic Animal Control

At the request of the various public safety and health stakeholders within the Cree communities, CWS has reviewed all nine local government Domestic Animal Control Bylaws. As a result, tablets equipped with a Domestic Animal Control software were purchased for each community's Public Safety Officer (PSO). Throughout the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the CWS Department used the same BeeOn Implementation Consultant as the Domestic Animal Control Module operates on the very same platform used by the Regional Fire Protection Management Software. The aim of this software module is to compile data on the Domestic Animal populations within all nine (9) communities and to promote the infrastructure required to increase Domestic Animal services in the communities.

Cree Public Safety Personnel PTSD Pilot Study and Training Initiative

The CWS Department, along with stakeholders from the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, received a grant from the Canadian Institute of Health Research in the amount of \$149,000 to study PTSD therapies for Cree Public Safety Personnel. Various Cree Health Board departments have supported the research proposal and will collab-

orate with the study. Local Cree Health Board mental health practitioners will be given training to administer therapies identified in the pilot study to increase local mental health capacity.

CAPITAL PROJECTS ACTIVITIES

CWS has a team in charge of construction activities, which had 18 active projects under its responsibility in 2019-2020 for a total value of about \$30.3 million as per the table 5. These projects were executed for the Cree Nation Government departments of the Eeyou Eenuo Police Force (EPPF), Justice and Correctional Services, Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) and the Cree Nation Government Administration.

Furthermore, CWS is providing technical support to the Child and Family Services Department for the renovations of the daycare centres in the Cree communities.

Professional Services Activities

The Capital Works Division mandates professional firms of architects and engineers to prepare plans and specifications for various construction projects, to assist in the supervision of construction works as well as to develop a preventive maintenance program.

In-house, work is being done to electronically archive all the construction and O&M documents for further integration into an information management system.

The CWS Capital Projects staff and O&M staff also provide some technical advice to the Cree local administrations on matters related to call for tenders, project management, inspection services, building construction and operations & maintenance, and housing construction & operations.



Cree Nation Government – EPPF Mistissini
Housing Project (2 Triplexes, 1 Duplex)

Table 5. Construction Activities of Regional Capital Works

Project	Value of Contract	Advancement				Delivery Date	Contractor
		Q1 2019/20	Q2 2019/20	Q3 2019/20	Q4 2019/20		
Youth Custody Facility in Mistissini	\$16,699 000	98%	98%	100%	100%	June 2019	Construction de l'Avenir
ASD Building Expansion in Chisasibi	\$697,800	98%	98%	100%	100%	December 2019	CBCC
EEPF Police Detachment in Waskaganish	\$5,608,196	98%	98%	98%	100%	March 2019	CCDC
Cree Nation Government Head Office in Nemaska exterior renovation	\$373,965	98%	98%	98%	100%	December 2019	Kesi Construction
EEPF Triplex in Mistissini	\$1,150,000	-	16%	35%	60%	July 2020	Makaahiikan
Cree Nation Government Triplex in Mistissini	\$1,150,000	-	16%	35%	60%	July 2020	Makaahiikan
Cree Nation Government Duplex in Mistissini	\$750,000	-	10%	35%	60%	July 2020	Makaahiikan
Paving Projects in Waskaganish	\$719,038	-	10%	100%	100%	December 2019	Wemindji Paving
Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Whapmagoostui	\$381,800	-	10%	71%	98%	December 2019	Minheku Construction
Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Eastmain	\$338,300	-	10%	41%	98%	December 2019	VCC
Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Nemaska	\$329,000	-	10%	41%	98%	December 2019	Vieux Poste
Justice Facility Warehouse Expansion Projects	\$1,178,400	-	10%	87% (Mist.) 71% (Others)	90% (Mist.) 71% (Others)	May 2020	Kesi (Mistissini) VCC (Ouje, Wasw., Wem., Chis., Wask.)
Commerce and Industry Business Hub in Mistissini	\$349,991	-	10%	33%	80%	January 2020	Nisk
Justice Housing Unit in Waskaganish	\$350,000	-	-	70%	100%	January 2020	Waskaganish First Nation
EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Whapmagoostui	\$100,000	-	-	-	20%	July 2020	Project Management Approach
EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Wemindji	\$50,000	-	-	-	70%	June 2020	Project Management Approach
EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room Nemaska	\$70,000	-	-	-	90%	May 2020	Project Management Approach
EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Ouje-Bougoumou	\$30,000	-	-	-	20%	June 2020	Project Management Approach
Total	\$30,325,490						



Top: Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) in Waskaganish Training Centre Paving Project

Middle left: Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) Building Expansion Chisasibi

Middle right: Police Detachment Waskaganish

Bottom left: Youth Custody Facility in Mistissini

Bottom right: Justice Staff Housing in Waskaganish

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) ACTIVITIES

As of March 31, 2020, CWS had to oversee the operations and the maintenance (O&M) of 24 public buildings (approx. 240,000 square feet), 1 warehouse, and 97 housing units (approx. 150,000 square feet) located in the Cree communities as per table 6. In order to carry out the O&M works, there is a team of 15 janitors, 12 maintenance workers (two acting as team leaders), 1 heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) worker, 1 Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) clerk and 1 manager dedicated to that work.

The types of operations and maintenance activities that are carried out by the Maintenance Workers can be classified in three major maintenance categories: preventive, corrective and predictive.

Since April 2016, the O&M team has been using a CMMS and has over 725 preventive maintenance templates for the buildings' equipment. Over the length of this fiscal year, over 1200 work orders have been produced in all categories combined. CWS' O&M staff also answered emergency maintenance calls for the 16 daycare centres in the Cree communities. This is subsequent to an agreement established between the Cree Nation Government's Department of Child and Family Services and CWS.

CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES HOUSING FILE

CWS provides support and services in the Cree communities related to housing. The Housing Program Administrator, the Regional Housing Planner and the Project Manager for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Programs are dedicated to the Cree housing file.

Housing Program Administrator Activities

1. Inspection Services for the CMHC's Mamuitun Program CMHC Section 95 Social Housing Units

The housing team is supported by four (4) housing inspectors from the Cree communities who work on a punctual basis to perform inspections on social housing on behalf of CMHC. They perform inspections for the new housing units being built (Section 95), by verifying the physical condition review (PCR) and the current housing stock.

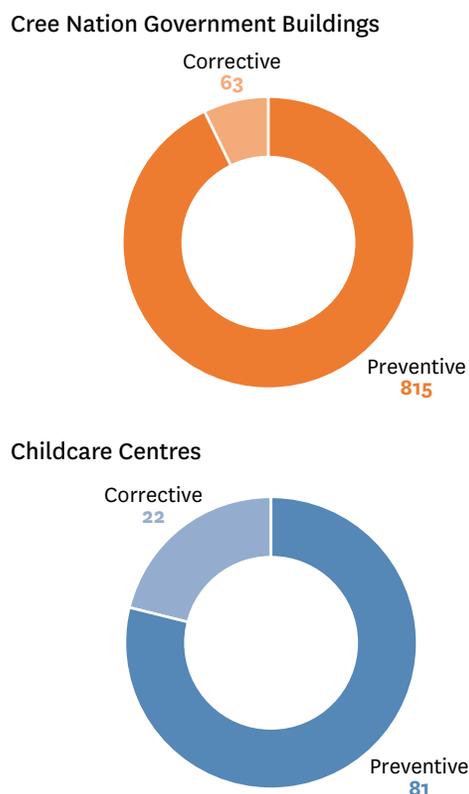
CMHC Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program Projects (RRAP)

Assisted the Cree communities in Eastmain, Mistissini, Chisasibi and Ouje-Bougoumou in producing work description with estimate cost of the unit and final inspection of the units. In total the Cree communities got approved for six (6) units.

Table 6. Assets under the responsibility of CWS for Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

	Number of facilities
Regional Buildings	
Assets under the responsibility of CWS for Operations and Maintenance (O&M)	1
CHRD Training Centres	2
Cree Nation Government Head Office	1
Cree Nation Government Office	1
EEPF Detachment	9
EEPF Headquarter	1
Justice Facilities	9
Warehouse	1
Sub-Total	25
Housing Units	
Cree Nation Government Housing Units	34
EEPF Housing Units	63
Sub-Total	97
TOTAL	122

Figure 6. Distribution of Work Orders



CMHC Physical Condition Review (PCR)

Assisted in inspections on Physical Condition Review with Conseil Tribal Maniitun inspection onsite and on-line reporting at CMHC website server for Waswanipi (10 units), Mistissini (9 units), Nemaska (2 units), Waskaganish (9 units), Wemindji (3 units).

2. Inspection Services for the Board of Compensation Insurance File

A cost estimate was prepared to repair the house floods in Mistissini (3 units) and the report was sent to Board of Compensation and the Cree Nation of Mistissini.

3. Cree Nation Government – Urgent Housing Renovation Mold

Major renovations were performed in the Cree communities of Eastmain (4 units), Mistissini (10 units), Wemindji (18 units) and Waswanipi (20 units). These major renovations included new kitchen cabinets/countertops, bathrooms, floor coverings, exit doors and windows to help reduce the cause or spread of mold.

Regional Housing Planner Activities

1. Cree Regional Housing Action Plan

A public information campaign was launched concerning housing issues and important information was distributed to promote home ownership in the Cree Communities. Upon request the housing team assisted the local housing departments in setting up an information booth to give out pamphlets, souvenirs and other materials at local conferences, general assemblies or meetings.

2. Regional Radio Show on Housing

Through the James Bay Cree Communications Society (JBCCS), the Regional Housing Planner hosted ten (10) thirty (30) minute radio shows concerning current and future homeowners and other related issues.

3. Financial Awareness Cree Nation Tour

The Regional Housing Planner and the Housing Specialist Consultant Ryan Rice organized and presented the financial literacy for current and new homeowners in the Cree Nation. This tour included local presentations on how to get ready for homeownership and personal budgeting.

4. Eeyou Miichuwaap Quarterly Meetings

The Regional Housing Planner coordinated and chaired meetings with the support from CWS Housing team for the Eeyou Miichuwaap regional forum of exchange among the Cree communities. In total, four (4) meetings were held throughout the fiscal year 2019-2020. The Eeyou Miichuwaap meetings generally last two (2) days. The first day is used to discuss and follow up the Cree housing file in the Cree communities. The meetings are usually held in the months of March, June, September and December.

5. Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay – Public Health

The CWS housing team met regularly with the public health of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay to discuss housing and health related topics. They also contributed towards topics to be discussed and shared with Cree communities on the regional radio show on housing.

6. Housing Symposium 2020 – Organizing Committee Meeting

The housing team established a committee within the Eeyou Miichuwaap regional forum to organize and plan the housing symposium that will be held in fall 2020. Natasha Bates from Chisasibi was hired on contractual services as the coordinator.

7. Housing Conferences, Forums, Assemblies and Meetings

Upon request from the Cree communities and other First Nations communities, the Regional Housing Planner participates and presents in local and regional conferences, forums, assemblies and meetings. The main objective is to provide and distribute information concerning housing related topics and homeownership in the Cree communities.

Project Manager for CMHC Programs' Activities

1. Update on CMHC Housing Projects

The CMHC housing projects went extremely well in 2019-2020. Most of the communities have completed their past Section 95 projects and are now working on new projects for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

2. Coordinating Training of Local Housing Inspectors

The Local Housing Inspectors training took place in Chisasibi on June 10-14, 2019 and in Val-d'Or on July 3-6, 2019. There was a total of 16 trainees. 4 of those trainees were the newly hired Local Housing Inspectors and the rest were local maintenance staff from the local Housing Departments in the 9 communities.

Table 7. Project Manager for CMHC Programs' Activities

Meetings	Location	Dates
Whapmagoostui Housing Director	Val-d'Or, QC	April 5, 2019
Nemaska Housing Action Plan	Val-d'Or, QC	April 12, 2019
Town Hall – Regional Housing Strategy	Val-d'Or, QC	April 16 & 17, 2019
CWS Housing Coordination Meeting	Montreal, QC	May 14, 2019
Cree Health Board & Cree Nation Government Housing	Montreal, QC	May 16, 2019
Capacity Development Session – Housing Directors	Montreal, QC	May 30, 2019
Local Housing Inspectors Training	Chisasibi, QC	June 10-14, 2019
	Val-d'Or, QC	July 3 & 4, 2019
	Val-d'Or, QC	September 4, 2019
Eeyou Miichuwaap	Gatineau, QC	June 26 & 27, 2019
	Val-d'Or, QC	September 18 & 19, 2019
	Montreal	February 10 & 11, 2020
	Gatineau	December 4 & 5, 2019
Cree Nation Government Annual General Assembly	Nemaska, QC	August 6, 7, & 8, 2019
Financial Awareness and Household Budgeting Tour	Wemindji, QC	August 21 & 22, 2019
	Ouje-Bougoumou, QC	August 28 & 29, 2019
	Whapmagoostui, QC	October 9 & 10, 2019
	Wemindji, QC	November 13 & 14, 2019
	Waswanipi, QC	January 23, 2020
	Mistissini, QC	February 19, 2020
Rental Scale Policy Working Group	Montreal, QC	September 24, 2019
Nemaska Local Housing Meeting	Nemaska, QC	October 30, 2019
Indigenous Housing Solutions	Gatineau, QC	November 5 & 6, 2019
Regional Housing Symposium Committee Meetings	Val-d'Or, QC	October 22, 2019
	Gatineau, QC	November 7, 2019
	Gatineau, QC	December 6, 2019
	Chisasibi, QC	February 13, 2020
	Montreal, QC	February 1, 2020
5th Annual First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Forums East	Toronto, ON	November 27 & 28, 2019
Training on Mould	Mistissini, QC	January 14 & 15, 2020
Commerce and Industry department and CWS Housing team Meeting	Montreal, QC	February 6, 2020

Table 8. Approved 2019-2020 Department Budget

	2019-2020
Department Direction	\$ 527,213
Regional Capital Works	\$ 565,343
Technical Committees and Related Support	\$ 77,600
Capital Planning and Engineering Services	\$ 969,700
Housing Support Services	\$ 293,800
Regional Fire Prevention Support	\$ 241,950
Fire Protection Training & Other Initiatives	\$ 600,000
Grand Total	\$ 3,275,606



CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Kelly Pepabano

On behalf of the Child and Family Services Department of the Cree Nation Government, it is a wonderful privilege to once again present the activities and achievements of 2019-2020.

First and foremost, we would like to give recognition and acknowledgement to all childcare staff members who have truly committed to improving childcare services, and who form the backbone of our network. Without this group of dedicated persons, we would not be able to play such an important role in stimulating the development of our young children in Eeyou Istchee.

We would also like to acknowledge all of our regional and local partners in Eeyou Istchee, and within the province, who have provided support in our objective to offer the best overall developmental opportunities for our children aged 0 to 5. This year, we focused a lot of our energy on working in collaboration with our partners who also support children in varied areas of either health, well-being, and education.

Wide range of activities at CFSD

In addition to providing ongoing childcare services, our Department also manages other programs related to children and families. These programs are made possible through two specific agreements:

- The Health Canada agreement for both the Head Start and Maternal and Child Health Programs;
- The agreement between Service Canada and Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD), for the implementation of the First Nations Childcare Initiative (FNCCI) and the Employment and Social Development Canada

initiative known as the “Indigenous Early and Child Care Framework (IELCC)”.

We have been working hard on the Maamuu Uhpichinaausuutaau program (Avenir d'enfants), which allows us to deliver more early childhood development programs in Eeyou Istchee to help provide local community-based projects and initiatives for the benefit of children 0 to 5 years of age.

Because of our ability to manage numerous programs at the regional and local levels, our Cree childcare centres continue to offer more integrated services than most centres across Canada. They include childcare services, Head Start programs, services dedicated to children living with special needs, and services for families.

We continued to strengthen our ties with the Maternal and Child Health program staff at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, with the goal to foster positive collaboration between the two programs, and to avoid duplication of services provided to the communities. This work continues to go smoothly, and we are confident in the process of working more collaboratively.

In closing, we would like to say that all of these achievements would not have been possible without the support of our Cree leaders, who endorse the work that we do to promote the development and well-being of Cree children and families throughout our territory. On behalf of all families in Eeyou Istchee, we wish to acknowledge and show our gratitude to them.

Chiniskuumidinaan mishtee.





MISSION OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PERSONNEL

Our Department is based in Mistissini, with four full-time employees working out of our main office. One employee is based in Waskaganish, two are in Waswanipi, two are based in Montreal, one is in Quebec City, and finally, three are based in Chisasibi. We are proud that members of our team are spread out in many communities and increase our presence and visibility throughout our Territory.

Department team members continue to ensure that childcare services are being provided by Cree personnel in the Cree language, and use culturally appropriate tools. Our work also includes ensuring that the childcare centres and Head Start programs reflect the communities' cultural values, beliefs and traditions. One of the main roles of our regional team is to travel to all the communities in order to provide technical and professional support to staff and board members of the nine child and family services centres. At the end of 2019-2020, more than 450 Crees were employed in child and family service centres, most of them in permanent full-time positions, with some as replacement educators. More than two thirds of the people working as educators now hold college-level diplomas.

Centres providing childcare services and Head Start programs each hire one director who looks after management (human resources, finance, materials, administration and services). Directors are assisted by coordinators for

each of our 16 facilities, as well as by administrative assistants. Each centre employs a number of educators (including special needs educators and in some cases, home visit educators). All centres also have cooks and janitors on their regular staff. Finally, some centres have pedagogical counsellors as well as coordinators for their Head Start programs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR ACTION PLAN

For fiscal year 2019-2020, the activities of the Child and Family Services Department have included the following.

A. Programs and Agreements

This year again, our Department channelled funds from a number of programs and agreements to local childcare centres, in order to support their operations. These programs and agreements have a significant impact on the economic vitality of our communities, as they injected 24.7 million dollars into local services, renovation projects and training programs.

- The Agreement respecting Childcare Centres between the Government of Québec and the Cree Nation Government gives us various responsibilities, including renewing childcare centres' permits, implementing our own budget rules, carrying out inspections, facilitating the implementation of background inquiries for all staff and board members of childcare centres, dealing with local and regional complaints, and providing technical and professional support to the centres. We are in the process of renegotiating our agreement with the Ministry of Family.
- The *Cree Childcare Program* is funded through an agreement between Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) and Service Canada for the First Nations Child Care Initiative (FNCCI). This program allows local childcare centres to improve the ratio of children to educators, thus enhancing the quality of services.
- The Employment and Social Development Canada initiative known as the "*Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC)*" is also funded through an agreement between ASD and Service Canada. This program is designed to support projects which aim to improve high quality early learning and childcare that is based on Indigenous culture, language and traditional practices.
- The *Cree Head Start Program* is funded through an agreement with Health Canada. Through this program, educators facilitate educational activities within childcare facilities or through home visits for families of children who do not attend the childcare centres. Home visits are a great way to introduce developmental activities for young children and to help children and parents alike discover the joys of 'learning through play'. Other activities offered through the Head Start program included services for children who have special needs, various stimulation activities for children, parent-child playgroups, parenting workshops,

nutrition workshops, first aid training for parents and various events to highlight the special bond that connects the Cree communities with young children.

- The *Maternal and Child Health Program* is funded by Health Canada as well. This program allows us to establish a partnership with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay in order to facilitate the delivery of health promotion services to children and families, through the *Â Mashkûpimâtsit Awash* program.
- *Avenir d'enfants*, is funded jointly by the Chagnon Foundation and the Government of Québec. This program allows us to contribute to the overall development of children 0 to 5 living in poverty, and to help ensure that every one of them has a chance to get a good start in life. Many projects are being implemented in Eeyou Istchee to further these goals.

Avenir d'enfants funding gives the opportunity to mobilize partners and to support their work as a committee, as well as to sustain collaborative partnerships. The nine communities that received funding can support the design and implementation of local action plans to provide families and children 0 to 5 years of age with local projects and activities.

Here are some of the projects and activities that were implemented in various communities:

Preservation of culture and language development, reducing social isolation, supporting parents of children with special needs, walking out ceremonies, parent/family programs, healthy lifestyles, snacks programs for preschool, music and movement program, Baby's Cupboard, kids' radio show, sewing for mothers/young grandmothers, snowshoe making, traditional cooking and sewing, and much more.

B. Support to Childcare Centres in the Nine Cree Communities

- In 2019-2020, we continued to support the nine existing child and family services centres' management teams as well as local boards of directors, and we facilitated training sessions for a number of them as well. We assisted local boards in the supervision of the operations of their childcare programs and services.
- We provided technical and professional support to all directors and staff members of the centres involved in childcare and Head Start programs, including on matters dealing with legal aspects, building maintenance and repairs, material, human and financial resources, training, educational activity programs, promotion, general co-ordination of the centres and assistance in problem-solving.
- We reviewed and updated childcare information from various sources (governments, associations, agencies) and distributed relevant documents and information to childcare centres.
- We developed new tools and systems to assist the directors in the supervision of all programs and services.

- We monitored regular maintenance needs and services for our sixteen childcare facilities to ensure that they function to their best capacity.
- Our Cree Nation Government Regional Department hosted two Regional Childcare Forums for all childcare staff in Eeyou Istchee. The main goal of the Forum was to bring together all staff members of the Childcare Centres and Head Start programs from each of the nine Cree communities.

The Forums were designed with a view to furthering professional development and learning for all personnel of the childcare centres. Workshops were provided by a variety of professionals in all areas of childcare operations, child development, management of facilities, and other topics of interest to participants.

The Forums also offered an opportunity for our childcare personnel to interact and share ideas with other professionals in their field of work. Some departments even seized this chance to work together on certain planning tools and materials.

Lastly, the forums also celebrated achievements by providing an evening banquet to honour childcare employees who reached ten or more years of commitment to the childcare profession.

C. Accessibility and Affordability of Child and Family Services

- At the end of fiscal year 2019-2020, there were 1,208 subsidized childcare spaces available in the nine communities. Free spaces were also available to children whose parents or guardians received social assistance benefits and/or were recipients under the income security program. Each childcare centre also provided two spaces for children covered through Youth Protection services.
- With the Head Start program, families whose children do not attend the childcare centres on a regular basis also benefitted from various services. The Head Start program was designed to meet the needs of low-income families and families with children who have special needs.

D. Training and Development

In order to promote the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of children while incorporating Cree heritage and culture in the programs, it is important for the Department to provide opportunities for training and development for staff members and persons who wish to pursue a career in early childhood development.

Here is an overview of the measures taken in 2019-2020:

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. In addition, numerous



Waswanipi, ENCS Graduation, October 2018 to February 2020



Eastmain, SNE's Graduation, February 2019 to November 2019

graduates of the programs that we sponsor also find employment in the Cree School and Health Board organizations.

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

- Eighteen students from the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi graduated from the CEGEP de St-Félicien's *Educators in Native Childcare Services* (ENCS) training program.
- Ten students from the Cree Nation of Eastmain graduated from CEGEP de St-Félicien's *Special Needs Education – Aboriginal and Inuit Children* training program.

In March 2020, the students in the *Management in Childcare Centres* program completed their 885-hour training curriculum. This new college-level training program consisting of 18 competencies was facilitated over the past two years, with a mix of individual hands-on training in the communities and off-site group academic sessions. The graduation ceremony for the 15 successful graduates of this program was to take place on April 3, 2020, but this has been postponed until the COVID-19 situation is resolved.

Congratulations to all of our graduates who, thanks to their commitment and dedication to the well-being and education of young children, have acquired their diplomas and are now recognized as qualified educators, special needs educators and childcare managers.

The ENCS and Special Needs training programs are still very much in demand throughout Eeyou Istchee, as local needs for trained educators in the communities continue to be high.

Much appreciation goes to Apatisiwin Skills Development, Plan Nord, the Cree Nation Government and CEGEP

de St-Félicien, all of which have been very generous in supporting the delivery of these important training programs in Eeyou Istchee.

We also need to thank the CEGEP instructors, who are making an important contribution by inspiring not only their students, but all childcare workers to become true professionals.

Financial Administration and Bookkeeping

Our very efficient regional finance team continued to travel throughout Eeyou Istchee to provide on-site training and support to all administrative employees in charge of the financial administration of childcare centres. Team members also continued to prepare the financial statements for the year-end audits.

Inspection of Facilities and Programs

In addition to taking part in on-site training with the new process and standards for inspection (facilitated by the Québec Ministry of Family), our Regional Inspection Officers carefully reviewed the operations and facilities within our network of Child and Family Services Centres. They also provided recommendations for changes and improvements as required. These inspections were carried out in 2019-2020 within the centres located in all the communities.

Educational Program

This year has been an exciting one for our educational program.

In June, we provided a Cree Culture and Language training program in Ouje-Bougoumou for 13 of our pedagogical counsellors.

In the fall of 2019, we formed a working group of 2 childcare centre directors, 2 pedagogical counsellors and 2 educators and other professionals to start the revision of our educational program and the development of the Cree cultural and language curriculum.

In the winter of 2019, we launched the Call for Stories – Cree Children's books. We are giving everyone an opportunity to become authors, as we are looking into publishing 7 additional books for infants, toddlers and preschoolers about Traditional Stories and Legends, to add to our existing collection of 13 children's books.

On November 20, Children's Day, we were reminded that children have the right to be respected and to grow up in an environment that allows them to reach their full potential. 2019-2020 marked our third year of participation in Quebec's Early Childhood Week.

Finally, our Regional Pedagogical Advisor continued to visit and to provide necessary training sessions on the educational program for educators within our childcare centres.

Head Start Program

Our Regional Head Start Advisor has been involved in a variety of projects this year and is taking the leadership in the implementation of the Nurturing Colleges program, which is gradually being rolled out to all communities. This program promotes the healthy development of young chil-

dren, with an approach centring on family involvement. Through 9-week cycles of sessions, parents focus on topics such as parent-child bonding, best parenting practices, as well as cognitive and early literacy skills.

Special Needs Program

Our Regional Special Needs Advisor also made regular visits to the childcare centres and supported the special needs educators (SNE) who foster the development of children who have special needs.

This year our goals were to provide workshops on language and behaviour to all SNEs, and also to provide a refresher training for them and the educators on how to fill out the Nipissing screening tools and Ages and Stages Questionnaires.

Our Advisor continued her involvement in the Kate Sharl Foundation, which aims to raise funds to financially support children with special needs in achieving opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach, because of their levels of need and the high cost of specialized equipment.

First Aid and Injury Prevention Courses

In order to ensure that all staff members remain certified in First Aid and CPR, courses with a focus on children were provided to childcare and Head Start educators as well as to parents in each of the communities.

Maintenance of our Facilities

This year, we worked in close collaboration with the Department of Capital Works and Services so that their team would assist us with the maintenance and repair of our sixteen childcare facilities. In addition, we continued to utilize the services of Roch Mandeville and his team, to coordinate maintenance and renovation projects for our childcare centres.

We had minor renovation projects in Mistissini, Ouje-Bougoumou, Wemindji, Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi. There was a total of approximately \$1M invested from the Cree Nation Government maintenance and replacement fund as well as from Service Canada funds.

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 À Mashkúpimâtsit Awash program.

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, part of our funding went to the Food Security Program, which provided emergency food baskets to all families in need of support, including employment insurance recipients, low income families, vulnerable families and families with expecting mothers, young children, etc. Food distribution was coordinated with the help of some schools and some MSDCs.

Out of the successful projects this year, four were geared toward child and family services, and are overseen by partners in our child and family services network.

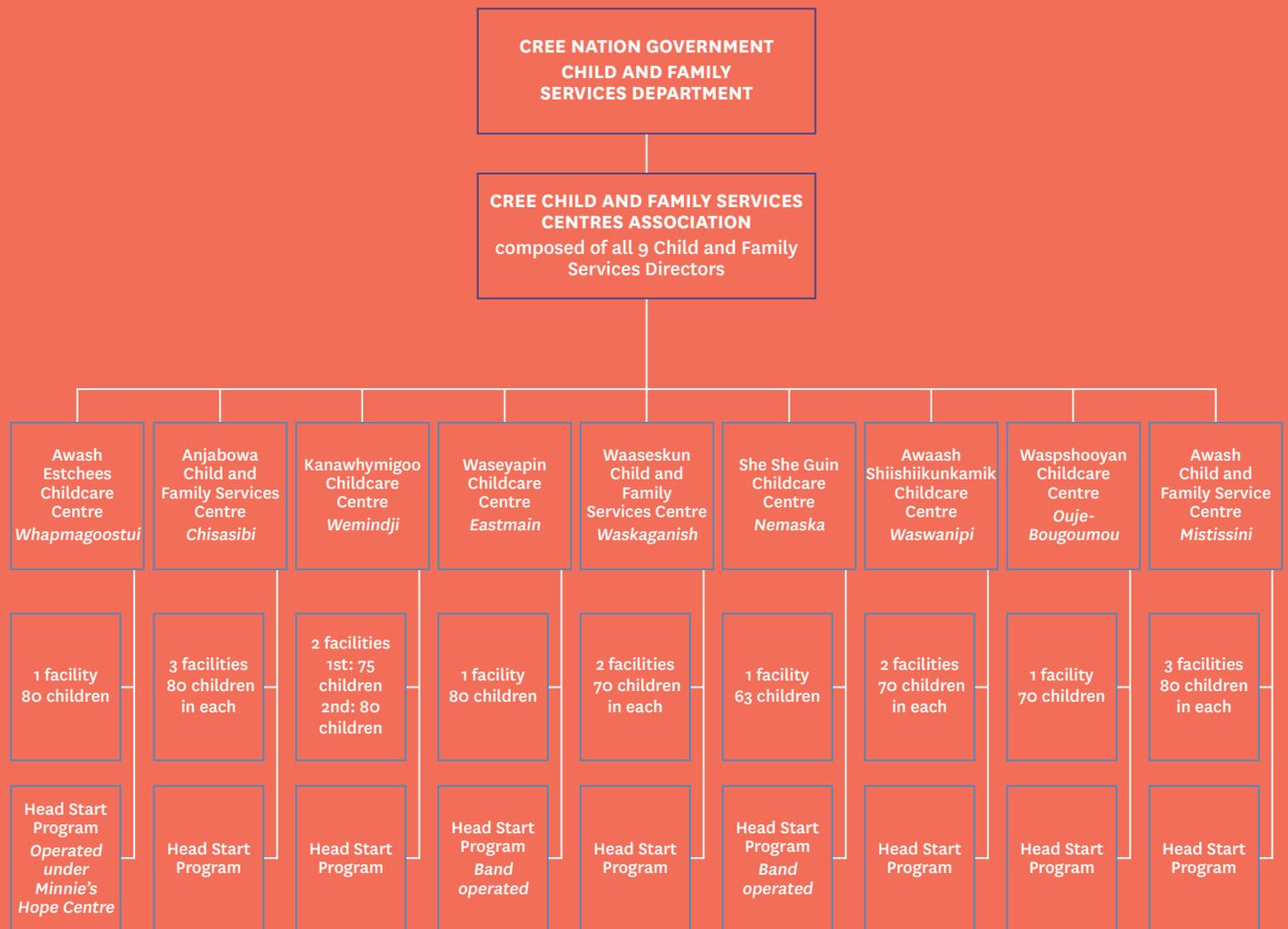
E. Liaison

- We planned and coordinated regional meetings throughout the year with members of the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association. The Association represents a means for local Child and Family Services Centres to cooperate on issues of common interest, including the renewal of the collective agreement in two unionized childcare centres.
- We also provided technical support to the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association in its operations.
- We acted as a liaison with other First Nations and organisations on childcare matters and issues, and ensured concerted and informed actions.
- We continued to network and build strong partnerships between the Cree Nation Government, local Cree Nation Administration offices, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, Community Miyupimaatsiun Centres, the Cree School Board, schools, as well as the Provincial and Federal Governments to provide inclusive, comprehensive and flexible childcare programs for Cree children, including children living with special needs.

F. Our challenges for 2020-2021

1. Continue to support the members of the Child and Family Services Department so that the members of the Department may meet their objectives efficiently.
2. Support and monitor the progress of all early childhood programs.
3. With the support of Capital Works and Services, continue to ensure that all local childcare centres meet the safety standards and quality maintenance of their facilities.
4. Support the implementation of the collective agreements for the unionized childcare centres in Ouje-Bougoumou and Nemaska.
5. Continue to provide training for our local childcare staff as required.
6. Continue to foster a positive relationship with our funding agencies, including the Ministère de la Famille, Health Canada, Service Canada, Avenir d'enfants, etc.
7. With the support of Apatisiwin Skills Development and the Cegep St-Félicien, continue to deliver the following CEGEP training programs for people in our network who require them: Educators in Native Childcare Services, Special Needs Education – Aboriginal and Inuit Children, and Childcare Centres Management.
8. With the new IELCC funding under FNICCI, we will create and update culturally appropriate tools and materials for our childcare centres in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee.
9. We will continue to provide support to the Kate Sharl Foundation, which was created to support Cree children living with special needs in Eeyou Istchee. ●

Our network of services, 2019-2020





JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Donald Nicholls, B.A., LL.B., B.C.L., LL.M

The theme of this year's Annual Report is 'We are Stronger Together'. Now more than ever, as we live in a new reality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our resilience and ability to unite as a Cree Nation to successfully keep our communities safe has proven to be an important characteristic of our People.

Our Department of Justice and Correctional Services places great value on collaborative approaches, where we share information and resources, in order to maximize support and benefit for individuals in our communities. For this reason, our Department continues to develop and nurture relationships with communities, entities and governmental partners. Our Nation is Stronger Together when our entities can join forces to offer support to our community members.

Our Department of Justice and Correctional Services is making great efforts and advances to improve services to those in the corrections system. Our Department is taking action, and the services that we offer in our facilities is a great example of this. In March of this year, we celebrated the inauguration and the start of services of the regional Cree Youth Healing Centre in Mistissini. We know that one of the most impactful ways to change the trend starts with our youth. In collaboration with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, we are very proud to open a facility that provides a place to support our young and keep them on the territory to heal.

Another example is the progress in our transitional Tiny Home Communities project. We believe that our strength lies in our ability to build environments for people to grow, learn and ultimately reintegrate into their community. The project will roll out in phases, initially with three Tiny Home Communities hopefully launching in 2020, again working in collaboration with other entities to offer a holistic approach to healing. Both of these projects are the result of extensive review of best practices and meeting with other similar services which are offered elsewhere in Quebec and Canada. We also consulted the concerned communities to ensure that the programs offered in those facilities would be adapted to our Cree context. Alongside the regional Women's Shelters that are now fully operational in Waskaganish and Waswanipi, these facilities are integral to our continued efforts to offer services to those members in need of support.

Our Corrections team is working together with the Federal and Provincial Governments as well as other Cree

Nation Government Departments and institutions. This team continues to work tirelessly to offer culturally adapted services to offenders with the goal of supporting them to become contributing members of the community. The COVID-19 pandemic created specific concerns with reintegrating Cree individuals back to their communities. We were happy to assist the communities, the health authorities and governments in this regard.

We continue to invest in the development of our dedicated employees so that we can increase the scope and maintain and improve the quality of our services. This year, we created 3 new positions in our Department to further enhance our ability to serve our clients, including a Coordinator of Strategic Management, a Domestic Violence Liaison, and a CAVAC Liaison Officer (sexual violence), each specializing in areas we are working on to improve our collaborative response in the Cree Nation.

With the expansion of the Tiny Home Communities, we will be adding a significant number of personnel to our community based services throughout the next year. We continue to engage Cree summer students and interns in justice, legal or corrections related programs, and we encourage them to pursue these studies for the development of more services in the near future.

The number of criminal cases in the Court system has remained fairly consistent over the past ten years, with an increase of cases in some communities and a decrease in others in the past year. Our commitment to ensuring that accused individuals receive a trial that considers the cultural context is supported by the excellent work of the members of the Community Justice Committees and by our team of writers producing the Gladue reports.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures, we expanded the use of our video conferencing technologies for court hearings in the Cree communities. All of our Justice Facilities are equipped with state of the art video conferencing technologies, which enabled the courts to continue to hear urgent matters from a distance during the lockdown period and prevented the unnecessary deprivation of individuals' rights or liberty. We are currently exploring with the courts the possibility for them to continue to use our video conferencing technologies as they resume all hearings and while the threat of COVID-19 is still present, and social distancing measures remain in place, in our communities.



Youth Healing Centre Inauguration in Mistissini

In the past year, the Community Justice Committees were given an opportunity to expand through an agreement with the government the types of cases and offences they can hear and address locally. This expansion of authority to hear more types of cases and offences will contribute to the creation of community-based solutions to address these cases and offences and will allow the integration of Cree values and ways into more decisions affecting Cree individuals.

With the imminent graduation of our next class of CICR (conflict resolution) participants, conflict resolution skills will be further developed and entrenched within our communities. We have been fortunate to have one of the best trainers in conflict resolution, bringing with her a vast experience of involvement in thousands of cases spanning over more than 40 years in the field of conflict resolutions.

Our Community Programming and Prevention programs form part of the valuable frontline services that we provide. Throughout the year, we have offered a variety of programs aimed at high-risk individuals, and we continue to invest in our youth through the delivery of programs such as Stop Now And Plan (SNAP) and Youth Enrichment Services (YES), as well as organizing initiatives such as WE Days, Challenge Days, and Take Action Camps amongst others.

Our collaboration with the Provincial Government is also manifested through the Cree-Quebec Judicial Advisory Committee, which comprises equal representation from the Cree Nation Government and Quebec. This year the Committee welcomed three new Cree members, Deputy Chief

Samson Weistche, Irene Bosum and Flora Blacksmith. Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull remains on the Committee for the duration of her term as Deputy Grand Chief, and the mandate of Deputy Chief Daisy House was renewed for another 3-year term. The Committee also welcomed three new Quebec members, Alain Bellefeuille, from the Quebec Department of Justice, Richard Coleman, from the Department of Public Security, and Josée Couture, from the Secretariat of Indigenous Affairs. The chairmanship of the Committee is assumed on an alternating basis, between a Cree and a Quebec representative, for a period of two years. Josiane Gendron from the Quebec Ministry of Public Security is the current Chairperson until the end of October 2020.

Throughout the year, our Department participated in several important testimonies and conferences in Quebec to provide expertise and understanding of our context, as well as to learn more about practices from other places that could be beneficial for Eeyou Istchee. In particular, we testified before the Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors of the Quebec National Assembly and we appeared before an Expert Committee on Support to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. The dialogue with these Committees was constructive and allowed us to share in a meaningful way. It also allowed us to recommend concrete solutions to issues and to highlight measures, including international measures adopted by the United Nations, that can be implemented here and that may have a significant impact, for example, in reducing exploitation of Indigenous children.



We Day 2019 in Montreal

The COVID-19 pandemic and the enforcement of emergency measures was a testament to our ability to unite as a Nation, and to react quickly and adapt. One of our key Cree values is to create communities of people around issues of importance for the Crees. As a Nation we want to take part in key decisions affecting us, and we are inclusive and respectful of everyone's contributions. We were able to maintain essential services throughout this period of COVID-19 by utilizing technology and putting in place measures to maintain the health of clients and staff. Again, our reaction and resilience in the face of global issues illustrated the importance of our collaboration in the successful achievement of any initiatives.

As we continue to develop services and build resources to support the Cree Nation, I am convinced that we will see the results of our efforts. As a Nation, we have the strength, resilience and ability to achieve our objectives. This continuing collaboration beyond COVID-19 amongst entities is important to our nation building capacity, as we truly are stronger together.

Youth Healing Centre in Mistissini



OUR PEOPLE

The strength of a Nation is directly proportional to what we invest in our people, so we continue to build capacity in our employees regionally and locally to create a foundation of services and infrastructure in justice and corrections. Together, our staff and organizations can provide more comprehensive and inclusive support to Cree people coming into contact with the systems of justice and corrections.

Providing broader support is a group of

22

Regional Staff

Which includes →

- Director
- Coordinators
- Psychologist
- CAVAC Officers
- Administrators
- Native Parajudicial Workers
- Court Liaison Officers
- Specialists
- And other positions

Each Justice Building is home to a core group of

49

Local Staff

Which includes →

- Receptionists
- Community Reintegration Officers
- Prevention Program Officers
- Community Justice Officers
- Primary Youth Workers
- Prevention Program Assistants

This year, we have also created

7

New Positions

Which includes →

- Translators
- Domestic Violence Liaison
- CAVAC Liaison Officer
- Fund Administrator
- Coordinator Strategic Management
- Coordinator of Knowledge Mobilization

All together, our department offers its services through our

78 

Department Employees

Skills Development

Our staff complements their skills with specialized instruction related to specific duties and overall services to the Cree communities. We open up the majority of our trainings to other Cree departments and entities we work collaboratively with.



First Aid CPR

Basic First Aid training for our staff to be prepared in emergency situations.



Trauma of Inner Child

Understanding childhood trauma when working with children and families.



Compassionate Self-Care Training

Explains the importance of self-care, so our staff can continue providing quality service.



Mental Health First Aid

Providing the understanding and tools to deal with moments of crisis.



Self-Injury Workshop

A comprehensive guide to understanding self-harm and how to respond.



SNAP Parents

How to facilitate and provide SNAP services for parents that may need support.

Celebrating 10 Years of Service



Anna Neeposh



Joseph Neeposh



Louise Coonishish

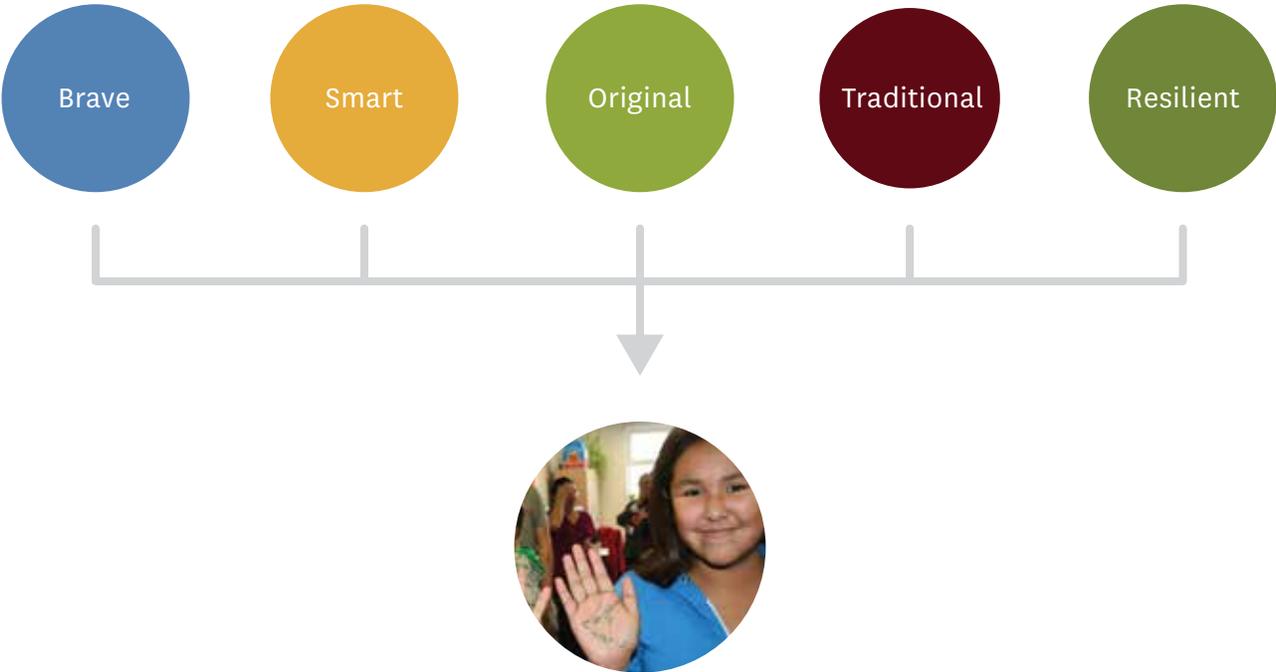


Nelson Mianscum

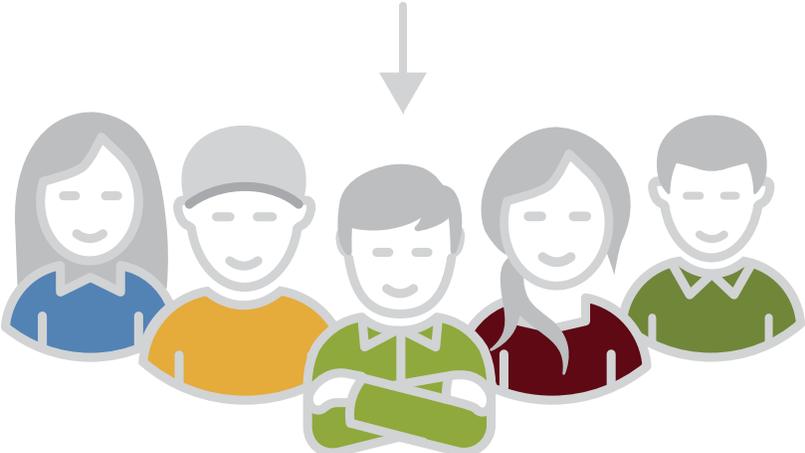
PREVENTION PROGRAMS

One of the key elements of our prevention programs is the ability to engage with children and youth at an early stage. The prevention program also works with adults and provides a number of ways to engage and support them throughout their self-examination of choices. We believe that as a part of a community wishing to be safer and stronger, we need to do our part.

Our Cree Youth



We **work together** with a variety of partners and run a range of prevention programs in **schools** and in the **communities**.

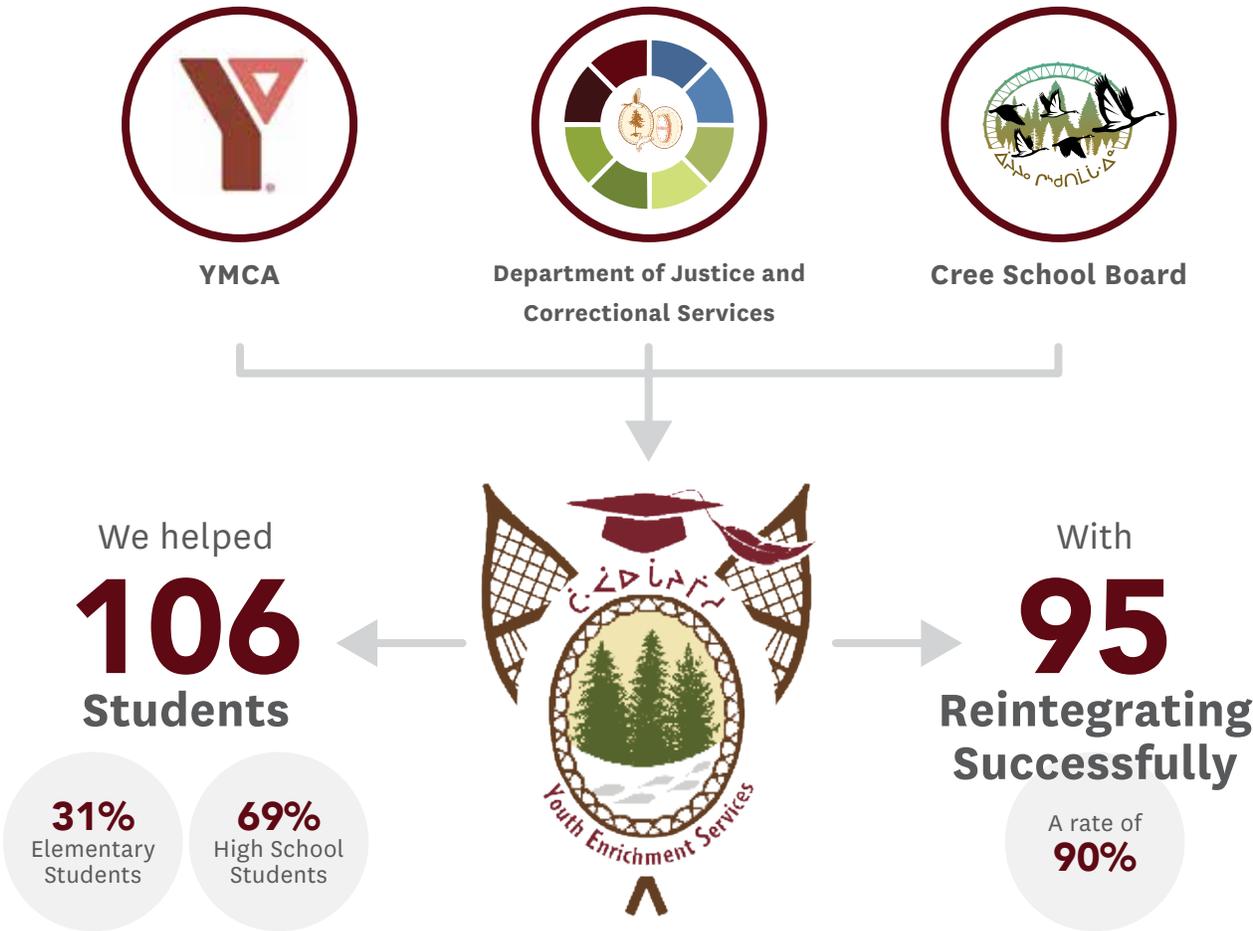


It is through these **programs** we can **engage, teach, coach** or **mentor** a youth at risk of being on an unhealthy path in their life.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Youth Enrichment Services

Our Youth Enrichment Services (YES) provides students who are referred by the schools or parents with a place to reflect on their attitude towards school, learn ways to improve their self confidence and catch up on schoolwork.



Referred students participate in **workshops** such as:

-  **Anti-Bullying**
-  **Reflection Sessions**
-  **Self-Esteem**
-  **Motivation**
-  **Art Therapy**
-  **Counselling**

Other Prevention Initiatives

In addition to the two larger programs that we have established throughout Eeyou Istchee, we support a variety of initiatives that aim at creating awareness about important issues.



26
Kids



63
Classes



25
Students



50
Students



434
Participants



170
Visitors

Programs of 2019-20



CREE JUSTICE FUNDS

The funds are about engaging the Cree entities and communities to form a stronger collaboration effort on issues impacting the Cree Nation. The Justice Funds build new relationships with shared objectives of having healthier and safer Cree communities.

The 3 Cree Justice Funds



EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES

Building upon the local connections our staff have in the communities they live and work, we created a fund to allow them to develop local initiatives with partners to achieve similar objectives to the Cree Justice Funds – healthier and safer Cree communities. The program was developed to encourage people to go beyond normal duties, and to do that extra effort that could make a significant impact in the lives of their clients.

Our employees initiated **10** programs with **+310** Participants

As the **employees** are **local** and so are the **clientele**, the approach will build upon the **values** of that community, with programs like:



Rock Your Gloves

Connecting with Your Identity



Beading with Youth

Building Relationships with At-Risk Youth



Learning to Cook

Teaching Self-sufficiency and Self-care



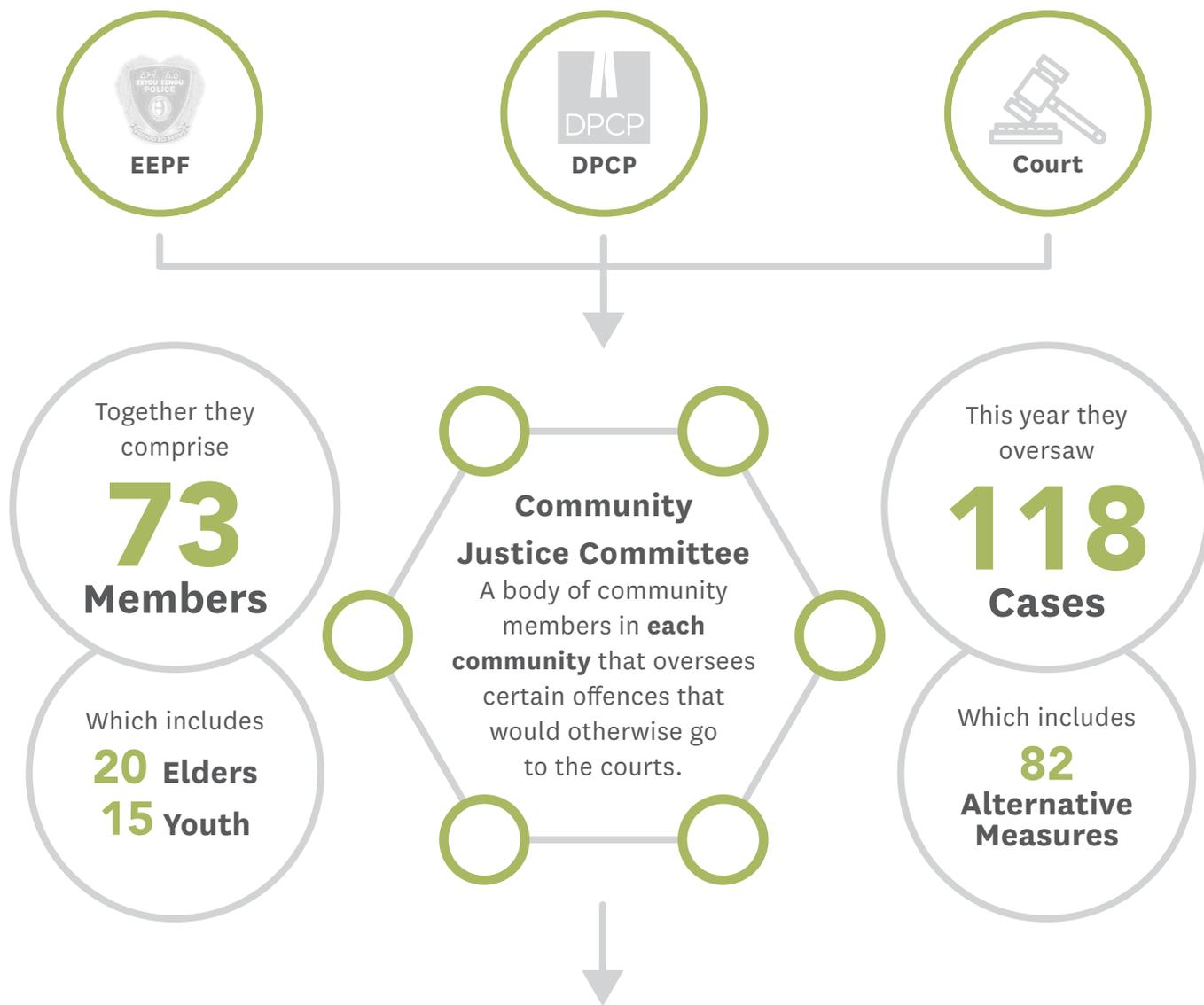
Together for Literacy

Essential Skills for Employability



COMMUNITY JUSTICE COMMITTEES

One of the key justice initiatives in a Cree community is the Community Justice Committee. A number of cases are redirected to these bodies each year to allow for the community to have a voice in how harm is addressed. We are appreciative of the many community members who volunteer their time to be an important part of our community based justice systems.



Community Remedy and Process for Healing

They apply community values and principles and seek to address the needs and interests of the individuals involved and the community as a whole through:

Community Hours



Land-Based Programs



Gladue Writing



Harm Reparation



Community Programming

In addition to overseeing certain offences, Community Justice Committees also organize programs that are aimed at Cree individuals who are at higher risk of becoming involved with the justice system.

This year CJs administered **43** programs with **+490** Participants

By collaborating with **local communities**, we can offer a variety of programs to our clients, such as:



Arts & Crafts Program



Crime Prevention Week



Relationship Workshop



Parka Making Program



Land Based Programs



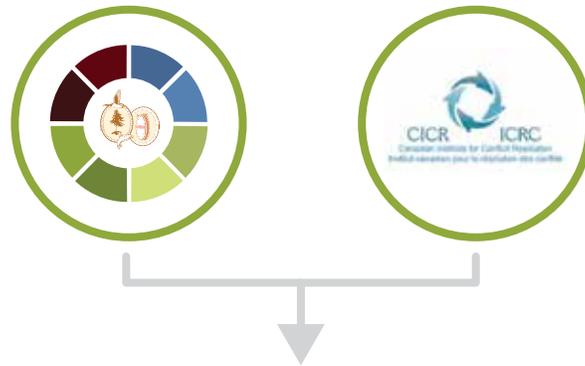
Goosebreak for Couples

Programs 2019-20



CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM

All of our staff begins their training with our signature Cree CICR program. The criterias to take part of this experiential learning journey are to be fully available and committed, open to change and transformation and willing to participate in a learning community.



To complete the training it takes:

140
Hours

4
Weeks

To this day, we have had **106** Graduates

Participants from **14** different Organizations



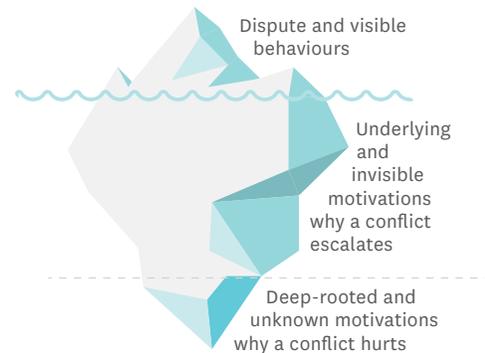
The majority of our staff are trained in **Cree third party neutral training** provided by **CICR** in order for our team to incorporate their **expertise** in a conflict situation.

Conflict Resolution Tools

All of the skills acquired during the training are geared towards self awareness and developing conflict resolution capacities while enabling individuals to intervene in conflict resolution processes as third party neutral. Some of the topics discussed are conflict coaching, facilitation, mediation, community dialogue, compassionate communication, negotiation and conflict management styles, etc.

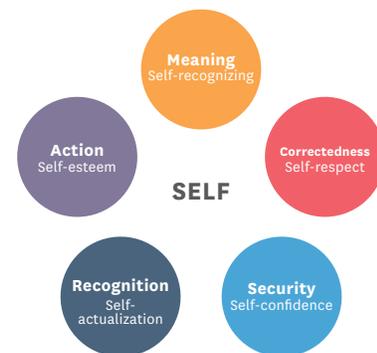
Layers of Conflict

This section provides a deeper understanding of the various layers and complexities of a conflict. By using an iceberg as an analogy, participants have the opportunity to visually explore the visible, invisible and unknown factors influencing a conflict.



Human Identity Needs

Long lasting solutions can be discovered by increasing our awareness of the complexity of the “self” and our (unmet) human identity needs intertwined within the historical context.



Source: Cree CICR Manual and Vern Redekop

Training 2019-20



IMAGES OF OUR DEPARTMENT

Our department has been involved in a variety of initiatives, programs, and events. These next pages are dedicated to giving a glimpse into our involvement throughout Eeyou Istchee.



Annual Employee Gathering



Waskaganish Together for Literacy



Marc Mero, Champions of Choices Tour



Youth Healing Centre, Mistissini



Cree Justice Funds Initiative, Waskaganish



Youth Beading Program, Chisasibi



We Day, Montreal



Credit to Will Nicholls



Justice Committee Initiative, Whapmagoostui



Department participation in community general assembly

CREE CAVAC SERVICES

Prior to the establishment of the Cree CAVAC offices, victims and witnesses did not have a support network to assist them through a difficult process and time. The strength of our team is their passion for the work, and to make a contribution that matters in the lives of those who have been impacted by criminal acts. The Cree team approach is about community and inclusiveness, and about the ability to actively listen to the stories of people who have been traumatized.



Services For

Victims of Crime



Relatives of Victim



Witnesses of Crime



Community Members



4

Cree CAVAC
Offices in
Eeyou Istchee

→

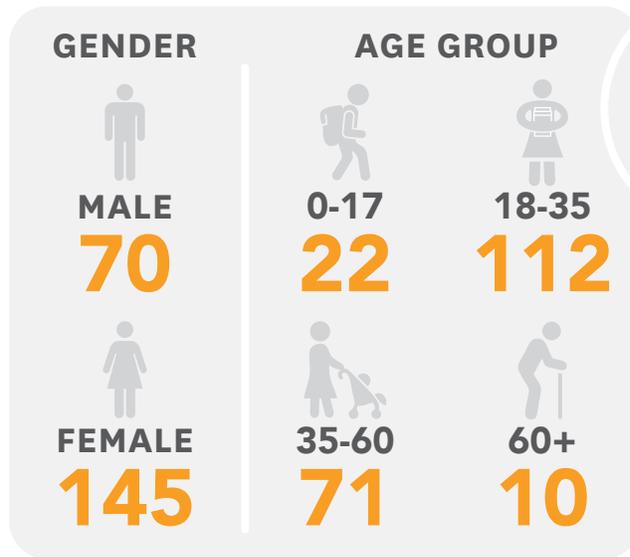
1. Cree Northern CAVAC
2. Cree Central CAVAC
3. Cree Southern CAVAC
4. CAVAC Liaison Office

A Caring Team

There is a healing in knowing that you are not alone, and that your hurt is acknowledged and recognized in the system. From the beginning of the process to the end, the Cree CAVAC Team is there to help people through it all because they care.

118 visits made to **Cree communities** outside of their court date visits.

We assisted a total of **215** clients



62% of our clients were **youth**.

This year we created **2** positions

- CAVAC Liaison Officer
- Domestic Violence Liaison

CAVAC Content for Clients



COURT

The courts, including the Court of Quebec, travel to Eeyou Istchee and provide services for the enforcement of Cree laws, as well as federal and provincial laws. All courts are hosted in our Justice Buildings in each community.

Criminal Court and Cree Laws

120
Days



944
Criminal
Offence
Cases

Criminal Offences may include offences under the Criminal Code and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.



384
Cree
Law
Cases

Community Law offences include files for offences related to alcohol, curfew, and misdemeanours.

Youth Protection

55
Days



36
Youth
Offender
Cases

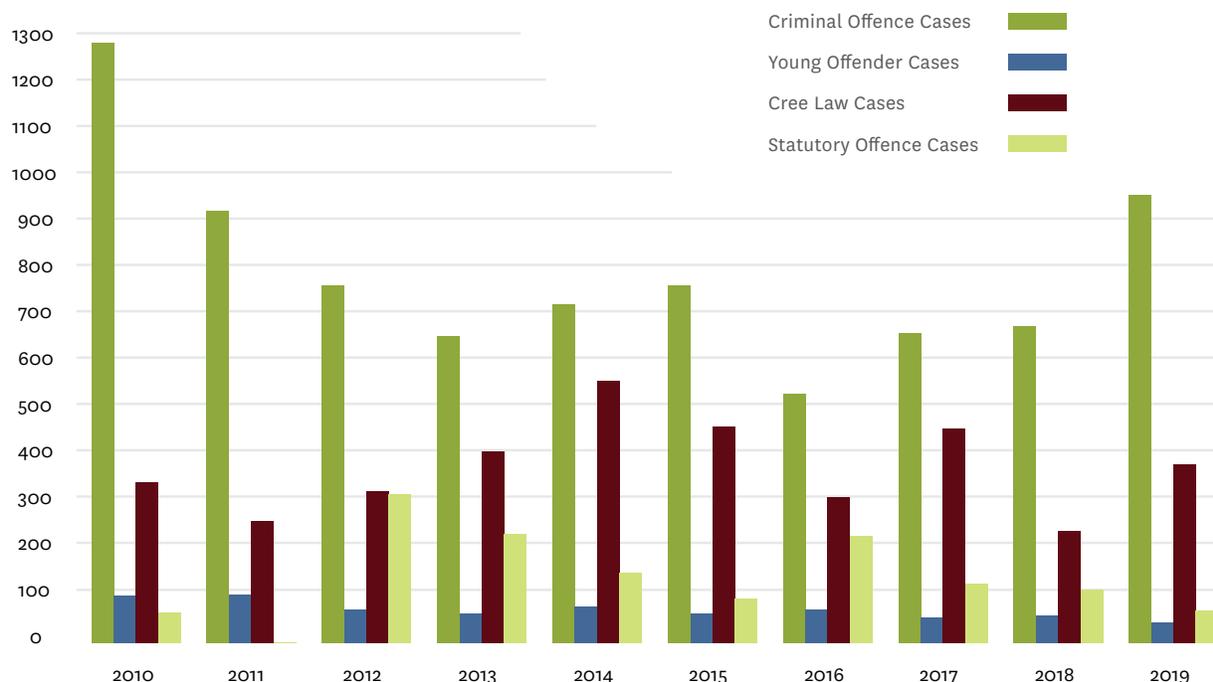
Young Offenders offences include legal proceedings instituted under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

Our **Facilities** are also able to host:



1. Superior Court of Quebec
2. By-Law Courts
3. Justice Committee Cases
4. Emergency Bail Hearings
5. Arbitration Hearings

Yearly Evolution of Number of Cases by Court Type



Throughout the court processes we have a team ready to work with you

- Coordinator of Justice
- Court Liaison Officers
- Community Justice Officers
- Native Para-Judicial Workers
- Justice Committee Members
- Cree CAVAC Workers
- Justice Administrators
- Receptionist

Our Court Facilities



IMAGES OF OUR DEPARTMENT

Our department has been involved in a variety of initiatives, programs, and events. These next pages are dedicated to giving a glimpse into our involvement throughout Eeyou Istchee.



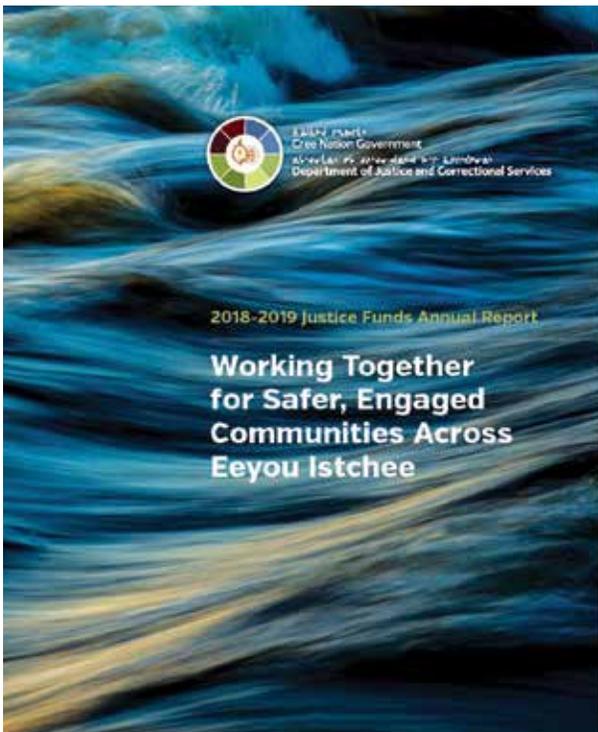
Justice Committee Initiative, Chisasibi



Youth Healing Centre, Mistissini



Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors



Cree Justice Funds Annual Report



Department participation in community general assembly

VIDEOS WE HAVE PRODUCED

As a part of our commitment to reach as many people as possible with information and affirming messages, we have developed diverse platforms of communicating with the public.



“You are your Child’s first role model.”

Parents as Role Models Awareness



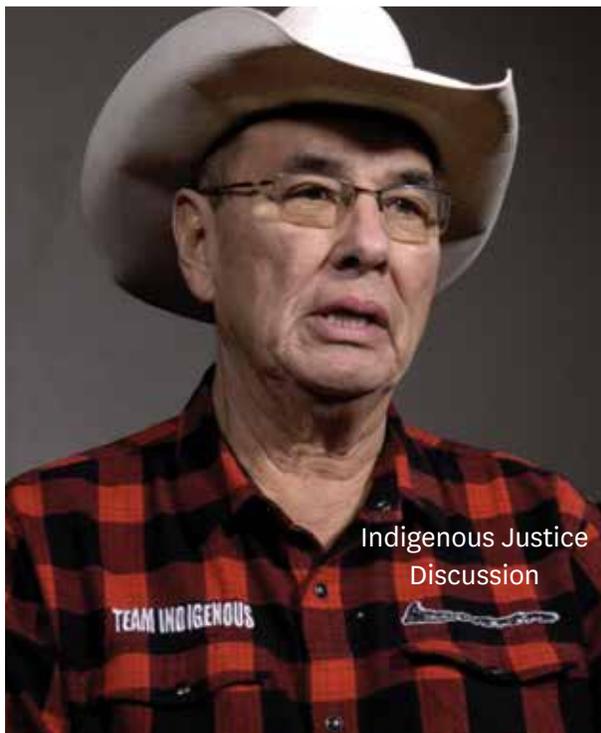
“Don’t lose focus of what’s important in life.”

Losing Focus Awareness



What is a **Gladue Report?**

Gladue Report Informational Series



Indigenous Justice Discussion

Dr. Wilton Littlechild Interview.

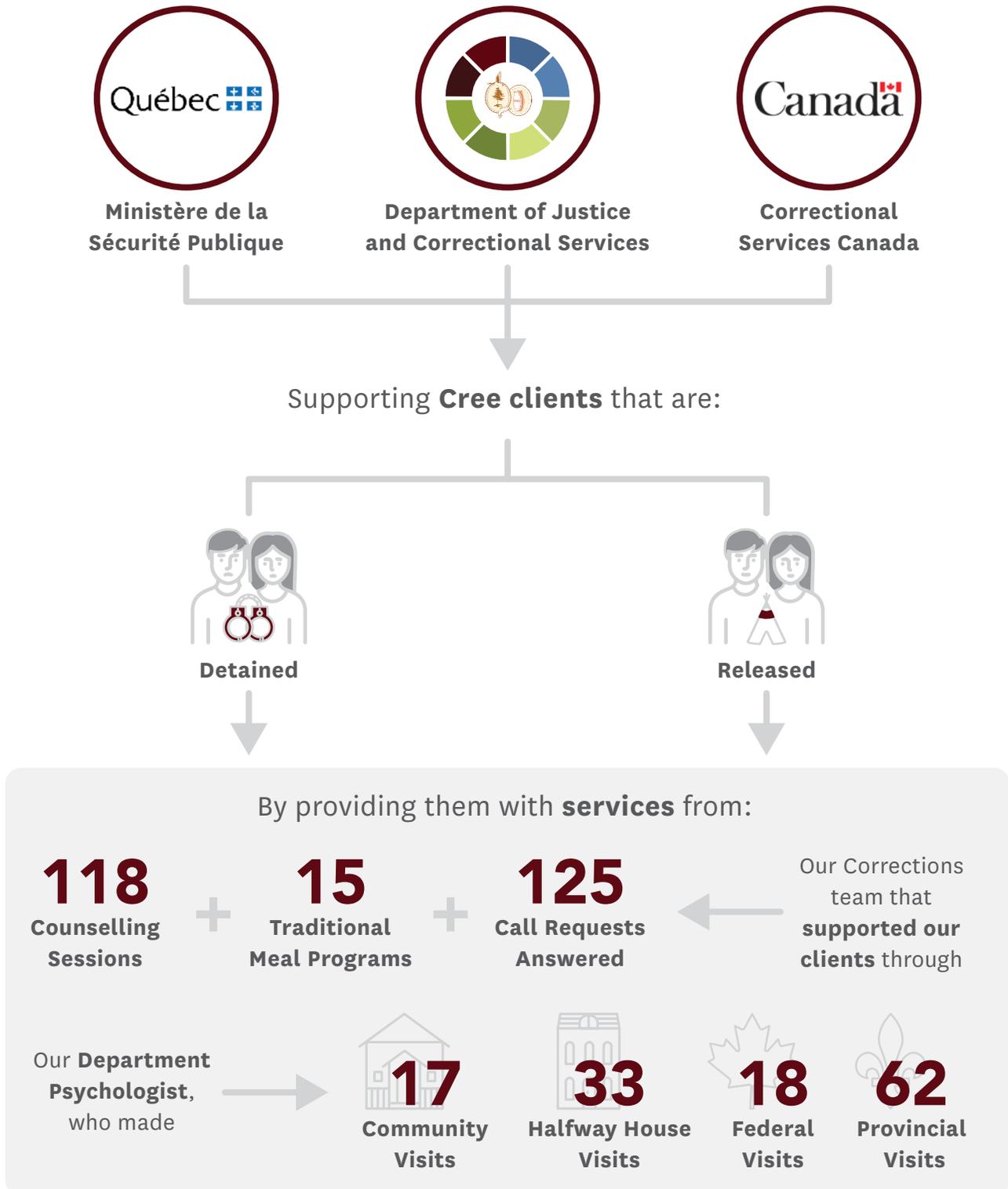


“Every child deserves a safe home.”

Domestic Violence Awareness (Featured in the 2020 Hudson Film Festival)

CORRECTIONS & REINTEGRATION WORK

The Corrections team works collaboratively with provincial and federal detention institutions, Cree communities and organizations, and other Cree Nation Government Departments. Our philosophy on corrections is about providing support and environments to facilitate change in individuals, help communities heal, and prevent harm from re-occurring.



C.R.E.E. SUPPORT SERVICES

The C.R.E.E. Program addresses the absence of effective community and land-based rehabilitation programming outside the corrections system by providing participants with the tools, guidance and support needed to lead productive lives.



Providing employment and training opportunities for clients in **3 phases**:



4,908
Employment hours this year

Through work placements, we are proactively helping clients **break the cycle** of reoffending by reintegrating them in **their community**. With programs like these we will be continuously fostering an **equitable, just, and ever strong Cree Nation**.

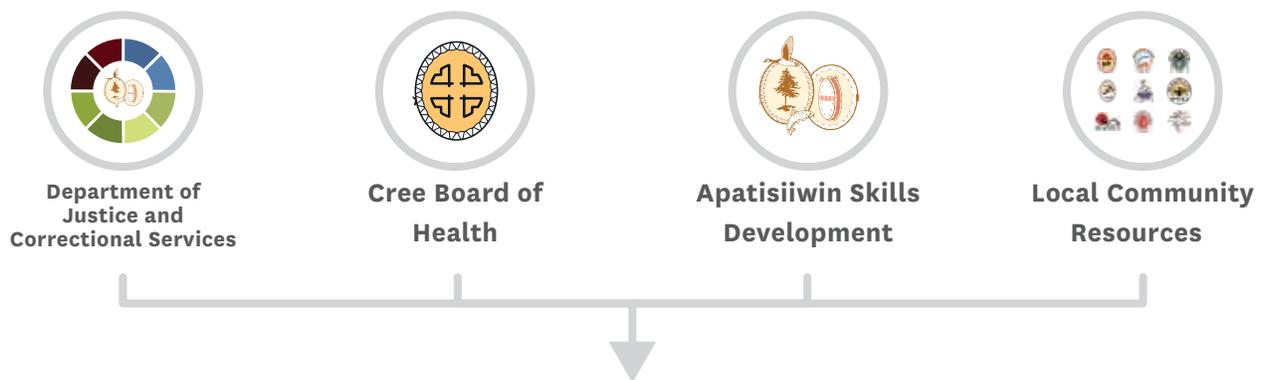
COMMUNITY TRANSITIONAL CENTRES

To further build upon services and programming, this year the Department will start building Tiny Home Communities in the Cree Nation. It will provide a transitional environment with the collaboration of various stakeholders.

The services will be given to **Cree clients** that are

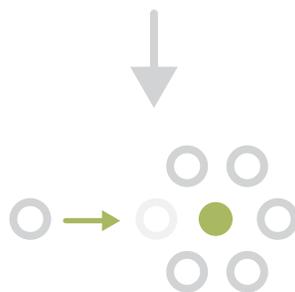


Through our various **partners**



Offering a variety of **services** such as:

- Career counseling
- Life-skills development
- C.R.E.E. Program
- Land-Based programs
- Addictions program
- Anger management
- Psychosocial counselling
- Mindfulness programs

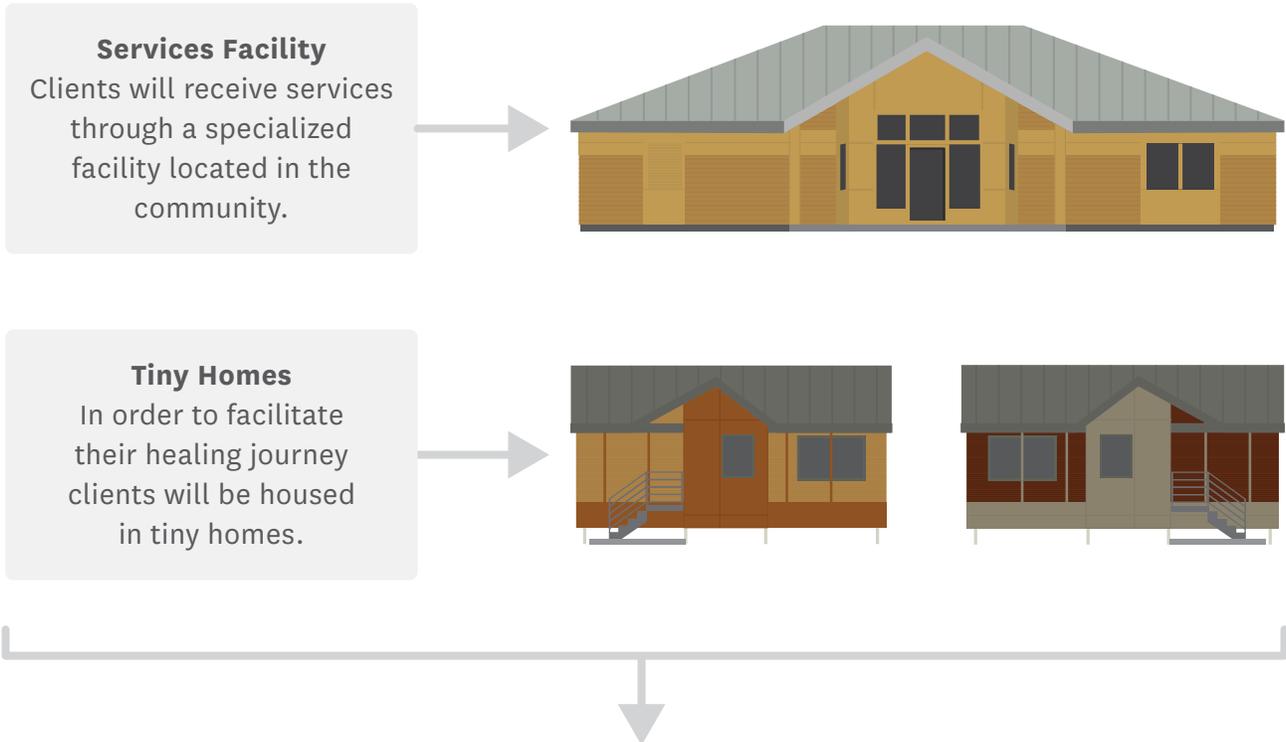


Reintegration back into Community

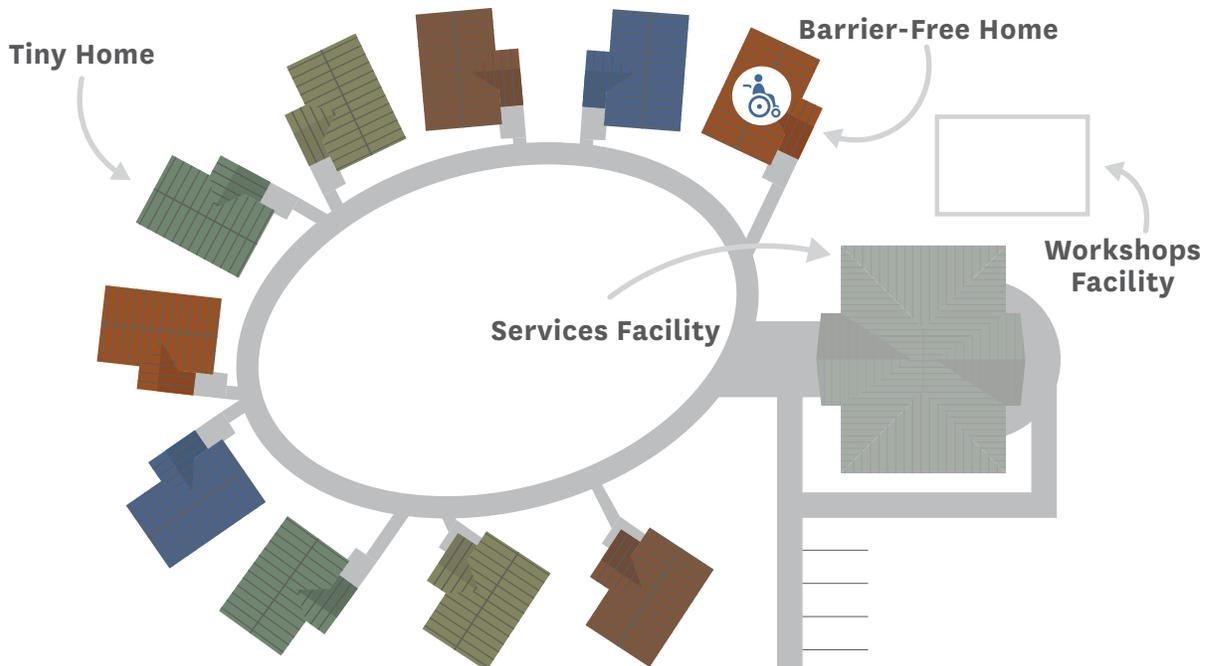
By working with various partners and by balancing traditional Cree cultural approaches with contemporary best practices, we are helping our people in their healing.

Tiny Home Community

We believe our strength will be in how we build environments that allow people to keep growing and learning.



Tiny Home Community Layout



GLADUE REPORTS

The Cree Gladue report writing process is administered by the Cree Nation itself. This year, we will expand upon the services offered to add Gladue letters into the process. These letters are like the reports but less comprehensive as a result of the level of offence they may address.

What is a Gladue Report?

It provides the social, historical, and **cultural background** of the offender

It provides a **broader perspective** than what would be addressed in court

Incarceration could therefore be reduced for an **Indigenous offender**

A Gladue Report must be written by a skilled and trained **Gladue Writer**

A Gladue Report takes

40-60

Hours to Complete

Which includes

1. Research
2. Interviews
3. Writing
4. Presentations

Our department trains **new Gladue report writers** each year in the **Cree communities** and hosts an international **human rights** student intern from **McGill Faculty of Law**.

Reports Written



We administered

39

Gladue Reports

New Cree Writers



This year we added

16

New Writers

DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATION

In the past year, the Department has been asked to be a part of some important processes in Quebec. Our goal in participating is to provide our expertise and understanding on subjects that impact our communities while also gaining further knowledge of processes in other regions of the world that might have beneficial impacts in Eeyou Istchee.

This year, **our department** had the opportunity to be part of the following **committees and events**:



Select Committee of the National Assembly

We testified on the sexual violence towards Indigenous children and youth. We promoted values and initiatives that should be adopted by Quebec publicly and privately to reduce vulnerability and human trafficking of Indigenous children.



Expert Committee on Conjugal Violence

We appeared before an Expert Committee on Support to Victims of Sexual Assault and Conjugal Violence to address the need of frontline services and workers in Quebec to be more responsive to the cases involving Indigenous women and children.



CCSA Substance Issue Conference

We also joined CCSA in the fall at their Substance Issue conference recognizing the need for more information about addictions and substance use to be mobilized effectively in some decision making in the Cree Nation to reduce dependencies.



12th National Criminal Justice Symposium 2020 : Alternatives to Short-Term Custody

It was held in Montreal, and supported by the Department of Justice Canada and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. It is an opportunity for leaders in justice to discuss candidly perspectives and solutions for a more accessible and accountably criminal justice system.

FACILITIES

This year, in collaboration with the Cree Health Board, we officially opened the regional Youth Healing Centre in Mistissini. The development of this facility was indicative of what could be accomplished with good people and planning together.

Youth Healing Centre



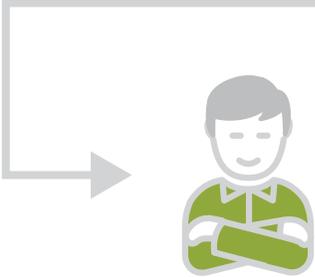
This was the result of an **ambitious** and **collaborative** effort with our partner the **Cree Board of Health**.



Our department paid for the **construction** of and now the Cree Health Board will **lease** the facility from us.

Officially Opened
March 6, 2020

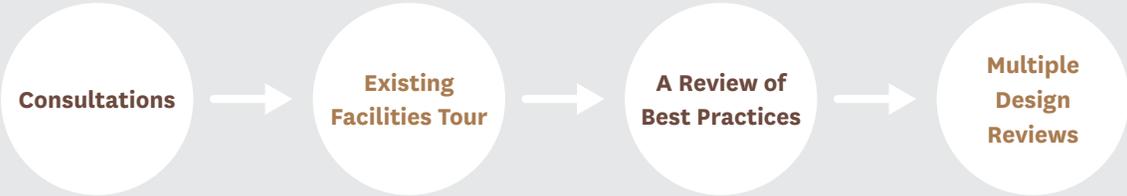
Cree Health Board will provide for **staffing** and **operations** for the facility for the **next 20 years**.



The **Youth Healing Centre** will significantly expand what can be offered for services for **Cree youth** and prioritizes keeping them in the territory. It was an example of how Cree organizations could **work together** to achieve something greater.

Development Process

The extensive process for the development of the Youth Healing Centre started several years ago, involved a series of partners, and a variety of processes, like:



COVID-19 MEASURES

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, our department put various measures in place in order to ensure the safety and health of our clients, staff, and communities.



COURT ADJUSTMENTS

Hearings are held via video-conference, new cleaning and safety measures were instituted.

CASE DIVERSION

Lesser crimes are deferred to reduce the need for court dates.

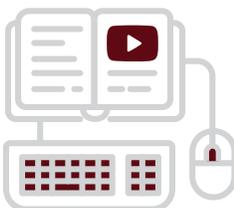
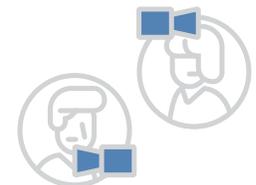


OFFICE ADJUSTMENTS

Office spaces respect the 2-meter distance, where possible, as were meeting rooms and common areas.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

Video conferencing is used as much as possible to limit the potential spread of the virus.



ONLINE TRAINING

In order to avoid travel, all training was moved to online platforms.

EVENT CANCELLATIONS

Events were cancelled or postponed to limit the potential spread of the virus.



LEGISLATION & COURT DECISIONS



Indigenous Languages

An Act respecting Indigenous languages (Bill C-91) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The main purpose of this Act is to reclaim, revitalize, strengthen and maintain Indigenous languages in Canada. The Cree Nation Government adopted its own Act respecting the Cree language of Eeyou Istchee (Bill 1), which became effective on September 17, 2019.



Cannabis Regulation

In October 2019, the Government of Canada introduced regulation related to cannabis edibles for the Canadian market. The magnitude of products has increased, and while in other areas products resembling candies were introduced, Quebec did not allow such products in the Province as they are often confusing to children.



Record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis

The Government of Canada adopted various legislative amendments in 2019 (Bill C-93) to enable individuals who were convicted for possession of cannabis before October 17, 2018 to request a record suspension (pardon) without having to wait the usual delay and without having to pay a fee.



Québec legislation on laicity

An Act respecting the laicity of the State (Bill 21) came into force on June 16, 2019. Among other things, this Act prohibits certain persons in positions of authority, including teachers, from wearing religious symbols while exercising their functions. However, these restrictions do not apply to the personnel of the Cree School Board or the Cree Health Board.



Criminal Justice System

An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Bill C-75) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. Bill C-75 amends many aspects of criminal law and criminal procedure. Among other things, it provides better protection for victims of domestic violence; it requires that courts take special consideration of the circumstances of an accused Indigenous person during bail hearings; and it facilitates appearance by audioconference or videoconference. Bill C-75 also amends the Youth Criminal Justice Act, including to encourage the use of extrajudicial measures.



Correctional Service

Amendments to the federal Corrections and Conditional Release Act (Bill C-83) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. These amendments include an obligation for Canada's Correctional Service to consider systemic and background factors unique to Indigenous offenders in the making of all their decisions regarding an Indigenous person.



Gun Control

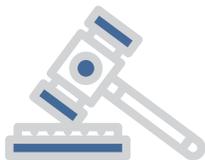
In May 2020, the Government of Canada ordered a ban on a number of assault-style firearms, effective immediately. Gun owners will therefore no longer be allowed to sell, transport, import or use these kinds of weapons in Canada. They will however benefit from an amnesty period (until April 2022) to dispose of the prohibited firearms. Indigenous hunters will be allowed to use these firearms to hunt during the amnesty period.



Indigenous Child Welfare

An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (Bill C-92) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The main purpose of this Act is to overhaul Indigenous child welfare services, referred to as youth protection services in Quebec, and enable Indigenous groups to exercise legislative authority on these matters and to enter into implementation arrangements with other levels of government. For the Crees, youth protection is already under the jurisdiction of the Cree Health Board, an institution of Cree self-governance established under the JBNQA Treaty.

Quebec is legally challenging this federal Act in Court, on the basis that Canada does not have constitutional power over youth protection matters.



Sentencing

This year, the Court of Québec rendered a sentencing judgment that supported the need to explore possibilities for Cree offenders to be detained closer to their community, consistent with promises made by Canada and Quebec in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Being detained closer to home, Cree offenders could benefit from the healing power of the land and the support of their family and community.

In the meantime, Cree offenders who are committed to provincial detention should be regrouped at the newly built detention facility in Amos. This would make it easier for our Justice Department to provide them access to rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Cree. In this sentencing judgment, the Court directed Cree offenders to report to their local Community Justice Committee after their detention so they could receive guidance from the Committee for their probation and community reintegration.

CLOSING MESSAGE

We look forward to continuing to invest in our efforts to build our capacity and to make progress in the development of a Cree legal and corrections system. We will remain steadfast in working together to increase community safety and well-being and in our contribution to the objective of changing the national trend of over-representation of Indigenous victims and offenders in the justice and correctional systems. We are committed to using the land and our own people as a part of the key elements in a solution.

Our Department will continue to create opportunities for dialogue and development of community members of all

ages and to seek innovative ways to keep them informed on the work that we do, and how they can access opportunities to heal, learn and thrive.

We will actively engage and offer services to our youth and we believe that our focus in this area will show great rewards for the next generations of healthy, contributing members in our communities.

We will nurture our partnerships and invest in collaborative projects in our belief that together, we can achieve our goals and create opportunities for a safer, healthier and stronger Cree Nation for all. ●





SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Rodney Mark

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I address the Cree Nation in this annual report. I am sitting here overlooking Mistissini lake, where there is a real sense of peace and calmness, while listening to “See you again” by Wiz khalifa ft. Charlie Puth. My team, like others in Eeyou Istchee, have adapted to working from home from home with occasional visits to the office. The majority of work, including touching base, was done through video or conference calls. I am very thankful to my team, who have kept going despite the crisis we all are facing since the beginning of March. Usually, during this time of the year there is a mad rush of meetings and year-end matters to wrap up, however, how our work normally is carried out came to a halt with the COVID-19 measures and the necessary suspension of activities.

Moving forward, all entities that we have collaborated with continue to prioritize our Cree Culture, Education, and Health, as these are important to the Leadership of the Cree Health Board, Cree School Board and the Cree Nation Government.

For your review you will find our activities, events and funding programs, which we administered over the past year in partnership with participating communities and different entities. As you will see, there are a wide variety of programs initiated by communities that range from sport, promotion of cultural programs, awareness of the importance of health within our communities, and most importantly engaging youth in educational activities. We wish to express our thanks to all who have championed our local projects and programs, which they initiated and implemented. As a department, working with communities is a priority in addressing the social well being our Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF OUR DEPARTMENT

The Social and Cultural Development Department plays a key role in working with Cree communities and other entities throughout Eeyou Istchee by providing important platforms to enhance Social and Cultural outcomes for the region. Under the direction of the Cree Nation Government leadership and management, the department is responsible for ensuring funds are administered in accordance to our agreements with the Quebec Government, and at the same time that they address the social and cultural aspiration of the communities.

Changes to our Administration

There are new additions within our administration this year; we welcomed a new Coordinator of Outreach and Wellness – Clarissa Happyjack. She joined the organization in January of 2020. Our Youth Support Staff; positions Special Projects Administrator and Administrative Technician, were made permanent. We’re happy to continue to keep Melissa Whiskeychan and Tania Lariviere within the department for the long term.

Department Strategic Plan

Our department is in the process of developing a Five-Year strategic plan, which will facilitate and guide in addressing issues and in partnerships with communities and other entities. This plan proposes to alter our Department Mission and mandate, and set clear priorities and objectives for the coming years.

EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Administration

Alexander Moses, *Coordinator of Social and Cultural Development Department*

Clarissa Happyjack, *Coordinator of Outreach and Wellness*

Caitlin Pelletier, *Administrative Assistant*

Nellie W. Gray, *Liaison Officer*

John Bishop, *Toponymist*

Social Sector – Youth

Kaitlynn Hester-Moses, *Youth Grand Chief, Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC)*

Tania Lariviere, *Special Projects Officer*

Melissa Whiskeychan, *Administrative Technician*

PARTNERSHIPS, BOARD AND ADVISORY FUNCTIONS

We support entities and activities through board functions and/or technical and advisory roles:

- The Economic Security Program for Cree Hunters, Members of the committee are Director Rodney Mark, Kathy Shecapio and Clarke Shecapio
- Land-use planning, protected areas and environmental impact assessment
- Cree community programs that address toponymy, archaeology and traditional knowledge

Our partners through staff initiatives, committees, program funding, events and activities

- Cree Nation Youth Council
- Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association
- Cree School Board
- Cree Health Board

Programs and Projects Supported (to name a few)

- **Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association**, “Touch and Sound Project” and “Youth Artist- Montreal First Nation Festival”
- **Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association**, “Miss Eeyou/Eenou Princess” and “Kuukumuwich Gathering and Advisory Committee”
- **Nishiiyu Council of Elders**, “Annual Cultural Gathering”
- **Cree Trappers’ Association**, “Eeyou Etuun Cree Land Stewardship”
- **Eeyou Eenou Community Foundation & Inpath Inc.**, “Youth Art assistant’s program”

Department and Cree Nation Government representative, Alexander Moses as the Board of Directors to the following organizations

- Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute
- Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association
- Cree Outfitters and Tourism Association

Access to Nutritious Food Committee

This is a joint committee with representatives of CNG and CHB that aims to improve access to nutritious food and acknowledges the essential role that it plays in the promotion of health, food security, and prevention of chronic diseases.

The main objectives of the Committee:

- Ensure access to affordable, nutritious food for all;
- Promote healthy food choices;
- Ensure adequate management practices at all levels of the food system to support healthy food choices;
- Ensure collaboration between different entities;

Overall commitments:

- Develop a sustainable food system that is inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provides healthy and affordable foods to all people;

- Encourage collaboration and coordination at the regional and community levels, working to integrate food policy considerations into social, economic and environmental policies, programs and initiatives;
- Seek coherence between local and regional food related policies, programs and initiatives;
- Engage all sectors within the food system in the assessment, development, implementation and evaluation of food related policies, programs and initiatives;
- Review and amend existing policies, plans and regulations in order to encourage the establishment of an equitable, resilient and sustainable food system;

This is one of the following highlights of the committee’s activities

Over the past few years, the Public Health Department of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) has been working to assess the availability and cost of basic nutritious foods in Eeyou Istchee.

The results from these assessments have shown that the cost of a nutritious food basket is higher in Eeyou Istchee than in most of the other regions in Quebec. It was also concluded that the price of milk is higher in Eeyou Istchee, which was partly due to the fact that the region was not subject to the provincial regulation on the price of milk.

Thus, in a view to ensure more affordable access to milk to all Crees, the Cree Nation Government (CNG) and the CBHSSJB, pursuant to a recommendation of the CNG-CBHSSJB Joint Committee on Access to Nutritious Food in Eeyou Istchee, jointly filed an application to the *Régie des Marchés Agricoles et Alimentaires du Québec* (RMAAQ) in June 2019 to request that all nine Cree communities be regulated by the *Règlement sur les prix du lait de consommation*, in order for a maximum price of milk to apply in Eeyou Istchee, as it is the case in most of the other regions of the Province of Quebec.

With respect to this application, the RMAAQ invited the CNG and the CBHSSJB to participate in a public audience on November 28th, 2019 in Montreal, which was the opportunity to provide arguments to the RMAAQ as per their request:

- To specifically add all nine Cree communities in the *Règlement sur les prix du lait de consommation*; and
- Ensure that Cree consumers can access all types of milk at a reasonable price, including UHT milk (e.g. Grand Pré) and added value milk.

On April 9th, 2020, the RMAAQ rendered a decision according to which the *Règlement sur les prix du lait de consommation* will apply to the Cree Nations of Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini as of July 1st, 2020. As for the other six communities, the RMAAQ requested additional information from different stakeholders of the milk industry, and from the CNG and CBHSSJB, regarding namely the transportation costs and details on the supply chain for the delivery of milk in these communities.

The CNG and the CBHSSJB will therefore collect the required data and provide the RMAAQ with all required information in order to ensure that Crees across Eeyou Istchee can access milk at a fair and reasonable price.

Cree Customary Adoption and Guardianship

James Bobbish – Regional Coordinator (Interim)

Background and Context

A Working Group on Adoption in Quebec was formed prior to 2007 by Quebec to recommend measures to the government to change the *Civil Code of Quebec* to better meet the needs of families in regards to adoption rules. This Working Group proposed a number of amendments but refrained from making any proposals regarding Indigenous customary adoption. It instead recommended that a working group be created to study this matter.

In March 2008, a “Working Group on Customary Adoption in Aboriginal Communities” was created following discussions with Indigenous authorities. The Working Group consisted of a Director of Youth Protection and representatives from the Quebec Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Assembly of First Nations Quebec/Labrador, Quebec Native Women, the Cree Nation and the Inuit Nation.

The Working Group’s Mandate

The Mandate of this Working Group was to “analyze customary adoption within the Aboriginal communities of Quebec and to propose the conditions, effects and means that can be put in place in the event that customary adoption practices are recognized in these communities.” During the course of its work, the members of the Working Group realized the importance of paying special attention to key legal aspects, especially regarding the constitutional division of legislative powers, Aboriginal and treaty rights and the interest of the child and the protection of children’s rights. In keeping with the mandate, consultations were held by the Indigenous communities to document the state of customary/traditional adoption in their respective communities. The consultations were held between 2009 and 2011.

The Working Group’s report

In 2012, the Working Group submitted its report, which included fundamental principles and recommendations, along with innovative proposals to change Quebec law to recognize legal effects of Indigenous customary adoption, which was developed with enthusiasm by the members of the Working Group.

The majority of these legislative proposals made their way into Quebec law by means of changes to the *Civil Code of Quebec* and the *Youth Protection Act*, and also included changes to reflect legal effects of Indigenous customary guardianship or “tutorship”.

Timelines

These changes to Quebec law regarding certification of Indigenous customary/traditional adoptions and guardianships were enacted in 2017 and came into force in June 2018.

A combined regional-local approach was proposed for Eeyou Istchee. This followed the recommendation of a Cree Customary Adoption Working Group, made up of representa-

tives of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government and the Cree Health Board, and consultations with the Cree First Nations and regional Cree entities.

In January 2019, the Board-Council designated the Cree Nation Government as the Cree “competent authority” to legally certify Cree customary adoptions and guardianships on request, in collaboration with local committees set up by interested Cree First Nations. This designation came into force in June 2019.

The Quebec Registrar of Civil Status officially included the Cree Nation Government in its register of Indigenous competent authorities in November 2019. This allows the Cree Nation Government to officialise an existing Cree customary adoption or guardianship, on request, if the adoption or guardianship meets the requirements and the relevant Cree First Nation has set up its local committee.

The Cree Nation Government has developed tools and a guide to help Cree First Nations to set up these local committees. Interested Cree First Nations are encouraged to contact James Bobbish, Cree Nation Government Regional Coordinator – Cree Customary Adoption and Guardianship in this regard. Work with certain interested Cree communities is underway to establish these committees, with a view to allowing their members to have Cree customary adoptions and guardianships certified for the benefit of Cree children and families.

Overview of the Cree Certification Process

- At the request of the customary adopters/guardians or the child, the Cree Nation Government can make the customary adoption or guardianship of a Cree child official, without these persons having to go to court. The Cree Nation Government does this by issuing a certificate confirming that a customary adoption or guardianship of a Cree child has taken place.
- The certification process applies to customary adoption/guardianship that has already taken place. It is not a process to place a child with a family, either on a permanent or temporary basis.
- The decision to carry out a customary adoption/guardianship is made according to Cree custom, generally by the biological parents, the adopters/guardians, and sometimes the child and extended family members.
- The customary adopters/guardians or the child fill out an application with the Cree Nation Government to have the customary adoption or guardianship certified. The application provides information on the child, the biological parents and the adopters/guardians, as well as information on the adoption/guardianship that took place.

Key Aspects of the Cree Process for Certifying Customary Adoptions or Guardianships

For the Cree Nation Government to certify a Cree customary adoption or guardianship under the Cree Certification Process:

- The child must have been a minor (under 18) at the time of the customary adoption, or be a minor at the time of application for certification of the customary guardianship;

- The child must be registered as a Cree JBNQA beneficiary;
- Both the child and adopters/guardians must currently live (be “domiciled”) in Quebec; and
- The biological parents, the adopters/guardians and the child must have been domiciled in Quebec at the time of the customary adoption or customary guardianship.

The Cree Nation Government collaborates with the families and with a local committee set up by an interested Cree First Nation to decide if the customary adoption or guardianship can be certified, including to make sure that:

- It was carried out according to custom;
- It is in the child’s interest;
- All the required consents have been given; and
- The child is in the care of the adopters or the guardians.

The verification that the adoption/guardianship and its certification are in the interest of the child is done in collaboration with families, other stakeholders and the local committee of the Cree First Nation of the adopters/guardians. A Cree First Nation has to set up its local committee for its members to be able to have a customary adoption or guardianship certified.

As part of the Cree Certification Process, the Cree Nation Government also considers criminal background checks for adopters/guardians and other adults living in the home; “Character Check” questionnaires filled out by people who know the adopters/guardians well; and certain information and/or input of a Director of Youth Protection.

Cree families are not required to have a customary adoption or a customary guardianship certified by the Cree Nation Government; it is optional. However, certification may help legal effects to be recognized more easily, including by provincial or federal government authorities.

If the Cree Nation Government certifies a Cree customary adoption, the Quebec Registrar of Civil Status changes the child’s birth certificate, and the child is then legally considered to be the child of the adopters.

If the Cree Nation Government certifies a Cree customary guardianship, the certificate is given to the guardians, who can use it to prove that they are the legal guardians (“tutors”) of the child and have parental authority. A copy of the certificate is also provided to the Quebec Registrar of Civil Status for record keeping.

Someone interested in having a customary adoption or a customary guardianship of a Cree child certified can contact the Cree Nation Government Regional Coordinator at creeadoption@cngov.ca for more information. If needed, the Regional Coordinator can provide an application form and help the adopters/guardians or the child complete it.

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE SECTOR

Our department works diligently to preserve and promote our culture and language. Through supporting the establishment of the Cree Language Commission and the Language Law, to historic preservation of lands, titles and significant spaces of Cree Culture, we seek to support organizations through our funding programs and partnership.

Language

The past year included significant developments in the Cree Nation Government’s ongoing effort to sustain and promote the Cree language in Eeyou Istchee. Social and Cultural Development staff played an important role in helping to draft *Bill 1: An Act respecting the Cree language of Eeyou Istchee*, which was unanimously adopted by the Board Council of the Cree Nation Government on September 17, 2019 in Waswanipi. The law itself is significant for several reasons. As the first law passed since the Cree Governance Agreement was signed, it clearly signals that the Cree Nation Government intends to exercise its sovereignty and law-making ability. That the first law was devoted to protecting the Cree language also clearly signals that the Cree Nation Government recognizes the need to take urgent action on behalf of the Cree language. Passing a language protection law was one of the primary Calls to Action issued following 2018’s *Michiminihtaa Chitayimuwininuu* Language Engagement Session, and the Department of Social and Cultural Development is very encouraged to see continued momentum.

The law is a clear statement that the Crees of Eeyou Istchee have inherent rights related to their language, *Iyiyiw-Ayimuwin*. The law, however, extends beyond a symbolic statement of rights, and mandates the creation of a *Commissioner of the Cree Language* for Eeyou Istchee. It is over 40 years since Chiefs George Wapachee and Walter Hughboy first called for the creation of such an office in 1979. Their call was followed by significant efforts in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2010s. Seen in this light, this law, and the establishment of the Commissioner’s office, represents a significant victory for generations of Crees who have recognized the urgent need to support and sustain the Cree language. Work in our department has now turned to supporting the Commissioner and ensuring that the office has the resources necessary to succeed.

Bill 1 also mandates that organizations in the territory develop a language plan to be submitted to the Commissioner’s office. These language plans should include measures, policies, and practices put in place to promote the use of the Cree language, and are intended to encourage all entities and businesses operating in the territory to cooperate and play an active role in sustaining and revitalizing the language. Again, our department has been preparing to assist both the Commissioner and organizations in meeting this obligation.

With respect to Bill 1, we were fortunate to be able to work closely with Paul Joffe, a lawyer with experience working on behalf of Indigenous peoples at the national and international levels. Paul ensured that the law not only reflected Cree perspectives, but also engaged relevant national legislation and international commitments. As such, the law is surely at the cutting edge of Indigenous governance in Canada and North America.

Place Names Program

The Cree Nation Government’s Place Names Program also continued its work over the past year. Efforts to map Cree-language place names in Eeyou Istchee have progressed, with surveys taking place in Mistissini in collabora-

tion with the local CTA office. There, we have been fortunate to work productively with Willie Loon, who has coordinated interviews with elders, tallymen, and other land-users. As always, we would like to thank all of those individuals who have agreed to participate for their time and knowledge.

We also had the opportunity to work closely with the Charlotte Tapiatic, Jennifer Napash, Jason Pachano, and Margaret Fireman at the Chisasibi Heritage and Cultural Centre. We have been providing technical assistance in their efforts to digitize the place names they have gathered, and to support their efforts to continue doing map interviews.

The Cree Nation Toponymist, John Bishop, was also involved in the Cree Nation Government's efforts to establish protected areas for Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Place Names Program houses over forty years of research, much of which has proven very useful in the context of Protected Areas Work. Our department was able to provide data, assistance with community consultations, and participated in meetings and discussions as the protected areas file made significant progress over the past year. We also assisted them by developing a set of Cultural Criteria to be considered when undertaking protected areas research. As the protected areas file continues within the context of the newly-signed *Grande Alliance*, our department looks forward to continuing to assist in this important work.

We are now regularly fielding an increasing number of requests from other CNG departments, regional entities, and non-Cree organizations for Cree place names maps and/or data. Over the past year we have had the opportunity to as-

sist a number of community governments, COTA, the Cree School Board, the Quebec Toponymy Commission, the Ontario Land Claims research team, and Canadian Geographic magazine. In the coming year, we look forward to assisting the Board Council of the Cree Nation Government in developing a long-term strategy with respect to place names so as to ensure that the people of Eeyou Istchee can take full advantage of the capabilities that we are building.

Archaeology in Eeyou Istchee

The Cree cultural heritage of Eeyou Istchee is rich and varied. It is preserved in the memory of elders and in Cree language and traditions and it is connected to places on the land through stories, place names and archaeological sites. The archaeology unit explores and researches heritage sites in collaboration with local communities, provides training for Cree youth, and works closely with elders to identify significant places. We provide technical and financial support to communities to preserve these sites and to educate Cree youth about this aspect of their heritage.

This fiscal year marks some important changes for this program, including the departure of its coordinator, David Denton, in late April, 2019. Archaeology was also part of the administrative transfer of cultural programs and employees to Anischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute over the course of the year. Work in archaeology continues at ACCI under the able guidance of Dario Izaguirre.



Photo credit: <https://www.cngov.ca/governance-structure/legislation/>

Mr. Denton was hired by the Cree Regional Authority in 1986 and worked in various capacities (staff archaeologist, full-time consultant, coordinator) over the decades. In collaboration with Cree First Nations, he developed an ongoing program of archaeological research in Eeyou Istchee, carried out research on place names and stories and was scientific director of the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Program, which operated in areas of hydroelectric development on the Eastmain and Rupert rivers in the 2000s. Over the years, he also provided support for the work of the community cultural coordinators and ongoing administrative support for CNG cultural programs.

This year was a busy one for archaeology projects in the communities.

Wemindji: The Kakabat granular materials project

In 2017, at the request of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, the archaeology unit began researching the archaeological potential of a section of the Kakabat family trapline to the west of Wemindji, that is intended to supply the community with granular materials for construction and infrastructure projects for decades to come. A 2017 survey resulted in the finding of an important Eeyou camping area dating to the late 1800s, near the proposed bridge crossing. In the summer of 2018, two old mitukihp (tent rings) were carefully excavated by the team, and a third was partially excavated at this place, which we refer to as Site no. 3.

In August and September of 2019, work at Site no. 3 was completed by excavating the remaining two mitukihp for a total of four excavated lodges at this site. And work began at Site no. 4, located 200 m to the west, near the proposed road alignment. Here the team carefully dug another two, overlapping mitukihp, and created a 3-D digital model of massive hearth from another mitukihp. On the final day of work, we found a probable wiyaauhkihiikin (building bed of sand for construction of a canoe) nearby.

As in past, the field work was carried out by CNG archaeologist Dario Izaguirre, assisted in 2019 by Jennifer Bracewell and Josephine Diamond (senior technician). Local crew members included Dale Tomatuk, Cody Mark, Clayton Stewart, Frank Ottereyes, Morgan Shecapio, Barry Mini-quaken, Taryn Shashaweskum and Arnold Georgekish.

Although these sites are not extremely old, they reflect an era of Wemindji's history in the late 1800s and early 1900s that is not well documented. Stories told by elders suggest spring and fall use of these places by members of the Atsynia and Kakabat families, among others, especially for fishing. The materials recovered include metal objects, glass beads, clay pipe fragments, gun flints, and a stone miitunsaan, used for crushing bones and grinding dried meat and fish. A 2019 find that generated much discussion was a beautifully made stone pipe. These objects are of keen interest to the Kakabat family members and to the broader community.

As in past years, Dario Izaguirre returned to Wemindji in late February to do the "lab work" (cleaning, numbering and cataloguing of artifacts, preparing plans, photographing of artifacts, etc.). He was assisted by Richard Kakabat and Dale Tomatuk. This was an opportunity for community

members to see the finds and to participate in this phase of the research. Dario presented an update of the project results at a community meeting.

Ouje-Bougoumou: Research near Upimiskaa Paawishtikuu

In 2016, the archaeology unit began a collaborative project with the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation to assess the archaeological resources at Upimiskaa Paawishtikuu (Opémiska Rapids) in advance of a possible mini-hydro project. The rapids are located near where the Chibougamau River enters Lake Opémiska on the Ouje-Bougoumou access road. Survey work to find sites was carried out in 2016 and 2017, and in 2017 and 2018, excavations were carried out at one of the sites (known by the archaeologists as DIFq-1), located at the upper end of the portage around the rapids. In July 2019, a full report on the 2017-2018 work was presented at the Ouje-Bougoumou AGA.

In 2019, archaeologist Dario Izaguirre and the team consisting of Josephine Diamond (senior technician), Silvio Shecapio Blacksmith, Kurt Shecapio Blacksmith and Anibal Bosum, returned to Upimiskaa Paawishtikuu to excavate a smaller site (DIFq-8) located along the shore, approximately 200 m downstream from the rapids and the bridge. Like the larger site at the north end of the portage, this one contained chips and tool blanks made of a stone known as rhyolite. Unfortunately, neither site can yet be dated due to the lack of fireplaces containing charcoal that can be definitively associated with the occupations. However, the fact that the 2019 finds were deeply buried in a mineral soil horizon suggests that they are quite old, perhaps on the order of several thousand years. This needs to be confirmed by further research.

These two sites, and others in the area, are part of Ouje-Bougoumou Cree heritage and that of the Cree Nation as a whole. They show a very different pattern of stone raw material use from that of neighbouring areas, where use of high quality quartzite from Waapushukamikw, on the Témiscamie River predominates. The 2019 finds contribute to the picture built from those of the previous seasons. Long ago Eenuou travellers on the river acquired blocks of this unique raw material, probably at nearby outcrops of rhyolite that have yet to be identified. They used it to make spear points, knives, scrapers and other tools at stopping places at the head of the portage and at other locations downstream.

SOCIAL SECTOR

A Message from the Youth Grand Chief

Wachiya, it is a great pleasure to present the Cree Nation Youth Council's Annual Report. In this report, it contains our Administrative Matters, Programs, Youth Representation, Contributions and Partners. Cree Nation Youth Council focuses on tackling and initiating the youth's priorities and needs in various beneficial programs and services. Youth prioritized Education, Cree Culture and Language, Healthy Active Living, Business, Social Development and Citizenship & Participation.

We would like to recognize, appreciate and congratulate the youth in Eeyou Istchee and in the south who continue to inspire our people, our team, and Youth Councils to achieve our mission.

I would like to extend appreciation to the Cree Nation Youth Council team and all Youth Council, Youth Department and staff, who continue to achieve our vision to pave our way to our future. I thank our team for their commitment and hard work. Cree Nation Youth Council would like to extend their appreciation for the support from our Cree Nation Government, Social and Cultural Department, Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec, and all our partners who contributed to our programming for our youth.

Meegwetch to all for their contribution to making our year successful!

Sincerely,
Kaitlynn Hester-Moses
Youth Grand Chief

Social Development – Youth Sector

The Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) is a governing body led by a board of directors comprised of the young elected leaders from each of the 10 Cree communities and local youth coordinators. Together, they work on the development of CNYC led initiatives that aim to foster the growth of youth as the future leaders of the Cree Nation.

The CNYC's agreements, programs funding, and administration of special projects are carried out under the responsibility and supervision of the Social and Cultural Development Department.

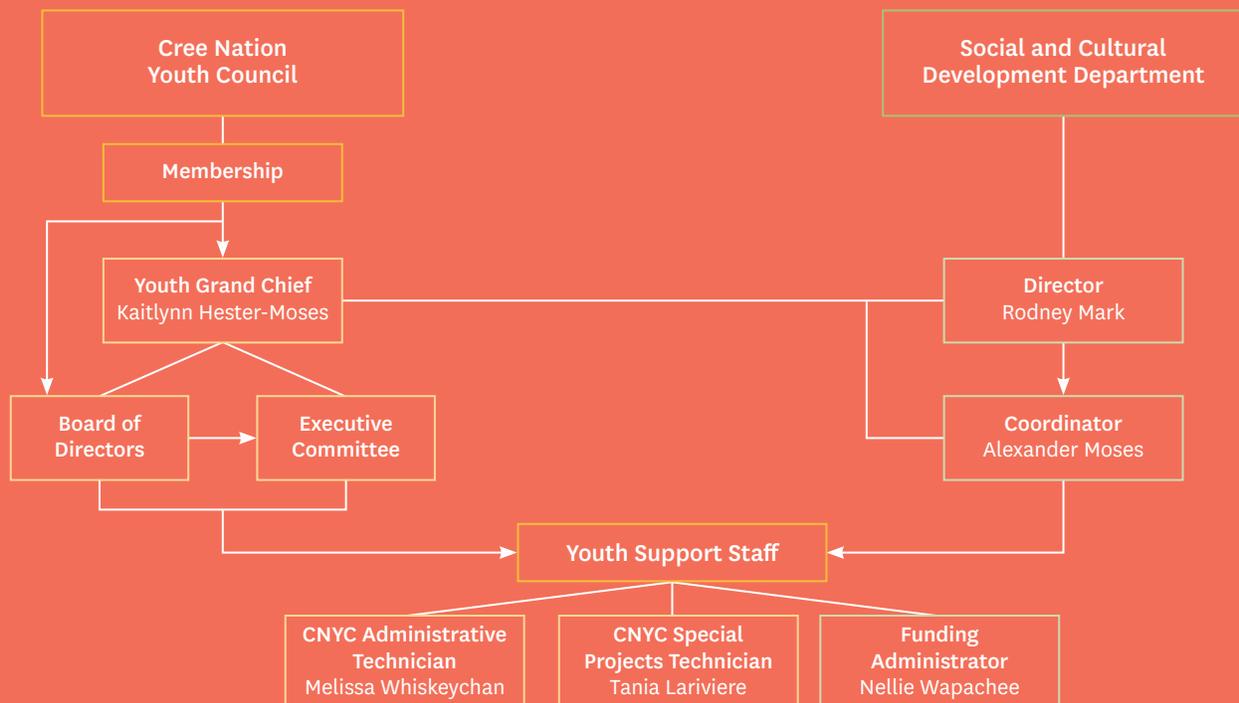
Administrative Matters

Our administration focuses on proposing meetings, trainings, planning sessions, communications, as well as implementing and promoting our programs, projects and organization mandate.

- Standing with the Sami Indigenous People in Inari, Finland
- Climate Change Conference
- Cree Hunters and Trappers Conference
- Indigenous Peoples' Justice
- Regional Suicide Prevention Meeting

Executive Committee Meetings

- June 7-8, 2019 – Val-d'Or, Qc
- September 30, 2019 – Mistissini, Qc
- October 25, 2019 – Montreal, Qc
- December 15-16, 2019 – Gatineau, Qc
- March 11, 2020 – Via Conference Call



Board of Directors Meeting

April 2019 in Waswanipi, Qc
 August 18, 2019 in Chisasibi, Qc
 October 2019 in Mistissini, Qc
 January 13-15, 2020 in Gatineau, Qc

CNYC Special Projects

The Cree Nation Youth Council focuses on facilitating and developing programs based on the following six priorities identified within their Cree Youth action strategy:

- Education;
- Culture & Tradition;
- Health & Active Living;
- Business & Employment;
- Social & Personal Development;
- Citizenship & Participation.

Based on these pillars, the CNYC dedicates itself to providing regional events and programming targeting Cree youth aged 13-35 from all 10 communities, by providing networking and self-development opportunities. Ultimately, the implemented projects seek to benefit the youth by providing learning and growth opportunities in the form of workshops, engaging activities, and trainings delivering youth-specific tools, skills, and information.

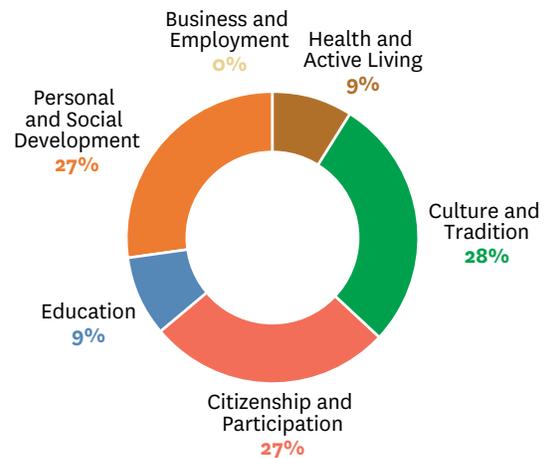
These efforts are deployed through CNYC special projects, made possible by the funding provided by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse's Cree Youth Strategy agreement over a span of three years (ending in 2021).

Special Projects at a glance

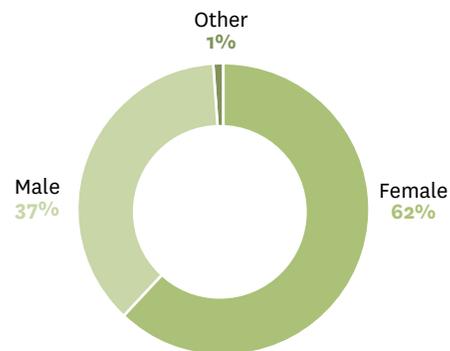
This year, the youth leadership at CNYC focused on the theme of Cree culture and language in all of its implemented events, in response to the youth's desire to maintain, practice, and learn our Cree History, Identity and Traditions.

This year, our events and programming under special projects reached out to the following:

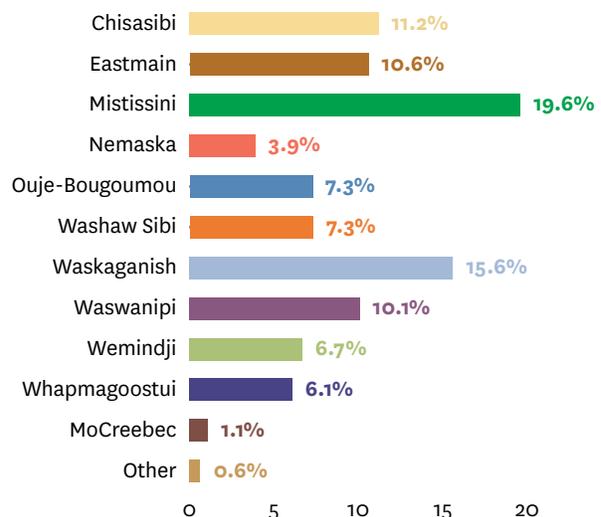
**Figure 1. CNYC SPECIAL PROJECTS
Main Priorities Reached, 2019-2020**



**Figure 2. CNYC SPECIAL PROJECTS
Youth Participation by Gender, 2019-2020**



**Figure 3. CNYC SPECIAL PROJECTS
Youth Participation by Community, 2019-2020**



2019-2020 Events and Programming

EeYouth Strong

- Focus:** Health & Active Living, Culture & Tradition
- Dates:** June 24-27, 2019
- Location:** Cree Nation of Eastmain
- Purpose:** To take action in raising awareness, promoting and prioritizing our health in all aspects by educating youth through workshops, team building activities, fitness and coaching.
- Activities:** Workshops targeting nutrition (meal planning), fitness (work-out plans, powerlifting, coaching) and wellbeing (harm reduction, sexual education and lateral kindness, relationships, self-care) in addition to team building activities, presentations, and a Culture themed day where the youth prepared their own feast.
- Partners:** Cree Health Board (Public Health Department); ActivNation; Eastmain Cultural Department; Cree Fitness Instructors/Trainers (Savannah Blacksmith, Nathan Rabbitskin, Daylon Longchap & Adam Cheezo).

30th Annual General Assembly

- Focus:** Citizenship & Participation
- Dates:** August 20-22, 2019
- Location:** Cree Nation of Chisasibi
- Theme:** Suuchikapuuhiituutau : Standing Strong Together
- Purpose:** An important assembly during which youth gather to voice their matters, lead their own decision making process, and practice the skills necessary in leadership and governance to pave our way as the future leaders of Eeyou Istchee.
- Presentations:** Cree Outfitting Tourism Association, Cree School Board, Protected Areas, Apatisiwin Skills Development, Department of Commerce & Industry, Social & Cultural Department, Nishiiyuu, and LGBTQ2S
- Activities:** Social Activities, Car Rally, Karaoke, Sweat lodge, and Gala Night.

Nishiyuu Cultural Gathering – Day 1: Youth (August 26th, 2019)

- Focus:** Culture & Tradition
- Dates:** August 26-29, 2019
- Location:** Cree Nation of Wemindji
- Purpose:** To promote intergenerational exchanges, knowledge transfer and use of our language and to maintain and strengthen the practices in our Eeyou Istchee. As hosts of the first day (Youth Day), CNYC highlighted the role elders serve as the gate keepers of Cree Knowledge, Wisdom, Traditions, Traditional Values and Spiritual Teachings, History, Language, Teachings, Philosophy, Healing Methods, Medicines and Way of Life.

In partnership with the Nishiiyuu Council of Elders and



EeYouth Strong



30th Annual General Assembly



Traditional crafts at Nishiyuu Cultural Gathering

other entities, CNYC worked to facilitate a greater participation of youth at the Cultural Gathering. Passing from 5 youth the previous year to a total of 36 youth this edition, the CNYC is happy to contribute to and promote opportunities for youth to learn from our elders' teachings.

- Activities:** Traditional crafts (beading, embroidery, skirt making), Cree Language engagement activities, open panel discussions, storytelling, traditional food preparation, comedy & entertainment, and many more.

5th Inspire Hope Conference

- Focus:** Education, Personal & Social Development, Culture & Tradition

Dates: January 17-19, 2020
 Location: Gatineau, QC
 Theme: Keeping Our Identity Strong
 Purpose: The main goal for our Inspire Hope Conference is to bring inspiration, motivation and hope to our youth by delivering workshops, engaging activities, motivational speakers and showing our support. For the 5th edition of our Inspire Hope Conference, we chose to show our support to our Post-Secondary Students and inspire the students to accomplish their academic goals and pursue their careers in the Cree Nation.

Cree Café: In contribution to the capacity building movement in the Cree Nation, the CNYC held a consultation with its youth in attendance. This workshop gave post-secondary youth residing out of our communities the opportunity to voice their thoughts in regards to the future of their communities and their potential return back home. A report of this consultation will be made available to all.

Activities: Team challenges, entertainment, booths, Cree Café, painting with Mikw'Chiyam, Panel Discussions with Cree School Board, Cree Health, Cree Nation Government, Commerce and Industry, Business Cocktail hour.

Workshops: Cree Language, Cree Medicine, Budgeting, Study Tips, Self-Care, Beading & Embroidery.

Partners: Apitisiwin Skills Development, Cree Nation Government, Cree School Board, Cree Health Board, Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, Department of Commerce and Industry, InPath, Public Health.

Ongoing 2019-2020 Projects, Events and Programming

Cree Nation Youth Council Tour

Focus: Citizenship & Participation
 Purpose: To promote youth capacity building and create a future strategic action plan by collecting our youth's feedback and data. This tour is also an opportunity for our youth to voice their concerns and needs. All the data will be reported to our youth. The vision of our Youth Capacity Building is to pave our way to our future.

2019-2020: Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Eastmain, Nemaska, and Mistissini.
 2020-2021: Ouje, Waswanipi, Washaw Sibi, Waskaganish, and Wemindji.
 Activities: Youth Council Visits, School Visits, Consultation and Youth Engaging Activities.

Inspire Hope Book

Focus: Social & Personal Development

Purpose: Inspiring, uplifting and bringing hope to our youth by collecting their stories as individuals. It is an ongoing project for the youth. The book focuses on two types of stories – hardships and passion.

JBNQA Development

Focus: Citizenship & Participation
 Purpose: To create and develop educational tools tailored to our youth and training kits to educate them on the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

FUNDING AGREEMENTS

The department negotiates and manages funding agreements from provincial ministries. We make the funding available to Cree organizations and communities. It is done through an application process.

Elder's Program Funding - The Regional Adaptation to Enhance Seniors' Living Conditions in the Cree Communities

The Department of Social and Cultural Development administers Cree and Quebec funding agreements that allocate funding for Elders programming in Eeyou Istchee. During the 2018-2019 year, we did not have any provincial funding as the previous agreement had concluded and the new agreement was not finalized.

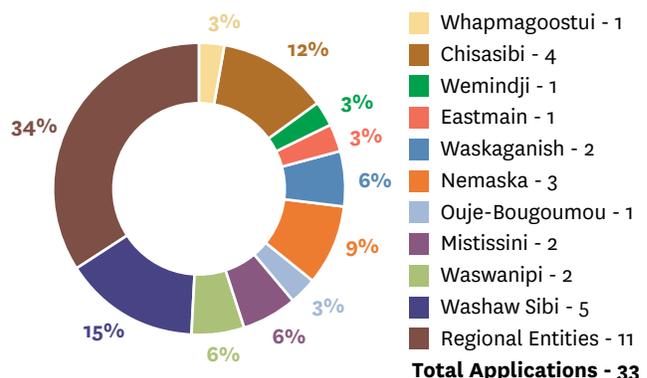
The Social and Cultural Department objectives for the Elder's Program funding

Under the umbrella of these categories, the funding objectives are broken into 5 main pillars, which are the foundation of this 5 year action plan:

1. Direct Assistance for Elders
2. Participation in community
3. Healthy lifestyles
4. Creating safe and welcoming environments
5. Traditional knowledge, skills, and language

Program funding Details

Figure 1. ELDERS FUNDING By Community, 2019-2020

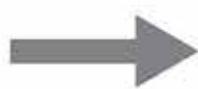


ELDER'S FUNDING

2019-2020 Report



A total of
30
Projects



For a total of
\$635,000
in project expenditures

Projects in
10
Communities



Regional
Entities
Funded



Funding
by fund
priorities

Transfer of knowledge	Community Participation	Healthy Living	Healthy & Safe Environments
14 projects \$286,000	7 projects \$100,000	8 projects \$120,000	4 projects \$129,000

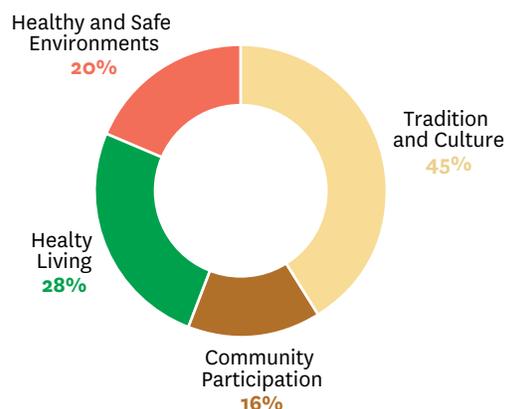


CREE NATION GOVERNMENT
Department of Social and Cultural Development

Table 1. ELDERS FUNDING
List of Programs/Projects

Project Name	Community
Tradition and Culture	
Traditional Cree Fishing and Medicine	Mistissini
Cultural Gathering	Regional-JBCEC
Elders Attendance "Footprints" at Canadian Museum of history	Regional-ACCI
Elder's Lunch and Teaching	Waskaganish
Documentation of lives and stories of Elders	Regional-ACCI
Snow Shoe Making	Nemaska
Youth Participation to Cultural Gathering	Regional-CNYC
Traditional Knowledge Teaching	Waskaganish
Kuukumuwich Gathering & Advisory Committee	Regional-CWEIA
Nemaska is Tasty (Traditional Food Recipes video)	Nemaska
Caribou and Moosehide Tanning	Chisasibi
Traditional Medicine Teaching	Chisasibi
Social Evening, Chiiwetau, winter Fest	Waswanipi
Elders – Creating art for footprints	Regional-ACCI
Community Participation	
Eastmain Elder's Council Projects and Activities	Eastmain
Touch and Sound Project	Regional-CNACA
Chisasibi Council of Elders Annual Activities	Chisasibi
Arts & Crafts Curation - Focus Group	Regional - CNACA
Elders Story Telling & Elders Feast and Recognition	Washaw Sibi
Elders Services Launch	Ouje-Bougoumou
Healthy Living	
Native Friendship Centre	Senneterre
Weechadowch Chaino Project	Mistissini
EI Sundance and Retreat Miinuwatwiin	Regional-Miinuwatwiin
Blueberry Picking Activity & Excercise and Outings	Washaw Sibi
Self Care for Elders	Washaw Sibi
Elders and Youth Lunch	Chisasibi
Wellness Community Development	Chisasibi
Healthy and Safe Environments	
Elder's Care program	Nemaska
Snow Removal	Wemindji
Elders Health and Safety Program	Whapmagoostui
Elders Assistance Program	Waswanipi

Figure 2. ELDERS FUNDING
By Program Pillars, 2019-2020



Cree Youth Development Fund

Funding Agreement with Secretariat à la Jeunesse, Cree Nation Youth Council and Department of Social and Cultural Development

Youth programming funding program that is expected to facilitate positive youth development in the following six areas.

1. Education and Support
2. Health and Active Living
3. Culture and Tradition
4. Business and Employment
5. Personal and Social Development
6. Citizenship and Participation

Program funding Details

Figure 1. CREE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUNDS By Community, 2019-2020

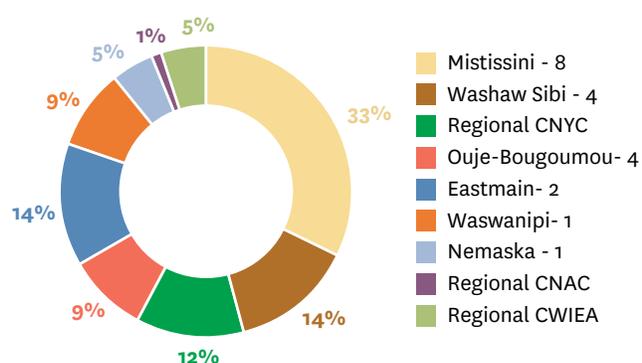


Figure 2. ELDERS FUNDING By Program Pillars, 2019-2020

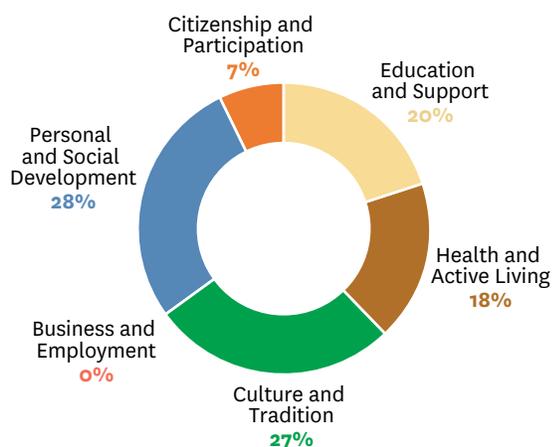


TABLE 1. CREE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUNDS List of Programs/Projects

Project Name	Community
Education and Support	
Honor Roll Incentive	Mistissini
Youth Achievement Awards	Washaw sibi
Education and Career Development	Mistissini
Mikw Chiyâm Youth Artists Assistant (YAA)	Regional-CNYC
Music Program	Mistissini
Taco Tuesday	Ouje-Bougoumou
Health and Active Living	
Sports Development	Eastmain
Softball/Fastpitch Summer Mentorship Camp	Eastmain
Cycling Challenge	Mistissini
James Bay Minor Softball League	Regional
James Bay Eeyou Basketball League	Regional
Culture and Tradition	
Youth and Elders Social Evenings	Waswanipi
Youth Harvesting Activities	Nemaska
Cultural Camp	Mistissini
Tipaachmuh - Cree Song and Poetry Writing Contest	Regional - CNACA
Cree Language & Culture Arts & Crafts Monthly Activities	Washaw Sibi
Mooseyan Project	Washaw Sibi
Business and Employment	
Montreal First Peoples Festival	Regional CNACA
Northern Lights Conference	Regional CNACA
Young Entrepreneur Symposium	Mistissini
Social and Personal Development	
Self-Care Workshops for PSSS	Regional-CNYC
Self-Development Program	Washaw Sibi
Post Secondary-Student's Motivational Night & 5th Inspire Hope Conference	Regional-CNYC
Snowshoe Expedition	Ouje-Bougoumou
Youth Empowerment	Mistissini
Lunch Program	Mistissini
Citizenship and Participation	
Miss Eeyou/Eenou Nation Program	Regional - CWIEA
A.C.T.I.O.N Program	Ouje-Bougoumou

CREE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

2019-2020 Report



We funded
28
Projects



Allocated a total sum of

\$284,756

in project expenditures

Funding by Fund Priority



What kind of projects received funding?

- Youth Empowerment
- A.C.T.I.O.N. Program
- Miss Eeyou/Eenou Nation
- Youth Harvesting Activities
- Education & Career Development
- Mooseyan Project

For more information, visit creenationyouthcouncil.ca

Cree Alliance for Solidarity

A new funding program emerged for the Department of Social and Cultural Development. The Alliance for Solidarity is a response to the Government's desire to support the deployment of regional and local actions to fight against poverty and social exclusion. It aims;

- to establish a partnership with all the partners who are concerned with the development of communities and the fight against poverty and social exclusion in order to ensure coherence of actions;
- to establish a shared vision with its partners on the efforts to be made to ensure that the interventions that will be supported are well anchored in the communities and meet the priorities that they have established in respect of their specificities;
- to ensure the participation of people living in poverty and social exclusion in the implementation mechanisms of the agreement;

An action plan was developed through consultations with Cree stakeholders and entities.

The Department hosted its first "Call for Proposals" in the fall of 2019. 16 Programs and projects were supported from multiple communities and regional entities. The department signed agreements thus allowing for implementation of the programs and projects. However, not all were able to commence in the winter of 2020. ●

Table 1.A list of supported programs

Project Name	Community
Inshiyuu Miyuupimatisiium	Chisasibi
2 Spirit Support Group	Chisasibi
James Bay Eeyou School	Chisasibi
Youth Arts & Crafts Business Development	CNACA
Eeyou Etuun Cree Land Stewardship	CTA
Eeyou-Eenou 2 Spirited Invitational Conference	CWEIA
Sports Development Concentration Camp	Eastmain
Sports Academy-Stay in School Program	Wemindji
Mental Health-Snack and chat	Nemaska Local Native Women
Wellness Wednesday Soup Kitchen	Nemaska Local Native Women
Student Engagement	Waskaganish
Driving School Incentive Program	Chisasibi
Attendance Surveying (Research)	Social and Cultural Development
School Lunch Program	Senneterre
Resource Centre	Ouje-Bougoumou





FORESTRY

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Gillman Ottereyes

I am pleased to share some of the highlights achieved this year by those who contributed their time, effort, and support for the development of this new Forestry Department. The Department was launched in September 2019 to fulfill the new responsibilities of the Cree Nation Government and to increase our capacity with respect to forest management.

Support from the Council of the Cree Nation of Waswanipi is affording us the opportunity to move forward with a new administration building, to be annexed into their existing administration building and enhanced by the construction of new units authorized by the Cree Nation Government. The new offices in Waswanipi will house both the Forestry Department and the Cree Quebec Forestry Board.

We are working with Human Resources to structure the Forestry Department and increase our staffing to better fulfill our mandate. In the coming year, we hope to hire an Administrative Assistant, a Coordinator of Field Monitoring, a GIS Technician, and a Wildlife Biologist to work alongside the experienced Forestry staff who transferred to this Department from the former Forestry Unit of the Environment and Remedial Works Department (ERWD).

The commitment of the Cree Nation Government and Quebec to sustaining Cree Traditional Enhancement Activities within Eeyou Istchee was reflected in 2019-20 through the allocation of more than \$2.8 million to tallymen, trappers, and other Cree land users, for remedial projects that will benefit 122 traplines impacted by industrial forestry. Our local Forestry Programs Officers deserve high praise for supporting these projects on the ground despite the extraordinary challenges faced in recent months.

The Mixed Forest Stand Development Strategy Committee prepared its final draft document this year, based on community consultations that occurred over the course of 2019. The Cree Forestry Joint Working Group members will review and hopefully finalize the Strategy for presentation to the Cree Quebec Forestry Board and acceptance by the Cree Nation Government and Quebec in the coming months.

I am proud to be part of the giant leap taken by the Cree Nation Government leadership with the development of the Forestry Department. I look forward to the upcoming year as this Department grows and flourishes in its new responsibilities, working always in collaboration with other Departments, Cree entities, and the Cree communities. Together we will strive to maintain the delicate balance be-

tween sustaining our traditional ways of life while developing the economy within Eeyou Istchee.

OUR HISTORY, MANDATE, AND MISSION

In 1975, when the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (JBNQA) was signed, industrial forestry was so limited in the territory that it was viewed as “compatible” with traditional Cree land use. As time passed and access to the region increased, forestry evolved from localized, small-scale efforts into a region-wide industry that cut millions of cubic metres of timber from Cree traplines each year. Industrialized forestry clashed so violently with Cree traditional land use—in Waswanipi, Mistissini, Ouje-Bougoumou, Nemaska, and Waskaganish—that we challenged the industry in courts of law and public opinion as being contrary to Cree rights and interests.

Ultimately, this conflict was settled with the signing of the *Paix des Braves Agreement* in 2002, which established the Adapted Forest Regime (AFR). A similar regime, referred to as the *Baril-Moses Agreement*, was established for the Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou traplines east of the height of land.

The Adapted Forestry Regime sets out a series of provisions aimed at balancing industrial forestry operations with the activities of Cree land users and the Cree right to be part of sustainable development in our territory. The AFR sets parameters on when, where and how much forest harvesting may occur, guided by comprehensive consultations with Cree land users through the facilitation of Cree-Quebec Joint Working Groups. The AFR established the Cree Quebec Forestry Board to oversee implementation of the regime. In 2015, the *Agreement to Resolve the Baril-Moses Dispute* extended many provisions of the AFR to the height of land region.

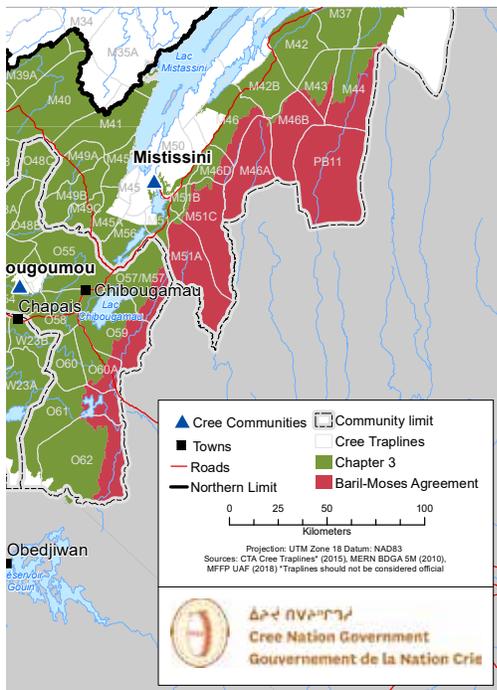
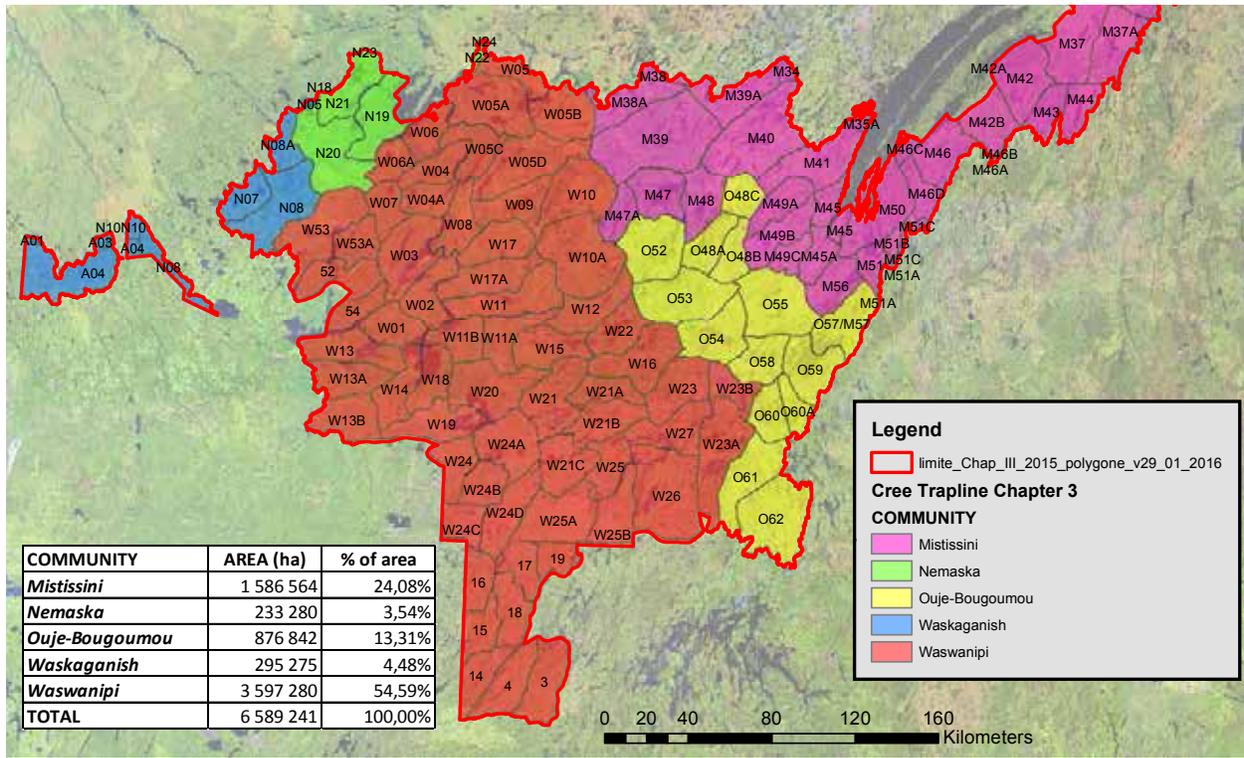
In 2012, the governance agreement signed with Quebec established a “Collaborative Forestry Regime” for Category II lands, with forest management planning responsibilities shared by Quebec and the Cree Nation Government, with increased Cree responsibilities over time. The creation of a standalone Forestry Department was required to administrate this regime.

All forestry-related programs of the Cree Nation Government—including the Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program, which supports the communities affected by forestry through millions of dollars in annual project funding—will now be overseen by the Forestry Department, working in collaboration with other Departments, Cree entities, and the Cree communities.

As Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum said at the Forum on Forests in August 2019, just before the Forestry Department was formalized, “The Cree Nation’s assumption of a greater role in the management of forestry with the Government of Quebec is defined by the mutual desire to find innovative so-

lutions to historical challenges.” This Department is working on many fronts to find these innovative solutions. It is our mission to protect Cree ways of life and advance Cree interests in the sustainable development of Eeyou Istchee.

CREE COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY FORESTRY



Top: Cree Communities Impacted by Forestry
Left: Baril-Moses Territory

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT STAFF

Our Department Director, Gillman Ottereyes, sits on the Cree Quebec Forestry Board and oversees all Forestry Department files and activities related to the administration of the forestry regime in Eeyou Istchee.

Our Forestry Engineer, Stephan Ouellet, provides advice and technical support to the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities on matters related to forestry. He analyses the Annual Forest Management Plans, Special Management Plans, and any related modifications, and he ensures that the rules of Chapter 3 regarding forest activities are applied within Eeyou Istchee and Baril-Moses territories.

Our Forestry Joint Working Group (JWG) Coordinator, Nicolas Lemieux, works with the Cree communities to assist with forestry planning consultations and to provide technical assistance to solve forestry-related conflicts between the Cree land users, forestry companies, and Quebec during the planning and implementation stages.

Our Forestry Programs Officer, Jimmy Iserhoff, works to implement the Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program, which funds remedial projects in the Cree communities affected by forestry. Our Forestry Program Technician, Abel Neeposh, conducts project verification monitoring to ensure that the Program's funds are used in compliance with the terms of the Program's policies.

As the Forestry Department grows, we hope to add specialized and support staff, including Monitoring Officers, a Biologist, a GIS technician, and an Executive Assistant. We will hire a new JWG Coordinator and move our experienced forester, Nicolas Lemieux, into the position of Forestry Planner, to work on forest management plans developed through the Collaborative Forestry Regime for Category II lands.

FOREST ACTIVITY IN 2019-20

Table 1 shows forestry-related activities within the Chapter 3 territory in the 2019-20 forestry season. A total of 126 traplines were affected by forestry activities this year, including 59 traplines which experienced harvesting, 59 impacted by forestry roads, and 68 subject to silviculture activities.

Assisting in the implementation of 3.6o

The Crees have the first right of say on 15% of the silvicultural work budget within the Chapter 3 territory, as agreed upon during the harmonization negotiations. In 2019-20, our Forestry Engineer assisted the Department of Commerce and Industry in providing the opportunity of contract for the silviculture season, and in distributing the work among the 5 eligible companies. Table 2 presents the budget allocated to each silvicultural enterprise in 2019-20.

Table 1. Forest Activity by Trapline and by Communities for the Season 2019-2020

Community	Harvesting		Roads		Silvicultural	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Waswanipi (62)	45	17	43	19	45	17
Mistissini (32)	9	23	9	23	13	19
Ouje-Bougoumou (12)	4	8	6	6	9	3
Nemaska (7)	1	6	1	6	1	6
Waskaganish (3)	0	3	0	3	0	3
Total (126)	59	57	59	57	66	46

Table 2. Percentage of the Budget for Each Enterprise

Enterprise	Budget (%)	% of the budget
Ouje Entreprise	\$962,474.70	51.91%
Dooden	\$216,878.28	11.70%
Weshthau	\$205,025.00	11.06%
Miiyunakutaw	\$205,025.00	11.06%
Eenatuk Forestry	\$264,757.75	14.28%
Total	\$1,854,160.73	100%

CREE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program mitigates the impacts of forestry and addresses the practical concerns of Cree trappers and other users of the traplines by funding local projects that enhance and reinforce Cree traditional activities. The Program, which is jointly funded by the Cree Nation Government and Quebec, provides funding to individual tallymen, trappers, or Cree land users whose traditional activities have been affected by industrial forestry in the past 5 years.

Eligible projects funded through the program can include camp relocations; dock replacements; trail development; snow removal; road maintenance; cabin construction; stream enhancement work, beaver relocation, goose pond enhancement, silviculture, and other projects that enhance the productivity of traplines and assist Cree land users in coping with the impacts of forestry.

Proposed projects are reviewed for conformity with the *Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement* and the program eligibility criteria, after which they are tabled by the Forestry Programs Prioritization Committee (FPPC) and recommended for approval through the simplified process stipulated within the *Consolidated Forestry Program Law*, for final approval by the Executive Committee of the Cree Nation Government.

Funded Projects in 2019-20

Over \$2.8 million was disbursed this year on enhancement projects that met the eligibility criteria. Funded projects include cabin construction, tent frames construction, hunting route development, woodcutting, snowmobile trail development, and subsidies for hunting equipment. This year's total of 529 enhancement projects will aid 122 traplines.

Renewal of the Agreement

The *Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement* was signed in 2005 to address the needs of Cree land users directly affected by forestry activities. The Agreement was renewed in 2013 and extended in 2015 by the *Agreement to Resolve the Baril-Moses Dispute*, which injected further funding to account for inflation and increased forestry activities.

The current Enhancement Agreement must be renewed by April 2021. With this in mind, the Cree Nation Government sent a letter to Quebec officials in March 2020, indicating the need for prompt discussions on the program's renewal. The Forestry Department is planning a thorough review of all facets of this program in the coming months, to ensure future compliance and acceptance from our Quebec partners.

The FPPC

The Forestry Program Prioritization Committee (FPPC) promotes projects that enhance and reinforce Cree traditional activities and/or foster social and economic development. The FPPC was formed through Board/Council resolution in 2006 with a mandate to oversee the dispersal

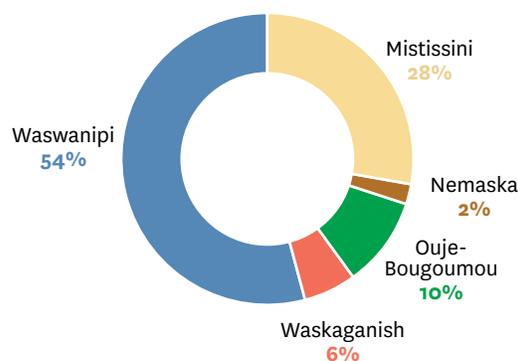
Table 3. Approved Enhancement Disbursements in 2019-20

Community	Total Disbursements
Mistissini	\$788,380.97
Nemaska	\$61,389.00
Ouje-Bougoumou	\$274,432.62
Waskaganish	\$160,247.32
Waswanipi	\$1,521,632.99
All communities	\$2,806,082.00

Table 4. Enhancement Projects by Trapline 2019-20

Community	Traplines Enhanced	Total Projects
Waswanipi	61	379
Mistissini	36	100
Ouje-Bougoumou	13	25
Nemaska	4	6
Waskaganish	8	19
Totals	122	529

Figure 1. Enhancement Projects 2019-2020



of forestry-related program funding. The FPPC develops the guiding policies of the program and reviews projects submitted for funding under the Enhancement Program and forwards its recommendations to the Board/Council Executive for approval.

In 2019-20, the FPPC had 3 meetings with the Community Forestry Program Officers and 9 meetings for project review with the Field Monitor, the Regional Monitor, and the Director of Forestry (whose role was undertaken by the ERWD Director until September 2019). The transfer of the FPPC to the Forestry Department officially began at the end of October 2019, when Director Ottereyes chaired his first FPPC meeting.

Table 5. Enhancement Projects in the FIMS Database

Community	Total Projects
Mistissini	250
Nemaska	26
Ouje-Bougoumou	84
Waskaganish	48
Waswanipi	421
Total	829

The FIMS Database and the Forestry Program Web Portal

The Forestry Information Management System (FIMS) has been in use since April 2013 as a database that houses detailed information on all stages of projects supported through Enhancement Program funding. This year, the For-

estry Department launched a new Forestry Funding Programs Database web portal to provide Cree land users with easily accessible information on the Enhancement Program and its policies, including project eligibility requirements and how to apply for funding. Access to the FIMS is available through the web portal for authorized users.

As of April 2020, the FIMS stores information on more than 800 Enhancement Projects.

Site Visits

We conduct Annual Monitoring Spot Checks for projects funded through the Enhancement Program in the previous year. Monitoring is conducted on a random basis by the Department’s Field Monitor, Abel Neeposh, along with our Community Forestry Program Officers and representatives of Quebec.

In July 2019, our Field Monitors conducted random spot checks on 14 accessible projects in Ouje-Bougoumou, spanning 7 traplines. All of the projects visited were found to have been well done.



July 2019 site visit of Porch Construction Enhancement Project funded in 2018-2019 (Wesley Mianscum, Land user and tallyman)



July 2019 site visit of 9-km Snowmobile Trail Enhancement Project funded in 2018-19 (Johnny Capassisit, Land user and tallyman)

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT WILDLIFE FILES

Woodland Caribou

The Cree-Quebec Technical Woodland Caribou Committee has been working to review and adapt the proposed Quebec Boreal Caribou Habitat Management Strategy within the context of the Adapted Forestry Regime since 2018. This committee was reorganized last year as the Cree Quebec Operational Group (GOR) on Woodland Caribou to better facilitate the presentation of Quebec's various proposals on forestry and woodland caribou management to Cree land users and regional stakeholders for their consideration. The Cree Nation Government co-hosted a Woodland Caribou forum in Ouje-Bougoumou in May 2019 as part of this effort. The forum gathered tallymen, elders, and land users from Mistissini, Nemaska, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waskaganish and Waswanipi for consultation on Quebec's developing proposal for a comprehensive woodland caribou forest management plan.

This is a very complex file and we anticipate that it will be difficult to reach a consensus between the various governments and users of the territory. Quebec's proposed plan to create "Immense Spaces"—in which large areas of caribou habitat would be protected from forest development in long and short-term durations on a rotational basis, while equally large blocks would be subject to wide-scale forest harvesting—is not aligned with the forest standards set out in the Paix des Braves Agreement. A new Cree-Quebec agreement would be required before such a plan could be implemented in Eeyou Istchee.

Detour/Kesagami Woodland Caribou Herd

In December 2019, a forum was held in Pikogan regarding the Detour/Kesagami woodland caribou herd, located at the border of Quebec and Ontario. Interprovincial cooperation will be required to manage the habitat of this cross-border herd in years to come.

Mixed Forest Stands Development Strategy

The provisions of the AFR call for the development of a Mixed Forest Stands Development Strategy by Quebec in collaboration with the Crees. Over the past years, we have

collaborated with our counterparts in Quebec's Ministry of Forests, Fauna and Parks (MFFP) to develop this Strategy. Considering the importance of mixed forest stands as wildlife habitat, we jointly consulted with the Cree communities on a proposed Mixed Forest Stands Development Strategy at a 3-day forum in Ouje-Bougoumou in May 2019. Tallymen from all communities affected by forestry were present at the Forum: 16 from Waswanipi, 10 from Mistissini, 14 from Ouje-Bougoumou, 16 from Nemaska and 3 from Waskaganish. The Mixed Forest Stands Development Strategy was presented to the participants, followed by round table discussions to elicit feedback. Two subsequent meetings were held with Waswanipi representatives in 2019-20 to enhance the Strategy, and the MFFP and the Cree Nation Government have completed the final draft. Final consultations with the JWG members were planned for May 2020, but were postponed due to COVID-19.

Wildlife Habitat Directives

Similar to the work on the Mixed Forest Stands Development Strategy, a joint Cree-Quebec committee is working to elaborate wildlife habitat directives to guide the forestry planning process under the Adapted Forestry Regime. Many working sessions have been held and some of the work is complete, including the description and analysis of the habitat needs of key species of Cree concern. Our target to complete the directive is April 2021.

Wildlife Habitat Quality Assessment

The Cree Quebec Forestry Board completed its pilot project to assess the quality of wildlife habitat—mainly for moose—for a Waswanipi trapline harvested under the Adapted Forestry Regime provisions. The Board hoped to expand this project to more traplines, but this work was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FORESTRY JOINT WORKING GROUPS

The Department's Joint Working Group Coordinator, Nicolas Lemieux, works with the communities affected by forestry to find collaborative solutions to forestry issues that take into account Cree traditional ways of life, the contemporary lives of forest users, and the needs of the forestry industry.

Each of the Cree communities affected by forestry has a Joint Working Group (JWG), created to harmonize forestry activities with the activities of Cree land users. Half of JWG members are Cree representatives, who prepare and assist the tallymen during forestry planning consultations, with assistance from the Department's JWG Coordinator and other Forestry Department staff.

On April first of each year, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government, Quebec authorizes forestry companies to harvest wood in the territory. To ensure adequate consideration of the Cree way of life, Cree representatives from each of the 129 affected traplines are called upon to participate, through consultations in the various forestry planning processes and monitoring of forestry management plans. Cree users are consulted in both medium-term planning processes (5 years) and annual planning, to ensure



JWG members discussing the Mixed Stands Strategy, Fall 2019

harmonization. The consultation process can require mediation and conciliation in the event of disagreements, misunderstandings, or discordant interpretations as forestry plans are implemented.

Every year, the Forestry Department's JWG Coordinator and his Quebec counterpart participate in the following cycle of work:

PRAN Consultations

In the first months of the year, the JWG Coordinators assist the Joint Working Groups of each of the five affected communities in conducting Annual Programming of Forestry Activities (PRAN) consultations, to inform the tallymen of planned locations of imminent forestry activities and to enable them to make corrections and requests prior to the final harmonization of the planning.

PAFIO Mediations and Conciliations

In cases where the official consultations on the Operational Integrated Forest Management Plans (PAFIO) 2018-23 have not led to an agreement, the JWG Coordinators assist with mediations to help resolve the disagreements. In 2019-20, several cases were mediated, including one case that underwent conciliation through an external intervention.



PAFIT Revision

Following PRAN consultations and PAFIO Mediations, the Tactical Integrated Forest Management Plans (PAFIT) are presented to the appropriate bodies and governments—including the Cree Nation Government and the Cree Quebec Forest Board—for revision and finalization. The JWG Coordinators implement the resulting action plan drawn up by the Cree Quebec Forest Board. All of this consultative work and forestry plan finalization is carried out by the first of April each year, in advance of the year's forestry harvesting season.

Monitoring and Modifications

The JWG Coordinators monitor forestry activities throughout the year and oversee any issues, disputes, or disasters that arise to ensure that appropriate consultation is undertaken prior to any modifications of the approved forest management plans. In Summer 2019, for example, further consultations were carried out with Cree representatives following requests from the forestry companies to modify the initial annual planning authorized in April. Special consultations were launched to develop a recovery plan following a major fire in the territory. In Fall 2019, working with the JWGs in each community, we consulted more than half of the tallymen regarding the modification of the 2018-2023 PAFIO.

Special Consultations

We facilitate further consultations as necessary throughout the year to settle local, forestry-related disputes that arise during the harvesting season. In 2019-20, for example, on Trapline W14, a member of the tallyman's family intervened to stop forestry harvesting activities in progress during the hunting season. Negotiations concluded to the satisfaction of all parties. On Trapline W11A, a work stoppage was ordered following the issuance of a harvest permit authorizing construction of a road whose original route had been modified by a forest company. An investigation process was launched and could lead to charges for violations. At this time, the harvested wood remains stacked in the forest.

These are just some of the ways the new Forestry Department is overseeing forest management in the territory and working with the communities to mitigate the impacts of forestry while improving our economy and our way of life. We look forward to taking on new staff and new responsibilities in the years to come. ●



EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

David Bergeron

Mandate

The mandate of the Eeyou Eenu Police Force (EPPF) and of each of its members is to maintain peace, order and public security, to prevent and repress crime throughout Eeyou Istchee and offences under the law and community by-laws, and to apprehend offenders.

In pursuing its mission, EPPF members shall ensure the safety of persons and property, safeguard rights and freedoms, respect and remain attentive to the needs in a manner consistent with cultural pluralism.

Mission Statement

Proud of our origins, the EPPF is committed to providing professional policing services throughout Eeyou Istchee in partnership with the communities we serve.

Our Motto

“Proud to serve”

Values

Professionalism - Service - Integrity -
Accountability - Trust

The Department of the Eeyou Eenu Police Force is pleased to present the 2019-2020 Annual Report.

The EPPF strive to contribute to the safety and well-being of all residents of Eeyou Istchee.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge and thank all staff in uniform and civilians of the EPPF for their work and dedication to the sometimes difficult tasks involved in policing.

PUBLIC SERVICE

The EPPF, wanting to be proactive after the Viens Commission and the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, decided their main objective for the 2019-2020 fiscal year was to maintain and gather all information on Crimes Against the Persons files and proceed to an in-depth analysis via our old Police Record Management System (PRMS) PAMS, and the new ICO Emergency (BeeOn); an analysis in which the EPPF reconsidered and reinvestigated certain cases. We also came up with additional specialized training, coaching on the job for some officers by ad hoc retired officers of the Sûreté du Québec in sexual assault.

COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING

Field Sobriety Test Screening devices (breathalysers) were purchased for each detachment. Previous equipment was becoming outdated, with hard to replace parts that needed repair.

Digital fingerprinting systems were also purchased and installed in all detachments. This machinery is connected to the National and International databases. Training is to be given by Sûreté du Québec (SQ) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with the goal to train senior officers to be able to train their officers.



Photo by Lt. Randy Kitchen

MATERIAL RESOURCES

Currently, we have 28 vehicles in service for patrol in the communities. Each vehicle is equipped with proper policing apparatus.

The staff of the Waskaganish Detachment moved into their new modern building in June 2019.

STAFFING

This year, the EEPF saw 7 students graduate from the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue in the AEC Police Techniques Program in Rouyn. They then moved on to their 15 weeks of basic policing program at the Police Academy (ENPQ) in Nicolet.



We would like to congratulate the following on their promotions within EEPF: Donathan Saganash from Lieutenant to Captain and posted to the headquarters in Chisasibi, Audrey-Anna Icebound from Officer to Lieutenant of the Chisasibi Detachment, which is one of EEPF's biggest Detachments, and most recently, Shannon Nakogee from Officer to Lieutenant of the Waswanipi Detachment.

For the year 2019-2020, there are 106 approved positions within EEPF.

Patrol Officers per community:

- Chisasibi – 18
- Whapmagoostui – 6
- Wemindji – 6
- Eastmain – 5
- Nemaska – 5
- Waskaganish – 14
- Mistissini – 17
- Ouje-Bougoumou – 5
- Waswanipi – 8

At the Headquarters in Chisasibi are: the offices of the Police Director, Deputy Director, two (2) Inspectors, one (1) Investigator Advisor, two (2) Captains and eight (8) civilian employees. There are also four (4) Investigators stationed at various Detachments, along with one Lieutenant per Detachment. In Amos, we have two (2) Court Liaison Officers as well.



DISCIPLINE

There were 19 disciplinary cases for 2019-2020 where 16 officers were involved. After investigations were completed, 7 were reprimanded and 3 resigned before their files could be dealt with.

INVESTIGATIONS BRANCH

This past year 2019-20, the Investigation team has doubled in size from 3 Investigators to 6 Investigators and added 2 contracted personnel. Due to the complexity and the number of criminal files that require additional intervention and more complex investigations, a personnel increase was required in order for the EEPF to provide a satisfactory level of service to the people of Eeyou Istchee.

Between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, the EEPF opened 222 files that required additional police work and handled and/or assisted by the Investigation Branch.

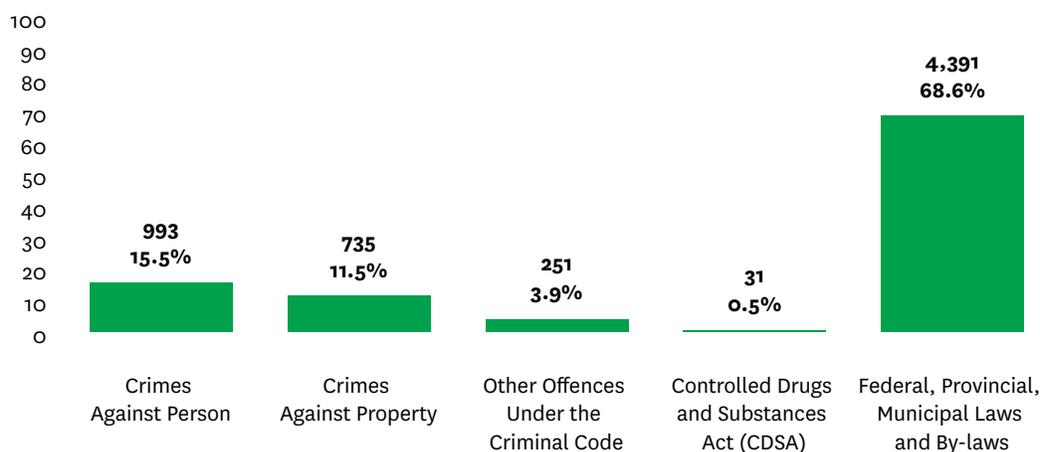
The type of crimes investigated this year fall into 5 main categories such as: crime against a person, crimes against property, drugs and other substances, infractions including traffic offences, and other provincial acts, which in detail include the following types of crimes:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual offences
- Child pornography when caught in the act
- Assault
- Fatal work injury, in cooperation with the Sûreté du Québec

- Robbery
- Extortion of vulnerable persons or persons who depend on their family circle
- Breaking and entering
- Fire
- Auto theft
- Production, trafficking and possession of illicit drugs at local or street level
- Bad cheques, credit card or debit card fraud
- Scams, false pretences, false statements
- Theft and possession of stolen goods
- Offence-related property
- Vehicle accidents
- Mischief
- Criminal offence causing death or life-threatening bodily injuries, committed while driving a vehicle, in cooperation with the Sûreté du Québec
- Reckless driving
- Impaired driving
- Weapons
- Death under mysterious circumstances
- Death or bodily harm threatening the life of a child under three years of age, in cooperation with the Sûreté du Québec
- Disappearances
- Drug trafficking ●

Criminal Investigations

April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020



EYOU COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

WHO WE ARE

Eeyou Communications Network (ECN) is a not-for-profit telecommunications corporation that provides broadband carrier services for the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee and municipalities of the James Bay region. ECN delivers advanced, reliable and cost-effective network access for the benefit of communities, populations, businesses, organizations and governments.

ECN has 25 employees including eight Crees located throughout Eeyou Istchee (Waskaganish, Wemindji, and Ouje-Bougoumou), James Bay (Chibougamau, Chapais and Lebel-sur-Quévillon), Val-d'Or and Montréal.

FIBER-TO-THE-HOME (“FTTH”)

In 2019, Eeyou Communications Network (ECN) continued its FTTH project completing the connection of the communities of Chibougamau, Chapais and Matagami to the most powerful and reliable network in the region. This project is funded in part by the Société du Plan Nord, the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation of Québec, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the Administration Régionale de la Baie James.

Meanwhile in Eeyou Istchee, the number of households taking advantage of ECN's FTTH network doubled since the service's inauguration last year.

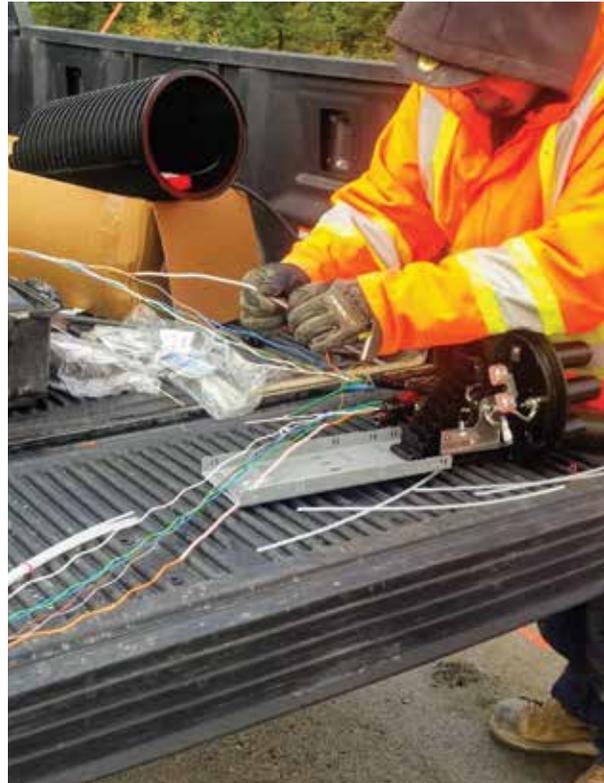
Through its partnership with Distributel, ECN is offering in most of the communities of Eeyou Istchee and James Bay high speed broadband Internet (with speeds up to 1 Gbps), home telephone and television services (with more than 100 channels from Canada, the United States and around the world), at prices comparable to similar residential services in Montreal and Quebec City.

WHAPMAGOOSTUI FIBER OPTIC CABLE

The Nunavik submarine cable project, which will connect Nunavik and Whapmagoostui using fiber optic, is still on track to provide service to Whapmagoostui by the end of 2021. This will allow ECN to provide broadband telecommunications services in the northernmost community of Eeyou Istchee. This infrastructure is funded by the Société du Plan Nord and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

CHAMOUCOUANE-BOUT-DE-L'ÎLE

The project to connect the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James region directly to Montréal using optical fibers, through the Hydro-Québec Chamouchouane Bout-de-l'Île high-power line, is underway and should complete in 2021. This pro-



ject will greatly increase the autonomy of ECN's network, removing its reliance on third parties for connectivity to Montreal and thus securing the whole region's bandwidth for the foreseeable future.

ELEONORE MINE FIBER OPTIC

ECN will deploy 122km of new fiber optic cable to the Eleonore mine in the summer of 2020 to connect it with broadband telecommunications services. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2020 and should allow the Eleonore mine to implement mining 4.0 technologies. This project is funded in part by the Société du Plan Nord.

JAMES BAY HIGHWAY

With its cable buried along the entirety of the James Bay highway, ECN has been managing the works affecting its cable as part of the highway renovation project, to minimize costs and the potential of damages to the cable. 2019 has been a busy year with over 100 dig-up sites to manage during the summer. Although cable damages were avoided in most cases, some in-



Announcement of Eleonore mine fiber optic project

incidents occurred and fortunately, ECN's network redundancy made these incidents transparent to the users of the network.

NETWORK REDUNDANCY

ECN has completed a feasibility study to deploy redundancy (back-up) on its transport network to reduce the impact of optical fiber breaks on some portions of its network and will begin securing the funding to implement this redundancy in the close future. This redundancy will allow essential services such as voice communications in general, and data communications to emergency services such as hospitals and police facilities, to remain active even during a fiber optic cable break.

ECN's team is proud to be hard at work during these trying times to keep people virtually closer together with the help of its fiber optic network. ●



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Christina Gilpin

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Chief Kenneth Cheezo
Chief Thomas Neeposh
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Chief Clarke Shecapio
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Chief Christina Gilpin
Chief Louisa Wynne
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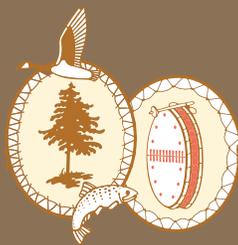
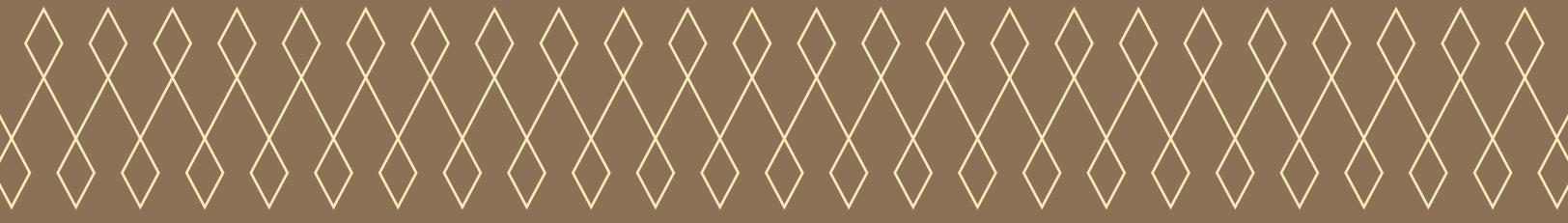
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