

ANNUAL REPORT
ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ
2020-2021



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ ᐱᓂᐅᓪ





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 | 24 |
| Message from the Deputy Executive Director | 27 |
| Communications | 40 |
| Cree-Canada Relations | 44 |
| Cree-Québec Relations | 52 |
| Indigenous Relations | 76 |
| Natural Resources | 78 |
| International Affairs | 80 |

Highlights

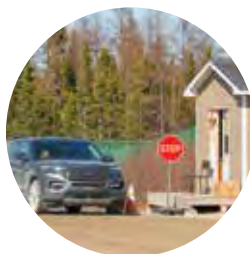
Cree Nation Government

| | |
|---|-----|
| Finance and Treasury | 89 |
| Human Resources | 92 |
| Apatisiwin Skills Development | 98 |
| Commerce and Industry | 118 |
| Environment and Remedial Works | 124 |
| Capital Works and Services | 138 |
| Child and Family Services | 154 |
| Justice and Correctional Services | 160 |
| Social and Cultural Development | 196 |
| Forestry | 208 |
| Eeyou Fenou Police Force | 218 |
| Eeyou Communication Network | 224 |
| | |
| Cree First Nations – Chiefs and Offices | 226 |
| | |
| Board/Council Members – Executive/Executive Committee Members | 227 |



Photo by Brendan Forward

Inside: Spruce Bough Illustration by Jade Mukash



ABOUT THE COVER PHOTOS

From left to right:

- 1) Wemindji community gate/checkpoint (Photo by Katherine Dehm)
- 2) Cree Nation Government Livestream Q&A on COVID-19 – March 31, 2021 (<https://livestream.com/accounts/8792434/events/9601395>)
- 3) Magnificent beaded mask named “Bella” after the former Chairperson of the CBHSSJB by Cree artist Flora Weistche (Photo by Flora Weistche)
- 4) Laura Brien, a resident of the Mistissini Elders’ Home, was the first person in Eeyou Istchee to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Mrs. Brien received the Moderna vaccine from local hemodialysis nurse April Iserhoff. (Photo by Joshua Loon for CBHSSJB)
- 5) Aerial photo of Wemindji community (Photo by Katherine Dehm)



ԻՆՏԵՐՆԱԿԱՆ ԵՎ ԵՐԱՅԻՆ

ՎՃԱՆԿՆԵՐ



COVID-19 VACCINES

January 9, 2021

Arrival of 200 doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccines by chopper from Mistissini to Ouje-Bougoumou.

In this picture, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum shares a fist bump with Jason Coonishish who is Coordinator of Pre-Hospital and Emergency Measures at the CBHSSJB.

Photo: Harry Bosum /CBHSSJB

Message from the GRAND CHIEF/CHAIRPERSON



Dr. Abel Bosum

WACHIYA. KWEY.

IT IS ONCE AGAIN MY HONOUR TO PRESENT TO THE PEOPLE OF EEYOU ISTCHEE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT FOR THE 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR.

It is certainly obvious that throughout the 2020-21 fiscal year, the primary preoccupation and focus of our work has been ensuring that our communities and our people have remained healthy and safe in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we have reported throughout the year, and on many occasions, we have been successful in ensuring that our communities have been protected from serious outbreaks of the virus. Where we have identified cases, we have moved quickly and effectively to isolate individuals and limit the spread. Where we have had tragic outcomes as a result of the virus, it has been in those situations where individuals have returned to Eeyou Istchee from southern areas where they initially contracted the virus. The entire Cree Nation continues to mourn with the families of those who we have lost to the pandemic.

Of course, our success in limiting and containing the virus has been due to our assertive efforts to devise our own laws, precautionary measures and other initiatives that were adapted to our own circumstances. We successfully marshalled all the tools and resources available to us to determine the necessary measures that worked for our communities. We refused to simply and blindly follow the measures that were put in place for geographic areas of Quebec vastly different from our own. We knew that our territory was different geographically, demographically, and

socially. Together with our own public health experts in the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, and the leadership in our communities, we have demonstrated once again that we, ourselves, are in the best position to develop solutions to the problems that we encounter. We have been self-reliant, responsible, and effective.

Our key Cree entities, including the Cree Health Board, under the leadership of Mrs. Bella Petawabano, and the Cree School Board, under the direction of Dr. Sarah Pash, have worked extremely hard to ensure that we were able to seamlessly implement a truly comprehensive and effective approach toward the pandemic, so that all our people—our Elders, our students, and those in vulnerable conditions—could be safe.

Armed with a clear direction of how to keep our own people safe, we were able to have effective coordination with other communities and other peoples of the region through the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.

By way of comparison, because of the robust character of our self-governance, we have outperformed many other jurisdictions in managing the pandemic. We know that it is precisely because we have fought so hard for decades to have the resources to apply to addressing our own issues that we have been able to be successful. We are certainly

[As of July 1, 2021]

| RATE OF VACCINATIONS | EEYOU ISTCHEE | QUEBEC | CANADA |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|--------|
| 1 st Dose | 92% | 81% | 79% |
| 2 nd Dose | 65% | 39% | 45% |

grateful, in comparison to other Indigenous communities and groups across the country, that we have the resources to apply wisely and carefully to our own challenges.

There are a number of important lessons that I personally take from our experience in dealing with the pandemic. We have witnessed repeatedly over many years that our greatest strength as a Nation has been the unity of our people, and it is our people at the community level who have demonstrated their willingness to make the sacrifices, who have complied with the precautionary measures we have put in place, and who have understood what has been asked of them. This reality has been further confirmation that it is only we who know what to adapt and how to adapt the existing available tools to address our own situations. Our strengths in getting through this pandemic have been our self-reliance, our faith in our own people, and faith in our own institutions.

Also, the way in which we have been winning the battle against the COVID-19 virus will enhance our confidence in our being able to address our own issues, whatever they are—physical health, mental health, economic health, or social health. This fundamental truth has been affirmed and re-affirmed as we have gone through this pandemic together. We know that, in the end, we are the ones who are in the best position to address our own problems. With the resources, the tools, and the personnel that we have, we know we can find those approaches and those creative solutions that combine our traditional knowledge, our traditional values together with non-Indigenous approaches to all the issues we face that will result in innovative and effective solutions to our problems.

It is this message—a message of optimism, confidence, resilience and pride—that I want to continue to resonate with all of us. It is this attitude that will serve us well as we continue to mature as an Indigenous Nation, and as we continue to be accountable and responsible for addressing our challenges—now and in the future.

In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, we have nonetheless, been able to move forward on other fronts as well.

Following our intensive efforts, the Government of Canada announced the transfer of \$17.4 million through its Rapid Housing Initiative for the immediate construction of 55 affordable modular homes in our nine Cree communities. This initiative will directly benefit the most vulnerable members of our communities.

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic brings into sharp focus the dangers to health caused by overcrowded housing, we are heartened by this tangible effort by the Government of Canada to help us address the problem. We are encouraged by Canada's adoption of a human rights-based approach to housing, in order to serve the most vulnerable. This investment by Canada complements the efforts of the Cree Nation to meet the critical need for more than 2,000 housing units over the next few years. It marks an important step in Canada's partnership with us in implementing our Cree Nation Housing Strategy.

I am pleased to report that over the course of the 2020-21 fiscal year we have been able to move forward with our initiative regarding protected areas. As part of the Grande Alliance MOU, we have been able to identify new protected areas which will connect the protected wildlife habitats throughout our territory. This, of course, has been done through extensive consultations with our communities and their traditional hunters and trappers. This initiative will result in the designation of 23 new reserves bringing an additional 39,000 square kilometres of protected areas within Eeyou Istchee.

I am very pleased to report that we have moved forward with the establishment of the Cree Development Corporation so that our Cree Nation can be in a better position to take advantage of development opportunities throughout the region, resulting in many more contracting opportunities for our Cree enterprises while, at the same time, creating very significant employment opportunities for our people. We have a great deal of confidence in Mr. Davey Bobbish, who has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of this Cree entity, and I am happy that this institution has a competent and experienced Board of Directors. This Cree entity will play an increasingly important role in the economic life of our Nation.

I am also very enthusiastic and proud of the fact that we have also moved forward with our Cree Language Commission, by appointing Mr. Jamie Moses as our new Cree Language Commissioner. Jamie's passion and commitment for *iyyiyuiyihitiwin* and *iyyiyuyimuwin* is demonstrated from his past work experience as Cultural Coordinator for 15 years for the Cree Nation of Eastmain. Further, he brings his experience and knowledge of his culture and values as a Board member for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, Vice-Chair for the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, Board member for the Cree Cultural Institute, and other working groups and committees. We look forward to working with Jamie in his capacity as the Cree Language Commissioner.

With regard to other important cultural matters, I am very pleased to announce that together with the City of Montreal, the Lachine Museum and our Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, we have successfully repatriated a Cree beaded hood (the Gunner Hood). This exquisite example of a Cree beaded hood belonged to the Gunner family; it is nearly 200 years old and is an important part of our heritage. It had been on temporary loan to Aanischaaukamikw where it was shown in the opening exhibition. Now it will be coming home to Eeyou Istchee on a permanent basis. Aanischaaukamikw and the Cree Nation celebrated the hood's repatriation with a Press Conference that I was honoured to participate in, along with Dinah Gunner and her daughter Trifona (representing the Gunner family), Dr. Sarah Pash, former Executive Director of the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante, and the Mayor of the Borough of Lachine, Maja Vodanovic.

As part of our effort to indigenize the labour force to the greatest extent possible in our Cree entities, we were

pleased to appoint Mr. John Longchap as our new Director of Cree Capital Planning. In our effort to bring out the best of our communities I am confident that Mr. Longchap will successfully apply a wealth of community experience to this important Cree Nation Government role, and will do so with the utmost professionalism.

Our Cree Nation, in collaboration with Quebec and Canada, was able to pay a very fitting tribute to our first Grand Chief, the late Billy Diamond. The James Bay Highway has been renamed “the Billy Diamond Highway”.

The renaming of this critical infrastructure link that safely connects our Cree communities and the region with the economic centres of Quebec and Canada acknowledges his important role in the history of northern Quebec and also in the future development, not only of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, but of our region and Quebec as a whole. We are grateful to Mrs. Elizabeth Diamond and her family for giving us permission to pay tribute to our former leader in this public way.

In this same vein, I would like to express our continuing gratitude to the ground-breaking efforts on the part of former Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, whose courageous stands in insisting upon the acknowledgement of Cree rights created the conditions for our Cree Nation to make important gains and successes. His insistence on respect for our rights has been pivotal in our inclusion into the political and economic life of the region, and at the same time, we have been able to enhance the range and level of resources available to us so that we could more effectively address our own issues.

Over this past year, I had the opportunity to work very closely with Canada’s Minister of Justice, Mr. David Lametti, to bring forward legislation to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government has been actively involved at the international level in drafting and promoting the passage of the *UN Declaration* for nearly 40 years. We are particularly grateful to former Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses and Mr. Romeo Saganash, who worked diligently for many years to see the fruition of this very important initiative.

Building on a previous bill first introduced by our own Romeo Saganash, this new legislation, Bill C-15, will be an important framework for reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples as called for in the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The *Declaration* will also be an important source for the interpretation of Canadian law.

This legislation will contribute to ensuring that historic injustices, colonialism, and current instances of systemic racism can be addressed, while also promoting the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and the right of self-government. The new bill has been introduced to parliament and we look forward to its successful adoption and receiving royal assent during the session of Parliament that recesses in June 2021.

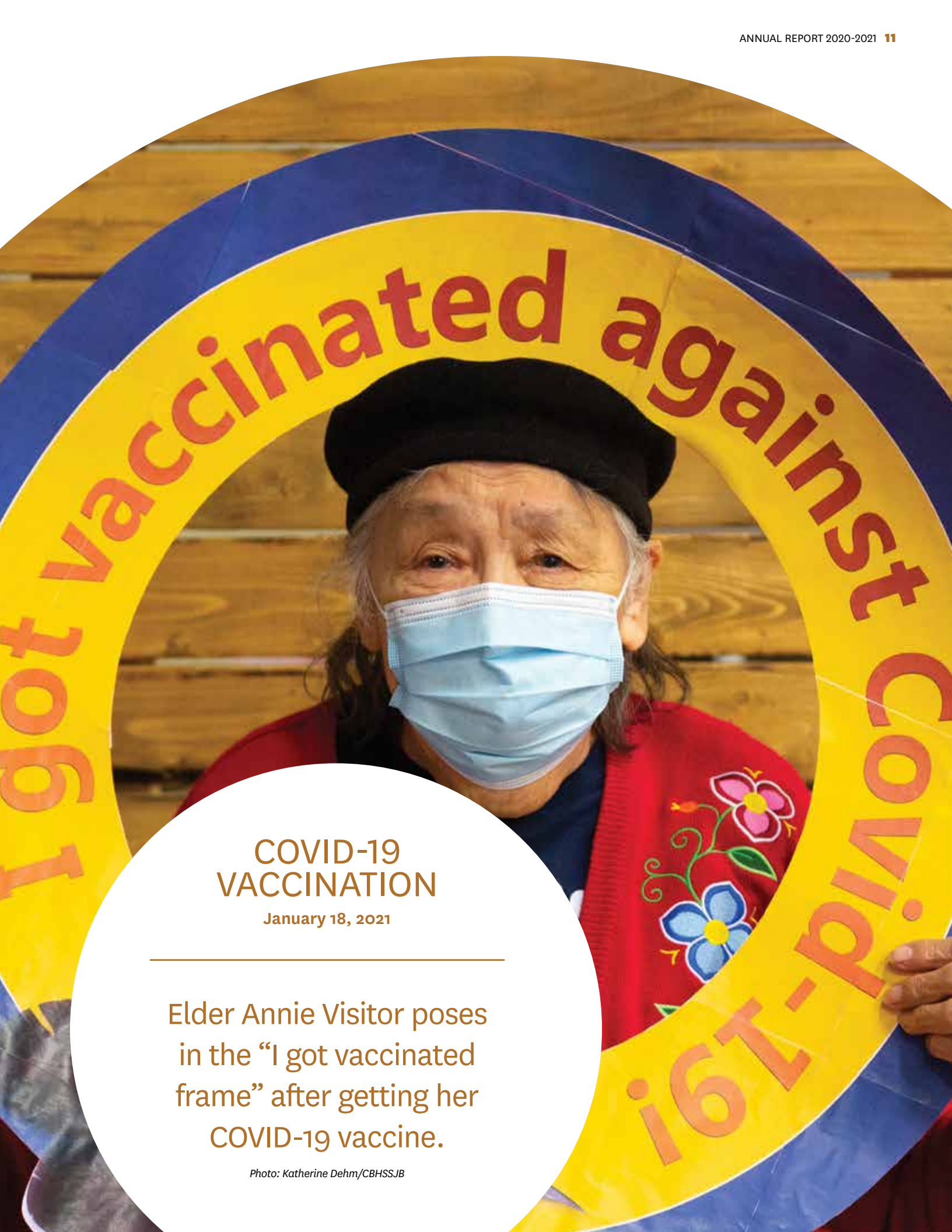
You will learn more about these, and other, initiatives undertaken on behalf of the people of Eeyou Istchee, throughout the pages of this Annual Report. I hope that you find this not only interesting, but inspiring. We have accomplished so much while prioritizing the health of our people.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Mrs. Bella Petawabano, former Chair of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. Her contributions, not only to the Health Board, but to our Cree Nation—particularly in the professional manner in which she coordinated our response to the COVID-19 pandemic—will have very lasting consequences for all of us. We wish Mrs. Petawabano all the best for the future.

It is also appropriate, in closing, that I acknowledge the passing of several of our Cree Nation pioneers who sadly left us during this 2020-21 year. These exemplary individuals include Fred Blackned, Rusty Cheezo, John Mark, Reggie Mark, and Matthew Wapachee. Although they all left us too soon, they have all left an indelible mark on the future of our Cree Nation.

Miigwetch,
Dr. Abel Bosum
Grand Chief/Chairperson





COVID-19 VACCINATION

January 18, 2021

Elder Annie Visitor poses in the “I got vaccinated frame” after getting her COVID-19 vaccine.

Photo: Katherine Dehm/CBHSSJB

Message du GRAND CHEF/PRÉSIDENT



Dr. Abel Bosum

WACHIYA. KWEY.

J'AI DE NOUVEAU L'HONNEUR DE PRÉSENTER AU PEUPLE D'EYYOU ISTCHEE LE RAPPORT ANNUEL DU GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS (EYYOU ISTCHEE)/GOUVERNEMENT DE LA NATION CRIE POUR L'EXERCICE 2020-2021.

Il est évident que tout au long de l'exercice 2020-2021, notre principale préoccupation a été de veiller à ce que nos communautés et notre peuple restent en santé et en sécurité dans le contexte de la pandémie de la COVID-19.

Comme nous l'avons signalé tout au long de l'année, et ce, à de nombreuses occasions, nous avons réussi à protéger nos communautés d'éclousions importantes du virus. Lorsque nous avons identifié des cas, nous avons agi rapidement et efficacement pour isoler les individus et limiter la propagation. Là où nous avons eu des conséquences tragiques en raison du virus, il s'agissait de situations où des individus sont retournés à Eeyou Istchee à partir de régions du sud où ils ont contracté le virus. Toute la Nation crie continue de partager le deuil des familles des victimes de la pandémie.

Certes, nos efforts soutenus pour concevoir nos propres lois, mesures de précaution et autres initiatives et les adapter à notre propre situation sont les éléments clés qui nous a permis de limiter la propagation de la COVID-19. Nous avons réussi à mobiliser tous les outils et toutes les ressources à notre disposition pour déterminer les bonnes mesures pour nos communautés. Nous avons refusé de suivre aveuglément les mesures mises en place pour des régions géographiques du Québec très différentes des nôtres. Nous

savons que notre territoire se distinguait des autres sur les plans géographique, démographique et social. Avec l'aide de nos propres experts en santé publique au Conseil cri de la santé et des services sociaux et des dirigeants de nos communautés, nous avons démontré une fois de plus que nous sommes les mieux placés pour trouver des solutions aux problèmes auxquels nous devons faire face. Nous avons été autonomes, responsables et efficaces.

Nos principales entités crie, y compris le Conseil cri de la santé, sous la direction de Bella Petawabano, et la Commission scolaire crie, sous la direction de Sarah Pash, ont travaillé très forts pour que nous puissions mettre en œuvre, sans heurts, une approche globale et efficace à l'égard de la pandémie afin que toute notre population — nos aînés, nos élèves et les personnes en situation vulnérable — puisse être en sécurité.

Munis d'une orientation claire sur la façon de garder notre population en sécurité, nous avons pu assurer une bonne coordination avec d'autres communautés et d'autres populations de la région par l'intermédiaire du gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James.

À titre de comparaison, en raison du caractère robuste de notre autonomie gouvernementale, notre gestion de la pandémie a été plus efficace que celle de nombreuses

[Au 1^{er} juillet 2021]

| TAUX DE VACCINATION | EYYOU ISTCHEE | QUÉBEC | CANADA |
|------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|
| 1 ^{re} dose | 92 % | 81 % | 79 % |
| 2 ^{ième} dose | 65 % | 39 % | 45 % |

autres administrations. Nous savons que c'est précisément parce que nous avons lutté pendant des décennies pour avoir les ressources requises pour résoudre nos propres problèmes que nous avons réussi à bien gérer la pandémie. Quand on regarde la situation d'autres communautés et groupes autochtones à travers le pays, nous sommes certainement reconnaissants d'avoir les ressources pour faire face à nos propres défis avec sagesse et avec rigueur.

Il y a un certain nombre de leçons importantes que je tire personnellement de notre lutte contre la pandémie. Depuis de nombreuses années, nous avons constaté à maintes reprises que notre plus grande force en tant que nation est l'unité de notre peuple. Et ce sont nos gens dans les communautés qui ont démontré leur volonté de faire des sacrifices, qui ont respecté les mesures de précaution que nous avons mises en place et qui ont compris ce qui leur a été demandé. Cette réalité a été la confirmation que nous seuls savons ce qu'il faut adapter et comment adapter les outils existants pour répondre à nos propres situations. Les points forts de notre lutte contre cette pandémie ont été notre autonomie, notre foi en notre propre peuple et notre foi en nos propres institutions.

De plus, la façon que nous avons choisie pour vaincre le virus de la COVID-19 renforce notre confiance en notre capacité à régler nos propres problèmes, quels qu'ils soient : santé physique, santé mentale, santé économique ou santé sociale. Face à cette pandémie, nous avons réaffirmé cette vérité fondamentale. Nous savons que, au final, nous sommes les mieux placés pour régler nos problèmes. Avec les ressources, les outils et le personnel que nous avons, nous savons que nous pouvons trouver des approches et des solutions créatives, en combinant nos connaissances et valeurs traditionnelles ainsi que les approches non autochtones, pour ainsi trouver des solutions novatrices et efficaces aux problèmes auxquels nous sommes confrontés.

C'est ce message d'optimisme, de confiance, de résilience et de fierté qui doit continuer de trouver écho auprès de chacun de nous. C'est cette attitude qui nous aidera à devenir une nation autochtone mature et à répondre de nos actes quand nous faisons face à nos défis, aujourd'hui comme demain.

Malgré les défis que la pandémie a entraînés, nous avons néanmoins pu progresser sur d'autres fronts.

À la suite de nos efforts intensifs, le gouvernement du Canada a annoncé le transfert de 17,4 millions de dollars, dans le cadre de son Initiative pour la création rapide de logements, pour la construction immédiate de 55 maisons modulaires abordables dans nos neuf communautés crie. Ces maisons sont destinées aux membres les plus vulnérables de nos communautés.

Alors que la pandémie de la COVID-19 met en évidence les dangers pour la santé causés par le surpeuplement des logements, nous sommes encouragés par cet effort tangible du gouvernement du Canada pour nous aider à régler le problème. Nous sommes également encouragés par l'adoption par le Canada d'une approche du logement axée sur les droits de la personne afin de répondre aux besoins des personnes les plus vulnérables. Cet investissement du

Canada s'ajoute aux efforts de la Nation crie pour répondre au besoin criant de plus de 2 000 logements au cours des prochaines années. Il s'agit d'une étape importante pour notre partenariat avec le Canada dans la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de logement de la Nation crie.

Je suis heureux de signaler que, au cours de l'exercice 2020-2021, nous avons pu aller de l'avant avec notre initiative concernant les aires protégées. Dans le cadre du protocole d'entente de la Grande Alliance, nous avons été en mesure d'identifier de nouvelles aires protégées qui relieront les habitats fauniques protégés sur notre territoire. Cela, bien sûr, est le résultat de vastes consultations avec nos communautés et leurs chasseurs et trappeurs traditionnels. Cette initiative entraînera la désignation de 23 nouvelles réserves, ce qui permettra d'ajouter 39 000 kilomètres carrés d'aires protégées au sein d'Eeyou Istchee.

Je suis très heureux de signaler que nous sommes allés de l'avant avec l'établissement de la Société de développement crie afin que notre Nation crie puisse être en meilleure position pour profiter d'occasions de développement dans toute la région, ce qui se traduit par de nombreuses possibilités de passation de marchés pour nos entreprises crie, tout en créant des possibilités d'emploi très importantes pour nos gens. Nous avons une grande confiance en Davey Bobbish, qui a été nommé président de cette entité crie, et je suis heureux que cette institution se soit dotée d'un conseil d'administration compétent et expérimenté. Cette entité crie jouera un rôle de plus en plus important dans la vie économique de notre Nation.

Je suis également très enthousiaste et fier du fait que nous avons également été de l'avant avec notre Commission de la langue crie en nommant Jamie Moses comme nouveau commissaire à la langue crie. La passion et l'engagement de Jamie pour iyiyuyiyihtiwin et iiyiyuyimuwin se sont manifestés dans son travail comme coordonnateur culturel pendant 15 ans au sein de la Nation crie d'Eastmain. De plus, il partage son expérience et sa connaissance de sa culture et de ses valeurs acquises à titre de membre du conseil d'administration du Conseil cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James, de vice-président de l'Association crie de pourvoirie et de tourisme, de membre du conseil d'administration de l'Institut culturel cri et d'autres groupes de travail et comités. Nous attendons avec impatience de travailler avec Jamie en sa qualité de commissaire à la langue crie.

En ce qui concerne d'autres questions culturelles importantes, je suis très heureux d'annoncer que, de concert avec la ville de Montréal, le Musée de Lachine et notre Institut culturel cri Aanischaaukamikw, nous avons rapatrié avec succès une coiffe crie (la coiffe Gunner). Cet exemple exquis d'une coiffe crie ornée de perles appartenait à la famille Gunner; elle a près de 200 ans et est une partie importante de notre patrimoine. Elle avait été prêtée temporairement à l'Institut culturel Aanischaaukamikw où elle a été présentée lors de son exposition inaugurale. Son retour à Eeyou Istchee sur une base permanente est maintenant prévu. Aanischaaukamikw et la Nation crie ont célébré le rapatriement de la coiffe lors d'une conférence de presse à laquelle j'ai

eu l'honneur de participer en compagnie de Dinah Gunner et de sa fille Trifona (représentant la famille Gunner), Sarah Pash, ancienne directrice générale de l'Institut culturel cri Aanischaaukamikw, Valérie Plante, mairesse de Montréal, et Maja Vodanovic, mairesse de l'arrondissement de Lachine.

Dans le cadre de nos efforts visant à autochtoniser, dans la mesure du possible, la main-d'œuvre de nos entités cries, nous avons été heureux de nommer John Longchap au poste de directeur de la planification des immobilisations cries. Dans le cadre de nos efforts pour faire ressortir le meilleur de nos communautés, je suis convaincu que John Longchap réussira à utiliser sa grande expérience communautaire dans ce rôle important du Gouvernement de la Nation Crie, et qu'il le fera avec le plus grand professionnalisme.

Notre Nation crie, en collaboration avec le Québec et le Canada, a pu rendre un hommage très approprié à notre premier grand chef, le regretté Billy Diamond. La route de la Baie-James a été rebaptisée «route Billy-Diamond».

Le changement de nom de ce lien infrastructurel important, qui relie en toute sécurité nos communautés cries et la région aux centres économiques du Québec et du Canada, reconnaît le rôle important que Billy Diamond a joué dans l'histoire du Nord québécois et aussi dans le développement futur, non seulement de la Nation crie d'Eeyou Istchee, mais de notre région et du Québec dans son ensemble. Nous sommes fort reconnaissants à Elizabeth Diamond et à sa famille de nous avoir donné la permission de commémorer notre ancien leader de cette façon publique.

Dans ce même esprit, j'aimerais exprimer notre gratitude à l'égard de l'ancien grand chef Matthew Coon Come qui a fait œuvre de pionnier avec ses positions courageuses visant à faire reconnaître les droits des Cris, créant ainsi les conditions qui ont permis à notre Nation crie de réaliser des gains et des succès importants. Son insistance à faire respecter nos droits a été un facteur de premier plan dans notre inclusion dans la vie politique et économique de la région. Par ailleurs, nous avons pu améliorer l'étendue et le niveau des ressources à notre disposition pour répondre plus efficacement à nos besoins.

Au cours de la dernière année, j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler en étroite collaboration avec le ministre de la Justice du Canada, M. David Lametti, pour la présentation d'un projet de loi visant à mettre en œuvre la *Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones*. Depuis près de 40 ans, le Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)/Gouvernement de la Nation Crie participe activement à l'élaboration et à la promotion de la Déclaration des Nations Unies au niveau international. Nous sommes particulièrement reconnaissants envers l'ancien grand chef Ted Moses et Romeo Saganash qui ont travaillé assidûment pendant de nombreuses années pour assister à la réalisation de cette importante initiative.

S'appuyant sur un ancien projet de loi déposé par Romeo Saganash, ce nouveau projet de loi, le projet de loi C-15, sera un cadre important pour la réconciliation entre le Canada et les peuples autochtones, comme le prévoit le Rapport de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation. La

Déclaration sera également une source importante pour l'interprétation du droit canadien.

Cette loi contribuera à corriger les injustices historiques, le colonialisme et les cas actuels de racisme systémique, tout en favorisant les droits inhérents des peuples autochtones à l'autodétermination et au droit à l'autonomie gouvernementale. Le nouveau projet de loi a été présenté au Parlement et nous attendons avec intérêt l'adoption et la sanction royale au cours de la session du Parlement qui prendra fin au mois de juin 2021.

Le présent rapport vous permettra d'en apprendre davantage sur ces initiatives, et sur d'autres, entreprises au nom de la population d'Eeyou Istchee. J'espère que cela ne saura non seulement vous intéresser, mais aussi vous inspirer. Nous avons accompli tant de choses tout en donnant la priorité à la santé de notre peuple.

En terminant, je tiens à exprimer ma profonde satisfaction à Bella Petawabano, ancienne présidente du Conseil cri de la santé et des services sociaux. Ses contributions, non seulement au Conseil de la santé, mais aussi à notre Nation crie — en particulier la façon professionnelle dont elle a coordonné notre intervention face à la pandémie de la COVID-19 — auront des conséquences très durables pour nous tous. Nous souhaitons à Bella Petawabano le meilleur des succès pour la suite des choses.

Il est également approprié, en terminant, de reconnaître le décès de plusieurs pionniers de la Nation crie qui nous ont malheureusement quittés au cours de l'exercice 2020-2021. Parmi ces personnes exemplaires on retrouve Fred Blackned, Rusty Cheezo, John Mark, Reggie Mark et Matthew Wapachee. Bien qu'ils nous aient quittés trop tôt, ils ont tous laissé une marque indélébile sur l'avenir de notre Nation crie.

Miigwetch,
Dr. Abel Bosum
Grand Chef/Président



LE BULLETIN COVID-19 DE LA NATION CRIE

Le 4 mai 2021

La Nation crie s'en sort exceptionnellement bien dans la campagne de vaccination, respectant les mesures de précaution et les restrictions et mettant en place des outils pour gérer l'accès à nos communautés.

Photo: Katherine Dehm/CBHSSJB



Message from the DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF/ VICE-CHAIRPERSON



Mandy Gull-Masty

THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL MESSAGE FROM MY OFFICE WILL MARK MY LAST AS THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF OF EYYOU ISTCHEE. THIS PAST YEAR HAS CONTINUED TO BE ONE OF CHANGE AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CREE NATION OF EYYOU ISTCHEE.

It has been one of the most rewarding and educational experiences to serve the Cree nation – to see and travel throughout the territory to listen and learn from Eeyouch has been a blessing to me and I am proud and honoured to have spent that time with you.

The year of 2020 was not only notably marked by a pandemic that completely changed our lives, but we have also seen some moments of Cree history once again being made. Most notably, the protection of more than 20% of the Eeyou Istchee territory which contributed to reaching the objective of 17% of Quebec's Protected Areas target by 2020 was of significant importance. We were able to achieve an additional 10,000 square kilometres of protection due to the excellent information and work by our protected areas team. None of this work would have been possible without the valuable input of our trappers, land users, and tallymen and their knowledge of Eeyou Ehtuwin and the activities of their traplines.

EYYOU LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION

This year the Land Use Planning Commission focused on continued workshop sessions that gathered information on a variety of subjects relating to impacts and activities such as the status of road network infrastructure. The feedback from these sessions has helped the team determine that more support is required in the engagement of GIS teams. We are continuously working to gather data in the development of a Regional Land and Resource Plan.

HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The HFFTC members have reviewed a number of important files this past year. Also most notably is the preparation of ministerial policy on Aboriginal relations with the Quebec government. This policy will refer to a number of key areas with respect to the management of forests, wildlife, and parks. The consultation process is underway, but a lot of additional work will need to be completed in providing feedback from Eeyou Istchee, especially with regards to the management of the Moose population and the continued

work of establishing a Caribou plan for Eeyou Istchee. I truly enjoyed this experience, as it was one of the committees that offered me a lot information on the activities of our Tallymen and the land users of Eeyou Istchee. I would also like to acknowledge Nadia Saganash for her diligence as a Cree member and our longstanding advisor Alan Penn for his continued knowledge that he always makes available to us and the other parties.

EYYOU ISTCHEE PROTECTED

The Protected areas file as previously mentioned has been submitted to the Quebec government on time for the 2020 deadline that was put in place. This is the first step in the process to finalizing and submitting the Protected areas to the legislative process. I want to thank the tallymen, land users and knowledge holders who continuously worked with us throughout the process. It is not possible to achieve protection for Eeyou Istchee without their priceless input. We were not able to be present in person during the COVID-19 period in Eeyou Istchee, but we continued to communicate and follow up by Zoom sessions and information sessions as much as possible. The Protected areas team has grown pretty significantly this past year and I am pleased to see the additional Cree members coming on board in this file to represent the needs of Eeyou Istchee and its members.

The work of the Cree Nation on protected areas is recognized as an ongoing project that focuses on the importance of culture traditional knowledge in defining the areas of selection. This work is still on-going, and we have the next task to attain our target of 30% by 2035. I trust that our Cree Nation members and staff will continue to work together in supplementing and supporting the protection of our territory. This year I had the opportunity to share the story of the work being carried out in Eeyou Istchee at a number of virtual events and conferences. It is always a pleasure to tell the story of our work and showcase the steps that Eeyou are taking to keep working on protecting their traditional territories.

I have to also acknowledge the work of our new Protected areas teams. I am so pleased to see valuable contributions

made by the new staff members coming on board to support this process. This team will continue the next precious steps out of conservation for our territory. The most important work in carrying out conservation efforts is in areas that connect sites of cultural interest and importance, and that hold important Cree knowledge 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!

YOUTH

The most rewarding experience this year in working with the youth was a JBNQA training seminar that engaged participants in the negotiation process based on real life files that happened in Eeyou Istchee. I was so impressed by the diligence of the participants in asking hard questions, finding information and of course leading the process with the valued input of their Tallymen. That role was well represented by the Youth Grand Chief Kaitlynn Hester Moses. I trust that this important work will continue on within the CNYC and at all youth levels – to continue in the training and access to information on the rights and responsibilities of being Eeyou and the JNBQA in Eeyou Istchee. I was very proud to see the youth participants take this event so seriously and work to have the best outcome and I trust we will have them to depend on in the future – continuing in the roles that our former leaders have left open for them.

As my term comes to an end, I want to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Cree Nation Government – I have valued the experience of working with you and learning from you. Many of you have exemplified a commitment to the Eeyou nation and I am further thankful for the challenge of continuing in your role and keeping our services continuing in a time that was rapidly changing. The situation unfolding in the Cree territory during this time was met with creativity and new ways of working. I am thankful that each and every one of you rose to the challenge of virtual operations or working with new measures in place. I wanted to share my thanks for every moment that you stepped up and fulfilled your role within the Cree Nation Government.

In closing I want to extend my appreciation to the Cree Nation members for trusting me as their representative and I am truly honoured and humbled for having had this opportunity. Every community has left me with knowledge and memories that I will walk with for the rest of my life. The Cree territory has evolved in so many ways and with such speed. I am amazed by our resilience and determination. Meegwetch for asking me to be a part of that journey in a leadership role. On behalf of my husband and my children I want to extend my deepest thanks for all the kindness and support that you have shown us. Niishkumdun mishdee!

*Mandy Gull-Masty
Deputy Grand Chief*

Photo: Jamie Moses



Message de la GRANDE CHEF ADJOINTE/ VICE-PRÉSIDENTE



Mandy Gull-Masty

LE MESSAGE ANNUEL DE 2020-2021 DE MON BUREAU SERA MON DERNIER EN TANT QUE GRANDE CHEF ADJOINTE D'EYYOU ISTCHEE. AU COURS DE LA DERNIÈRE ANNÉE, LA NATION CRIE D'EYYOU ISTCHEE A CONTINUÉ DE FAIRE FACE À BEAUCOUP DE CHANGEMENTS ET DE DÉFIS.

Servir la Nation crie a été pour moi l'une des expériences les plus enrichissantes et éducatives de ma vie. La possibilité de voyager à travers le territoire pour écouter et apprendre des Eeyouch a été une vraie bénédiction pour moi et je suis fière et honorée d'avoir passé ce temps avec vous.

En plus d'avoir été marquée par une pandémie qui a complètement changé notre vie, l'année 2020 nous a aussi fait vivre, encore une fois, quelques moments de l'histoire crie. Plus particulièrement, notre contribution d'aires protégées qui a permis au Québec d'atteindre sa cible de 20 % du territoire québécois en aires protégées d'ici 2020 a été très importante. Nous avons pu protéger 10 000 kilomètres carrés de plus grâce aux excellents renseignements et au travail de notre équipe des aires protégées. Ce travail n'aurait pas été possible sans l'apport précieux de nos trappeurs, utilisateurs du territoire, et maîtres de trappe, leur connaissance d'Eeyou Ehtuwin et les activités sur leurs aires de trappe.

COMMISSION EYYOU SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Cette année, la Commission sur l'aménagement du territoire a poursuivi les séances de discussions qui ont permis de recueillir des informations sur divers sujets liés aux impacts et aux activités, telles que l'état de l'infrastructure du réseau routier. La rétroaction reçue lors de ces séances a aidé l'équipe à déterminer qu'un soutien plus important est nécessaire pour l'engagement des équipes du SIG. Nous travaillons continuellement à la collecte de données dans le cadre de l'élaboration d'un plan régional du territoire et des ressources.

COMITÉ CONJOINT DE CHASSE, DE PÊCHE ET DE PIÉGEAGE

Les membres du CCCPP ont étudié un certain nombre de dossiers importants cette année. Plus particulièrement, il y a eu la préparation de la politique ministérielle sur les relations avec les Autochtones du gouvernement du Québec. Cette politique fera référence à un certain nombre de domaines clés en matière de gestion des forêts, de la faune et

des parcs. Le processus de consultation est en cours, mais du travail supplémentaire devra être accompli pour fournir des commentaires concernant Eeyou Istchee, surtout en ce qui concerne la gestion de la population d'originaux et la poursuite de travaux sur l'établissement d'un plan pour le rétablissement du caribou à Eeyou Istchee. J'ai vraiment aimé cette expérience. C'est l'un des comités où j'ai appris le plus sur les activités de nos maîtres de trappe et les utilisateurs du territoire d'Eeyou Istchee. Je voudrais également remercier Nadia Saganash pour sa diligence en tant que membre cri, et notre conseiller de longue date, Alan Penn, pour les connaissances qu'il continue à nous offrir ainsi qu'à d'autres parties.

EYYOU ISTCHEE PROTÉGÉ

Le dossier des aires protégées, comme mentionné précédemment, a été présenté au gouvernement du Québec à temps pour respecter la date limite fixée pour l'année 2020. Il s'agit de la première étape pour régler les derniers détails sur les aires protégées avant la présentation sur ce sujet au processus législatif. Je tiens à remercier les maîtres de trappe, les utilisateurs du territoire et les détenteurs de connaissances cries qui ont travaillé avec nous tout au long du processus. Il n'est pas possible d'obtenir une protection pour Eeyou Istchee sans leur apport inestimable. Nous n'avons pu aller à Eeyou Istchee pendant la pandémie de la COVID-19, mais nous avons continué à communiquer et à assurer le suivi lors de réunions et séances d'information virtuelles Zoom autant que possible. L'équipe des aires protégées a connu une croissance assez importante au cours de la dernière année et je suis heureuse de voir les membres cris supplémentaires se joindre à ce dossier pour représenter les besoins d'Eeyou Istchee et de ses membres.

Les travaux de la Nation crie concernant les aires protégées font partie d'un projet à caractère permanent qui met l'accent sur l'importance des connaissances traditionnelles culturelles dans la définition des aires pour la sélection des aires protégées. Ce travail est toujours en cours. Notre prochaine tâche sera l'atteinte de 30 % d'aires protégées

d'ici 2035. J'ose croire que les membres et le personnel de notre Nation crie continueront de travailler ensemble pour accroître et assurer la protection de notre territoire. Cette année, j'ai eu l'occasion de parler des travaux réalisés à Eeyou Istchee lors de plusieurs conférences et événements virtuels. C'est toujours un plaisir de parler de notre parcours et de présenter les mesures que les Eeyou prennent pour mieux protéger leurs territoires traditionnels.

Je dois également souligner le travail de nos nouvelles équipes des aires protégées. Je suis très heureuse de constater l'incalculable contribution des nouveaux membres du personnel qui se sont joints à nous pour appuyer ce processus. Cette équipe passera aux prochaines étapes importantes pour la conservation de notre territoire. Les plus importants travaux de conservation visent les zones qui relient les sites d'intérêt culturel qui représentent des connaissances crie importantes sur le territoire cri. Je tiens à les remercier de leurs efforts inlassables auprès des communautés, et ce, tout en respectant des délais des plus difficiles. Félicitations pour votre excellent travail!

JEUNESSE

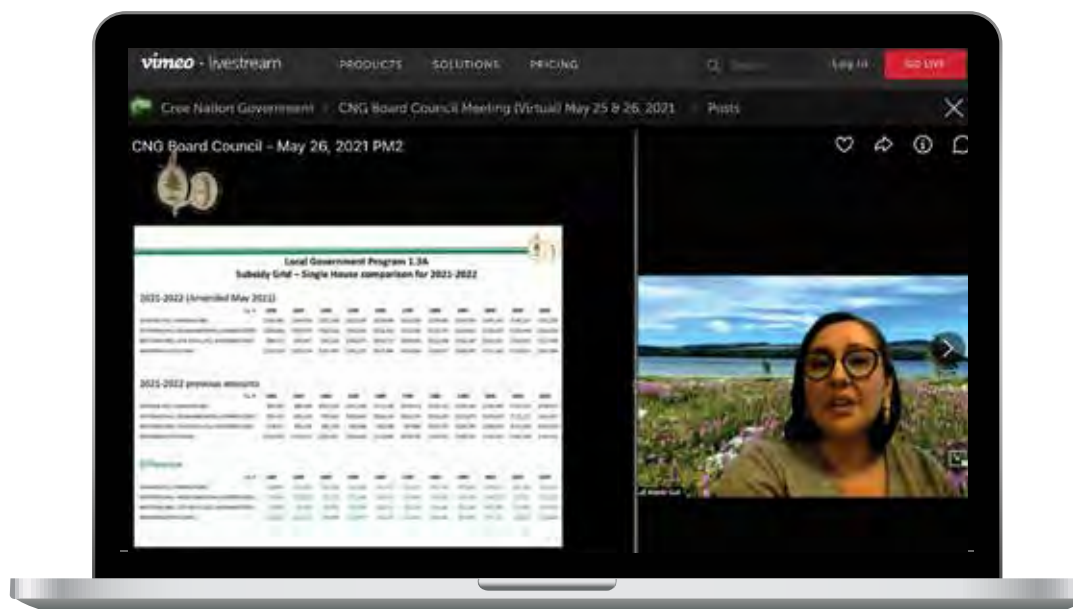
L'expérience la plus enrichissante de mon travail avec les jeunes cette année a été un séminaire de formation sur la CBJNQ où les participants ont pu participer à un processus de négociation basé sur des cas vécus à Eeyou Istchee. J'ai été vraiment impressionnée de voir les participants travailler avec diligence, posant des questions sérieuses, trouvant l'information et, bien sûr, dirigeant le processus avec l'apport précieux de leur maître de trappe. La grande chef de la Jeunesse, Kaitlynn Hester Moses, a joué ce rôle. J'espère que cet important travail se poursuivra au sein du CJNC – et à tous les paliers touchant les jeunes – pour améliorer la formation et l'accès à l'information sur les droits et responsabilités des Eeyou et de la CBJNQ à Eeyou Istchee.

J'étais très fière de voir les jeunes participants prendre cet événement au sérieux et travailler pour obtenir le meilleur résultat et j'ai confiance que nous pourrions compter sur eux à l'avenir, dans des rôles que nos anciens leaders sont prêts à leur laisser.

Alors que mon mandat touche à sa fin, je tiens à remercier chaleureusement le personnel du gouvernement de la Nation crie. J'ai apprécié mon expérience de travail avec vous, car vous m'avez enseigné des choses. Plusieurs se sont distingués par leur engagement envers la Nation Eeyou et je suis contente de vous voir poursuivre votre rôle et maintenir nos services dans un monde en rapide évolution. La situation en cours récemment dans le territoire cri a été relevée avec créativité et de nouvelles façons de travailler. Vous avez tous relevé le défi posé par un fonctionnement virtuel ou le travail avec de nouvelles mesures en place. Je vous remercie d'avoir répondu à l'appel et rempli votre rôle au sein du gouvernement de la Nation crie.

En terminant, je tiens à remercier les membres de la Nation crie de m'avoir fait confiance en tant que représentante et je suis sincèrement honorée et fière d'avoir eu cette expérience. Chaque communauté a amélioré mes connaissances et m'a laissé des souvenirs dont je vais me rappeler tout au long de ma vie. L'évolution du territoire cri a suivi de multiples voies, et ce, tellement rapidement que notre résilience et détermination m'impressionnent. Meegwetech de m'avoir demandé de faire partie de cette évolution en tant que leader. Au nom de mon mari et de mes enfants, je tiens à exprimer mes plus sincères remerciements pour toute la gentillesse et le soutien que vous nous avez témoignés. Niishkumdun mishdee!

*La grande chef adjointe,
Mandy Gull-Masty*





Message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Namagoose

THIS PAST YEAR WAS ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING YEARS WE HAVE FACED AS A NATION AND AS A GOVERNMENT. WE HAD TO MANAGE AND DEAL WITH A GREAT THREAT TO OUR PEOPLE'S HEALTH, LIVES AND SAFETY BROUGHT ON BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

We managed to continue to function as a government, and the services continued to be delivered albeit at a reduced pace. Throughout the pandemic, our offices in the Cree communities remained open and functional. Each director was mandated to seek the best options for their employees' safety and to keep our services in place.

Due to the lack of large hospitals and the remoteness of our communities, we had no option other than to implement a total lockdown strategy for the Cree communities.

Southern Quebec was the epicenter of the pandemic and so our employees located in the southern offices were required to work from home. All the services they provide continued to function and the mandates given to them were being carried out although at a somewhat slower pace.

We unfortunately lost 10 of our citizens to the pandemic. We express our deepest condolences to those families for their loss.

The total suppression strategy worked and is still working, and the few cases we endured in Eeyou Istchee were successfully managed and brought under control.

Our own Cree Board of Health and Social Services must be commended on the successful and professional way that they have managed our suppression strategy and guided our people throughout the ongoing pandemic.

The Federal government maintained or extended various measures as part of its COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to provide support for individuals and businesses affected by the pandemic. Among others measures, it provided emergency funding to the Cree communities to cover the essential and direct costs caused by the pandemic. The communities to date have received a total of \$16,893,095 to cover these costs. Cree community-owned businesses received support funding of \$1,655,185.00. The Cree Nation Government received on behalf of the Cree communities a total of \$17.4 million to construct 55 affordable modular homes, for elders and disabled persons. More details are provided under the section *Cree-Canada Relations* of this report.

On a brighter note, we saw this year the successful roll out of the Private Housing initiative, with 50 applications

approved and more than \$6 million in subsidies allocated for the construction of private home units. This is the beginning of unlocking the value of housing and creating wealth for Cree citizens in the Cree communities. This value has remained locked due to colonial legacy of the *Indian Act*, which made it legally impossible for Cree citizens to own land or a house in the Cree communities.

The Cree Nation and Canada amended the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement* to make it possible for Cree individuals to acquire a right of "superficie" on a land lot in perpetuity for residential purposes. This right permits the Cree grantees to own, sell and pass down to family members the house built on the lot. Since the grant is perpetual, there will be no need to have Chief and Councilors decide if they would let you keep your house, as there will be no need to renew the grant for the lot. This also removes any potential political issue that might have arisen if the land lot grants were subject to renewal.

The Cree Nation Government tabled a proposal that we are still working with the Federal Government on how it can contribute to the Cree Nation Housing Strategy in a meaningful way. These discussions remain ongoing.

Seeking solutions and working around legal obstacles have been part of our successful strategy in Cree Nation building for many years. If we just submitted well-worded complaints to government, there would be no successful solutions to our many issues, since most Federal Officials do not really know how to solve our issues. We know our issues best, and we also know best the potential solutions. If we are fearful to table solutions, we will not resolve our issues and the problems will persist, and we will not advance as a society or Nation.

On the legal front, we obtained a very major court decision in our efforts to prevent uranium mining. On October 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada refused Strateco Resources' application for leave to appeal from the judgment of the Québec Court of Appeal in Strateco Resources Inc. The Supreme Court's order brought to a final close Strateco's unsuccessful efforts to seek damages for having been

prevented from proceeding with the Matoush advanced uranium exploration project.

In November 2013 Quebec refused to authorize the Matoush uranium project, on the basis that the project lacked social acceptability amongst the Crees, especially in Mistissini. Quebec's decision came after sustained opposition on the part of the Cree Nation of Mistissini and with the support of the Cree Nation, demonstrating the importance of the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Cree Nation and Québec. This confirms Cree consent is a requirement for development projects to proceed in Eeyou Istchee.

On the Federal relations file we continue to make progress on the implementation of the *New Relationship Agreement*. After some initial issues, we have mostly developed templates on how to manage the funds and projects.

The implementation and management of the community projects have gone beyond my expectations. I have reported this to the Federal government representatives. This is a good model that can be pursued in delivering special projects and Federal obligations.

The implementation of the *Paix des Braves* is also going well, and the projects in the Cree communities are being managed professionally by the Cree communities' officers. I commend them on the great and outstanding job they have done since the signing of the *New Relationship Agreements* with Quebec and Canada.

No one is being left behind, and the transformation and progress are apparent in all the Cree communities.

The relationship between the Cree Nation Government and the local governments is also positive and very functional. We have administrative and community capital planning virtual meetings with the Directors of Operations, Director Generals and Treasurers on a regular basis. This forum is critical and pertinent in managing relationships and in the implementation of 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.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Directors and employees of the different departments of the Cree Nation Government. Thank you for everything that you do for the Cree Nation Government and the entire Cree Nation.

Have another great year.

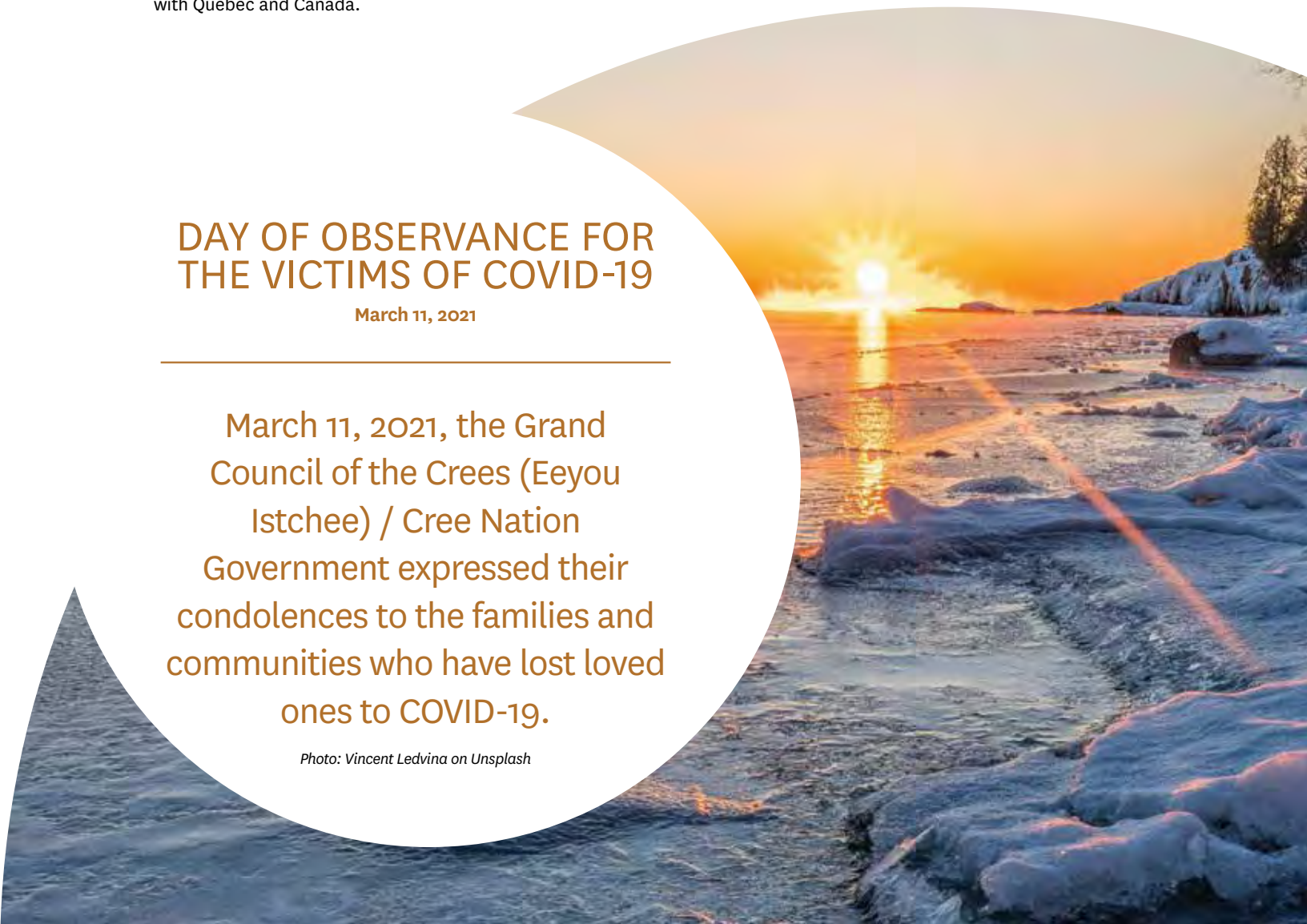
Bill Namagoose
Executive Director

DAY OF OBSERVANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF COVID-19

March 11, 2021

March 11, 2021, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government expressed their condolences to the families and communities who have lost loved ones to COVID-19.

Photo: Vincent Ledvina on Unsplash



THE CREE NATION OF WASHAW SIBI

The Cree Nation Government is pleased to have continued to support the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi in its efforts to identify a suitable site, and to construct a new village, for its members. The Cree Nation Government has continued to support a basic administration to further this objective so that the Washaw Sibi people can have a secure location to call home, and a place where their Cree culture and language can be protected and encouraged.

The Washaw Sibi Council, in close collaboration with the Cree Nation Government, continued to explore the possibility of creating a single, unified community located at Pikogan. During the 2020-21 year, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings continued between the Washaw Sibi Council and the Council of the Abitibiwinni First Nation. However, at the Washaw Sibi Annual General Assembly, the community members unanimously expressed the view that their preference was to pursue a potential village site that had been previously identified by community members located south of Matagami on Highway 109.

This location has historically and genealogically been associated with Cree hunters, and the current tallymen invited the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi to consider this site for the future village. Previously, several technical assessments were carried out on this location to determine the suitability of this site for construction purposes, and it was found to address all the basic requirements for locating a new village.

The leadership of the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi, headed by Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt, will continue to pursue this site option into the 2021-22 fiscal year, and will remain in close contact with the Cree Nation Government as this

process continues. Once a suitable site for their new village has been secured, discussions with both Quebec and Canada will commence to incorporate Washaw Sibi as the 10th Cree community under the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*.

In the meantime, Washaw Sibi has continued to work in close collaboration with the Cree Nation Government and with the Waskaganish First Nation in addressing various issues related to a potential mining development by Wallbridge Mining Company. Together, the two communities have worked with the Abitibiwinni First Nation to secure a range of benefits including the employment of approximately 25 Washaw Sibi members, and a number of Waskaganish members, from Wallbridge directly and from its contractors while the company is still in its exploration phase. Regular meetings involving

Waskaganish, Washaw Sibi and Wallbridge have created a very positive climate for collaboration as the mining project progresses toward full development. Washaw Sibi has done its part in ensuring acknowledgment of Cree rights in the context of resource development within Eeyou Istchee.

Also, Washaw Sibi and Waskaganish have, together, undertaken a very creative approach to the resolution of certain ambiguities related to the trapline overlaps of their traditional territories. This innovative approach has involved the establishment of a mediation exercise overseen by respected Cree Elders and statesmen—Robert Kanatewat and Philip Awashish. Washaw Sibi looks forward to a very principled and effective resolution to this issue based on the traditional Cree value of respect.

Washaw Sibi looks forward to continuing to play its part in the future growth of the Cree Nation.

Photo: Ryan Christodoulou on Unsplash



Message from the DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael Petawabano



WELCOME TO THE 2020-2021 CREE NATION GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL REPORT. THIS PAST YEAR WAS A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER FOR US ALL!

Beginning in April we had no idea that COVID-19 would affect us all for the entire year. With limited or no travel, virtual meetings, and offices restricted to limited occupation by staff, the adjustments made by all the Government Services departments' employees were significant. Despite the restrictions and many changes, we continued to adapt and work hard to achieve the most that we could. I am proud of the adaptability we have shown as a government and as a nation.

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
- Forestry Department

As Deputy Executive Director, I also sit on the Management Committee as well as many other committees and boards such as Plan Nord and the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council.

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. I am proud of the dedication all the departments have shown this year, from the work done by the IT Department in assisting community Public Safety Departments, to the Communications Department's continuous work with the COVID-19 Public Updates. Our Department of Commerce and Industry worked hard to modify its programs to provide struggling businesses help, and the excellent work done by Apatisiwin Skills Development and the Social and Cultural Development Departments throughout the pandemic allowed for continued support and services.

A special thank you to Nadia Saganash, Senior Advisor Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement Implementation for all her hard work and dedication on the many files she worked on in the past year. Also, a thank you to Rodney Petawabano – Coordinator for his efforts in the start-up

and program development of the Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper Program.

During the past year, I have continued to work with 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.

This past year we had completed our first community Zoom tour where four Directors and I conducted virtual meetings with the communities. Our goal was to reach out to every community and create an opportunity to provide access to the directors and to identify productive ways to work together and to allow inter-departmental collaboration. Although we had to change the tour from in person to virtual, we did complete all the communities and had a successful meeting with all communities. This year we hope to follow up with an in-person tour and to continue to push for greater collaboration with the Cree communities and Cree Nation Government Departments.

We have embarked on a Capacity Building Framework with ASD, DCI, SCD and DOJCS to identify how we as departments can better leverage our programs and services to help build capacity throughout our respective mandates. While this work is still ongoing, we had made significant progress in understanding how we can work together to create better outcomes in increasing the capacity of the region.

Work has continued in the many other areas of Government Services. We have continued to make significant progress in the Records and Information Management (RIM) project as well as the Cree Free Trade and construction CCQ discussions.

In 2020-2021 we saw the launch of the new Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper Program (EILK). This program saw the employment of five new government employees and represents a significant first step in overseeing management of our traditional lands. This is a first step of a larger program that will present significant opportunity for our region. With the increase of protected areas, we will need to have the ability to patrol and monitor wildlife and environment throughout the region.

Despite the continued dedication and hard work, 2020-21 was a difficult year for large projects and housing construction due to the pandemic. We hope that with continued vaccinations and respect for the protocols we can gradually return to normal early in this year. A return to normal is in sight and we can expect higher levels of activity and opportunity as we turn the corner on COVID-19.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the employees for their hard work, perseverance, and adaptability during the past year.

Below are some highlights of the various Government Services departments from 2020-2021.

CREE-QUÉBEC FORESTRY ECONOMIC COUNCIL

The Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council (“CQFEC”) is composed of an equal number of representatives designated by the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (“MFFP”) and by the Cree Nation Government. Its mandate is to promote the development of economic and business opportunities for the Crees in forest development activities. It shall also ensure the implementation of sections 3.64 to 3.70 of Chapter 3 of the Paix des Braves.

CQFEC works aimed at ensuring the availability of a list of Cree Enterprises interested in forest development activities and at consulting the concerned forestry stakeholders and concerned Cree communities in a view of finding best ways to use the guaranteed annual volume of three hundred fifty thousand (350,000) cubic metres of timbers. It also aimed to encourage and facilitate employment and contracts to Crees, and to provide recommendations on how to improve sections 3.64 to 3.70 of the Paix des Braves Agreement forestry regime, with the goal of increasing the economic involvement of the Crees in forest development activities.

Over the year 2020-2021, the CQFEC oriented its works towards the objectives of helping Cree stakeholders better understand forest product industry and opportunities, prioritizing Cree enterprises benefiting Cree Communities with respect to local employment, local contracts, and local economic spinoffs with respect to non-commercial silvicultural works, and improving the Crees involvement in forest development activities within the context of the use of the the guaranteed annual wood allocation.

To this end, the Cree members of the CQFEC have been holding working sessions with local representatives appointed by the Cree Nation of Waskaganish, the Cree Nation of Nemaska, the Cree Nation of Waswanipi, the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, to make recommendations on ways to maximize benefits for the Crees and to further promote their involvement in all aspects of forest development activities.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Many of our employees have been confined this year and the team immediately took to the task of helping remote work and encouraging collaboration tools. Driven by the introduction of new tools and processes last year, we were able

to adapt quickly, but with higher volume, and more complex and unusual support requests, we had to adjust our service. The team's visibility has improved and collaboration with all departments has been strengthened, which has enabled the development of improved solutions.

During this exceptional year, the IT team was on the move to help and provide solutions to anyone in need. Finding the most efficient route to provide solutions, the team often worked on weekends in preparation for a cargo flight on Monday or were involved in technologies or services outside the usual support framework. The IT Team was fully present and available to meet the exceptional challenges of 2020-2021.

This year, the IT Department welcomed 3 new employees:

- Benoit Farly, IT systems administrator in Montreal,
- Kristian Whiskeychan, IT technician in Waskaganish,
- Danielle Wapachee, IT technician in Mistissini.

New Infrastructure and VoIP service.

With several projects launched last year, this year we were able to achieve several important milestones successfully. Five major offices received new infrastructure equipment that provides more reliable connectivity, including new VoIP phones.

The offices of Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EPPF) and Justice of Whapmagoostui are now connected to our network with a fast and reliable connection. The IT team has also started to deploy new infrastructures and VoIP service at some of the EPPF offices, allowing employees to benefit from several new services. We are also participating in the deployment of a new call centre at the police headquarters in Chisasibi. This year we are launching a new project with the Department of Justice to update and improve the infrastructure.

Working with many departments IT increased its service catalogue:

- This year the Cree Nation Government IT team integrated the Justice IT team, forming one team.
- Collaborating with the communities Public Safety Officers and the Cree Health Board, a new application was developed, implemented and users training was also provided.
- Working with the Department of Child and Family Services, the team created the infrastructure needed for the daycare centers in the communities.
- For the Finance Department we have participated in the Disaster Recovery installation.
- IT participated to the infrastructure plan for the HVAC monitoring system.
- IT brought its expertise into the ArcGIS consolidation plan.
- The Forestry department has taken up residence in a new office where we have installed the infrastructure.
- Working with Commerce and Industry department we have deployed the needed infrastructure for the upcoming new Business Hub in Mistissini.
- Most of the videoconference system implementation in our offices was delayed due to COVID-19.

In 2020-2021 we appointed IT Horizontal Business Analyst (BA) experts to carry out a general audit of our main business processes and the IT systems impacted by them. Each Cree Nation Government department will be reviewed in order to gain an overview and potential optimization of systems and data. In an effort to consolidate our systems without affecting our level of service, we are awaiting a recommendation report by them which will provide the organization with an understanding of the current use of the systems in place, and will identify gaps between processes, requirements, and system capabilities. The main objective is to take advantage of existing systems where possible. The report will provide multiple recommendations to achieve an optimized integration of all systems.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM) PROJECT

Documentation Center Update and Achievements

Despite difficulties caused by the ongoing global pandemic, over the course of the year the Brossard Documentation Center continued to ensure access to information within our archives while maintaining daily operations. Today, the Documentation Center houses approximately 4700 boxes, and the Records and Information Management (RIM) team is constantly working towards cataloguing, digitizing, and

identifying duplicate records in order to reduce our storage needs, preserve vital records, and improve access to information. In January, the Documentation center acquired an additional 200 boxes which had previously been stored by the Hutchins Legal cabinet. As a result, the team has embarked on a project to digitize all 200 boxes within the next six months. This will be challenging as the preparation of each document for digitization is extremely labor intensive, but necessary in today's modern digital age.

Additionally, the RIM team has worked on cataloguing a large collection of records from both the Executive Branch of GCCEI/CRA and the work of Alan Penn. Approximately 75 boxes of records from the Executive Branch of GCCEI/CRA were transferred from Ottawa to Brossard and catalogued, wherein several boxes were deemed duplicates. Furthermore, the team was able to catalogue approximately 200 boxes from Mr. Penn's collection of records and will tackle the remaining 250 boxes when the current Hutchins Legal digitization project is completed.

Records and Information Management (RIM) Project

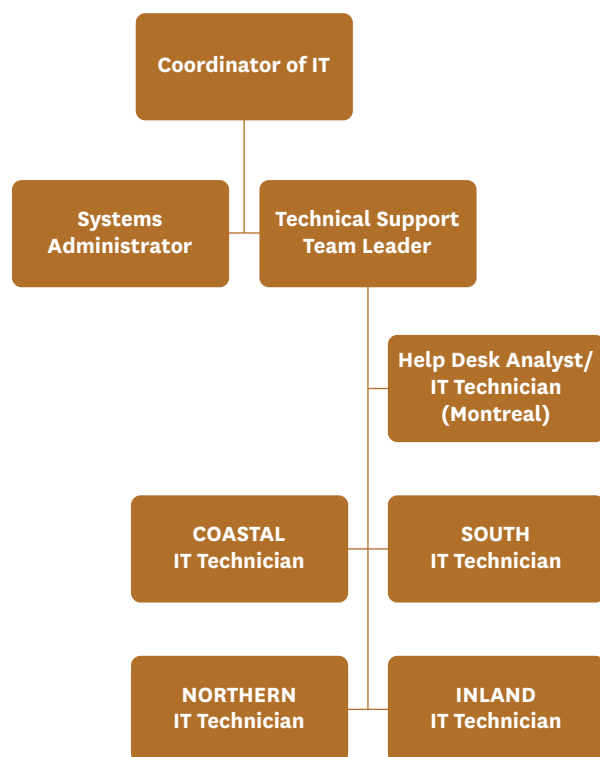
The Records and Information Management (RIM) team reports significant advancement for the RIM project over the year. 2020-2021 marked the first year of implementation for the RIM Project, where great strides have been made towards optimizing documentation management practices across the Cree Nation Government.

Antès Business Design Update

Antès is a company that specializes in Business Design, with strong expertise in defining the optimal use and structure of information within an organization. Over the course of the past two years, our RIM team has been working on the Records and Information Project for the Cree Nation Government. With a detailed vision and key components of the RIM Project identified, 2020-2021 was exclusively dedicated to deploying the SharePoint platform for document management, leveraging the 6-step process designed by Antès. A dedicated project team was assembled, combining Antès and a designated project manager from within the RIM department. Together, the team has been able to address multiple departments over the course of the year: Communications, HR, ASD, Capital Works and IT. Additionally, the team has begun defining the different policies and procedures that will result in full deployment of the document management platform. Throughout the coming year, targeted groups for implementation include the Ottawa Embassy, Environment and Remedial Works, Social and Cultural Development, Justice and Correctional Services, and Finance and Treasury departments. Working with these groups in the past year has led to a deeper understanding of the individual needs of each department. The RIM Project continues to focus on addressing the issues of working in a closed network environment, including file duplication, varying classifications, difficulty with access, searching, and compliance.

To accelerate the deployment and implementation of SharePoint, the project team has decided to re-evaluate

Figure 1. The organizational structure for the Information Technology Department



their strategy and tackle multiple groups simultaneously, rather than sequentially starting and finishing one department at a time.

In collaboration with the IT department, the RIM Project is also taking the initiative to address the Cree Nation Government's need for a centralized intranet page. This initiative incorporates feedback from across the Cree Nation Government collected through survey analysis. The feedback will be used to determine the design and implementation of an intranet page that promotes easy information storage, communication, content creation, and an overall improvement in daily work for all.

As the project nears completion in the next fiscal year, a great deal of focus will be spent on supporting departments throughout this transition period by providing training, sharing of best practices and ongoing feedback to improve each department's experience when working in their new SharePoint environment. Completion of the RIM Project will have lasting impact on the Cree Nation Government by improving document management practices across the organization and facilitating the sharing, collaboration, and accessibility of information for all. Lastly, project deliverables will set the foundation for future archives management by leveraging the SharePoint platform to constitute the basis of organized and compliant documentation.

CREE-QUEBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

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 Jamesiens 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 a governance model that is new and unique particularly regarding its implementation, which includes a range of different issues and challenges. At the level of the Cree Nation Government, some of the challenges are mostly in respect to implementation of responsibilities for category II lands. The Cree Nation Government has greater autonomy and responsibilities for governance on Category II lands and may declare the same competencies attributed to a municipality or MRC. The Cree Nation Government may, by resolution, declare with respect to all or any part of Category II Lands that it shall exercise any of the jurisdictions, powers and functions attributed from time to time to a municipality or MRC. In cases where adaptations are required regarding the exercise of the jurisdiction concerned to consider the context of Category II Lands and the institutional capacity of the Cree Nation Government, they shall be the object of a prior agreement between the Crees and Québec.

Some of the jurisdictions, functions, and powers that the Cree Nation Government may exercise in Category II lands, include:

- Planning of land use and development
- Regional Economic Development
- Territorial development plans
- Establishment of a fund to provide financial support for operations to develop land or forest resources
- Management of watercourses and lakes
- Management of Recreational Leases
- Management of access
- Management of sand and gravel
- Establishment and management of regional parks
- Power
- Planning of residual matter (waste) disposal
- Any other jurisdiction, function or power that is attributed or may be attributed from time to time to an MRC

Some activities such as the development of the Regional Land and Resource Plan for category II lands are currently underway by the Eeyou Planning Commission in support of the Cree Nation Government's Environment and Remedial Works Department land use planning unit. However, the delegation of jurisdiction, powers, and functions to the Cree Nation Government has not occurred to date but may take place progressively through coordinated efforts between Cree Nation Government departments as well as an assessment of adequate resources to undertake these responsibilities.

This past year, the Cree Nation Government has been preparing to define an implementation strategy of these responsibilities and has sought the service of an expert firm to support the development of a five-year implementation action plan. The objective of the project is as follows.

- 1) Gain a thorough understanding of the jurisdictions attributed to Regional County Municipalities (MRCs) that the Cree Nation Government could exercise under the Cree-Québec Governance Agreement, and of the associated responsibilities and obligations.
- 2) Determine the gaps that might exist between the implementation of these jurisdictions and the Cree Nation Government's current structures, responsibilities, and needs.
- 3) Develop a five-year action plan for the implementation of the prioritized jurisdictions and functions, including organizational and budgetary requirements.

In the coming year, the Cree Nation Government will be meeting with the various departments to help feed the action plan, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2021. It is worth mentioning that this exercise will eventually require a harmonized approach with the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.

Wildlife Protection Resources

The *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)*, 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 these 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 Related to Wildlife Protection Resources

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

As part of the discussions between the Cree Nation Government and the Quebec Ministry of Wildlife, Forest, and Parks, it was agreed to establish a workgroup that would provide recommendations to identify issues and measures for the proper implementation of the 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 CBJNQ.

- To follow up and report its recommendations to the Cree and Quebec authorities.

This past year, the Cree-Quebec Technical working group has been working to provide recommendations for the adequate implementation of the following priority issues:

1. Establishment of a wildlife protection office in a Cree community
2. Recruitment/training of Cree Wildlife Protection Resources on the territory
 - 20 Wildlife Protection Officers
 - 19 Wildlife Protection Assistants
 - 30-50 Auxiliary Conservation Officers
3. Adapted training programs for Cree Wildlife Protection Resources
4. Recruitment and retention of Cree wildlife protection resources
5. Ensuring adequate presence on the territory to respond to increasing pressure.

Most recent efforts have been dedicated to securing a permanent and functional office in the community of Chisasibi for the Wildlife Protection Officers. Considering the current office was to be temporary and deemed inadequate for the operations and needs of the WPO, the Cree Nation Government deemed it necessary to resolve this long-standing issue. The Cree Nation Government therefore engaged with the community of Chisasibi and the Société d'Infrastructure du Québec to find solution to the issue. Latest discussions between the Cree Nation Government and SQI has resulted in a draft funding agreement enabling the planning and construction of the building. The next step is to present the draft agreement to the executive for further directive.

Photo: Jamie Moses



EYYOU ISTCHEE LAND KEEPER/WILDLIFE PROTECTION ASSISTANT (EILK/WPA) PROGRAMS

It is with great pride and excitement that I can present the very first Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper/Wildlife Protection Assistant section for the Cree Nation Government's 2020-2021 Annual Report.

Background of EILK/WPA

In March 2019, the Cree Nation Government signed a two-year funding agreement with Quebec to conduct a pilot project that would initiate a program for the training and hiring of Wildlife Protection Assistants resources in Eeyou Istchee.

This initiative will help support the implementation of article 178 of the Agreement on the Governance in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory between the Cree of Eeyou Istchee and the Government of Quebec, enabling therefore the Cree Nation Government to train and hire Wildlife Protection Assistants. The pilot project is entitled: The Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper's Program.

The Land Keeper's program vision is:

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

The Land Keepers will not only have certain responsibilities & enforcement powers under Quebec legislation, but will also integrate cultural responsibilities so as to promote traditional practices and values. Our responsibility will be to provide support to the Wildlife Protection Officers, the tallymen, and communities in the monitoring, management and in building awareness to ensure continued respect for the land, animals & traditional values, and practices.

Program Development

Since the finalized agreement with the Government of Quebec was realized, we have spent most of 2020-2021 on building and setting up the program, hiring and training the staff.

Since July of 2020, we have begun putting in place all the necessary components of the program, starting with hiring the Coordinator of Operations, Rodney Petawabano. In the following months we have made significant progress in hiring four Land Keepers (Wildlife Protection Assistants), purchased all the necessary vehicles and field equipment, as well as locating our offices in Chisasibi (Coastal) and Mistissini (Inland).

Training has begun with initial training under the MFFP and subsequent training programs are currently underway in First Aid and Administrative support. We have also been instructed in the "Eeyou Indoh-Hoh Weeshun-Weehun" (Traditional Eeyou Hunting Law). Our plan is to continue to build our team's capacity with additional programs delivered in 2021-2022.

Land Keepers Activities in 2020-2021

Although our main focus was on staffing and building the program, over the past six months our team was able to get started with several key initiatives in Eeyou Istchee.

1. **Monitoring of Caribou Hunting** – Our Land Keepers were requested to respond to issues and complaints related to

Caribou hunting on the Trans Taiga road in the territory east of Chisasibi in the Caniapiscou region. This monitoring and surveillance resulted in one of the first indigenous managements of Indigenous hunters for our territory. It was a large achievement for our newly formed organization to take part in and get started on our important work.

2. **Moose Survey** – The Land Keepers provided support to the Wildlife Protection Officers in their moose survey that took place in the late winter 2021. The opportunity to collaborate with the Wildlife Protection Officers presented an excellent learning experience and provided us an overview and some ideas of our own on monitoring and data collection.

Looking ahead to the 2021-2022 year we plan to take the next steps in defining the Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper Program. Our objectives are to:

1. Structure our patrolling efforts into regions, including protected areas, and set goals for the year for trapline visits, patrols for monitoring of hunting and fishing practices and general patrols for inspection of campsites and other environment concerns.
2. Identify and conduct several research/data collection projects for the year.
3. Plan and document program outreach. We will set specific goals to achieve outreach for stakeholders, land users, communities, and youth throughout Eeyou Istchee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the new Land Keepers for their dedication to the program and to Cree Nation Government for all its support for the program. In addition, I would also like to thank Apatisiwin Skills Development for its assistance in training and capacity building for this important program.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE PROTECTED AREAS COMMITTEE

In 2020, much effort has been focused on advancing the establishment of a protected area network in Eeyou Istchee in support of Quebec commitment to achieve the international target of 17% of protected areas in Quebec by the end of the year 2020. Indeed, the Québec government committed itself to preserving 17% of Québec's land and freshwater territory in protected areas, which 20% of them would be north of the 49th parallel. This is based on an international target that the countries under the United Nations have pledged to meet by a certain deadline.

For several years the Cree Nation Government has been working with the communities to develop a proposal for protected areas in Eeyou Istchee. Collaborative work was pursued between the Cree Nation Government Protected Areas team, led by Mrs. Chantal Tetreault and the MDELCC where discussions on a proposed protected area network were initiated.

In February 2020, the Memorandum of Understanding for the La Grande Alliance was signed between the Cree Nation and the Quebec Government. As a result, an implementation process and structure was put in place including the Grande Alliance Protected Area Committee composed of representatives of the Cree Nation Government, the Ministry



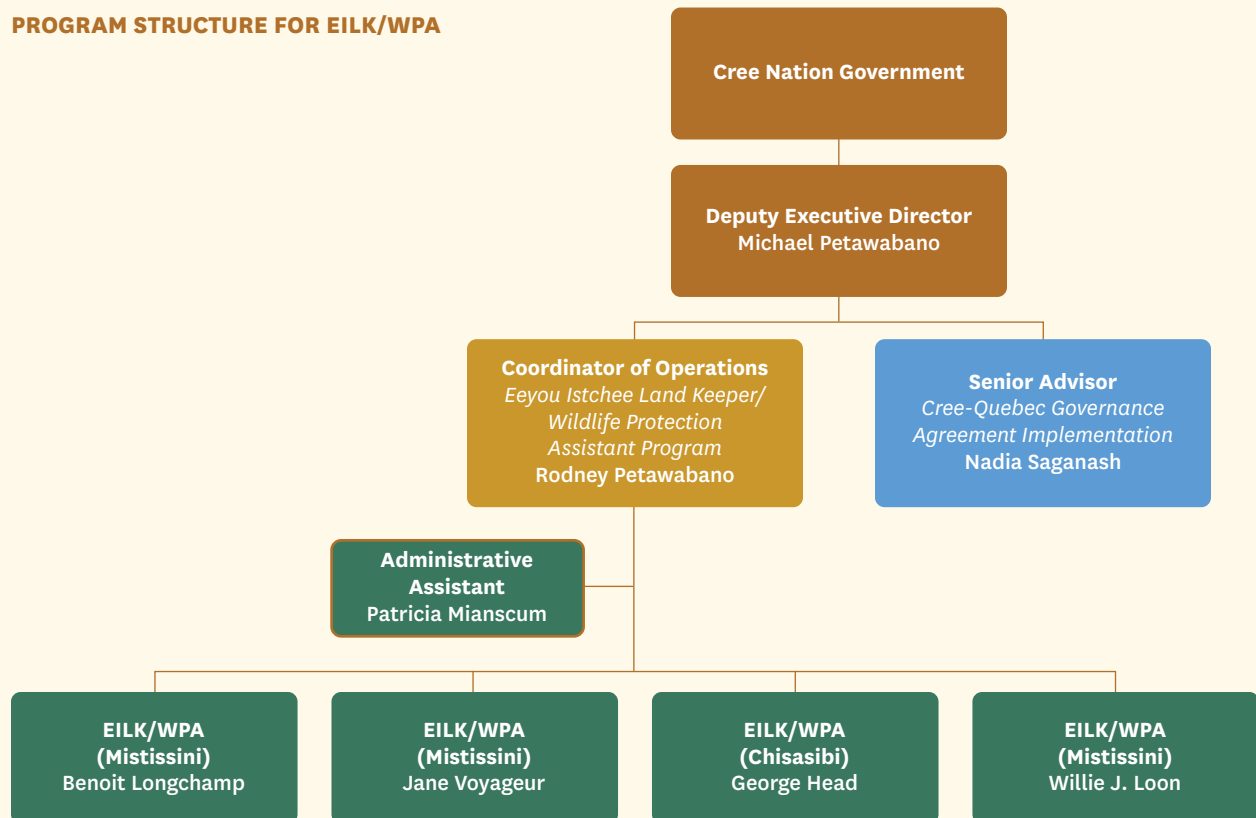
**About the Role of the
EYYOU ISTCHEE LAND KEEPER
WILDLIFE PROTECTION ASSISTANT**

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

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



PROGRAM STRUCTURE FOR EILK/WPA



of Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change (MELCC), Ministry of Wildlife, Forests, and Parks (MFFP), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MERN), and the Société Plan Nord (SPN). This committee was mandated to coordinate the process of establishing a network of protected areas in Eeyou Istchee as well as other conservation measures (eg. additional 30% of conservation areas, ensuring adequate wildlife protection resources, etc.).

The Grande Alliance Protected Area Committee held its initial meeting in August 2020. Since then, numerous meetings were held where the Cree Nation Government continuously provided support to the Ministry of Environment (MELCC) to facilitate and coordinate exchanges of information and feedback to meet the targeted deadline of December 2020. Throughout these exchanges with the ministries, the Cree Nation Government also maintained, in parallel, engagement with communities through various forums including Cree Nation Council Board meetings, Local General Assemblies, meetings with community representatives, and more.

The Cree Nation Government provided its fourth revised proposal in January 2020, which focused on improving protection and connectivity of the protected area network in the southern portion of the Eeyou Istchee. The realignment

of the proposal towards the southern part of the territory also served to improve habitat connectivity for Woodland Caribou (Boreal population). In October 2020, MELCC submitted its final adjustments on the Cree Nation Government revised proposal of January 2020. The proposed territories were revised, taking into consideration stakeholder's interest including mining claims and planned hydroelectric corridors.

In November 2020, the Grande Alliance Protected Area Network Committee discussed opportunities to include an additional 10,000 sq. km to the proposed protected area network. This fifth proposal brought the protected area network to a total of 39,000 sq. km of "land reserved for the purpose of protected areas", representing 23% of the Eeyou Istchee territory.

On December 17, 2020, the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec made a joint announcement under the Grande Alliance that 23 new territories reserved for the purposes of a protected area (TRPPA) were being designated in Eeyou Istchee. This increased the amount of total protection within Eeyou Istchee territory to roughly 100,000 sq. km.

Figure 2. Left: Previous Protected Area Network

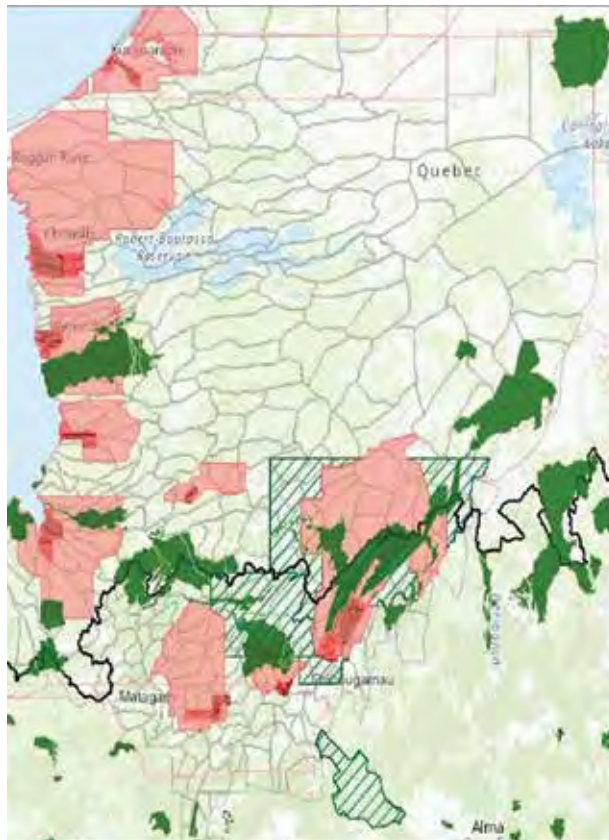
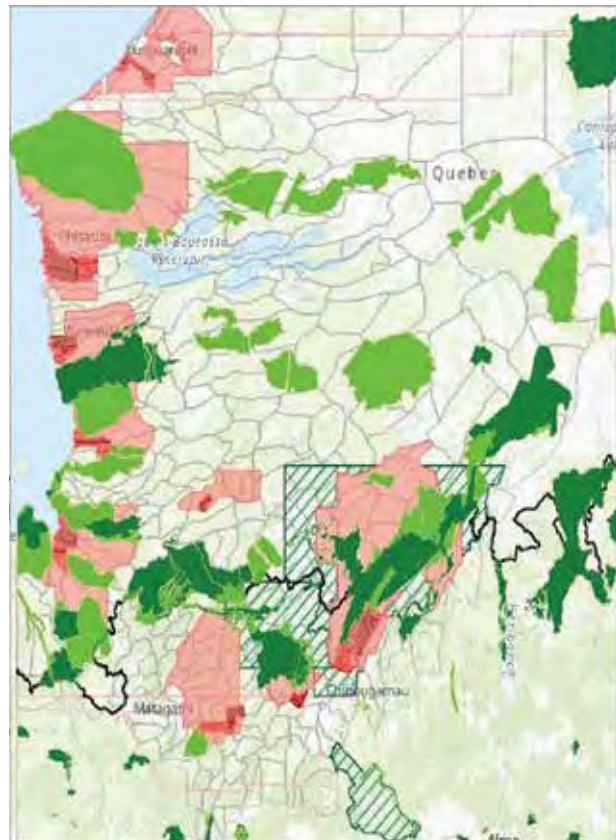


Figure 3. Added New Protected Area Network



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 Quebec in the management of wildlife species in the Territory, either through decisional or consultative recommendations. The responsible Quebec or Federal government is obliged to consult the HFTCC and must strive to follow the HFTCC advice. 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 sections 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, however due to the COVID-19 restrictions, all regular meeting has taken place by video-conference. The HFTCC also held several sub-committees and working groups meetings tasked with specific mandates.

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, review of legislation and policies, and matters related to the outfitting regime. As a member of the HFTCC, support to other files such as Lake Sturgeon and moose management have been provided.

Recent activities also include support provided to the Environment department in the organization of the moose aerial survey where the Cree Nation Government and MFFP had agreed to collaborate in carrying out this survey this past winter. The support of the Waswanipi Cree Nation as well as the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers was also provided. Several meetings were organized to plan the Cree teams, the training, the logistics and funding arrangements of the survey. Through the support of the Environment Canada Challenge funds, the Cree Nation Government had successfully collaborated and completed the survey, which will provide important knowledge of the state of the moose populations. This will enable further knowledge acquisition within protected areas, and will improve our management and conservation efforts in order to ensure the health of our moose population in Eeyou Istchee.

WOODLAND CARIBOU (BOREAL POPULATION)

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

The Cree Nation Government has continued its collaboration with Quebec on the feasibility and adaptations necessary to ensure adequate management of habitat for the recovery of Woodland Caribou. A Cree-Quebec Technical Committee, also referred to as the Operational Regional Group for the Nord-du-Quebec Region, was created and mandated to provide recommendations on:

- Propose adaptations to the Quebec Habitat Management 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.
- Proposed caribou habitat management scenario for the area covered by the AFR using the concepts of extensive favorable 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.

This past year, several meetings have taken place namely to review Quebec's proposed modalities. The Cree Nation Government also collaborated in summary report on the progress made so far by the committee. The Cree nation now needs to review the proposed adaptations and seek direction on these.

Development of a Range Plan for Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population) in Eeyou Istchee

In parallel, the Cree Nation Government has sought the support of the University of Abitibi-Temiscamingue in Quebec to seek their expertise and support for the development a range plan for the Woodland Caribou in the territory. This work is funded as part of the funding received by Environment Canada. The mandate consists of developing a range plan for the Boreal Caribou populations of Eeyou Istchee that will outline how range-specific land and/or natural resource activities will be managed over space and time to ensure that critical habitat for the Boreal Caribou is protected from destruction and that sustainability of the populations is ensured. More specifically the mandate includes;

- 1) Identify and conduct the required analysis needed to

develop a range plan for the Boreal Caribou Populations in Eeyou Istchee, that will include management, protection and restoration measures while taking into account the federal strategy requirements and the Range Plan Guidelines developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Amongst other things, the mandate will need to:

- a. Define the range boundaries for each of the Boreal Caribou populations in Eeyou Istchee based on the best available information, including local and traditional information;
 - b. Identify management, restoration and protection needs at the range scale level and propose measures that will ensure recovery and sustainability of each population;
 - c. Provide analysis and recommendations to identify and protect critical habitats, including core areas, connectivity habitats and restoration habitat needs;
 - d. Identify vulnerability to habitat disturbance for each population (Habitat conditions, disturbance threshold, required level of undisturbed habitat through time, percentage of chances of survival, etc.);
 - e. Provide analysis that will demonstrate how the minimum threshold (65% or other, as required) of undisturbed habitat will be reached or maintained throughout time for each population range;
 - f. Evaluate potential vulnerability of the habitat to fire disturbance;
 - g. Provide recommendations to monitor and mitigate various threats and activities that may impact the Boreal Caribou population and its habitat, namely; Forestry, Mining, Energy & Transmission lines, Roads and transport infrastructures, Access and occupancy (camps & other settlements), Sand and Gravel, Natural disturbance, Predators and alternate preys.
- 2) Support the Cree Nation Government in its collaborative work with the MFFP to define a new forest management regime in the Eeyou Istchee Territory, one that will favor local

persistence of the Woodland Caribou Boreal populations on a range scale level and ensure that these measures are harmonised with the rights and interests of the Crees.

- 3) Provide analysis and recommendations on the protected area proposal prepared by the Cree Nation Government.

This work will be coordinated with the work undertaken by the Cree-Quebec technical committee on Woodland caribou. An update on the progress of the work is planned to be presented to leadership at the end of the summer.

MIGRATORY CARIBOU

Harvest Management

The decline of the Migratory Caribou over the years has been a great concern for the Cree Nation and other nations who rely on these migratory herds. After years of debate with the Quebec government, pressures from the Cree Nation have finally led to the closure of the sport hunt in 2018. Since, the concerns shifted towards food security matters and management of the harvest between Aboriginal nations.

Figure 4. Ungava Caribou population have natural cycles of 80 to 100 years.

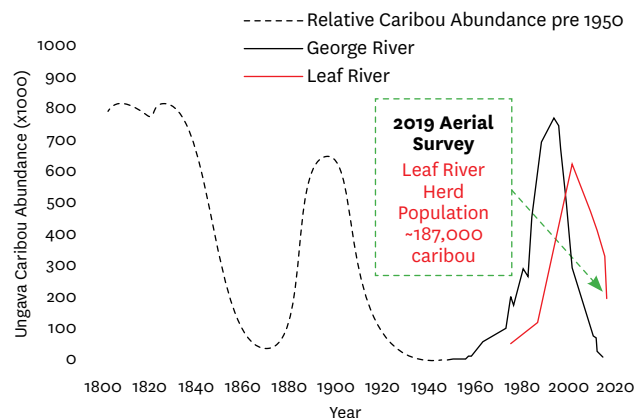


Photo: Sylvain Paquin

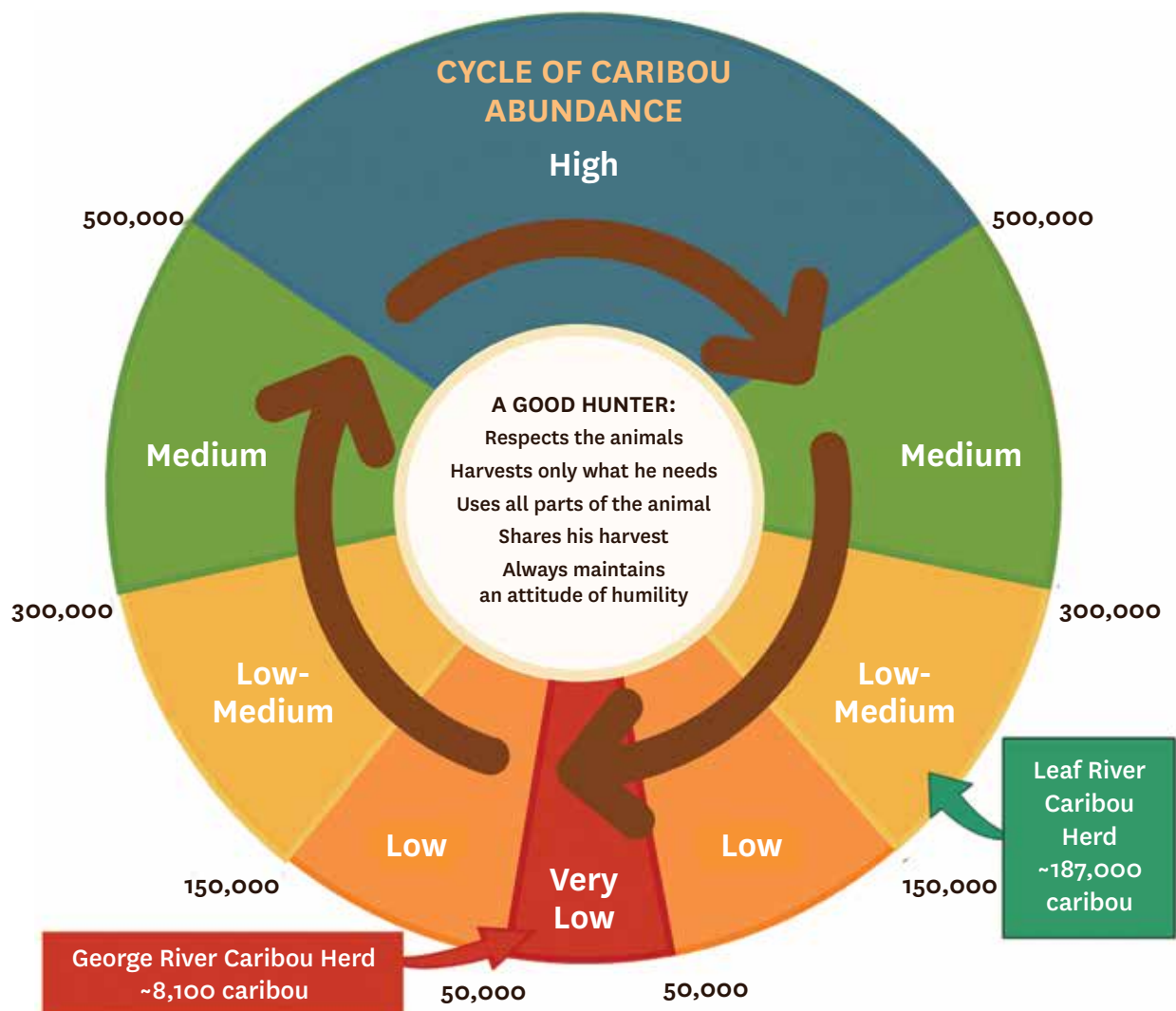


The Cree Nation have fostered a relationship with neighboring nations to create the *Ungava Caribou Peninsula Aboriginal Round Table* which led the development of a conservation strategy released in 2017 and endorsed by several nations from both Quebec and Labrador. This strategy defined the need to establish a Sharing Agreement between the nations. The Cree have continued these discussions emphasizing on the health and conservation of the herd as well as ensuring respect of the interest and concerns of the Cree, including our treaty obligations. The Cree Nation government has always reiterated the need to take precautions to ensure the health and sustainability of the Leaf River population, and focused discussions with the Inuit and Naskapi in order to ensure a common approach to the feasibility of a sharing agreement with non-beneficiaries of the JBNQA. As a result, the Cree Nation Government drafted an 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. This understanding is still awaiting further approval by the Inuit party.

In the meantime, a mutual understanding between the Cree and Naskapi was finalized in 2019 after numerous engagement sessions with concerned tallymen of Chisasibi. This was a first step to ensure mutual respect and good relations between the two nations, with emphasis on the health, conservation, management, and harvest of caribou. This Understanding now clearly defines a protocol and authorization procedure between the Cree and Naskapi when harvesting caribou in each respective Territory. It is hoped that this Understanding will serve as a basis for similar understandings with other nations.

In 2020, the mutual understanding with the Naskapi was not renewed due to the COVID-19 restrictions, however the



harvest of 20 caribou was organized by Cree Nation Government and Chisasibi to be donated to the Naskapi Nation.

As for neighboring nations, no understanding has yet been established. Since the drastic decline of the George River Herd, the Cree Nation has been engaged in discussions with the Innu Nation of Quebec for a few years now to find solutions along with the Inuit and the Naskapi Nation on how we can ensure that the caribou remain an integral part of our respective cultures for centuries to come. These discussions are ongoing as part of the Ungava Caribou Aboriginal Table and both the Cree nation and Innu nation of Quebec are represented. Discussions of a sharing protocol was being discussed as an action objective of this round table. The Cree Nation understands the food security needs of the Innu Nation, and were willing to find solutions such as a sharing protocol enabling them to harvest the Leaf River herd in Cree territory, but this would need to consider the health of the population first and foremost and the need to respect our treaty (JBNQA) obligations. Considering the poor state of the caribou, their health must remain our priority, and it was explained that the Cree Nation Government and local Government needed to focus on the management of their harvest as a first step.

Despite these concerns, the Cree Nation Government was informed that unauthorized hunting by hunters of the Innu Nation of Matimekush- Lac John had taken place in the territory of Chisasibi this past winter. The Cree Nation Government and Chisasibi as well as the concerned Cree tallymen had collaborated to address the matter with the Innu nation as well as with the Ministry of Wildlife, Forest and Park and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The Cree Nation Government also provided monitoring assistance through the EILK/WPA program in order to report on these hunting activities. The matter is still in discussion in order to find solutions to address the concerns of all parties.

In an effort to address the management of Cree harvest, this past year the Cree Nation Government and the CTA has collaborated in drafting recommendation on harvest guidelines to encourage and support conservation efforts for the recovery of the populations. These guidelines were adapted from the Caribou Strategy developed by the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Round Table in which the Cree Nation has collaborated in its development. This strategy recommends sustainable levels of harvest according to population level and trends. When the population is between 300,000 and 150,000 caribou, the Ungava Caribou Strategy recommends a sustainable harvest of 3-2%.

The Leaf River Herd latest caribou count in 2019 estimates the population level at ~ 187 000 caribou, which means the overall harvest level on this herd should not exceed 2% of the population estimate, which represents approximately 3,740 caribou.

Considering harvesting is taking place by different Indigenous nations including the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi, the Cree Nation should be considering this in the management of their caribou harvest. The sustainable harvest for the Cree share is based on the same proportion of Guaranteed Level of Harvest between the Cree (13%), Inuit (71%) and Naskapi (16%).

The Cree Trappers' Association and the Cree Nation Government has drafted recommendation on harvesting guidelines including a sustainable harvest of 500 caribou for the coming year to be shared between all concerned Cree communities. Consultation and approval on this recommendation is still required from the tallymen, communities, and leadership of the Cree Nation. This hopefully will be undertaken in the coming summer.

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 Innu 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.

This past year, the committee has met several times and has recently prepared initial recommendations on common rules of practices prioritizing immediate issues such moose hunting, goose hunting and camp establishment. The committee intends to organize engagement sessions in the next coming months with the concerned land users to validate and receive input on these proposed recommendations. The Cree Nation Government has also hired additional administrative support to assist the work of the committees established under the agreement.

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 times and the HFTCC oversees the procedures.

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 pro-

vide 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 have begun in 2017 and are slowly progressing, however it was agreed between the parties that another three-year extension will be required in order to complete the negotiations. Another complementary agreement extending the RFR has been drafted and is in the process of approval.

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 Department Fisheries and Ocean (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.

The initial approach undertaken by DFO was to engage the Cree through its usual consultation process; a format considered inadequate and limited given the species special status and territorial context. The Cree Nation has sought 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.

This past year, the Cree Nation Government and the DFO has engaged in fruitful discussions enabling the creation of a negotiation table between the Cree and DFO in pursuit of reaching a collaborative conservation agreement under section 11 of the Species at Risk Act, which allows a competent minister to enter into a conservation agreement with any government in Canada, organization or person to benefit a species at risk or enhance its survival in the wild.

The objective of the negotiation table will be to:

- 1) draft a Bilateral Conservation Agreement as per section 11 of SARA to provide for a framework for a Nation-to-Nation collaboration between DFO and Cree Nation Government to support the preparation of a management plan for Lake Sturgeon/nemeeo, within Eeyou Istchee territory, identifying conservation targets and establishing the concrete actions to be taken in order to address the identified threats and ensure long-term survival of the said populations of Lake Sturgeon/nemeeo;
- 2) prepare the mandate and oversee the work of an Operational Working Group to work collaboratively to prepare a proposed SARA-mandated management plan for the Lake Sturgeon/nemeeo within the JBNQA territory;
- 3) discuss opportunities for implementation of conservation measures;
- 4) ensure that the above-mentioned objectives are achieved in accordance with the Cree cultural values and consistent with the principles of conservation, as per the spirit of the JBNQA and of SARA.

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 meetings and providing input and updates on matters related to the Woodland Caribou strategy and works of the Cree-Quebec Technical Committee.

CONCLUSION

The 2020-2021 year presented many challenges, but we have risen to the challenge and continued to make significant progress on all fronts. As a Nation we have all had to work together to protect each other and use our extraordinary ability to overcome challenges. I am very proud of each and every one our employees and of all the departments for their efforts over the past year.

We look ahead to 2021-2022 with the anticipation of returning to normal as the year progresses. We will need to be ready as there is much expectation of making up for lost time in many construction, housing, and other projects.

I look forward to meeting people and visiting communities in person and sincerely hope that this new year brings greater freedom of movement, fewer restrictions, and the opportunity to see each other in our nation building quest.

Meegwetch
Michael Petawabano
 Deputy Executive Director

COMMUNICATIONS



Headed by the Director of Quebec and Indigenous Relations, Melissa Saganash, the Communications Team is comprised of our Communications Advisor, Joanne Ottereyes, our Events and Communications Specialist, April Pachanos (on one year leave since March 2021), and our Web Communications Specialist, Brendan Forward. The 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)/Cree Nation Government to people across Eeyou Istchee and the general public.

Our team is also responsible for maintaining and updating the Cree Nation Government's website and social media accounts and ensuring that information is made available on all platforms. We also coordinate the issue of press releases and provide assistance in the organization of press conferences and events such as the Annual General Assembly and Livestream broadcasts. The team also offers support and services to departments in their communications and promotional needs. This past year, we have assisted the Protected Areas Team with their communication plan, Capital Works and Services with the creation of a webpage for the housing program, and the online commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement featuring video messages from key figures and the launch of a new video, "We are the Eeyouch of Eeyou Istchee".

Since March 2019, the Communications staff has been critical to the Cree Nation Government's COVID-19 Response Team, put in place to produce and distribute up-to-date information and public briefings concerning the pandemic.

This team has been central to disseminating information in a concerted effort to help keep community members in Eeyou Istchee safe and healthy. A summary of the regular meetings 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 our region.

Throughout the last year, we published more than 117 Cree Nation COVID-19 Briefing Public Updates, first on a tri-weekly and bi-weekly basis, and currently on a weekly basis since the situation of the pandemic has stabilized in Eeyou Istchee. A special COVID-19 section was created on the Cree Nation Government website to post all the current precautionary measures, directives, and areas of risk maps to ensure all people are aware of the unique measures in place in Eeyou Istchee. Also, special live streams were produced at pivotal moments to answer specific questions about COVID-19 (i.e., Goose Break, Self-Isolation Law, Vaccination, etc.).

We also produce the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government's Quarterly Newsletter, which delivers news articles, promotes events, and includes publications in an electronic newsletter format by email for all subscribers. If you have a story or an event to share with Eeyou Istchee, we invite you to 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



7.1K
Fans

↑1627
increase
in 2020-2021



2.8K
Followers

↑369
increase
in 2020-2021



1.1K
Followers

↑221
increase
in 2020-2021



1.2K
Followers

↑198
increase
in 2020-2021



374
Posts

The total number of posts that have been published on your Pages



398
Tweets

The number of tweets published from your Twitter accounts, including replies



161
Posts

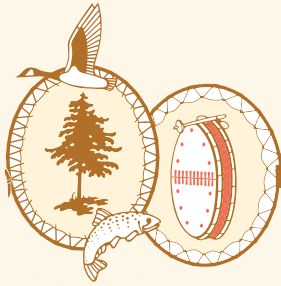
The total number of posts published to your Instagram accounts



136
Posts

The total number of posts published to your Pages

WEBSITE STATISTICS



VIEWERSHIP

61K

Users

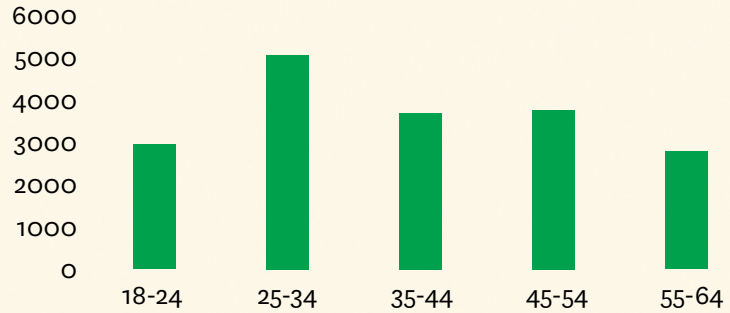
Or 103,173 sessions

82% new vs 18% returning visitors

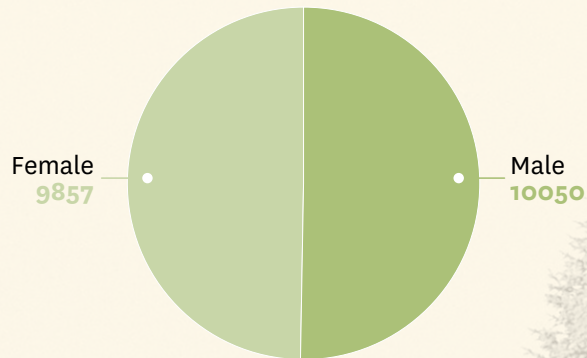
86% Canadian

64% Quebec | 23% Ontario

AGE OF USERS



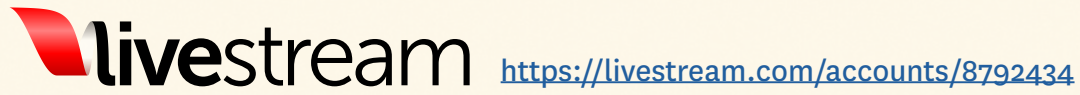
USERS' GENDER



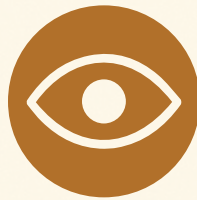
TOP PAGES

| RANK | PAGE URL | IEWS | |
|------|--|--------|--------|
| 1. | /(Home) | 27,899 | 13.53% |
| 2. | /resources/covid-public-updates/ | 18,387 | 8.91% |
| 3. | /covid-19/ | 15,797 | 7.66% |
| 4. | /services/careers/ | 10,998 | 5.33% |
| 5. | /community-culture/communities/ | 4,744 | 2.30% |
| 6. | /fr/ | 4,358 | 2.11% |
| 7. | /update-on-indian-day-school-settlement-agreement/ | 4,037 | 1.96% |
| 8. | /news-issues/ | 3,170 | 1.54% |
| 9. | /governance-structure/legislation/agreements/ | 2,621 | 1.27% |
| 10. | /eeyou-eeenou-police-force/ | 2,533 | 1.23% |

LIVESTREAM STATISTICS



14
Broadcasts



VIEWERSHIP

22,817
Views

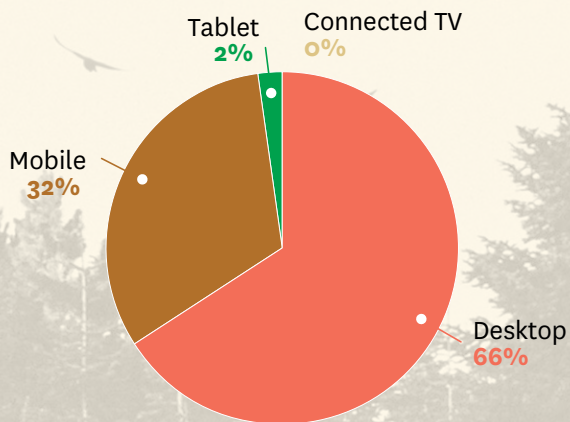
20+ Min Average Watch Time



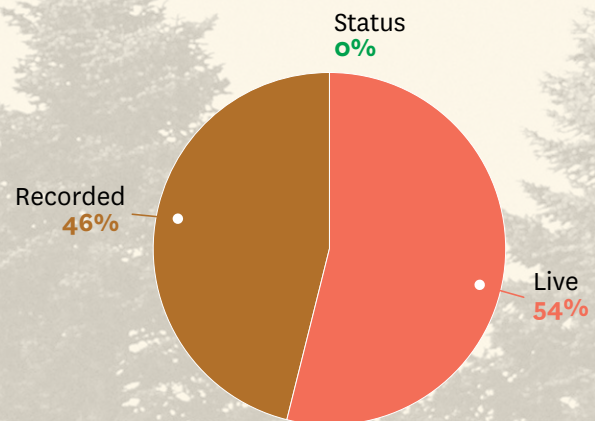
LOCATION

95%
Canadian Viewers

DEVICE PREFERENCES



MEDIA TYPE



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).

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 on this Committee is currently Assistant Deputy Minister Ross Pattee. Mr. Pattee is responsible for the Implementation Branch of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA). He was also part of a federal working group with the Department of Justice that initially looked at and worked on the development of Bill C15, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

During this year, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bill Namagoose and Ross Pattee remained in close communication and held several one-on-one meetings. These meetings provided an opportunity to advance certain files and to keep Mr. Pattee updated on the Cree Nation's response to the pandemic.

UNDRIP – BILL C-15

On December 3, 2020, on behalf of the Government, Minister of Justice David Lametti introduced in Parliament Bill C-15, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. In speaking in the House of Commons about Bill C-15, Minister Lametti recognized the efforts of former Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash, who introduced private member's Bill C-262, the first draft legislation to approve and implement UNDRIP. Bill C-262 contributed significantly to the development and introduction of Bill C-15.

The Grand Chief testified in support of Bill C-15 before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on March 23, 2021, and before the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on May 14, 2021.

Bill C-15 received third reading in the House of Commons on May 25, 2021 and moved to the Senate at the time of writing this report.

CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

During this year, Cree and federal representatives pursued discussions on a partnership agreement and federal support for the 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 the special needs of Cree elders, trappers, disabled, and youth.

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. In June 2019, Cree representatives tabled the financial components of a comprehensive Cree housing proposal. In March 2020, Cree representatives provided supplementary information to help federal representatives better understand the Cree Nation Housing Strategy and the need for federal support to successfully implement the Strategy.

Cree and federal representatives have held several meetings of the Cree-Canada Housing Table to ensure a complete understanding of all components of the Cree housing proposal. Federal representatives are now expected to respond to the Cree housing proposal.

AMENDMENT OF SECTION 22 JBNQA

During this year, Cree and federal representatives continued 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 federal *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. Cree and federal representatives have developed a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to advance discussions on the federal environmental assessment process and Section 22 of the JBNQA.

EYYOU MARINE REGION LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT (CREE OFFSHORE TREATY)

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* (Cree Offshore Treaty) and (ii) the renewal of its Implementation Plan for the second ten-year planning period (2022-2032).

The Cree Offshore Treaty came into force on February 15, 2012. Its 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

Last year, Cree and federal representatives concluded a Land Exchange Agreement regarding the designation of Bear

Photo: Jamie Moses



Island and Grey Goose Island as “Cree lands”, in exchange for a transfer to Canada of Cree lands of equivalent area on South Twin Island. The parties contemplated this land exchange at the time of signing the Cree Offshore Treaty. Cree and federal representatives have agreed on the required consequential amendment of the Cree Offshore Treaty, and Canada is now expected to adopt an Order in Council, to give effect to this land exchange.

Under the terms of the Land Exchange Agreement, Canada remains responsible for any residual contamination associated with the operation of Doppler relay radar stations on Bear Island, and the possible presence of unexploded munitions, or ordnance (UXO’s) on Grey Goose Island. Despite indemnification provisions contained in the Agreement, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government could be exposed to liability if they, or their representatives, were to remove or handle UXO’s without reasonable care. According to the Department of National Defence (DND), it is unlikely that anyone would find UXO’s on Grey Goose Island. However, in the unlikely event that anyone did find such UXO’s, they should notify DND immediately so that they can be safely removed.

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 – Authority of Wildlife Boards

In 2015, the Wildlife Boards established under the Cree Offshore Treaty and the Nunavik Offshore Treaty determined the number of polar bears that Inuit and Cree hunters may harvest annually in Southern Hudson Bay. The Boards made that determination after extensive public hearings and consideration. In 2016, the federal Minister of the Environment, acting under the Treaties, modified the decision of the Boards and made her own determination as to how many polar bears could be harvested annually by Inuit and Cree hunters.

In 2017, Makivik Corporation filed, on behalf of the Nunavik Inuit, an application in the Federal Court for judicial review of the Minister’s decision, arguing that she had failed to properly apply the terms of the Offshore Treaties when she made her decision.

The GCC(EI) also filed legal proceedings in support of Makivik’s application, and also argued that the Minister had exceeded her jurisdiction in making her own determination about the number of polar bears that may be harvested by Cree and Inuit hunters. The GCC(EI) argued that the Boards had sole authority to make such decisions under the Offshore Treaties. These Treaties are Nation-to-Nation agreements and they effectively created a partnership in the

management of wildlife in the Offshore. The Boards were deliberately established with equal representation from the Government and Inuit/Cree parties as an expression of this partnership and as the sole forum to make the decisions on wildlife in the Offshore. It followed that the Minister, acting under the Offshore Treaties, owed deference to the decisions of the Boards, and her role was essentially to review those decisions to ensure that they were reasonable as part of her responsibility to implement them and give effect to them.

In the Federal Court, the Attorney General of Canada defended vigorously the Minister’s decision and argued that she had, in any case, ultimate responsibility over the management of wildlife in the Offshore. On October 30, 2019, the Federal Court released its judgment. It accepted the arguments of the Attorney General of Canada and dismissed the applications filed by Makivik and the GCC(EI). Both appealed the judgment to the Federal Court of Appeal. The GCC(EI) filed its arguments on appeal in July 2020. The Federal Court of Appeal will hear the parties on June 7-8, 2021, and is expected to issue a judgment later this year.

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 Quebec 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, Cree and federal representatives established a table to pursue exploratory discussions on MoCreebec, which will enable Cree and federal representatives to review long-term solutions for MoCreebec and their community.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal Response to COVID-19

Throughout the year, the Government of Canada maintained various measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, to protect health and safety, 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.

The Cree Nation Government and Cree First Nations received funding under some of these special measures and

funds to support their efforts in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and addressing the effects of the pandemic. This includes funding:

- to support Cree First Nations (*Indigenous Community Support Fund*)
- to support Cree First Nation-owned businesses (*Indigenous Community Business Fund*)
- to build affordable modular homes (*Rapid Housing Initiative*)
- for homelessness and to renovate houses (*Reaching Home Program*)
- to reopen community facilities (*ISC Non-Health Activities*)
- for additional expenditures of the Eeyou Eenou Police Force related to COVID-19
- for the safe re-opening of community buildings (*ISC Minor Capital Investments*)
- to support Cree youth (*Youth Employment Strategy and Skills Links Program*)
- to support Cree parents (*Early Learning and Child Care*)
- to support Cree students (*Youth and Post-Secondary Students*)

In addition, Cree individuals and Cree businesses could apply for and, where eligible, receive benefits under various special programs and measures made available generally to all Canadians and businesses. These programs include the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for eligible employers, and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) for eligible employees or self-employed individuals. The Federal Budget 2021 proposed to extend most of these programs until the fall, with certain eligibility conditions applying in order to ensure an orderly phase-out of the concerned programs as vaccinations are completed and the economy reopens.

Assumption of Federal Responsibilities

During this year, the Cree Nation Government continued to implement the key elements of the *Federal NRA*, in particular, the assumption of federal JBNQA responsibilities. Over the 20-year term of the *Federal NRA* until 2028, the Cree Nation Government assumes, with funding provided by Canada certain responsibilities of Canada under various

COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR CREE FIRST NATION-OWNED BUSINESSES

Air Creebec Flight C-19 is readied for a one-day delivery run to Eeyou Istchee carrying thousands of doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on January 16, 2021.

Photo: Rodolphe Beaulieu-Poulin/CBHSSJB



provisions of the JBNQA. These “assumed federal JBNQA responsibilities” include certain aspects of Cree community and economic development, the administration of justice and the development of human resources. Formal discussions to renew the *Federal NRA* will start in 2026. The way in which the Cree Nation implements the *Federal NRA* and carries out the assumed federal JBNQA responsibilities will determine largely what the renewal of this agreement will look like in 2028.

Apatisiwin Skills Development

Last year, the Cree Nation Government and Canada agreed on long-term 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. The levels of federal funding for the period of the *Federal NRA* (2008-2028) remain an outstanding matter, and the parties maintain their respective positions as to whether such funding levels comply with section 4.12 of the *Federal NRA*.

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 continues to be provided through this contribution agreement pending discussions with federal representatives on alternative and more flexible arrangements.

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 (EPPF) in accordance with a tripartite funding agreement. The funding agreement has a minimum duration of five (5) years, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties to such agreement.

During this year, Cree, federal and Quebec representatives reached an agreement on long-term funding for capital expenditures for the EPPF. This agreement is now incorporated into the ten-year tripartite agreement for operational funding of the EPPF for the period from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2028.

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 are expected to pursue discussions in an attempt to resolve this matter, in compliance with Section 28 of the JBNQA. 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

Last year, the Cree Nation Government submitted an infrastructure funding proposal to Canada, consisting primarily of short-term projects, and including also the amounts required from Canada to upgrade the community access roads. Cree representatives expect to meet with federal representatives to confirm the status of all approvals,

APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Cree Nation Government and Canada agreed on long-term funding arrangements to support Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) for the period 2019-2028.



allocations, priorities, and any funds set aside for Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Indigenous groups, including new funds for Indigenous infrastructure projects announced in the Federal Budget 2021.

FINAL LAND DESCRIPTIONS AND RECONFIGURATION OF LAND

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

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

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

Waswanipi

Cree, federal and Quebec representatives have exchanged draft proposals of a reconfiguration agreement for Waswanipi. The parties have also held discussions on a transitional agreement to facilitate the opening of a new waste management site, as well as certain community infrastructure located across from the community of Waswanipi, which would eventually be located in Category IA lands of that community, once the proposed land reconfiguration is completed. Finally, in view of the significant delays to deal with the matter of the "500-foot corridors", the Cree party has requested that priority be given to the reconfiguration of a small block of lands located in front of the community, identified as Block A12.

Waskaganish

Discussions over the land reconfiguration of Waskaganish have provided an opportunity to address issues related to the so-called "Roman Catholic Mission Lands". During this year, the Cree party has held discussions regarding these issues with federal and Quebec representatives, as well as the Amos Diocese.

Ouje-Bougoumou Recognition and Mistissini Lands

Complementary Agreement No. 22 of the JBNQA and the Final Agreement related to the recognition of Ouje-Bougoumou came into force during the 2012-2013 financial year. These agreements have formally established Ouje-Bougoumou as a Cree First Nation, subject to a transitional period

required for the transfer of lands and the coming into force of an amendment of the then *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*. This amendment came into force in May 2014, when land was formally set aside by the Governor in Council as Category IA land for the exclusive use and benefit of Ouje-Bougoumou. Like the other Cree First Nations, Ouje-Bougoumou was formally constituted as a corporation under the then *Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act*, and continued as a Cree First Nation and as the same legal entity under the *Cree Nation Governance Agreement of 2017*.

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

Cree, federal and Quebec representatives are now pursuing regular discussions in order to conclude the land transactions required to finalize the said land transfers. There are currently certain delays with respect to the adoption by Quebec of the required Orders-in-Council, and the adoption by Canada of the reciprocal Order-in-Council, which are required to give effect to these land transfers.

CREE LAND AND HARVESTING RIGHTS IN ONTARIO

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

Canada and Ontario have relied upon this artificial colonial line to deny and interfere with the exercise of Cree rights in what is now Ontario. Colonial laws and activities have negatively affected the Cree communities of Washaw Sibi, Waskaganish and MoCreebec Eeyoud, and these impacts continue to this day.

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

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

Legal, anthropological, and historical research on behalf of the Cree Nation in support of the Ontario action will continue

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

In addition to this litigation, we continue working to protect Cree rights by insisting that the Cree Nation, and especially the particularly impacted communities of Washaw Sibi, Waskaganish and MoCreebec, must be consulted about resource development activities occurring on these lands in Ontario. In the first years after the Cree Nation filed its action, the government of Ontario repeatedly denied that it had a duty to consult the Cree Nation about mining activities occurring in the Harricana watershed. Ontario took the position that the Cree Nation's assertion of Aboriginal rights in this area was "not credible".

We challenged Ontario's consultation position, including through a judicial review application filed in 2017 regarding Ontario's refusal to consult the Cree Nation about the West Detour Project, the planned expansion of the Detour Lake Mine, which is located just west of the Quebec-Ontario border, in the part of Eeyou Istchee Ontario in which the Cree Nation asserts Aboriginal title. As a result, the government of Ontario changed its position, and has acknowledged that it has a duty to consult the Cree Nation about the West Detour Project. This represents an important achievement on the path towards proper recognition of Cree rights in Ontario, and has resulted in the Cree Nation's consultation on numerous projects located in the area in which the Cree Nation asserts Aboriginal rights and title.

In 2019, a robust consultation protocol was developed with Ontario in respect of the West Detour Project. This consultation protocol was revised in 2020 to accommodate the unforeseen delays and public health measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Pursuant to these protocols, two public consultation meetings were held in January 2020 and March 2021 to understand and address issues and concerns raised by members of the Cree Nation regarding the project. The Cree Nation Government Environment Department has also engaged in multiple meetings and information exchanges with the proponent Kirkland Lake Gold and the various implicated Ontario ministries. In June 2021, the Cree Nation will submit its report and recommendations regarding the West Detour Project.

UPDATE ON THE CREE NATION'S STAND AGAINST URANIUM AND STRATECO RESOURCES INC V. PROCUREURE GÉNÉRALE DU QUÉBEC

On October 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada refused Strateco Resources' application for leave to appeal from the judgment of the Quebec Court of Appeal in *Strateco Resources Inc v. Procureure générale du Québec*. The Supreme Court's order brought to a final close Strateco's unsuccessful efforts to seek damages for having been prevented from proceeding with the Matoush advanced uranium exploration project.

The *Strateco* proceedings originated in the government of Quebec's decision in November 2013 to refuse to authorize the Matoush uranium project, on the basis that the project lacked social acceptability amongst the Crees, particularly the Cree Nation of Mistissini. This decision, which came after sustained opposition on the part of the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Cree Nation as a whole, demonstrates the importance of the nation-to-nation relationship between the Cree Nation and Quebec. Quebec's decision was consistent with a fundamental principle confirmed in the Paix des Braves: that Cree consent is a requirement for development projects to proceed in Eeyou Istchee.

In response to the decision, which brought the Matoush project to an end, Strateco sued the Quebec government for approximately \$200 million. Strateco argued that the decision to refuse the permit for the Matoush project was "illegal" since "social acceptability" is not a criterion set out in Chapter 22 of the JBNQA or in the Environment Quality Act. According to Strateco, Quebec was not legally permitted to consider Cree opposition or to reject the project on that basis. Strateco argued that the Cree Nation gave up its right to have any say in the development of Eeyou Istchee when the JBNQA was signed.

Strateco's argument represented a significant attack on Cree rights and on the JBNQA. The Grand Council of the Crees, the Cree Nation Government and the Cree Nation of Mistissini intervened in this litigation to ensure that Cree rights and interests were represented and protected, and that the Cree Nation has a voice in litigation that involved the consideration of our rights under the JBNQA.



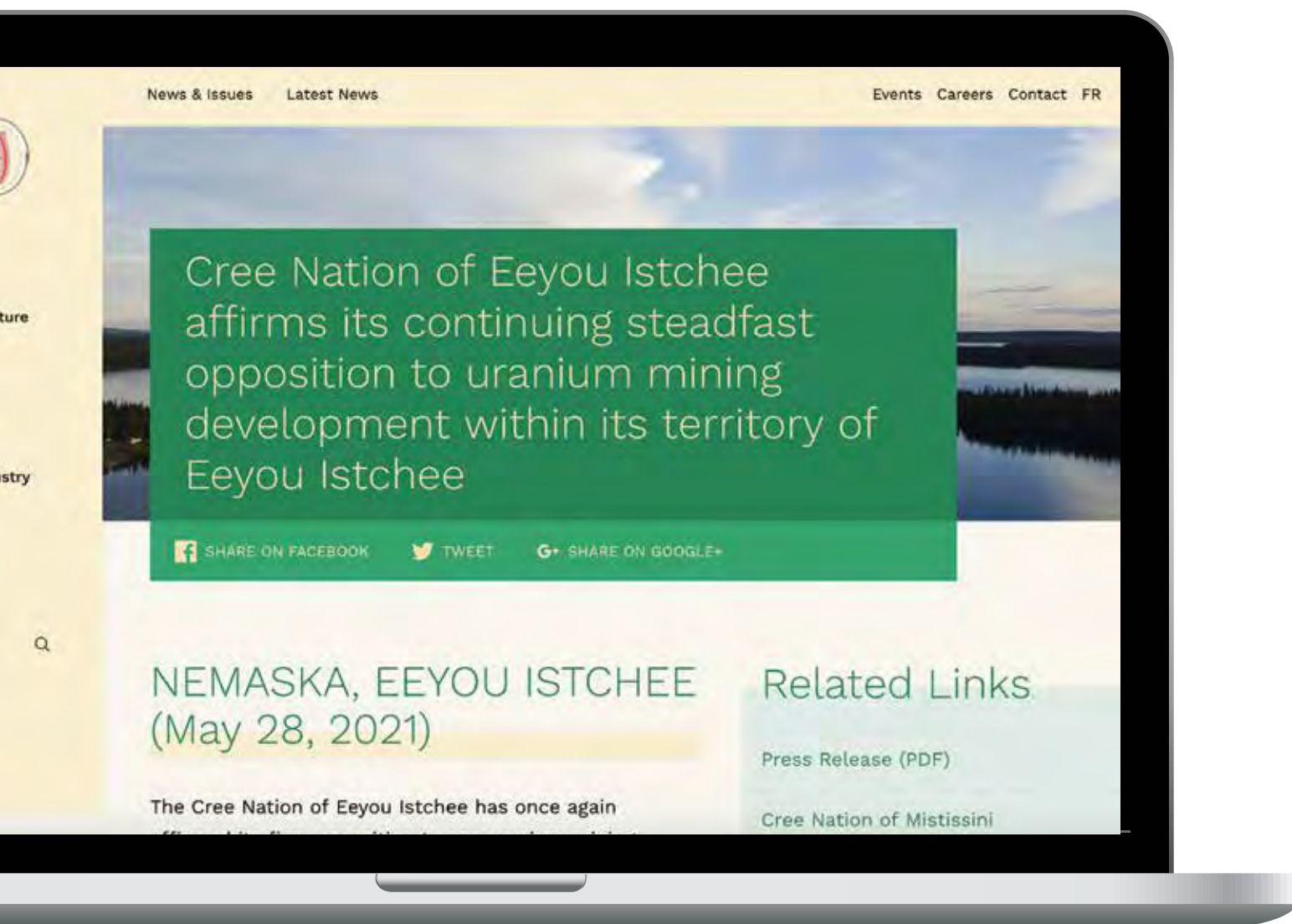
The trial was held in Québec City in January and February 2017 before Justice Denis Jacques. In June 2017, Justice Jacques released his decision, dismissing Strateco's claim in its entirety. The Court rejected Strateco's argument that Quebec's decision was illegal or made in bad faith, concluding instead that the Minister was entitled to consider the Cree Nation's position and to refuse the permit on the basis of its total lack of social acceptability amongst the Cree Nation of Mistissini.

Strateco appealed this decision to the Quebec Court of Appeal. In January 2020, the Court of Appeal found that the Minister of the Environment was required to consider the Cree Nation's opposition to the Matoush uranium project and could refuse to permit the project to proceed on the basis of its total lack of social acceptability amongst the Cree Nation of Mistissini. In October 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada declined to hear Strateco's appeal from the decision of the Quebec Court of Appeal.

In May 2021, junior mining company International Consolidated Uranium (ICU) publicly announced that it was acquiring the Matoush uranium project that had previously been owned by Strateco Resources. In its announcement, ICU stated "We recognize that uranium mining can be a lightning rod issue and, as such, it is incumbent on us to garner social acceptance before attempting to advance a project."

In response to ICU's acquisition of the project, the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Nation Government passed a resolution on May 26, 2021, affirming the Cree Nation's continuing opposition to uranium mining development in Eeyou Istchee, including any further development of the Matoush project.

The Cree Nation will continue its stand against uranium in Eeyou Istchee.



CREE-QUÉBEC RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

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*. That said, two matters largely dominated the year 2020-2021: the COVID-19 pandemic and the establishment of *La Grande Alliance*.

In many ways, the year 2020-2021 was the year of the COVID-19 pandemic for the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, as for all nations around the world. The public health emergency disrupted the life of all Cree citizens of Eeyou Istchee and the operations of every Cree entity, at both the local and the regional levels. It also disrupted normal working relations with the Government of Québec.

Nevertheless, the response of the Cree Nation Government in combating the COVID-19 pandemic showed very tangibly its stature as a mature government. The COVID-19 pandemic made an already strong collaboration even stronger between the Cree Nation Government, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) and the Cree School Board, as well as all local governments. This joint effort enabled them to take comprehensive, integrated action to protect the health and lives of Cree citizens, meet their needs and maintain local essential services. In the result, the Cree Nation worked exceptionally hard in limiting the spread of the virus in Eeyou Istchee and in minimizing its impact on the health of the Cree population. This would not have been possible without community members and frontline workers who have gone above and beyond to protect their communities.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been the greatest health crisis the world has seen in the past century. The pandemic has proved more challenging and longer lasting than many expected in March 2020, when the WHO first officially declared it. Only now, some 15 months after the pandemic took hold in Québec, are the Cree communities cautiously emerging from the strict isolation measures put in place to protect the population of Eeyou Istchee. This success is due in large part to the exemplary discipline and unity demonstrated by Cree citizens in every community. The very effective vaccination program deployed by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services has also made a critical contribution to this success.

The COVID-19 crisis 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 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 March 2020, 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.

Public Updates, or bulletins, on COVID-19 followed each of these leadership meetings. Over the past 15 months, over 120 of these bulletins were posted on the internet, keeping the population informed about the situation in the Cree communities, regions surrounding or relevant to them, reminders about social distancing, self-isolation protocols and other public health measures. These bulletins were issued jointly by the Cree Nation Government, CBHSSJB 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 and fall goose breaks 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 CBHSSJB.

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 among the lowest incidence of COVID-19 of any region in Québec. As of this writing, the situation has improved to the extent that deconfinement has begun, cautiously and progressively, enabling Crees to resume travel between the communities and outside the Territory for those who have been fully vaccinated.

The measures taken, and the resulting success in combating COVID-19, show once more the power of Cree unity. The Cree Nation Government, CBHSSJB, 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.

LA GRANDE ALLIANCE

On February 17, 2020, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and Premier François Legault opened a new chapter in Cree-Qué-

bec relations by signing a Memorandum of Understanding creating “*La Grande Alliance*”.

La Grande Alliance envisages a transformative 30-year, \$4.7 billion infrastructure program in Eeyou Istchee. The program’s three phases propose to 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.

La Grande Alliance 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. Thus, the very critical first steps are a feasibility and pre-feasibility study of the proposed phases to ensure community engagement and direction.

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 infrastruc-

COVID-19 PANDEMIC TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Public notices were posted on the internet to advise the Cree population about restrictions on non-essential travel between regions, and restrictions on entry into Cree communities.

Photo: Katherine Dehm



ture, 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:

- 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 development of a network of protected areas to provide interconnected corridors for habitat of wildlife, including endangered species, such as woodland caribou;

Strengthening local capacity for the management of these protected areas and wildlife, helping to ensure social acceptability for infrastructure and resource development plans.

On March 27, 2020, the Cree Nation Government entered into a Funding 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.

As the Memorandum of Understanding of February 17, 2020 had an initial term of twelve months, the Crees and Québec agreed to extend its term for an additional twelve months and may seek to prolong this term if deemed necessary.

Feasibility Studies

On January 27, 2021, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for the *La Grande Alliance* Phase I Feasibility Study, including the following elements:

- Upgrades to the access roads between the Billy-Diamond Highway and the Cree communities of Waskaganish, Eastmain and Wemindji;
- Upgrade to the access road between the Route du Nord and the Cree community of Nemaska;
- A railway line following, as much as possible, the Billy-Diamond Highway between the town of Matagami and KM 257 of the Highway;

- A return to service for the railway line between Grevet (Lebel-sur-Quévillon) and Chapais;
- Trans-shipment areas along the Billy-Diamond Highway and the Grevet-Chapais railway corridors, specifically one located at KM 257.

On March 29, 2021, the RFP was issued for *La Grande Alliance* Phases II and III Pre-Feasibility Study. Phase II of the Infrastructure Program includes the following elements:

- A new railway corridor following, as much as possible, the alignment of the Billy-Diamond Highway between km 257 (Rupert River bridge) to km 544 (Junction of Billy-Diamond Highway and Trans-Taïga road);
- A new road corridor connecting Radisson and Whapmagoostui, over an approximate distance of 175 km;
- Extension of Route 167 to the north to connect with the Trans-Taïga road, over an approximate distance of 125 km.

Phase III of the Infrastructure Program includes the following elements:

- A new railway corridor following, as much as possible, the alignment of the road corridor connecting Radisson and Whapmagoostui (Phase II), over an approximate distance of 225 km;
- A deep-water port at Whapmagoostui / Kuujuarapik;
- Extension of the Trans-Taïga road eastward to connect with Schefferville, over an approximate distance of 200 km.

Both the Phase I Feasibility Study and the Phases II and III Pre-Feasibility Study will build on *La Grande Alliance*'s mission of sustainable socio-economic development by integrating aspects of social acceptability and sustainable development in its approach. The studies will apply the highest standards of public participation, and will seek to engage local actors in the vision and approach to co-design the proposed infrastructures. Cree communities and land users will play a key role throughout the Feasibility Study process. To facilitate the process, a network of Grande Alliance Community Information Officers (GACIOs) in each of the ten Cree communities will assist in the coordination of all work related to the Studies.

On April 15, 2021, the result of the Phase I Feasibility Study RFP was announced, with the award of the mandate to the "Vision Eeyou Istchee" Consortium. The consortium, comprising Stantec, Systra and Desfor, with assistance from KPMG will bring to bear solid expertise in economics, rail and road design and in social and environmental studies. It will ensure full engagement with Cree hunters, fishers and trappers as well as with the Cree communities throughout the entire Feasibility Study process. The study will be carried out with the close participation of the Grande Alliance Community Information Officers (GACIOs) and representatives of the Jamesian communities.

On June 11, 2021, the result was announced of the RFP for *La Grande Alliance* Phases II and III Pre-Feasibility Study. The mandate was awarded to WSP Canada Inc., which has worked on numerous mandates over the years in Eeyou Istchee, related to transportation infrastructure and other projects. For the study, WSP has partnered with Maamuu

Consulting, a Cree-owned business specializing in community engagement, to undertake the liaison work with the communities within the study. Their team will work closely with the Grande Alliance Community Information Officers (GACIOs) to gather valuable information from communities and land users. As was the case for the Phase I study, the Phases II/III Pre-Feasibility Study approach relies heavily on the participation of all concerned communities to shape a common vision for the future of the territory.

The scope of the Phases II/III Pre-Feasibility Study was developed through close collaboration between the Cree Nation and various ministries of *le gouvernement du Québec*, which will continue into the future to ensure the success of the Study.

Committees

The governance structure of *La Grande Alliance* provides for a number of sectorial Committees (See Figure 1).

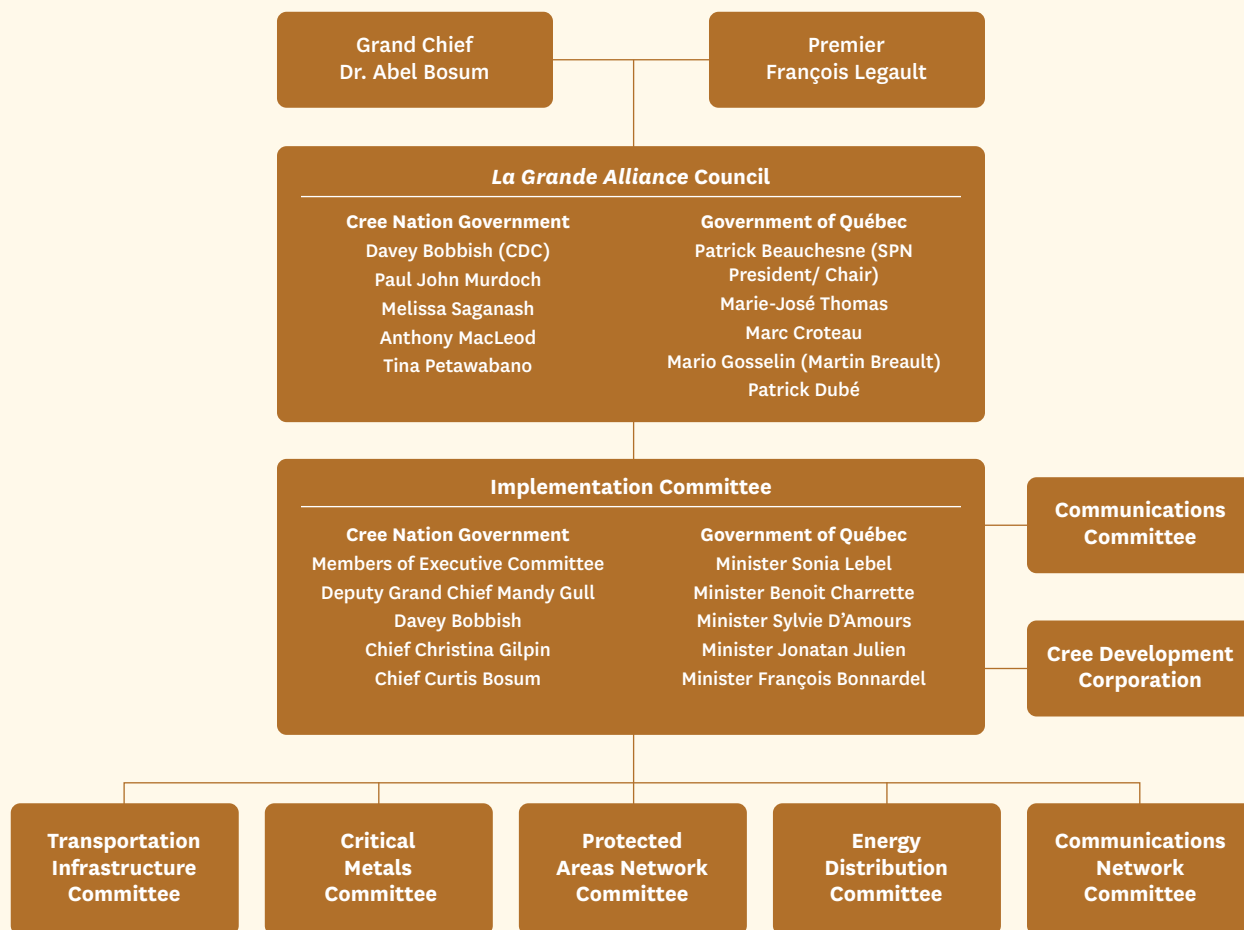
In order of priority, the different Committees established under *La Grande Alliance* are advancing the following files:

(a) Protected Areas

The Cree Nation has done considerable work in advancing the protected areas file. *La Grande Alliance* has allowed the Cree Nation to address many issues that are related to protected areas, and not dwell exclusively on areas in square kilometres. These issues include the management both of protected areas themselves and of wildlife, such as woodland caribou.

The establishment of protected areas under Québec legislation is a long process. Throughout the duration of the process, the area under consideration, its status and the related conditions are subject to change. Protected areas are treated like natural development projects as they proceed through an environmental and social impact assessment process.

Figure 1. The governance structure of *La Grande Alliance*



In current discussions, two matters go beyond the actual areas to be protected that are of fundamental importance for the Cree Nation in environmental and wildlife protection.

(i) Role of Cree Nation as “Proponent” of Protected Areas

Traditionally, protected areas are formally proposed by the Government of Québec, which then acts as “proponent” of protected areas as they go through the environmental and social impact assessment process. Discussions are underway concerning the possible role of the Cree Nation as the proponent of protected areas in Eeyou Istchee. In such a case, the role of the Cree communities would change from passive “community consultation” to active “community engagement”, including in the management of the proposed protected area. Such a scenario would require a deeper engagement with mechanisms such as the Eeyou Planning Commission.

(i) Role of Cree Nation in Wildlife Management

The short-term goal of the Committee on Protected Areas Network and Wildlife is to have 20% of the territory of Eeyou Istchee determined for IUCN Category II protected

area status. In order to achieve this by in the short term, the following issues will need to be addressed to the greatest extent possible:

- Role of the Cree Nation as proponent;
- Role of the Cree Nation in wildlife management;
- Specific measures for the species of woodland caribou & moose;
- Status of 30% non-industrial use in Eeyou Istchee;
- Other tools for the protection areas.

(b) Energy Distribution Committee

The Committee has initiated discussions on supplying mining projects with energy from Hydro-Québec, which currently has an energy surplus, rather than from environmentally unacceptable forms of energy, such as diesel generators. This solution would likely require investment from government and industry for energy distribution lines and might require legislative amendments in Québec.

(c) Transportation Infrastructure Committee

Early discussions suggest that improvement and development of the internal road network in Eeyou Istchee are likely



to have immediate, significant benefits for the Territory and should be the focus of attention at this time. The challenge will be to explore internal road network improvements in a way that does not prejudice the treaty obligation of Canada or Québec.

(d) Committees on Critical Metals and Communications

The Critical Metals Committee is intended to harmonize Cree Nation and Government of Québec policies on the maximization of transformation and value of critical metals within the province of Québec. The current context has made it very difficult to advance since Québec's consultation exercise on the matter has been delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Communications Committee focuses on the commercialization and facilitation of access to the Eeyou Communications Network fiber optic system has yet to be initiated as well. The long-term benefit to the Cree Nation could be the reduction of residential rates, with greater participation of industrial and institutional clientele.

Communications Plan

Certain misunderstandings as to the purpose and role of *La Grande Alliance* indicate the need for a comprehensive communications plan and consistent community engagement to demonstrate how *La Grande Alliance* can empower the Cree communities to shape development in Eeyou Istchee on their own terms. Similarly, the communications plan can demonstrate to the leaders of the Jamésien municipalities the benefits that can result from increased collaboration between the municipalities and the Cree communities.

Federal Participation

In October 2029, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and Minister Jonatan Julien (Québec Energy and Natural Resources) met with Michael Sabia, Chairman of the board of directors of the Federal Infrastructure Bank. The Bank indicated interest in pursuing discussions since *La Grande Alliance* touches upon many of the priorities of the Bank.

La Grande Alliance initiative also matches the stated objective of the Indigenous Sector of the Federal Infrastructure Bank, which is to fund infrastructure projects capable of generating revenue that will ensure a greater role for First Nations in natural resource development. To date, there have been positive indications from the Federal Infrastructure Bank as to the possibility of a significant financial participation.

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.

In October 2020, Ian Lafrenière replaced Sylvie D'Amours as Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs. Patrick Lahaie

has assumed the position of, Associate Secretary General of the Indigenous Affairs Secretariat, replacing Me Marie-José Thomas, who has assumed responsibility for Strategic Projects, including *La Grande Alliance*, reporting directly to Yves Ouellet, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers.

Despite the disruption of COVID-19, the Standing Liaison Committee met regularly in 2020-2021, although less frequently than in past years, focussing 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) Inter-ministerial coordination with various Québec Government Departments, including the Secretariat for Indigenous Affairs, Treasury Board, Health and Social Services, Education, Justice, Public Security, Municipal Affairs, Energy and Natural Resources, Forests, Wildlife and Parks, Transport, and others;
- (c) Section 28 JBNQA issues, including contracting and tendering procedures, Cree priority in contracting, definition of "Cree enterprise";
- (d) *Cree-Québec Governance Agreement*
 - i. Review of Governance Agreement;
 - ii. Representation on Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government
 - iii. Renewal of funding arrangements for Cree Nation Government:
- (e) Implementation of Viens Commission report and recommendations;
- (f) Legislative review:
 - i. Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay;
 - ii. Cree School Board;
- (g) Sector tables:
 - i. Cree Trappers Income Security Board;
 - ii. Protected areas;
 - iii. Land reconfiguration;
 - iv. Caribou – Modernization of Section 24 JBNQA;
 - v. Cree Nation Housing Strategy;
 - vi. Customary adoption;
 - vii. Childcare;
 - viii. Youth Protection;
 - ix. 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 Jamésiens 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, which will expire on December 31, 2021. Madame Cyr now serves as Vice-Chair.

The Council of the Regional Government is composed of 22 representatives, half Cree and half Jamésiens. 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.

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.

This work to clarify roles and responsibilities becomes increasingly important in light of two key factors. The first is the provision of the Governance Agreement calling for the review of the representation and voting rights of the Crees and Jamésiens on the Council of the Regional Government by the ninth anniversary of its start of operations, that is, by January 1, 2023. This review is to be based on resident population in accordance with a formula to be agreed by the Crees and Québec based on democratic principles and demographic realities.

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

Funding

Funding for the Cree Nation Government in relation to the Governance Agreement is addressed in paragraph 11.3.17 of the JBNQA and in section 73 of the Governance Agreement. These provisions state that 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 two Funding Agreements, the first for financial year 2019-2020, concluded on March 27, 2020, and the second for financial years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, concluded on March 30, 2021.

These agreements provide for annual payments of \$5 million from Québec to the Cree Nation Government, which may allocate the funding as it deems appropriate to the different components provided for the Cree Nation Government in Chapter VI of the Governance Agreement.

The Crees and Québec are to meet as soon as possible, but not later than December 1, 2021, in order to negotiate a five-year funding agreement for the financial years 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 in accordance with paragraph 11.3.17 of the JBNQA and section 73 of the Governance 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 focussed on setting up the institutions and processes necessary to implement the Governance Agreement, the first five-year review has not yet been carried out.

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

- (a) Representation and the distribution of votes on the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government in accordance with section 85 of the Governance Agreement and section 37 of the Act establishing the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (chapter G-1.04);
- (b) Sections 44 and 45 relating to energy on Category II lands;
- (c) Planning processes on Category II and III lands, taking into account the evolution of programs and the current context and other related questions;
- (d) Other implementation issues.

These discussions are to take place at the same time as

five-year funding discussions mentioned above, and the parties will try to conclude agreements on these subjects by December 31, 2022.

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.

After a hiatus due to COVID-19, discussions are to resume with the CCQ with a view to reviving the proposal that had been developed with CCQ representatives:

- Development of a CCQ region that matches the administrative map of Eeyou Istchee and the JBNQA;
- Prioritization of Cree labour in the region;
- * Adaptation of the CCQ program to ensure Cree access to the construction industry with adjustments to ensure that Cree candidates have access to the necessary training programs to acquire and keep their status;
- The provision and adaptation of administrative resources to ensure that Cree workers receive the proper support that they need to remain current with the regime through

Photo: Jamie Moses



the CCQ or through partnership with entities such as Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD).

The positive working relationship established with representatives of the CCQ and with Madame Carole Arav, the Deputy Minister of Labour (and former Associate Secretary General of the Treasury Board), are positive indications for the outcome of the discussions.

(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, Label-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 a 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 (CBHSSJB) 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 Bertie Wapachee, Executive Director Daniel St-Amour and the Public Health team 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 *La Grande Alliance* section. The contributions of former Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano must also be noted as key as she fulfilled her role as a leader in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 former 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, as they were then, an important Agreement with the Government of Québec to renew the funding framework and funding rules for CBHSSJB for the period 2019-2024.

This new Agreement was the result of discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Services by the leadership of the CBHSSJB. 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 CBHSSJB 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 CBHSSJB 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*."

Former 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 CBHSSJB, please consult its most recent annual report, for 2019-2020, [available online](#).

New Eeyou-Eenou Regional Health Centre

On October 7, 2019, in Chisasibi, Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and former Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano joined with Québec Health Minister Danielle McCann and Indigenous Affairs Minister Sylvie D'Amours, as they were then, 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 CBHSSJB will manage the project and will own and operate the new Centre.

The new \$300 million, 20,000 square metre 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 CBHSSJB 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 CBHSSJB 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 sensitisation.

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 the inauguration event, Dr. Abel Bosum, Chairman of the Cree Nation Government, and Ms. Bella M. Petawabano, then the Chair of the CBHSSJB, 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 CBHSSJB. 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 CBHSSJB 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 CBHSSJB 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 honors the spirit and intent of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* and of our partnership, among Cree partners and with Québec. It also honors the responsibility we have as a nation to care for our youth with services close to their homes and families."

Former 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 CBHSSJB has continued discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Services in 2020-2021 on administration of the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program, including reporting and accountability for expenses relating to the delivery of NIHB services.

The CBHSSJB also provided MSSS with an amended version of its proposed Cree NIHB Program Framework based on these discussions, with a view to finalizing this framework. This Program Framework includes management and control mechanisms of the program, as well as related CBHSSJB policies and procedures. Formal signature of the Program Framework is expected shortly, and in the interim the framework is being applied by the CBHSSJB.

Legislative Review

The CBHSSJB is reviewing its governing legislation, the *Act respecting health and social services for Cree Native persons*. An important objective is to ensure that the CBHSSJB's governing statute reflects its character as an institution of Cree self-governance in health and social services. 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. In this regard, the CBHSSJB is creating a Cree working group composed of Cree stakeholders, including former Grand Chief Matthew Mukash and Elders, to provide guidance on Cree traditional healing practices for the purpose of developing the new legislation.

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 CBHSSJB is coordinating this work with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government.

The CBHSSJB proposal for this new legislation advanced significantly in 2020-2021. The intention is for this proposal to be further revised based on the input of the Cree working group on Cree traditional healing practices under the leadership of Chairperson Bertie Wapachee. The proposal would then be finalized with the Chairperson in collaboration with Executive Director Daniel St-Amour, for approval by the Board of Directors. It is expected that this work, and related discussions, with Québec will continue to advance significantly in 2021-2022.

EDUCATION

COVID-19

The Cree School Board collaborated actively with the Cree Nation Government, the CBHSSJB, the Cree First Nations and other Cree authorities in responding to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The Chairperson, Dr. Sarah Pashagumskum, former Director General Abraham Jolly and Interim Director General Caroline Mark 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 CBHSSJB.

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.o.22 and 16.o.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 former 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, the Council of Commissioners of the Cree School Board and the Grand Council/Cree Nation Government. The Government of Canada is also expected to approve these Budgetary Rules.

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.

During the year 2020-2021, the Cree School Board presented to Québec a first series of short-term legislative amendments in order to fulfil certain commitments of the Cree and Québec over the years and to address other matters of immediate concern.

In the near future, the Cree School Board intends to carry out, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec, a more in-depth revision of the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons* insofar as this Act applies to the Cree and the Cree School Board. This Act has remained essentially unchanged in regard to the Cree since 1978, and a modernization of its provisions in regard to the Cree and the Cree School Board is overdue.

A modernized Education Act for the Cree would better recognize the Cree School Board as an institution of Cree self-governance in education and would lay the foundation for a renewed relationship between the Cree and Québec in education.

INCOME SECURITY PROGRAM FOR CREE HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS

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

The second important objective would be to examine the possibility entrusting the administration of the Income Security Program to the Cree Nation Government. While the program is efficiently administered, an issue exists in that participants are penalized through “clawbacks” of amounts received from programs to compensate them for damage done to their traplines. Cree administration of the program could be explored as a way to better honour the pursuit of the traditional way of life as a critical element in protecting and maintaining Cree culture, rather than treating it as an alternative welfare program.

There is reason to be optimistic about the discussions as the Deputy Minister involved would be Mme Carole Arav,

formerly of the Québec Treasury Board. Mme Arav is well versed in the JBNQA, and has proven to be an individual who focuses on innovative solutions.

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 a five-year term, and it is expected that a new agreement will be concluded shortly. Québec continues to provide funding

COVID-19 CREE SCHOOL BOARD

The Cree School Board collaborated actively with the Cree Nation Government, the CBHSSJB, the Cree First Nations and other Cree authorities in responding to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Photo: Atoms on Unsplash



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 10952016, 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 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.

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 and the filing of numerous exhibits and responses to questions from the Commission.

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 heard their voice, and 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 called 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 in Québec* (UNDRIP) will be taken into account in its legislation, a measure long sought by the Cree Nation.

Housing: The Commission stated that the Indigenous housing crisis has emerged at the epicentre of many of the issues faced by the First Nations and Inuit. The Commission called 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 followup 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.

Follow-up by the Québec Ombudsperson

On March 12, 2021, Madame Marie Rinfret, Québec's Ombudsperson, wrote to Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum and other Indigenous leaders, regarding the follow-up on the implementation of the various calls to actions set out in the Commission's final report.

Mme Rinfret is seeking the involvement of Indigenous representatives, through the creation of an advisory committee whose composition and operation remain to be determined. The committee would be apolitical and representative of the diversity of Indigenous Peoples.

The Cree Nation Government has agreed to participate in the works of the advisory committee, provided that it is fully involved both in assessing the information provided by the various departments identified in the CERP's calls for action and in formulating recommendations for follow-up and remedial actions.

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 proposes concrete, specific actions to increase the supply and quality of housing in the Cree communities. It takes 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 CBHSSJB and the Cree School Board, taking into account the Cree priority provisions of Section 28 of the 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 CBHSSJB, to make presentations on their needs and expectations.

Meetings have resumed with Québec Treasury Board to discuss the implementation of Section 28 of the JBNQA especially as it pertains to Cree priority in procurement for entities such as the Cree School Board or the Cree Board of Health and Social Services.

The strategy at this table is twofold. In light of the backlog of capital projects at the CBHSSJB and the Cree School Board, there is insufficient time to develop and implement a permanent legislative solution as originally envisioned. An expedited process is therefore required to allow these entities to secure derogations from Québec from the normal call for tender requirements.

The second objective is to secure a long-term legislative solution that ensures proper implementation of Cree contract and employment priority as provided for in Section 28 of the JBNQA. Discussions with Treasury Board have been positive; it appears open to Cree prioritization under the draft *Cree Nation Free Trade Agreement* for companies that invest in a Cree community, local human resources and have a real connection to the communities of Eeyou Istchee, regardless of their legal status or structure: corporation, joint venture, partnership and so on.

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. A new CEO, Sophie Brochu, has recently been appointed at Hydro-Québec, replacing Éric Martel. The Grand Chief has met with Madame Brochu and they had a positive exchange.

EYYOU COMMUNICATION NETWORK

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 and Chapais), Val-d'Or and Montréal.

Fiber-to-the-Home Project (“FTTH”)

In 2020, ECN concluded its FTTH project completing the connection of the community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon to the most powerful and reliable network in the region. 2020 has been a milestone year for ECN and its FTTH project as it now provides Internet to more homes in Eeyou Istchee and James Bay than any other service provider.

Further, in 2020, ECN completed a project with the Cree School Board to connect all its residences with FTTH Internet, which constitutes approximately 275 connections. The project was delivered on time for the new school year starting in September 2020 to support COVID-19 related tele-education initiatives.

Connection of Éléonore and Bachelor Mines

ECN connected the Newmont Eleonore and the Bonterra Bachelor mines with fiber optic cable. While the Bachelor project constituted in the deployment of only about 1 km of fiber optic cable, the Éléonore project required more than 120 km of buried fiber optic cable, a \$3.6M project funded in part by the *Société du Plan Nord*. These projects should

significantly increase these mines' capacity to improve their efficiency in a mining environment.

Billy Diamond Highway

Renovation works continued on the Billy Diamond highway in 2020, with again over 100 dig-up sites. These works caused four fiber optic cable breaks, which did not cause outages because of the redundancy of ECN's network.

Network Redundancy

In 2020, ECN secured funding to implement a redundant networks link between Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini. This link will close a network “ring” that connects the communities of Ouje-Bougoumou, Chibougamau and Mistissini. This new link will use microwave technology and will require a new tower to be built on Route 167 between Chibougamau and Mistissini. It will have sufficient capacity to carry voice and other critical traffic, as well as some Internet traffic, when fiber cable breaks occur. This project will be completed in 2022, as it is currently in design phase.

Other redundancy projects are being considered for the future, such as a submarine network interconnecting the coastal communities, and fiber optic redundancy for the communities of Nemaska, Chapais and Radisson.



Human Resources

ECN concluded some important improvements in its Human Resources Department by implementing multiple HR and occupational hazards safety management systems. It also implemented use of “Spot” satellite rescue systems and subscribed to Airmedic for air transport and search and rescue. As ECN personnel are constantly moving throughout the territory, these measures ensure that our personnel are safe in any situation.

Furthermore, ECN significantly increased its internal capacity to reduce its dependency on third party service providers. Training took place in outside plant works (cables, poles, etc) as well as optoelectronic equipment management so that our team can resolve most technical issues internally as well as proceed to smaller-scale fiber optic cable deployments on its own.

Eeyou Mobility

Eeyou Mobility is a new project from ECN in partnership with the James Bay Eeyou Corporation and SSI Canada Inc. to deploy mobile cellular service throughout Eeyou Istchee James Bay. The intent is to cover all communities as well as most roads of the region and provide the best cellular connectivity of the region at an affordable price. Eeyou Mobility deployed its systems in trial mode in the communities of Ouje-Bougoumou and Nemaska in early 2021 and will launch commercially in all Eeyou Istchee James Bay communities in 2021. Eeyou Mobility has been in discussion with various governmental entities to fund coverage of highways and access roads since 2019.

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 kilometres. 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.

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 have 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*. The process contemplated by Amendment No. 6 with respect to such legislative amendments remains pending with Québec.

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 is to 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. Negotiations have not yet been completed and thus, as of March 31, 2021, the successor agreement had not yet been completed.

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. Negotiations have not yet been completed and thus, as of March 31, 2021, the successor agreement had not yet been completed.

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 Devel-*

Photo: Vincent Guth on Unsplash



opment Program of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs in the Nord-du-Québec Region (PADF Agreement) for the period 2015-2018.

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

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 to address it in a holistic fashion, having regard to the need to promote interconnected corridors for wildlife habitat, especially for woodland caribou.

On December 17, 2020 that, through *La Grande Alliance* partnership the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Québec, the latter will protect more than 20% of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory in the Nord-du-Québec region. In addition, 23 new territories reserved for the purposes of a protected area (TRPPA) were designated which will bring to 23% the proportion of protected areas in the territory. The addition of the new territories brings the total to roughly 39,000 km², equivalent to the area of Switzerland.

Gazoduc Pipeline Project

On November 22, 2018, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government received a project notification from Gazoduc 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 Gazoduc 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 Gazoduc 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, Gazoduc 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 Gazoduc 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 Seneterre 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.

MODERNIZATION OF SECTION 24 JBNQA

Serious concerns have arisen concerning over-harvesting of migratory caribou in the JBNQA Territory by neighboring nations. The Grand Chief wrote to, and met with, Minister Dufour (MFFP) and Minister Lafrenière (SAA) in February 2021 on this matter. He proposed the establishment of a special table to negotiate a modern Implementation Plan of Section 24 of the JBNQA.

These discussions would include possible adaptations to the existing legislative framework to provide greater responsibility for the Indigenous parties and collaboration between the Government of Québec and the Cree Nation Government for the purpose of ensuring effective wildlife management, in particular and in priority, the migratory caribou of the JBNQA Territory.

Both Ministers have responded and named representatives to the negotiating table. The long-term solution would likely be the delegation of greater responsibility for wildlife protection to the Cree Nation. This is consistent with the broad trend since the signature of the JBNQA and the Paix des Braves.

It is anticipated that other files of concern with the MFFP may be addressed at this table such as Right of First Refusal (RFR) for outfitting, which has now been extended to November 2024.

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 Eenou 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, but no agreement was reached by then.

However, the Parties did reach an agreement during fiscal year 2020-2021 by which the tripartite agreement was amended to add distinct funding, apart from operations funding, for certain major capital infrastructure projects for the EEPF, to be undertaken between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2025. The Parties however agreed that the tripartite agreement was concluded without prejudice to their respective positions with respect to funding for the transportation of accused persons.

The Parties also reached a second amending agreement during fiscal year 2020-2021, to add non-recurring excep-

tional funding for fiscal year 2020-2021 in light of the specific situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic response. This second amendment had not yet been signed by Québec and Canada as of March 31, 2021.

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 Eenou 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 took place 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.

Efforts are also ongoing in order to address, with Québec and the education institutions, recruitment and retention of the EEPF.

CREE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION AND YOUTH PROTECTION MATTERS

Changes to Québec law came into effect in 2018 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, 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 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. Several communities have set up these committees, and are working to identify and orient committee members.

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

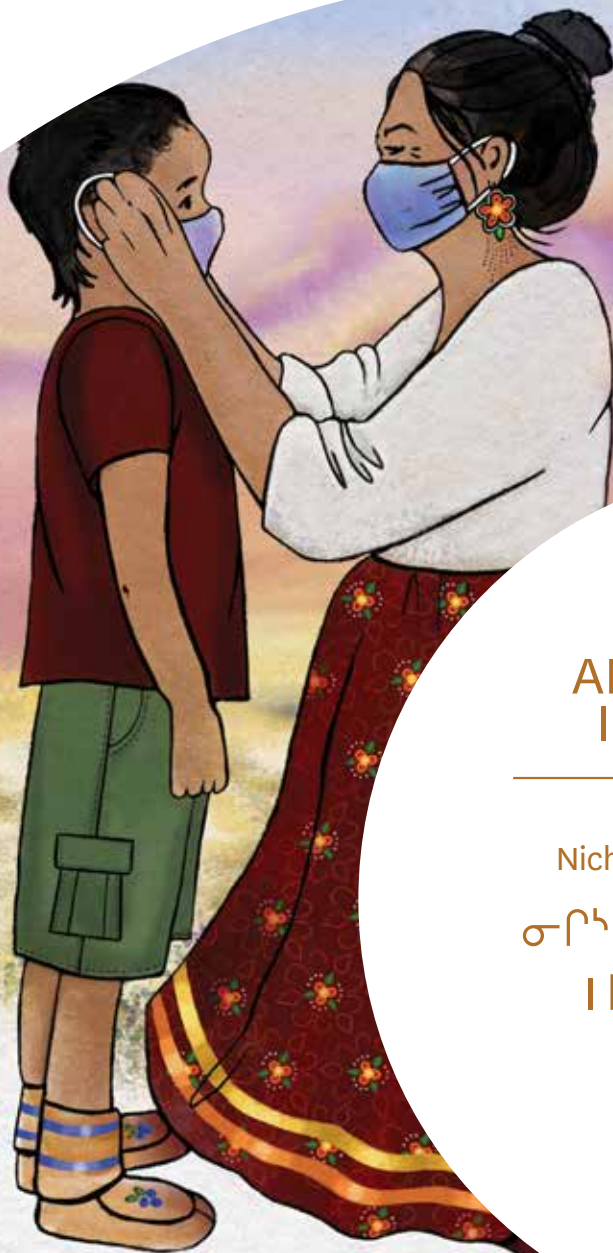
The Cree Nation Government will also collaborate with the CBHSSJB as part of this certification process.

Cree representatives are seeking on-going funding from the Government of Québec to support the Cree customary adoption and guardianship certification process. The section of this report of the Department of Social and Cultural Development provides 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;



COVID-19 ART AS MEDICINE IN A PANDEMIC

Nichischeyihten e sâchichiyin
 ᓂᓯᓴᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ ᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ
 I know you love me

Artwork: Natasia Mukash/CBHSSJB

(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 as well as the infrastructure located in front of the community of Waswanipi, which would eventually be located in Category IA lands, once the reconfiguration is completed. Finally, in view of the significant delays to deal with the 500-foot corridors, attempts are being made to agree with Québec and Canada to prioritize the reconfiguration of a small block of lands located in front of the community, identified as Block A12.

The Waskaganish reconfiguration discussions also provide 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. Discussions were carried out with Québec, Canada and the Catholic Diocese of Amos during fiscal year 2020-2021, and are continuing.

With respect to Chisasibi, discussions are to take place on the need to reconfigure Category I lands in relation to the transportation corridor that transects the community.

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

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.

On March 13, 2020, Newmont 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.

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.

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 shutdown 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). Underground operations at the Renard mine resumed on August 1,

2020 and ore processing operations resumed on October 3, 2020.

BlackRock Metals Inc. – BlackRock Project

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 Albel 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.

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. After a Sale or Investor Solicitation Process (SISP) to seek buyers or investors for Nemaska Lithium, a transaction was approved by the Court.

Nemaska Lithium is now owned in equal parts by the Government of Québec (through *Investissement Québec*)

and a newly formed entity called Québec Lithium Partners ("**QLP**"). QLP will be owned in equal parts by The Pallinghurst Group and Livent. The Pallinghurst Group is a London based leading investor in the metals and natural resources sector with a key focus on battery materials. Livent is a leader in lithium extraction and purification technology and a producer of lithium products.

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.

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.

In February 2021, the Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee ("**COMEX**") held virtual public hearing sessions in mid-February in Matagami, Eastmain, and Nemaska. The Government of Canada runs a parallel permitting process to that of the Province of Québec. The Joint Assessment Committee has confirmed that it has received all information required to allow the completion of the environmental assessment of the Project and it released on March 18, 2021 its draft report following the environmental impact assessment of the Project.

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 IBA's. However, like other regions, Canada and Québec have seen a slowdown in mining investment owing to the global decline in commodity prices. As a result, these discussions have either slowed or been temporarily suspended, pending a more favourable economic climate.

These discussions include:

- (a) the 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.

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.

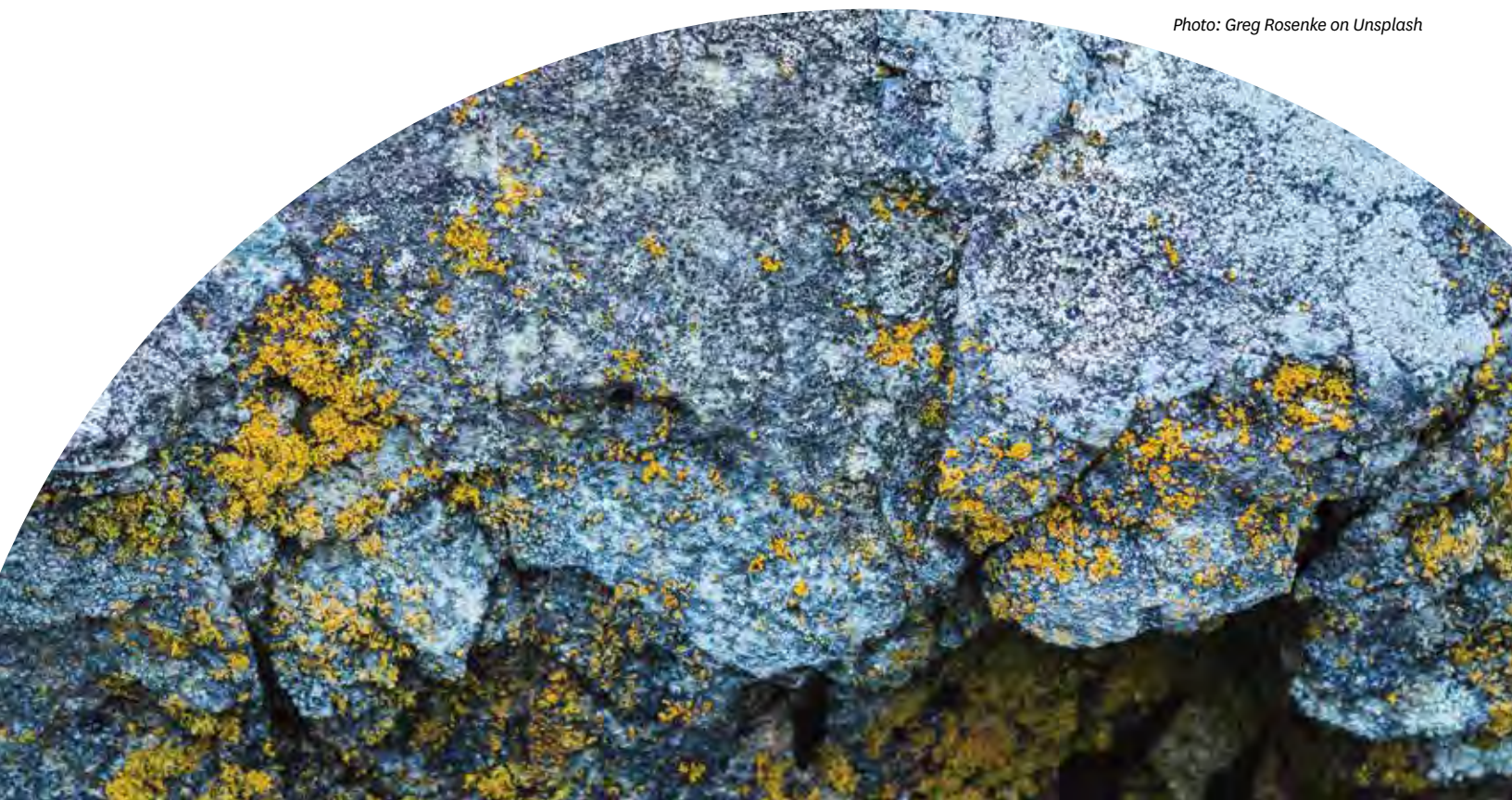
Since the signature of the *Paix des Braves* in 2002, the Cree-Québec relationship has provided significant benefits for the Cree Nation. The funding provided pursuant to the *Paix des Braves*, the significant funding for Cree Health and Social Services, Education, Police, Justice, Childcare Services 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, CBHSSJB 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.

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.

Photo: Greg Rosenke on Unsplash



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS



The Cree Nation Government has undertaken an important initiative to engage directly with Indigenous groups across the country in order to share the experience and the history of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. We do this out of a sense of responsibility, and also to assist other Indigenous groups in securing recognition of their rights.

More specifically, this initiative saw the importance of engaging with those groups who are our neighbours and with whom there are a wide range of issues of common concern. Our approach in this initiative is to strengthen and to build new relationships based on our shared Indigenous histories and values, and to conclude arrangements that are in keeping with our cultures and traditional ways of relating to one another.

CREE-NASKAPI-INUIT RELATIONS

On March 22, 2021, newly elected President Pita Aatami, Makivik Corporation, Chief Noah Swappie, Naskapi Nation and Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum met to discuss common issues and to identify the next steps in order to address these. The respective technical teams have met to draft a memorandum of understanding for the creation of a Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi Forum. The Proposed MOU will be presented at a follow-up meeting of the leaders this summer. In general the Forum will address political issues such as our respective rights under the JBNQA and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; and also specific issues, such as caribou management and infrastructure. Moreover, this proposed MOU will identify our common objectives on the health, conservation, management and harvest of caribou populations, and will be reviewed by all three nations.

CREE-INNU OF PEKUAKAMIULNUATSH NATION RELATIONS

The Maammu Wiicheutuwin Agreement, an agreement concluded in 2018 between the Pekuakamiulnuatch 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 the environment and the promotion of our respective languages and cultures. The committees established to address wildlife management, economic development, and forestry have had ongoing dialogue and exchanges throughout the year. Our treaty promotes positive inter-Indigenous relations.

CREE-INNU NATION RELATIONS

The decline of the migratory caribou herd populations continues to be a challenge throughout the territory. The Cree Nation Government, the Cree Trappers' Association and the Cree Nation of Chisasibi have engaged in discussions with the Innu for several years in an attempt to find an acceptable solution to enable access to caribou while ensuring that any actions ensure the health of the herds and the respect of Cree rights and interests.

Once again, as an expression of good faith, the Cree Nation Government offered a symbolic gesture of gifting caribou to the Innu Nation and the Naskapi Nation. This gifting was also done in anticipation of a future cultural exchange followed by discussions towards reaching common objectives and recommendations for long-term solutions.

In the winter of 2021, a group of tallymen from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi reached out to the Cree Nation Government concerning a group of Innu hunters harvesting caribou on Cree traplines. The Innu community failed to contact the concerned community prior to their departure, as it has always been customary practice between our peoples. Despite attempts to contact the Innu Community leadership, the Innu hunters harvested a significant number of caribou which undermined the Cree leadership's notices and campaigns to make sure that Cree members restrict harvesting caribou in order to protect and promote the health of the herds. A meeting took place between the Innu, Cree Nation of Chisasibi, the affected tallymen, Naskapi Nation and the Cree Nation Government in order to allow an open exchange with the objective of finding ways to restore the relationship between our nations. More exchanges are planned in order to address this important issue.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INDIGENOUS GROUPS

In the context of La Grande Alliance, there have been presentations made to the Naskapi Nation Chief and Council and the Makivik Corporation representatives. These meetings produced very positive exchanges.

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.

Photo: Jamie Moses



NATURAL RESOURCES



COLLABORATIVE FORESTRY REGIME CATEGORY II LANDS

As expected, work on the implementation of the Collaborative Forestry Regime with Quebec has been slowed by the ongoing pandemic. The end goal of this Regime is for the Cree Nation to eventually prepare forestry management plans for the traplines within Category II lands.

As mentioned in last year's report, the Forestry Department continues to build its capacity, resources, and experience in forestry management administration. This past year, the Department engaged 2 new Forestry Monitors, a Coordinator of Monitoring, a GIS Analyst, a Forestry Planner, and an Administrative Assistant. With 11 staff members in total, the Department has begun administering the broader roles necessary for the Collaborative Forest Management Regime with Quebec.

Although challenged by COVID-19, our Forestry Planner and GIS Analyst have begun working closely with the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) lead Forest Planner in a knowledge and data transfer that will be required for future Cree based forest planning.

Similarly, our Coordinator of Monitoring is developing a monitoring protocol that encompasses all facets of the consultation process that is required under the Adaptive Forest Regime of the Paix des Braves Agreement. This work marks a significant transition as past monitoring, done largely by the MFFP, focused on the industrial operations, whereas this new monitoring is done largely in support of Cree land users.

This new monitoring focus is already paying dividends for both the MFFP and Cree land users as we have been able to resolve several complex conflicts over how forestry operations are conducted on the traplines.

The added ability to conduct direct monitoring interventions has led to a deeper understanding by all stakeholders and revealed some innovative solutions to these conflicts.

It is work of this nature that is vital to ensure that Cree land users have confidence in the Forestry Department and the Cree Nation Government when it undertakes the planning role in the future.

CREE QUEBEC FORESTRY BOARD

First launched in 2003, the Cree Quebec Forestry Board's (CQFB) mandate is to oversee the implementation and evolution of the Adapted Forest Regime of the Paix des Braves Agreement; the heart of which is the consultation process between forest planners, companies, Cree tallymen and land users.

To improve these consultations, the CQFB has engaged in a comprehensive diagnostic review of each element of consultation process with particular attention to ensuring positive outcomes. The key expression of these positive outcomes are harmonization measures used to ensure balance between forestry operations and Cree land use activities. To this, the Board's diagnostic recommended the creation of a guide for harmonization measures to improve these positive outcomes. To address situations where harmonization measures cannot be invoked, the diagnostic recommended the creation of a further guide for the management of conflicts at the consultation process. Finally, to ensure that each party shares the same understanding of the consultation process, the Board's diagnostic recommended that the Internal Operating Rules for this process be renewed and revitalized. With the help of the Board, these three diagnostic recommendations are currently being developed by the parties.

In similar fashion, the Board's Secretariat provided support for the completion of a regional Mixed Forest Stands Strategy. As reported in last year's Annual Report, this Strategy was in development and was completed this year after extensive consultation with each community affected by commercial forestry operations. The Board and its Secretariat provided valuable input throughout the development of this Strategy.

The current Cree representatives on the Board are Isaac Voyageur, Gillman Ottereyes, Geoff Quaille, Nadia Saganash and Steven Blacksmith, with technical support from Stephan Ouellet, Nicolas Lemieux and Dion Michel.

TERRITORIAL ACCESS

As part of the Cree Nation Government's ongoing efforts to manage access to the territory, coordinated efforts with the Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN), and the Cree communities continued on the identification, verification and prosecution of illegal non-native cabins in Eeyou Istchee. Each year the MERN prepares a list of suspect illegal cabins that they wish to investigate. This list is forwarded to the Chiefs of each affected community and to the Cree Nation Government. Representatives from the communities verify each cabin on the list to ensure that they do not belong to Cree Beneficiaries. Cabins that are owned by Crees are then removed from the list. The remaining cabins then undergo a physical inspection/investigation by the MERN which ultimately leads to their dismantling.

It is important to recall that the 2012 moratorium on any new non-native cabins in Eeyou Istchee remains in effect.

This is why the continued prosecution of illegal “squatter” cabins is vital to maintain the integrity of this moratorium.

NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN ONTARIO

The environmental impact assessment of the West Detour Lake Mine extension continued this past year with focus being on the potential for downstream impacts on the Detour/Harricana watersheds that flow into Quebec. Staff from the Cree Nation Government’s Environment and Remedial Works Department and legal counsel (GoldBlatt Partners) continued their collaboration to ensure that the Ontario Government and Kirkland Lake Gold fulfilled their legal obligations to ensure that the Cree Nation Government was included in the assessment process, particularly for the communities of Washaw sibi, MoCreebec and Waskaganish. This effort culminated in a remarkable virtual consultation session between these communities, Ontario, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Kirkland Lake Gold in late March 2021. In the coming year, the Cree Nation Government will finalize its comments and recommendations for the project, with the expectation that the company will begin to receive its permits for the project into 2023.

GAZODUQ PIPELINE

The Gazoduq natural gas pipeline, which is projected to run from the Timmins area in Ontario, east through the Val-d’Or region in Quebec, was a subject of interest to the Cree Nation Government because its original route was to enter a small portion of a Cree trapline in the Senneterre area. After actions taken by the Cree Nation Government, the proponent opted to move this route further south to avoid triggering the environment review process under Section 22 of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*.

Since this route change, the Cree Nation Government has kept the project under observation. Last year Gazoduq lost several key investors in the project and the company has since scaled back its timeline on the project. At this stage it is uncertain whether the project will be able to move forward.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SECTION 22 HARMONIZATION

The effort to harmonize the Federal Environment Assessment process with Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement has been ongoing since the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the federal government, while having a right to separate external environmental review process outside of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement framework, maintained an obligation to ensure that it respected the Crees’ right to participate in the process as required by the Agreement. Following the administrative agreement between Canada and Cree Nation Government to collaborate on the federal review of the Rose lithium-tantalum and James Bay lithium mines in 2019, the parties have continued to work on a similar permanent solution for future federal reviews in Eeyou Istchee.

Progress on this file was slowed by COVID-19 for much of year, but the parties convened an important meeting in February that provided the initiative for a potential Memorandum of Understanding that would open the door to amending the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement to ensure that the federal external process allows for meaningful participation. This MOU is expected to be approved by both parties in the first quarter of the 2021 fiscal year.



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



In 2020-2021, COVID-19 eliminated in-person meetings internationally and in Canada. Although work continued through Zoom meetings, progress has tended to be less productive.

An important exception has been the negotiation and tabling of Bill C-15 – *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The federal Bill was introduced at First Reading in the House of Commons on December 3, 2020. As described further below, this Bill – if adopted in 2021 – will set an important precedent in Canada and internationally.

As promised by the Trudeau government, the government fulfilled its commitment that Bill C-262 – Romeo Saganash’s private member’s bill – would be “the floor, rather than the ceiling, when it comes to drafting this new legislation” on the *UN Declaration*.

1. BILL C-15 – AN ACT RESPECTING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A crucial purpose of Bill C-15 is to “affirm the Declaration as a universal international human rights instrument with application in Canadian law” (s. 4(a)). A further purpose is to “provide a framework for the Government of Canada’s implementation of the Declaration” (s. 4(b)).

Canada “must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the Declaration” (s. 5). This must include the preparation of an “action plan” to achieve the objectives of the Declaration (s. 6(1)).

C-15 includes 22 preambular paragraphs, which have legal effect. “Colonialism” and “doctrines of “superiority”, such as “discovery” and *terra nullius* (lands belonging to no one), are repudiated. Racism and other forms of discrimination are also prohibited.

Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum has played an ongoing active role, reaching out to other Indigenous peoples and appearing in March 2021 before the INAN Standing Committee on C-15. As he did with Bill C-262, Paul Joffe was one of the lawyers that drafted C-15. This Bill was then negotiated with federal government representatives.

2. UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (PFII)

The UN Permanent Forum in New York held a virtual session in April 2020, which enabled participation by Indigenous peoples and others from different regions of the world. The theme of the session was “sustainable development”. For

this purpose, the Permanent Forum published a report entitled “Update on Indigenous peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

In particular, the PFII report underlined that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is not specifically mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. However, the report added that this Agenda “remains the primary international instrument for Indigenous peoples, providing a road map for incorporating the rights of Indigenous peoples into equitable, participatory and people-centred sustainable development.”

3. EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (EMRIP)

Each year, the Expert Mechanism holds a five-day session in July in Geneva, in which representatives from states, Indigenous peoples and their organizations, civil society, inter-governmental organizations and academia take part.

EMRIP converted its postponed 13th session into four virtual regional meetings. The key topic of the regional meetings was: “The impact of COVID-19 on the rights of Indigenous peoples under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. The North America region met virtually on November 30, 2020.

In June 2020, the Expert Mechanism indicated its awareness that, during the current pandemic, many Indigenous peoples do not have the capacity to engage and participate in its work. EMRIP emphasized that Indigenous peoples are more likely to die of COVID-19, are hit the hardest by its socio-economic consequences, and that inadequate access to healthcare and other key facilities exacerbates the possibility of Indigenous peoples catching the disease.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE COALITION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government is a member of the Coalition. A key aspect of its work has been to convene Coalition meetings on an ongoing basis, as well as draft press releases, joint statements and participate in meetings around advancing the *UN Declaration*, especially the federal legislation on Bill C-15. Resources can be found at: declarationcoalition.ca

In August 2020, the Coalition met with the new Ambassador to the United Nations, Bob Rae. In March 2021, the Coalition participated in a virtual 2-day meeting on international issues hosted by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNA).

INDIGENOUS NATIONS,
ORGANIZATIONS
AND PROMINENT
INDIVIDUALS
SUPPORT FEDERAL
IMPLEMENTATION
OF UN INDIGENOUS
RIGHTS DECLARATION



NATIONAL DAY OF OBSERVANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF COVID-19

ON MARCH 11, 2021, THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH REGIONAL ENTITIES, COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE ACROSS EYOU ISTCHEE, PARTICIPATED IN A NATIONAL DAY OF OBSERVANCE, IN HONOUR OF THOSE THAT DIED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC*. DECLARED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, THE DATE MARKED THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF WHEN THE PANDEMIC WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED IN CANADA.

TRIBUTE TO THOSE LOST DURING THE PANDEMIC

We would like to express our condolences to the families and communities who have lost loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic.

* Information relevant as of March 11, 2021



SAM SHECAPIO

Mistissini

Sam was born on November 28, 1951 out in the bush. He loved being out on the land practicing the Cree way of life. He was a fishing guide for many years, he started at a very young age at Camp Louis Jolliet and Vieux Poste. Sam passed away on February 25, 2021 in Montreal.



JOSEPH SHECAPIO

Mistissini

Joseph was born on January 2, 1951. Joseph was an employee of the Cree Nation of Mistissini for many years under the housing department. After his retirement, he spent his time out in the bush and continued helping his family. Joseph passed away on January 20, 2021 at the age of 70.



CHIEF FRED BLACKNED

Wemindji

Former Chief Fred Blackned passed away on May 11, 2020 at the age of 80. As a former Chief of Wemindji, and a JBNQA signatory, Fred leaves a legacy that has shaped the modern Cree Nation for past, present and future generations. His generosity, Iiyiyuu knowledge and his compassion for our people, our culture, and our language, history and traditions have left an indelible mark in our hearts.



EMMA TRAPPER LONGCHAP

Mistissini

Emma was born in the bush on December 7, 1944. Emma was a friend to many and loved to share her knowledge of Cree culture and language. She loved to laugh and share her wisdom with people. She had faith which gave her great strength. Emma passed away on May 4, 2020 in Montreal at the age of 76.

“To the families of those individuals we are deeply sorry for your losses, and our entire Nation has mourned with you.”

- Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum



JIMMY RATT

Chisasibi

Jimmy Ratt passed away at the age of 62 on May 5, 2020, the date of his birthday. From Chisasibi, he was a hunter and loved being in the bush and living off the land. He had been ill the last few years and he was in Montreal receiving long term care when he passed away.



GEORGE MASTY

Whapmagoostui

George Masty was born on February 17, 1952. As a member of the Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui, George was an active member of his community; working in Youth Protection, as well as being a member of the Elder's Council and President of the Social Policy Advisory Committee. George was also instrumental in helping build the CHBSSJB, serving on the board for three terms. He leaves behind a loving family who continue to miss him every day.



LAWRENCE HOUSE

Chisasibi

On June 6, 2020 Larry House passed away at the age of 55. Larry was an honourable person, and his interest was always about preserving the best of our Cree culture and traditions. He was instrumental in establishing the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiun Committee, for which he served as president. Larry was also a member of the Sundance family, and an advocate for cultural safety and cultural approaches to justice and well-being. For all he taught, Larry leaves behind an honourable legacy.



CHIEF MATTHEW WAPACHEE

Nemaska

Former Chief Matthew Wapachee was born and raised in Old Nemaska. He was a highly respected and cherished member of the Cree Nation who served his people in different roles throughout his life. Matthew passed away on December 26, 2020 and will be dearly missed by his wife Emma, their children and grandchildren.



TOMMY WESKENAN

Mistissini

On September 26, 2020, the Cree Nation of Mistissini lost one of its members: Mr. Tommy Weskenan at the age of 76. In his younger years, Tommy and his wife Sarah lived off the land with their children. He was an avid hunter and lived a traditional Cree lifestyle with his family. Tommy leaves behind a loving family and friends who miss him dearly.



DOROTHY SHECAPIO

Mistissini

Better known as Jochigan, Dorothy Shecapio passed away at the age of 75 on November 10, 2020. She was the daughter of Minnie and Wliiam Shecapio, and sister of Hattie, Mary-Jane, Sarah, Diane, and Dorothy Shecapio. She was cremated in Saguenay and laid to rest with her parents Minnie and William.

Photo: Jamie Moses



COMMEMORATING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF OUR TREATY - THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed on November 11, 1975 and is the first modern Indigenous land claim agreement and treaty in Canada. This historic moment established a landmark agreement to develop Eeyou Istchee in alignment with Cree values and culture. It set in place a comprehensive framework that would be built upon in the subsequent four and a half decades. Signed by the Cree Nations of Eeyou Istchee, the Inuit of Nunavik, the Government of Québec, the Government of Canada and Hydro-Québec, it establishes a partnership in the governance and development of Eeyou Istchee. To mark this important milestone, video messages and statements by Cree leadership and JBNQA signatories, the governments of Canada and Quebec and Hydro-Québec were shared online. These videos can be viewed on our website: <https://www.cngov.ca/news-issues/current-issues/celebrating-45-years-of-the-jbnqa-1975-2020/>

“Today is a very special day, where we take a moment to honour the challenges of a young group of Crees, who at the moment probably thought they were in the face of something insurmountable. Despite this, they believed in the power of unity. People like Billy Diamond, Robert Kanatewat, Phillip Awashish and Fred Blackned, who we sadly lost this year, knew there had to be a solution. It was bold, but it worked... We have maintained and protected our way of life to hunt, fish and trap in Eeyou Istchee as we always have; this is who we are. As the world around us modernized, so did we. We adapted and looked ahead to prepare for the next generation.”

-GRAND CHIEF DR. ABEL BOSUM

“The James Bay Agreement was negotiated in a way that would enable the people to restore their nation and rebuild their nation. It’s built on respect, recognition, restoration, responsibility, cooperation. After 45 years of the James Bay Agreement, we have emerged as a strong nation and people. We have the protection of our rights; we are exercising our right to govern ourselves...There is clearly a sign of emergence and resurgence of the Eeyou Nation as a result of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement... There has been vast improvement over the past 45 years.”

**-DR. PHILIP AWASHISH
JBNQA NEGOTIATOR AND SIGNATORY**

“I never dreamt that when I began that we would be here where we are today. I dreamed of independence and running our own show: our own forces, schools, police force, airline - everything. We got to have everything that runs a country, and we are succeeding.”

-ROBERT KANATEWAT, JBNQA SIGNATORY

“In the context of 1975, there was the audacity of Robert Bourassa, who had the vision to build large electric dams to the benefit of all including Indigenous nations. There was also the audacity of Grand Chief Billy Diamond, who saw an opportunity to build a long-term win-win partnership, it took audacity and leadership to take that direction, and as a tribute to this visionary, the James Bay Highway will be renamed in his honour.”

-QUÉBEC PREMIER FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

“Through this agreement, we have been able to advance collectively. Yes, there has been economic development for all Quebecers, and yes, there has been economic development for the communities, but above all there has been human development, and it is on the basis of these relationships that I invite you to pursue our common path.”

-SOPHIE BROCHU, HYDRO-QUÉBEC PRESIDENT/CEO

RENAMING OF THE JAMES BAY HIGHWAY IN HONOUR OF ONE OF THE CREE NATION'S GREATEST STATESMEN, BILLY DIAMOND

The motion to rename the highway was passed by the Government of Québec on the eve of the 45th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA in recognition of the former Grand Chief Billy Diamond. A fitting tribute to Billy Diamond, the chief architect and chief negotiator of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, for his contribution to the development of our Cree Nation and the protection of our rights, laying the foundation upon which we have continued to build our Nation. The new Route Billy-Diamond Highway spans approximately 620 kilometres in length and extends north from Matagami to Radisson. In May 2021, a new arch was installed above the highway to highlight its new name, the result of a joint project between the Cree Nation Government, the Société de développement de la Baie-James and the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.



CREE NATION HOUSING STRATEGY

IN 2020-2021, IMPORTANT INITIATIVES WERE ANNOUNCED THAT EXPANDED COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE HOUSING SHORTAGE THAT EXISTS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES.

COMMUNITY PRIVATE HOUSING INITIATIVE

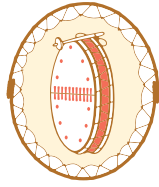
On May 27, 2020, the Cree Nation Government approved the Community Private Housing Initiative. This new Program Initiative forms part of the Cree Nation Housing Strategy, and is intended to stimulate the construction of new private homes; encourage and support Cree access to private homeownership and the development of a real estate market in the Cree communities; and facilitate the participation of Cree Local Governments and their development corporations in this new Cree housing market. With \$100M established to fund community private housing, the fund will be part of a multifaceted approach to address housing needs in Eeyou Istchee.

RAPID HOUSING INITIATIVE (RHI)

On March 17, 2021 the Federal Government, represented by the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families Children and Social Development and Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services and Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum announced \$17.4 million that would be invested through the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI). Through this initiative, communities will receive an investment of \$17.4 million for immediate construction of 55 affordable modular homes for elders and persons with disabilities in nine Cree communities. This investment compliments the effort to meet the critical need for housing in Eeyou Istchee.







Cree Nation Government
ᐃᐱᓯ ᐸᐅᐱᓯᓯᓯᓯ





FINANCE AND TREASURY

Message from the Treasurer **Matthew Swallow**

THE 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR WAS A CHALLENGING PERIOD FOR ALL CREE ENTITIES AS WE HAD TO FIND NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MANAGE OUR AFFAIRS AS HAS THE REST OF THE WORLD. I BELIEVE WE HAVE MANAGED TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD DURING THIS PERIOD DESPITE THE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES WE HAVE ALL FACED AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC.

Over the past year, the Cree Nation Government has continued to work with the Government of Canada to streamline funding arrangements to respect the Cree Nation Governance Agreement and financial reporting mechanisms inherent with the Cree Constitution.

We have come a long way in having Canada and Quebec recognize our rights of self-government and how we must manage our affairs consistently with those rights and responsibilities.

We have also continued our efforts to revise the reporting obligations of communities to Canada, and wherever possible, with Quebec, to ensure that the Governance Agreement is respected.

Fiscal year 2020-2021 was particularly challenging because of the pandemic. The Cree Nation Government was able to secure \$16.8M 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.

In addition to the above funding, the Cree Nation Government also secured additional COVID-19 funding for the Eeyou Eenou Police Force, Childcare and housing initiatives including the Rapid Housing Initiative and the Reaching Home Program.

We are also pleased to advise that we have concluded negotiations regarding the major capital funding requirements of the EEPF. For the first time since the creation of the EEPF, Canada and Quebec have agreed to fund certain major capital projects. The major capital infrastructure funding to be provided is \$30,859,481 to be paid over a five (5) year period to implement the EEPF Capital Plan.

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 despite the 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, and who have ensured that we were able to meet

our financial needs and to continue to evolve as a team in this process.

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 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Board/Council of the Cree Nation Government allocated \$391,335,913 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, 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 nations' 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 favor of the local communities and/or in conformity with Agreement guidelines.

Table 1 summarizes certain of these arrangements for 2020-2021.

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.

Table 1.

| GOVERNMENT OF CANADA | |
|--|---------------|
| Cree Act Operation and Maintenance Funding | \$107,579,591 |
| Federal Capital A Base Funding | \$20,521,905 |
| Agreement respecting the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and Related Services | \$4,889,976 |
| Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Funding Agreement | \$3,413,974 |
| CANADA / QUEBEC JOINT FUNDING | |
| Policing Services Agreement | \$26,755,482 |
| GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC | |
| Agreement Concerning a New Relationship - Annual Payment | \$104,417,961 |
| Agreement Concerning the Administration of Justice | \$20,757,024 |
| Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Istchee Territory | \$5,000,000 |
| CREE NATION TRUST | |
| Implementation of Assumed Obligations and Responsibilities | \$98,000,000 |



HUMAN RESOURCES

Message from the Director **Nancy Bobbish**

ON BEHALF OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, I PRESENT YOU OUR 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH DESCRIBES THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TASKS ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE YEAR AND THE MOST RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RESOURCES.

Describing 2020-2021 in a word is taxing. It's difficult to encapsulate such a complex year in a word, however 'interconnected' could be one. Interconnected because even while adopting a hybrid work model – from home and office in different proportions, we innovated and adapted new ways to convene, collaborate, and connect.

When the pandemic hit the world, it brought great uncertainty and the need to take immediate decisions. As the Human Resources department, we had to adapt rapidly to the situation. It was a complex task. However, our goal was always clear. We must continue to work, contributing – within the framework of our functions and competences – to the advancement of the Cree Nation Government's mandate in the context of the pandemic. We sought to protect the health and safety of our employees, putting in place various precautionary measures, and adopting teleworking methods.

In the Human Resources department, we saw our drive to forge ahead with our objectives. We kept the momentum with our recruitment activities, in the implementation of our human resources and information system, in finalizing our compensation review and its implementation, in adapting our safety measures and other procedures, amid other activities.

Moreover, I want to express my appreciation for everything everyone has done to make the transition as seamless

as possible for our employees and our clients. You have been creative, you have been flexible, and you have been patient. We saw everyone's determination to try a new virtual environment and embrace the change. We've seen people's determination to do their work, but in a different way. Please accept our heartfelt appreciation for each and every one of you and the hours spent in the implementation of these changes.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work of our HR professionals, who have played a role in helping our government navigate these uncertain times. It was inspiring to see everyone come together to help our organization face these challenges and grow stronger as a team.

Kindest regards,

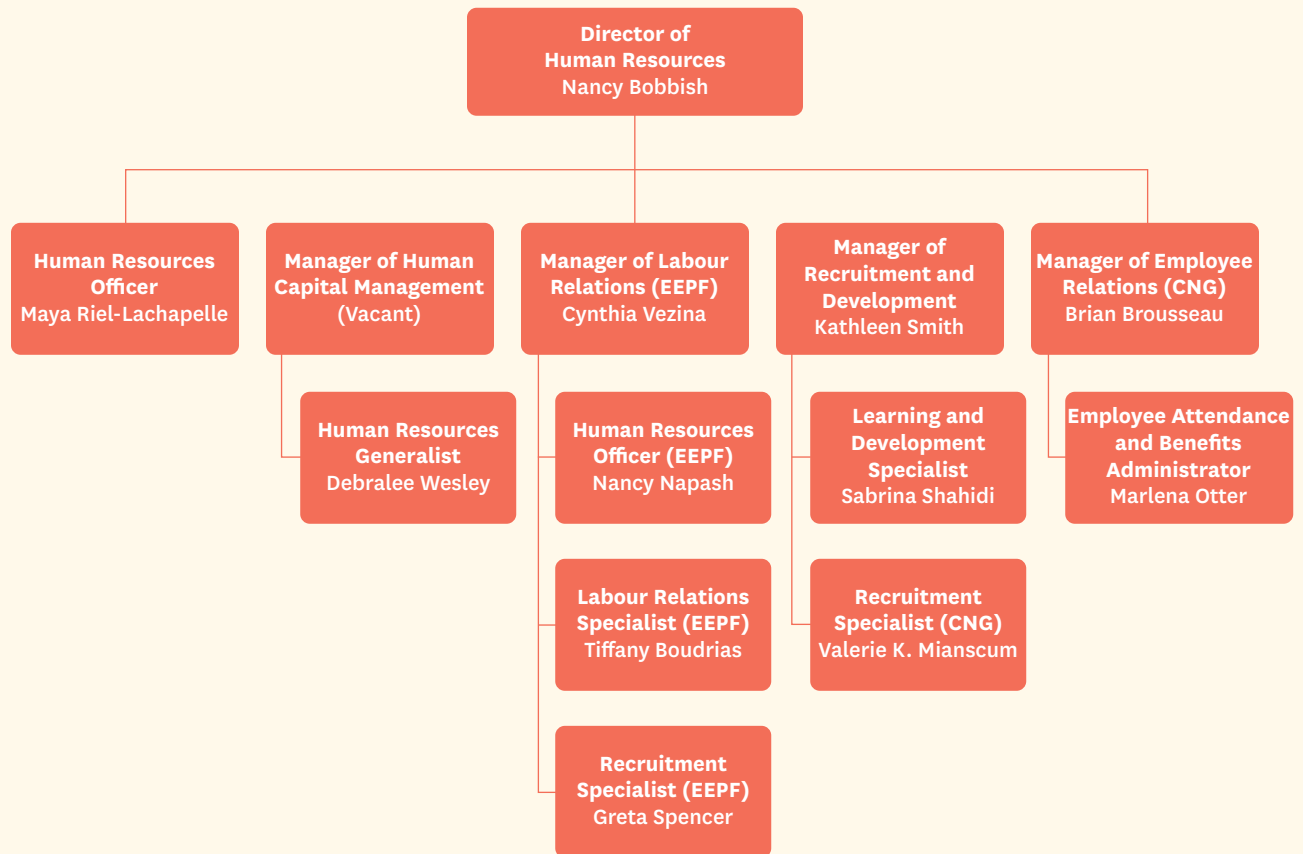
Nancy Bobbish
Director of Human Resources



HUMAN RESOURCES

What we appreciate about human resources is that the profession is ever-changing to make things better – whether it's new strategies to help employees with their development, new human resources technologies and tools, or partnering with managers to find ways of improving processes to help our government reach its objectives. We are passionate and purposeful about our work. Our aim is to model transparency, responsibility, accountability, and fairness through our decisions and actions. Working in human resources is immensely rewarding.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



MANPOWER AND RECRUITMENT

For 2020-2021, the Cree Nation Government had 441 approved civilian and non-civilian employees (see Figure 1).

Number of employees per department:

- Apatisiwin Skills Development: 38 employees
- Capital Works and Services: 57 employees
- Child and Family Services: 13 employees
- Commerce and Industry: 10 employees
- Eeyou Eenou Police Force: 124 employees
- Environment and Remedial Works: 28 employees
- Finance and Treasury: 12 employees
- Forestry: 10 employees
- Government Support Services: 35 employees
- Grand Council: 8 employees
- Human Resources: 12 employees
- Justice and Correctional Services: 77 employees
- Social and Cultural Development: 11 employees

The Human Resources department has hired 74 civilian employees. We filled 42 vacant permanent positions and 32 contractual positions of a duration of six months or more; nearly twice as much as 2019-2020 (see Figure 2).

Non-civilian employees were hired in different communities throughout Eeyou Istchee. We conducted 52 interviews. We hired 31 officers and had a total of 28 resignations and 1 retirement.

However, we did encounter problems with retention. The turnover rate was 7.9 % for permanent Officers and 30.3 % for contractual Officers. There are several factors for the high turnover of contractual Officers, such as Officers being hired by another Police Force, work location, COVID-19, and personal reasons. We did our best to recruit more Officers by organizing six virtual information sessions at École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ) in order to recruit Officers who are enrolled in the program or have recently graduated from the ENPQ. We

Figure 1. Number of active employees per department (Civilian and non-Civilian Employees - Total of 441)

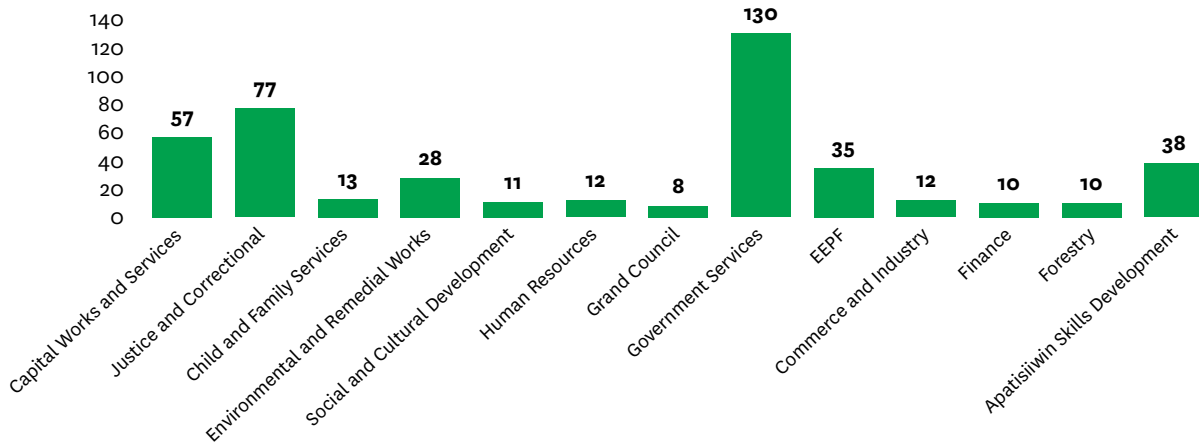
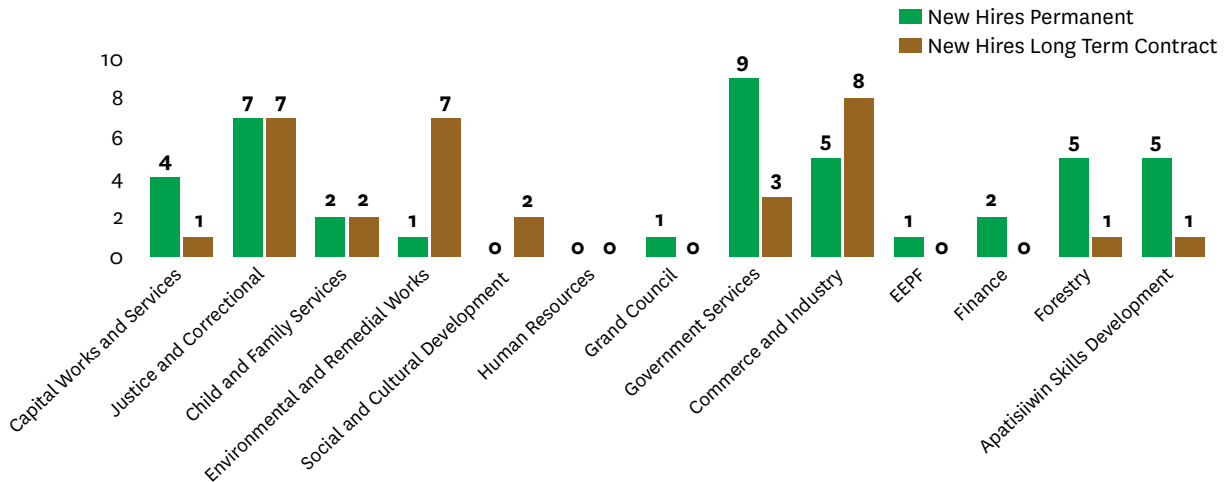


Figure 2. New Employees Recruited by Department



also attended the Cree School Board Virtual Orientation event. This gave an opportunity for the secondary students to learn about the Eeyou Eenuu Police Force, its prospective job opportunities, and the Police Technology program.

Civilian employees are distributed across a vast geography as follows: Chisasibi (48), Wemindji

(16), Montreal (48), Val d'Or (18), Ouje-Bougoumou (17), Waskaganish (24), Nemaska (34), Waswanipi (23), Quebec (3), Mistissini (73), Ottawa (11), Whapmagoostui (8), Eastmain (10) and Amos (2) (see Figure 3).

As for our EEPF manpower, our Officers are primarily based in Chisasibi (27), Mistissini (18), Waskaganish (17),

and in Eastmain (6), Nemaska (6), Ouje-Bougoumou (6), Waswanipi (10), Wemindji (7), Whapmagoostui (7) and Amos (2) (see Figure 4).

From the 335 civilian employees, 47 represent male employees and 128 represent female employees in Support/ Technical positions. Professional & 1st Level Manager roles are held by 44 male individuals and 75 female individuals. SR Professional & 2nd Level Manager roles are held by 15 males and 8 females. Director/Executive positions are held by 12 male employees and 6 female employees (see Figure 5).

As for our Officers, 80 represents male employees and 12 represents female employees (see Figure 6).

Figure 3. Distribution of Employees by Community/Location of Work (Civilian Permanent Employees)

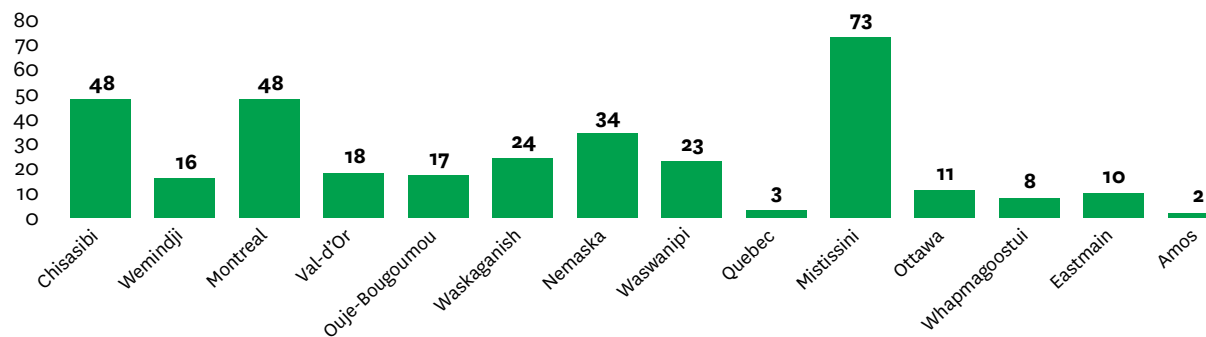


Figure 4. EEPF - Distribution of Non-Civilians per Community

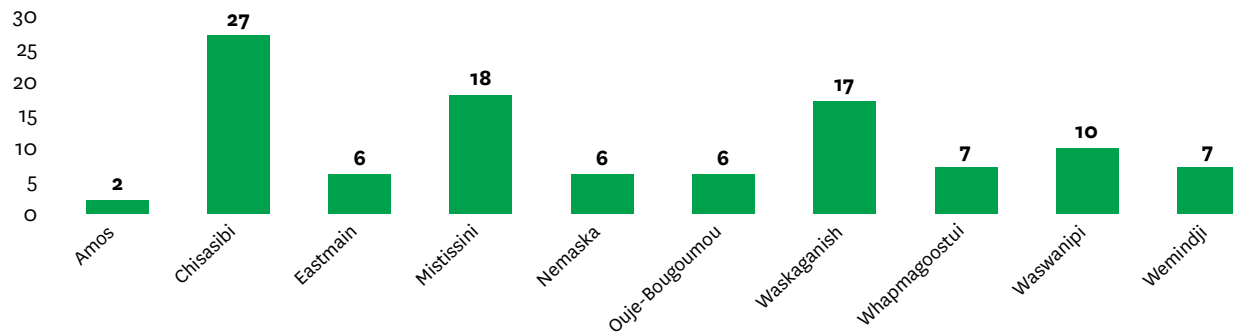


Figure 5. Gender Distribution (Civilian Employees)

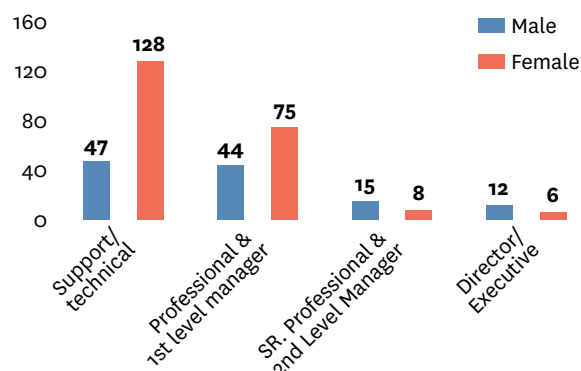
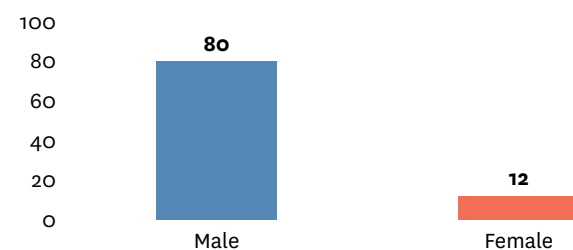


Figure 6. EEPF - Gender Distribution (Non-Civilian Employees)



The majority of civilian, permanent employees are Cree Beneficiaries (261). The remainder of employees comprise First Nation (17) and Non-First Nation (57) (see Figure 7).

The majority of non-civilian permanent and contractual Officers are Cree beneficiaries (56), followed by Non-First Nations (29), and First Nations (7) (see Figure 8).

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Our vision is to empower employees to realize their full potential through job-related and meaningful training opportunities, professional development and career planning.

The Cree Nation Government offers various training and development opportunities to employees at all levels of the organization. Some of these include orientation, basic skills and computer systems training such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Office 365, first aid training, conflict resolution, mediation, CNESST, industrial relations and payroll. This year many of these trainings were instructor led and web-based trainings.

Policing Program

There are currently seven Cree students enrolled in the Police Technology program at the Cegep de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue. They are expected to graduate in October 2021, as long as there are no further delays due to COVID-19.

Figure 7. Ethnic Demographic (Civilian Permanent Employees)

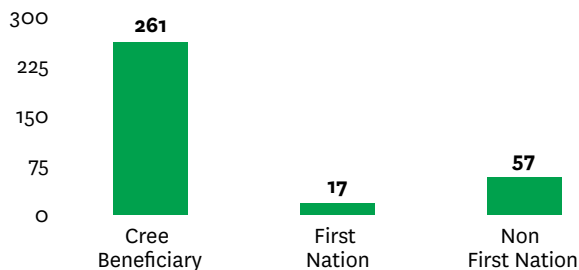
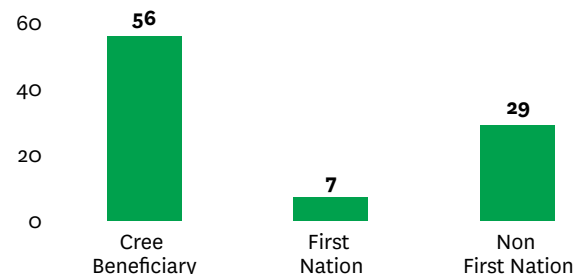


Figure 8. EEPF - Ethnic Demographic (Non-Civilian Permanent and Contractual Officers)



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Call Center

Our department was involved in assisting the EEPF with the implementation of a centralized Call Dispatch Center. We identified the human resources needs such as: the number of positions required to deliver such services and developed the respective job descriptions, while determining the working conditions and the operational budget for the unit in terms of salaries and benefits. We also assisted with the recruitment activities.

Dayforce

The department provided support to the Finance team with the implementation of the time and attendance module of Dayforce in order to prepare for the implementation of our HR modules; and we are looking forward to the implementation of future modules.

Thus far, the Dayforce system adds great value to everyone’s daily work. It generates and provides valuable and timely reports to track work hours, absenteeism, COVID-19 incidences, payroll and entitlement bank balances by employee categories.

Performance Evaluation

The Human Resources department assessed EEPF’s existing performance assessment tools and procedures. In doing so, we developed new evaluation forms for each police rank. With the implementation of the new or revised forms, training was provided to all Senior Officers.

For the Senior Officers, we created an incentive program that rewards them for their overall job performance, which is primarily based on the attainment of EEPF goals and defined competencies.

Recruitment Tools

The team created new recruitment and onboarding tools. An onboarding presentation to welcome and assist new hires with the completion of administrative forms. A new recruitment video was also created for the purpose of online career events of which we participated in.

Salary Structure Implementation

In the summer of 2020, we implemented the new salary structure which was adopted on April 1, 2020. It was a lengthy process which was done in collaboration with the Directors and employees. The implementation of this new salary scale allows us, as a government, to be more competitive in terms of total compensation and rewards, in order to attract and retain employees.

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY REVIEW

HR Policy and Procedures

The HR Policy and Procedures were reviewed and implemented in the summer of 2020. This also brought a lot of changes. This process allowed us to review all other employee benefits.

Some of the items that were updated are Cultural Leave, Sick Leave, Family Responsibilities, Attraction and Retention Premium (formerly Special Allowance) among others. We also ensured that our policies respected any new federal and provincial policies and regulations. A document and presentation were developed for all employees to get a better understanding of how these changes affected them.

Overtime Policy

The Overtime Policy was reviewed and updated to ensure federal compliance.

COVID-19

The Human Resources department had to adapt to the pandemic and provide employees with tools to guide them and to ensure safety precautions were known and followed. As such, various documents were prepared and shared with all employees. Furthermore, a weekly memo was sent to all staff to inform them of any important changes to working arrangements, among other important information. These memos started on April 3, 2020, and in total, fifty memos were sent to all staff throughout 2020-2021. We communicated with employees who were traveling to more affected regions to ensure they were respecting guidelines implemented by the leadership and communities. In order to lessen the effect of these regulations on the services provided by the Cree Nation Government, we permitted employees to work from home, when possible, when having travelled for medical purposes. Other measures were put in place, such as hybrid work models, changing restrictions on travel, and use of leaves and benefits.

Other special measures were put in place exclusively for the Eeyou Eeenu Police Force. We recognize that they provide an essential service to our communities. Since it is extremely important to prevent the spread of this virus and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our employees and our communities, we strongly encouraged our Officers to stay in the communities that they are assigned to during their time off work. However, when Officers needed to travel, in collaboration with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services' Public Health authorities, we developed and implemented measures specifically for them including an on-line self-screening questionnaire. All Officers were required to complete this questionnaire before traveling and they had to follow due process before-during-and-upon-their-return to the community. Once in the community, the Officers names would be given to the Public Health team, where they were prioritized for rapid COVID-19 screening tests.

This pandemic has been emotionally challenging for many people, changing day-to-day life in unprecedented ways. As an employer, our main objective was always to protect our employees. We couldn't have done this without the collaboration and guidance from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services and our leadership.

IN CLOSING

In the fiscal year ahead, the department will continue to develop and implement innovative and responsive programs and services that enable us to support our government. We look forward to the upcoming realizations that will be achieved in the coming year.



LIVESTREAM CHB QUESTION PERIOD ON THE COVID-19 VIRUS

[https://livestream.com/
accounts/8792434/
events/9044181/
videos/203169284](https://livestream.com/accounts/8792434/events/9044181/videos/203169284)



APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director **Louisa Saganash**

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (ASD) OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT FOR 2020-21. IT HAS BEEN QUITE A CHALLENGING YEAR WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND WITH FULLY IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECTS WE SPONSORED, BUT WORK GOES ON.

The offices stayed open during the pandemic except for Gatineau and Ottawa offices, which were closed, with employees working from home. There was limited access to clients in the ASD community offices, but we were able to be reached by email and telephone at all times.

The department's activities have been numerous, such as its Annual Regional Career Fair held virtually on March 25-26, 2021. This year's theme was "Reaching out to further your future". The department plays a strategic role in the development of the capacity building/workforce in Eeyou Istchee; reaching out to Post-Secondary students with the Cree Internship program to help them find employment in Eeyou Istchee and working with a few Cree Nation Government departments on the capacity-building framework.

Also, in 2020-21, ASD completed its Community Employment Needs Assessment (CENA) 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 and make optimal decisions on how to invest in workforce development training programs. The Cree School Board SAES Adult Learning

Needs Assessment (ALNA) survey is being completed. Our collaborative efforts will help in creating training and employment needs to occupy the learning centres built in Eeyou Istchee.

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.

ASD thanks a very dedicated staff for their continuous contribution and accomplishments each year. Their much-valued commitment is crucial to the development of capacity building in Eeyou Istchee.

I'd also like to extend an enormous thank you to the Cree Leadership, who worked endlessly this past year in keeping our communities safe.

Do your part in keeping safe and stay well. 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.

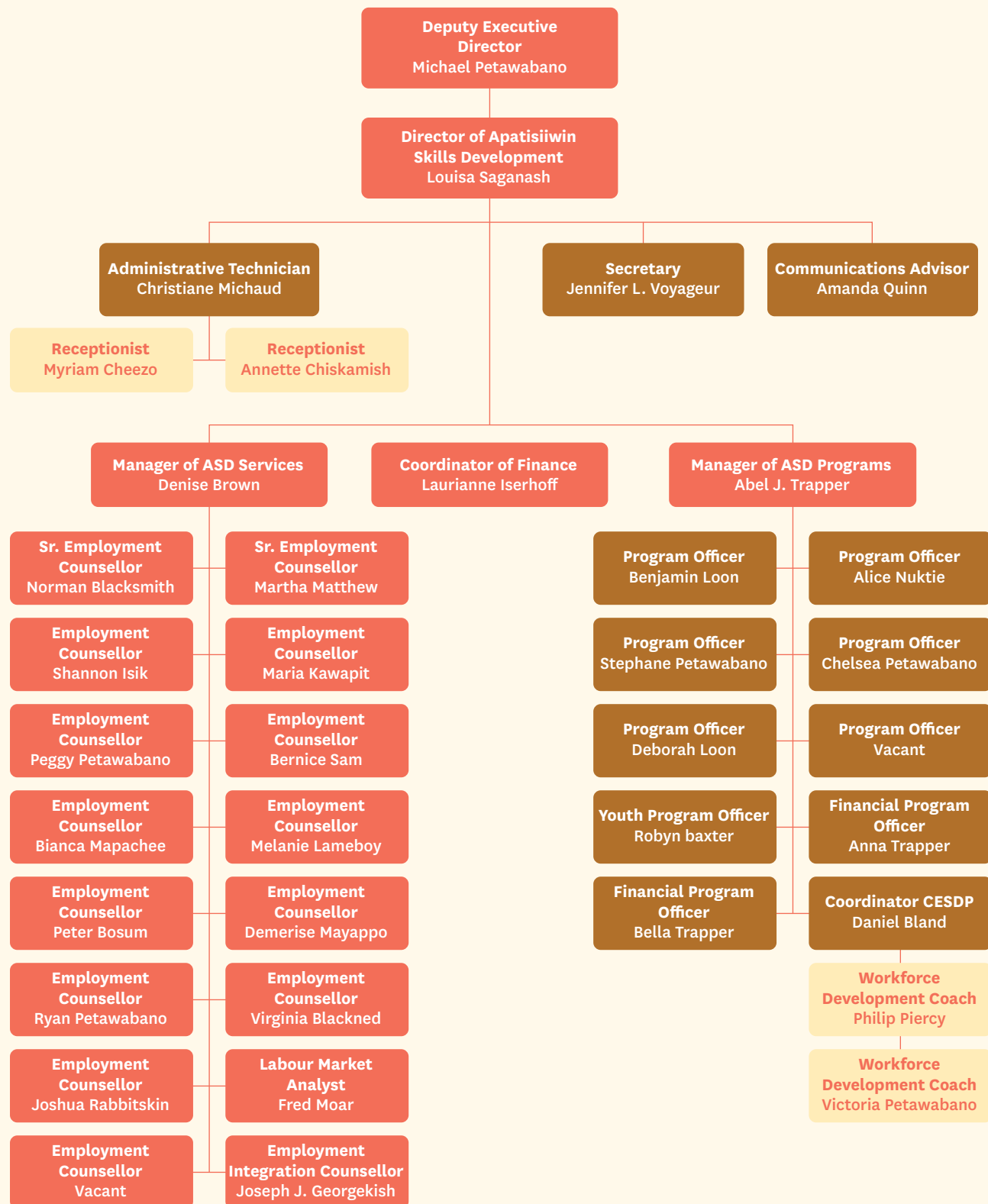
OUR MISSION

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 assets. Their success is our success as a department.

ASD’s mandate is:

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

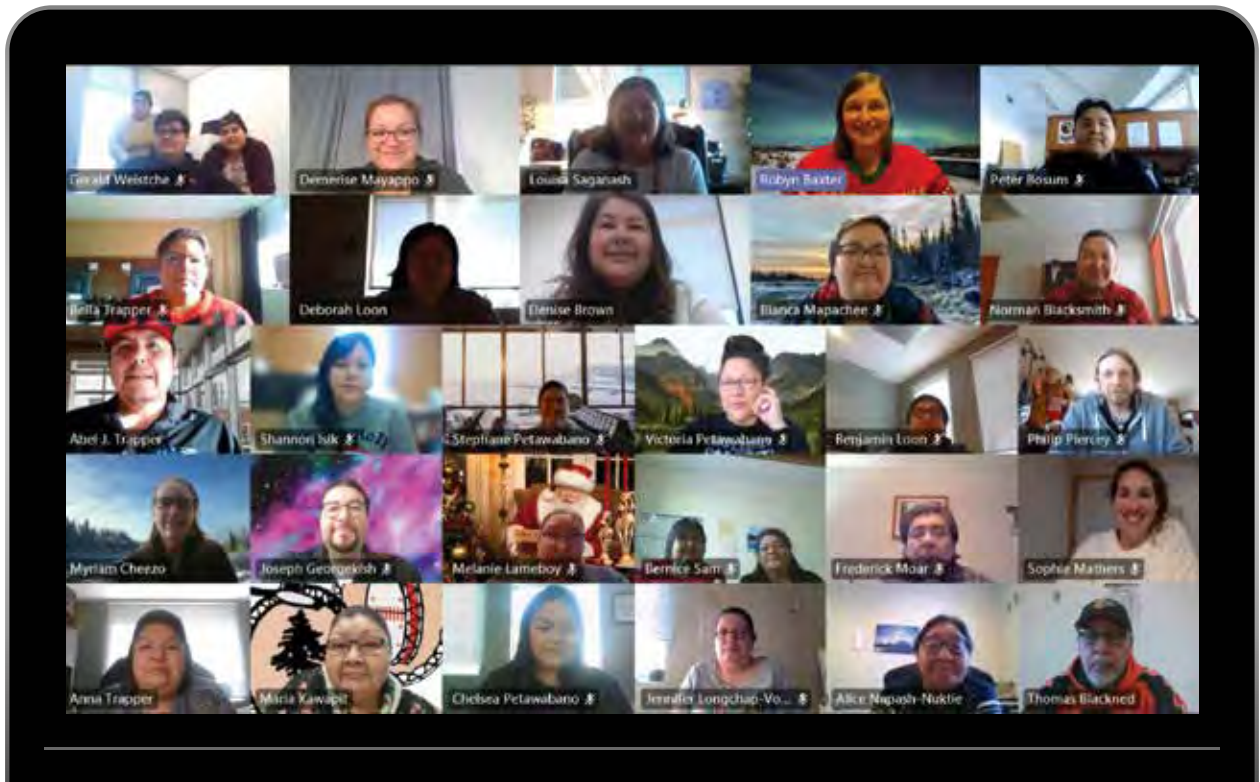
- To support employers in creating opportunities for Cree and non-Crees in the Cree communities and throughout the territory.

ASD fulfills 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 dedicated staff of 37 individuals who oversee and implement local and regional programs and services to clients; our clients being job seekers and potential employers, throughout Eeyou Istchee.

ASD has an office in each of the 10 Cree communities, with two other offices outside of the region, one in Ottawa and one in Gatineau, which help provide training and employment programs and services.





CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT

Christiane Michaud, Administrative Technician

Christiane Michaud, Administrative Technician, started working for Apatisiwin Skills Development Department of the Cree Nation Government in 2009.

She has been instrumental to the ASD department with her many talents and expertise for the past 12 years as the Administrative Technician. She played a crucial role in the department's administration function, taking on additional responsibilities for the staff within IT support and administration. All ASD staff enjoyed working with Christiane and wishes her well on her journey of retirement.

"Christiane was delightful to work with. A very dedicated worker who was always in the office. She was a great asset to the ASD department.

We have enormous gratitude for Christiane for her dedication to the department over the many years. We will miss her, and we wish her all the best in her new adventure and enjoying the next chapter of her life, for she deserves it. Keep safe and stay well! Meegwetch, and God bless."

- Louisa Saganash, Director

"It has been a pleasure working with you all these years. May the next chapter of life bring you endless time to do the things you love; now the fun begins!!!"

- Jennifer L. Voyageur, Secretary

"Christiane, it has been a pleasure to have worked with you. Wishing you all the best in the next phase of your life!"

- Demerise Mayappo, Employment Counselor

"It has been a great experience working together with you, Christiane. I learned a great deal from your skills and knowledge. I know we shared some good times with some good laughs. Your dedication to the job has always been something I admired about you. I want to wish you a wonderful retirement. Take this special time to do anything you want, see, and explore new places. I wish you good health and peace for your future!"

- Denise Brown, Manager of Services

"Best wishes on your retirement, Christiane, it was a pleasure working with you and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours."

- Stephane Petawabano, Programs Officer

"Christiane, I will miss seeing your face around. Too bad we did not win that Lotto Max before your retirement. It would have been a hell of a retirement if we did! Take care, and do not be a stranger."

- Anna Trapper, Financial Program Technician

"It was nice to have you on the ASD team Christiane, you have done great as the administrative assistant to the Director and also sharing your expertise in Information Technology (IT) for a number of years for ASD. You will be missed, and I would like to wish you all the best in your retirement."

- Abel J. Trapper, Manager of Programs

"May the next chapter in your life bring you endless time to enjoy the things you love to do! Wishing you a very Happy Retirement and all the best to you and your family! Congratulations"

- Maria Kawapit, Employment Counsellor

TEAM RECOGNITION AWARDS

Each year Apatisiwin Skills Development acknowledges an outstanding employee in one of the following categories: Excelling in Teamwork, Community Involvement, and Innovation. In 2020 – 2021, the following staff received the awards:

Excelling in Teamwork

The person nominated for this award is excelling in teamwork; he accepted additional responsibilities for the team during the challenging times of the pandemic and faced internal challenges in staff turnover. He has helped the programs division team tremendously to close off outstanding projects.

He has also been there to help other colleagues while on their cultural break, doing additional duties by presenting their projects to committee meetings.

Overall, this person has shown great teamwork. It is a pleasure to announce the recipient of the “**Excelling in Teamwork**” award goes to **Mr. Stephane Petawabano**. Congratulations Stephane!

Community Involvement

The person nominated for this award is very involved in his community. He has shown great dedication to his clients and colleagues. He goes above and beyond the responsibilities and duties of his position.

He was promoted from Employment Counselor to Senior Employment Counsellor, and he has been very involved in helping with the procedures and the guidebook. His experience and knowledge on many training employment referrals have been a great asset to the department. He often works from the early hours of the day to late at night. He has no time limit to helping. We commend him for the excellent work he has accomplished.



Overall, this person has shown outstanding community involvement. It is a pleasure to announce the recipient of the “**Community involvement**” award goes to **Mr. Norman Blacksmith**. Congratulations Norman!

Innovation

The person nominated for this award is very innovative. The employee showed new and innovative ways to deliver an effective service under ASD department. He has helped develop new workplace documents to help improve clients’ essential skills. During this pandemic year, he has explored ways to continue the training on essential skill delivery via virtual training sessions; this project still needs to be tested. With technology nowadays, everything is virtual; we are very optimistic that the essential skills delivery will be online in no time.

Overall, this person has shown great innovation. It is a pleasure to announce the recipient of the “**Innovation**” award goes to **Mr. Philip Piercey**. Congratulations Philip!

We thank these employees for their excellence and commitment to ASD in 2020-21!

PLANNING SESSIONS

ASD held two planning sessions this past year. These meetings are held on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the team can meet to synergize and ensure all staff are aware of updates and any new initiatives discussed or implemented. 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 held via Teams on July 17, 2020. The first day was presentations and updates. ASD Director did her welcoming and opening remarks on its Annual Activities plan and the Cree Nation Government Annual report for 2019-2020. The Employment Integration Officer did a presentation on the Internship Program. There was an update done on services by all Employment Counselors about their respective communities. Labour Market Analyst spoke on the CENA/ALNA survey reports. The Coordinator of CESP did the SPF project update. Later that afternoon, staff had a brainstorming session on some topics of consideration:

- Collaboration on funded projects with Program Officers & Employment Counsellors
- What will local services look like?
- More meetings with local band offices
- Monitoring
- Allowances

End of the day session, we acknowledged Mr. Thomas Blackned on his retirement from the department and presented him with an award and a gift of snowshoes. It was an emotional time for him and the ASD staff. All of us at ASD enjoyed working with Thomas, and he will be missed.

Winter Planning Session

The Winter Planning Session was on December 15-16, 2020, via Teams again. On the first day, Director welcomed everyone and gave the opening remarks. Managers presented their action

plans. ASD usually invites one other Cree Nation Government department to join the session to update us on their programs and services. During the winter session, ASD invited the Director of Justice and Correctional Services department to do the presentation. We had an update on the Cree Internship Program by Employment Integration Counsellor. Then Robert Langlois, a consultant, shared with the ASD team his experience as a Program Officer when he worked with Service Canada. We ended the first day with Microsoft Teams staff training by the Senior Manager of CNG IT department. The second day, we had the referral form review by Senior Employment Counsellors, then we had break-down sessions for the services team and the programs team on various items related to their work. A team-building exercise was conducted. End of the day, we did the employee acknowledgment awards and staff Christmas gifts. Director made her closing remarks.

These planning sessions play an essential role in the department's annual operations and team building with the staff, seeing as our department was unable to meet in person for the past year.

CONFERENCES

CANNEXUS

Canada's Career Development Conference (CANNEXUS) is an annual event designed to promote the exchange of information and explore innovative approaches in career counselling and workforce development. This year, the event was held virtually due to the COVID-19 restrictions on travel, from January 25 and 27 and February 1 and 3, 2021.

2020 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 to foster their harmonious development. Several staff members attended the conference each year.



TEAM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Indigenous Business Management Program - McGill

Project Analysis – Summer 2020

This course was the eleventh and last course of the Certificate Indigenous Business Management Program. This course was tailored specifically to answer the needs of the Program Officers, Financial technicians, and Coordinators, when assessing and managing their programs and projects. In this course, the learners examined ways to improve their skills. More specifically, they learned to evaluate their actual practice as Program Officers and identify ways to improve their practice. They developed the skills to think innovatively and collaboratively on ways to address issues in Eeyou-Istchee.

McGill Virtual Convocation

June 18, 2020

Due to COVID-19 health measures, the graduation ceremony was held virtually instead of in person. Robyn Baxter, Thomas Blackned, Denise Brown, Isaac Iserhoff, Benjamin Loon, Deborah Loon, Alice Napash, Stephane Petawabano, Abel Trapper, Anna Trapper completed and Graduated on this day. The McGill University plans to hold a more official Convocation on June 10, 2021, and plans to hold a more traditional Indigenous celebration. Rachel Martin and Lawrence Katapatuk will be joining the graduates for this celebration as they completed the Program.

Managing in Public and Non-Profit Organizations

January 6 - 11, 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 required to manage public and non-profit organizations effectively. The course developed the skills needed to analyze internal and external organizational trends and needs, make appropriate organizational and workforce deci-



sions, develop strategic relationships with key stakeholders, and build and maintain trust.

Micro-Program Employability and Career Development in Aboriginal Context - UQAT

The Micro-Program is coming to an end as a complete Certificate Program will replace it as of September 2021. This program aims to fully equip the Employment Counsellors serving Eeyou Istchee communities, so they can support their clients using a professional and holistic approach rooted in the Cree culture and its values. Two courses were offered in 2020.

Fall Semester 2020

Career Development Theories in Aboriginal Context – SOA1201E the objective of this course is to understand how human development models relate to career development models. Describe the main models for career development theories and employment counseling. Describe the main components of career development. Link these models and theories to Aboriginal perspectives in human development, counseling as well as career development.

Winter Semester 2021

Job Search Strategies in Aboriginal Context – SOA1202E Guide clients in identifying their skills, strengths, personality traits, values, and interests. Learn how to support clients

for resumes, prepare for an interview, and use effective job search techniques. Use and apply the information related to the labour market with the client. Clarify the client’s job-related needs. Identify and test standard and non-standard assessment tools. Select and use the appropriate assessment tools according to the client’s needs.

Employment Counsellors’ Professional Membership

Apatisiiwin Skills Development remains an Organizational Member of the Provincial Association. The Employment Counsellors are members of the organization as well.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

ASD continues to implement its new five-year action plan, a plan to achieve results in critical areas of importance while at the same time respecting the values of Honesty, Transparency, and Integrity towards client-driven programs and services. 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 work closely with the Cree communities to understand employment and training needs 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 better 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



Quebec's Association for Career Development Professionals



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 deliverables. This requires new partnerships and internal capacity to meet this need.

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

External Communication, we continue to focus on getting our information online. We achieve this throughout our social media accounts. We are on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. With twice-weekly social media posts of potential employment opportunities within the Eeyou Istchee and other events and opportunities for future growth. This year, we have shifted our focus to a more digital presence in all our external communications, digital surveys, digital PDF forms, and social media posts.

Internal Communications, we are continuing to transfer current paper documents within the department to a digital format so that employees can easily access these documents for clients to use that cannot meet in-person due to COVID-19 restrictions.

PARTNERSHIPS

Cree School Board SAES

Sabtuan Adult Education Services (SAES), and the Post-Secondary Student Services have agreed to establish a sustainable partnership that will enhance collaboration at all levels, namely, to better meet the needs of the students and clients. To offer an aligned approach to external stakeholders (students/clients, bands, employers) to offer simple, effective, and consistent processes and services for the students and clients by avoiding duplications and contradictions, particularly for data and information requests.

In the same spirit, an official partnership agreement with the Cree School Board's Sabtuan Adult Education Services was signed last December to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations and provide the best possible support to the students in accessing employment opportunities. This ASD/SAES Agreement sets out, in particular, processes and standards for information sharing, confidentiality, consultation, and community relations.

Cree School Board PSSS

Another partnership agreement with the Post-Secondary Student Services of the Cree School Board is also being developed in the same spirit to maximize the resources and assistance offered to PSSS students in their transition to the Eeyou Istchee Labour market.

ASD and the Cree School Board Post-Secondary Student Services (CSB-PSSS) held an important meeting to update

information on the Post-Secondary Internship pilot project to enable CSB-PSSS to join the ASD-Mitacs partnership.

Soon after, CSB-PSSS representatives participated in a key ASD-Mitacs partnership meeting; it was decided to jointly fund the Post-Secondary Internship pilot project, which would be implemented during summer 2021.

Choosing a hands-on approach, ASD experimented in the field by reaching out to employers to discuss their workforce needs and contacting post-secondary students to gather information on their field of studies and their interest in pursuing internship opportunities with employers.

ASD prioritizes creating partnerships with other entities, communities, and educational institutions.

MITACS Partnership for Internship Programs

For the period of January to March 2021, ASD worked diligently at advancing a partnership with MITACS for the implementation of a jointly funded ASD-MITACS post-secondary student internship pilot project. MITACS is a not-for-profit organization that has designed and delivered research and training programs in mathematical sciences and associated disciplines in Canada for 20 years.

Through numerous meetings, ASD and MITACS developed a pilot project that will evaluate the needs of participating employers and find post-secondary students that can answer those needs while building their own skillset through an internship.

The Cree School Board recently joined the partnership and will support post-secondary students to participate in the pilot project successfully.

Cree Nation Government Engagement Sessions

Cree Nation Government Engagement sessions were held in all the communities. Four Cree Nation Government departments (Apatisiwin Skills Development, Commerce and Industry, Social and Cultural Development, and Justice and Correctional Services) were to tour the communities to present its programs and services and to work more closely with them in identifying their needs and to help understand how both can improve its services, however due to COVID-19, the sessions were held virtually between September and October 2020.

Cree Nation Government Departments

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

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

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

ASD actively participates in this working group and has recently awarded service contracts to two experienced

economists who will conduct a socio-economical study of Eeyou Istchee at a regional and community level to develop a Capacity Building Framework.

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 centers located within the territory, one in Mistissini at the ASD Coordination Office and the other in Chisasibi located at the ASD 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.

ASD staff attended a webinar provided by the CRA on July 2, 2020. The purpose was to make services more accessible and provide up-to-date information to our clients. This webinar provided information on the eligibility criteria to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CREB) and the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB). The CRA provided information on both programs and how and where to access each program. Included in the webinar, the CRA announced the increase to Canada’s Child Tax Benefit for families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with information on how to contact a representative by telephone or online to obtain these services.

This past year, no visits were made to the communities due to the pandemic’s restrictive travel from the red zones.

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.

The Cree Nation Government and Canada have agreed on long-term funding arrangements, which provide, however, that the 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 New Relationship Agreement, the whole subject and without prejudice to Cree rights and claims. Under these arrangements, federal funding to support Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD) for the period 2019-2028 is provided to the Cree Nation Government as a “grant,” which provides greater flexibility and reduces administrative requirements. The Cree Nation Government and Canada have also concluded a companion contribution agreement for Employment Insurance funding for the period 2019-2029. Federal funding to support childcare is provided through this contribution agreement until at least next year.

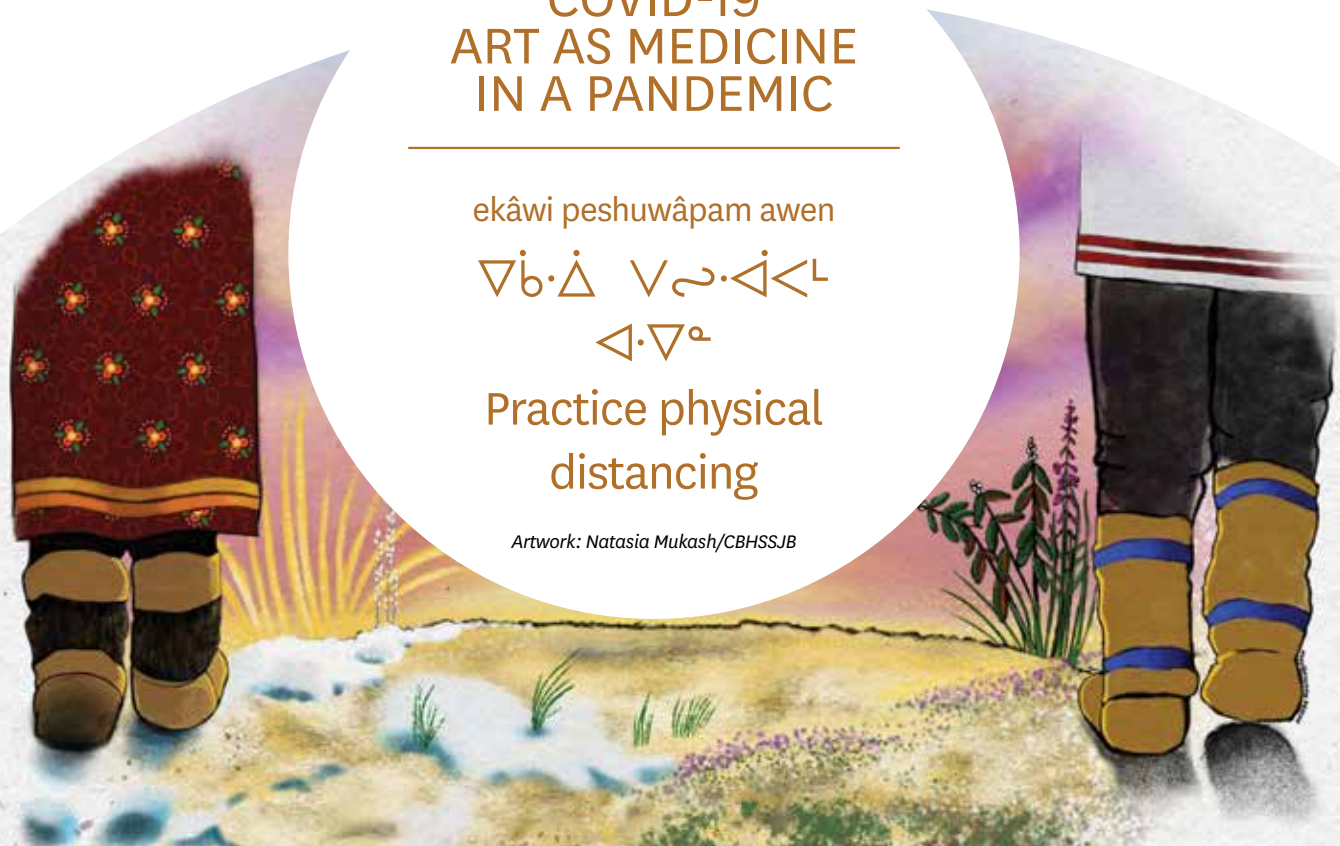
**COVID-19
ART AS MEDICINE
IN A PANDEMIC**

ekâwi peshuwâpam awen

▽ᐆ·ᐃ ᐅᓪ·ᐃᐱᐱ
ᐃ·ᐅᓪᓐ

**Practice physical
distancing**

Artwork: Natasia Mukash/CBHSSJB



Discussions continue with federal representatives with a view to transferring childcare funding through the new ASD arrangements instead, as soon as possible.

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

ASD POLICY ON PROGRAMS

Amendments to the Policy establishing the conditions applicable to our Programs were finalized and approved, effective as of April 1, 2021. The review of this Policy was conducted with the objective to better reflect the needs of employers and individual clients in accessing funding for their projects and ensure it meets the evolving needs regarding skills development, training programs and services, and employment insurance services in the Cree communities and Eeyou Istchee.

ASD COMMITTEES

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

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

Technical Group

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

ASDAC

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

a) Voting members

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

b) Non-voting members

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

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

The ASDAC has the following mandate:

- a) ensure that the proposals promote employment for Cree beneficiaries and other residents, where applicable, including training for the purpose of enhancing development of work skills necessary to support employability of the client;

- b) ensure that proposals promote, as much as possible, full-time employment as criteria priority;
- c) ensure that the increase 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 & 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 Program

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 Program

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

Example of projects:

- CESPCAP: Community Employment Skills Partnership Action Program
- 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 three years under the employment program. The internship can be off territory (within Canada) if an internship opportunity is not available in Eeyou Istchee.

To increase the number of Post-Secondary students in the database, we launched a post-secondary student survey. A total of 87 post-secondary students participated in the survey providing their information, including what they are studying, where they are studying, expected completion date of the current program, any prior, completed post-secondary programs, and their completion date, and contact information/community of origin. These students will be easily accessible as potential candidates for the possible pilot project with MITACS.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Skills Partnership Fund

The SPF project ended March 31, 2021 and was extended for another year. Due to limited access to mining projects now, the SPF team started working on other projects, including



the Cree Employability Skills Development Partnership project with the communities.

Cree Employability Skills Development Partnership (CESDP)

As in other CNG departments, where and how we did our work this past year was determined by COVID-19 related travel, community, and worksite access restrictions. From an average of one or two work visits a month in 2020, our team could only make three such visits during the entire year, two to Waswanipi and one to Waskaganish.

To make the best of a difficult situation, we purchased 16 laptops. We loaded them with training materials, instructional videos, and practice exercises tailored to the kind of tasks new workers will be doing. We are piloting this online learning approach with workers from the Miyuukaa Corporation in Waswanipi. Employees are being paid time off to work through these online training exercises, checking in regularly with our Coaches for questions and feedback. Fortunately, we could continue some in-person work with the Community Employment Skills and Youth Work Experience programs that ran during the year in Mistissini. In addition to administering basic skills assessments, our team worked with participants on skills upgrading and delivered workshops on work ethics and work readiness.

We also continued to edit and organize workshop training materials and resources we have developed over the past three years by industry and target groups. These will become a foundational set of coaching and training materials that ASD can build on as it moves forward in supporting Cree workers in the workplace. Next year, we will compile a similar set of materials for use in all 'Community Employment Skills' and 'Youth Work Experience' programs moving forward.

In an innovative spinoff, we have begun work on the Cree translation of a selection of training videos in French and English used by Gestion ADC in their camps. We worked with over 40 Crees employed by Gestion ADC at Osisko's Windfall mine this year, and as more mines open across the territory, we anticipate many more will be hired at their camps. For those without a solid foundation in either French or English, we believe the option for them to watch training videos in their own language will be of significant benefit. Finally, we received word from Service Canada late last year that the SPF project will be extended for an additional year until March 2022. This is good news for all involved.

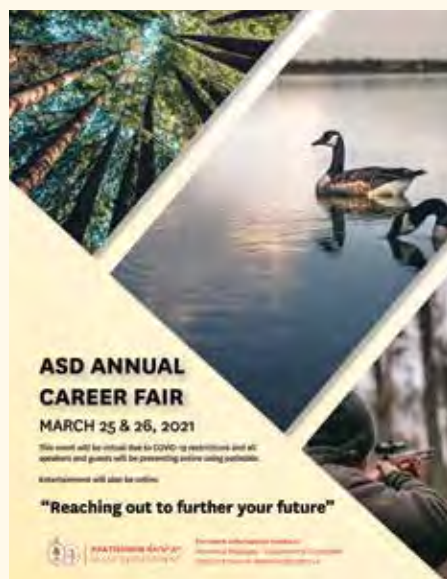
CAPITAL PROJECTS

Training & Learning Centres

The ASD team, along with Capital Works Services, CSB Adult Education Services, and Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, started to discuss concepts and structures of the new centre before the pandemic began then we did not meet for the rest of the year.

Cree School Board is managing the training centres in Waskaganish and Wemindji. ASD staff have their offices in the centre as before and will have access to the facilities for training courses.

SUCCESS STORIES



LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT Annual Regional Career Fair

The Regional Career Fair happens every year in one of the Cree communities. This year's event was held virtually online on Pathable from March 25 – 26, 2021. Over 400 participants were in attendance and 24 virtual booth exhibitors.

Students could not attend individually due to high software security with CSB, so teachers had to use personal email addresses for the students to attend as a group. The theme that was chosen was “Reaching out to further your future.” Our guest speakers included: ASD Director Louisa Saganash, Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull, Deputy Youth Grand Chief Stacy Anderson, Mervina Cheezo, Jomarie Einish, Tina Brown, Ryan Petawabano, Robyn Baxter, Joseph J. Georgekish, Robert Auclair, Tik Toker Sherry Mackey, and singer Kerisha Shecapio.

LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT 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. This survey aims to understand better 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 nine 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 support clients attending vocational education by providing training allowances and paying for professional fees that our partners do not normally cover in delivering training courses.

This year, an ASD participant has completed his education in mining and has found employment with Osisko mining at the windfall drilling site. Since the start of his career, Dion Mianscum has had many accomplishments as a Geological Technician. “My advice to people is that no matter what it is that you do in life. Do it with passion, do it with pride, do it with fire, always stay consistent, and always move forward step by step. Eventually, you’ll get to where you want to go.”

– Dion Mianscum

SUCCESS STORIES

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

This success story is with Eenou Welding Inc., located in Waswanipi. Eenou Welding Inc. specializes in manufacturing and installing mining and forestry equipment and other needs and offering labour rental in the Eeyou Ischee.

“Starting a business is not easy; the most challenging task I faced was building a building to house my welding business. The pandemic phase was an extremely difficult period. It took eighteen months before it became a reality. I am most proud of the support I got from my partner DMC Soudure Inc. for their unending support in all aspects of our Business Venture development. Without them, I would not have come this far. CNG Business of Commerce and Apatisiiwin Skills Development are also definitely a big factor in their financial contribution and continued support and advice” – Steve Matoush, President of Eenou Welding. Inc.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Apatisiiwin Skills Development (ASD) Internship Program is specifically designed to assist post-secondary graduates in finding 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. The employer gains a skilled employee for a year.

This year we had one of our participants Allycia Lameboy-Dixon, who is currently working at the department of justice and correctional services as a Justice Project Officer, describe her experience with the Internship Program “From the internship program through the Cree Justice department, I’ve had opportunities to participate in various certification pieces of training tailored to our Cree communities. I also have the privilege of working behind

the scenes to acquire an in-depth comprehension of the purpose, obligation, and responsibility of the Cree Justice department.

From this experience, I have gained more passion for contributing to the development of our Cree Justice system and finding ways to continue the improvement of services we provide to our community members.

After graduating from my program in 2019, I had to make a difficult decision knowing that I intended to return home right after school. One of the challenges was to find the appropriate position that fits my studies at a local or regional level. At the time of my search, I was unsuccessful, and I got discouraged by not having enough experience or being allowed to gain the hands-on knowledge required. I reflected on what I needed to do to grow in my career choice, so my motive to make the decision was to be afraid to lose what I had just spent years learning of by occupying a space that was not mutual. Therefore, I decided to stay in the city and look for employment to gain further experience within my studies. Luckily enough, I got hired to work for a law firm in Ontario, which provided immediate insight into the Indigenous communities’ recurring issues on a national scale. Words cannot express the gratitude I have for having this opportunity as part of my success story.”

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. We look forward to supporting more graduates achieve their employment goals.

Calling All Cree Youth Ages 16-35

PRESENTS

YOUTH & POLITICS TRAINING

2 SESSIONS
20 PARTICIPANTS PER SESSION
40 WORLD CHANGERS

Session 1 March 1-5, 2021
Session 2 April 19-23, 2021
Forestel- Val d'Or, QC

Want to Change the World?
Limited Seats!
REGISTER NOW!
WWW.CWEIA.CA/EVENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Julie Ann Cooper
TEL 819-282-8597 ext. 4
EMAIL bdcc@cweia.ca

Disclaimer: If government prohibits gathering, training will be switched to online zoom.

Training & Certificate offered by: **Major Sponsor**
Secrétariat à la jeunesse
ALGONQUIN COLLEGE
Québec

YOUTH PROGRAM

In Eeyou Istchee, youth have an essential role to play within their communities, in local and regional leadership, and directly part of the Board Council within The Cree Nation Government. As the largest and fastest-growing part of the population, they represent an important contribution to the future of Eeyou Istchee and our Cree communities. Because of this representation and the distinct leadership role that youth have, we need to ensure that they are given opportunities to learn about how youth can understand and participate in politics.

Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association developed and hosted a 5-day Youth and Politics Training Session. Apatisiwin Skills Development along with the Cree Nation Youth Council, and the Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec, funded the development and delivery of this program. The 5-day session was developed in partnership with Algonquin College with input from Stella Masty (President of Cree

Women of Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Nations Youth Grand Chief, Kaitlynn Hester Moses.

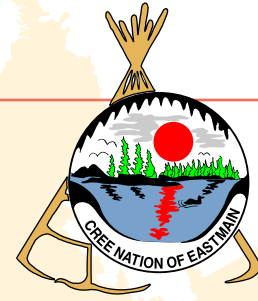
The first Youth and Politics training session took place the first week of March. Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, the sessions were successfully adapted to be delivered through Zoom. According to Julie Anne Cooper (the event coordinator/one of the training facilitators), six youth participated in this session, which created a more intimate atmosphere that allowed the participants to be more open.

The session covered valuable information such as conflict management, communication, identifying individual accomplishments, values, and skills. To complement the material, they invited speakers, such as our grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum, Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull, and Youth Grand Chief Kaitlynn Hester Moses, to share their first-hand experiences and encouraging advice.

The sessions ended each day with participants being asked to provide their feedback and share their thoughts on what they had learned. Each day, participants grew in confidence and had a positive interaction with the materials that were discussed. One participant who had been in a complimentary university program felt that the sessions gave her a foundation to build on, that the material was well presented, and helped adjust her perspective in a positive way. Another commended the facilitators on their ability to make the material relevant and relatable to current situations in the Cree Communities.

The first session was very successful, and with the feedback from the participants, the second session is sure to be just as valuable. With a waiting list on the second session, it seems apparent that this type of training is valued, and we hope to see many more of its like in the future for youth and adults alike.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT – EASTMAIN



● EASTMAIN

Wachiya

I am delighted to provide you with an update from the ASD office in the Cree Nation of Eastmain for 2020-2021. We are a small Northern community along the coast of James Bay with over 800 people, a small community that is rich in culture and tradition. The population of Eastmain continues to grow every year. This population growth means that we must continue developing and creating new employment opportunities and secure work that is available in our community for our local members. We will be working towards implementing a community development plan created through local band members and the Cree Nation of Eastmain.

Client services were my main focus for the upcoming year. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses have struggled to maintain their operations, with businesses closed due to the pandemic. I was busy helping many individuals who lost their jobs during this time to get financial assistance through Service Canada. I can say I had many clients that were affected by the pandemic. Also, I was working on helping our community with their Indian Day school applications.

The database for this year, 2020-2021, was very active, with 265 client reports.

In addition to helping clients with training programs, we have an active partnership with the Cree Nation of Eastmain

under the Cree Nation Eastmain, Youth Council on Youth work experience programs, and summer employment. Also, we have many active ongoing projects under CNE. I look forward to continue working with these individuals.

I coordinated the first-ever Virtual Apatisiwiin Career Fair that took place on March 25 - 26, 2021. We had a total of 24 exhibitors and 400 participants for those two days. I want to thank all those who participated (400) and exhibitors, and the ASD team that helped make it possible.

I look forward to the upcoming year and the opportunity to assist my community in securing employment within my community of Eastmain and throughout the Cree territory.

Wachiya,

*Demerise Mayappo,
Employment Counsellor*

Photo: Jamie Moses



**ASD ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS AND GRAPHS
FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021**

**Projects and Participant Training Interventions /
All ASD Programs**

Apatisiiwin 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.

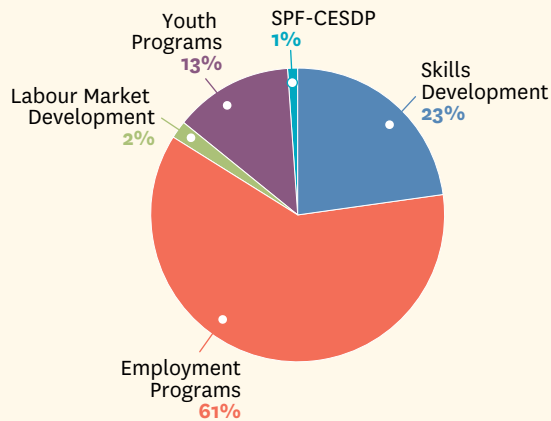
ASD received hundreds of project submissions in 2020-21. A total of 218 projects receiving support from ASD carried out training activities throughout the communities and territory during the fiscal year. There were 2,150 participant interventions in these projects.

**ASD Projects and Participant Interventions
By Program in the Fiscal Year 2020-21**

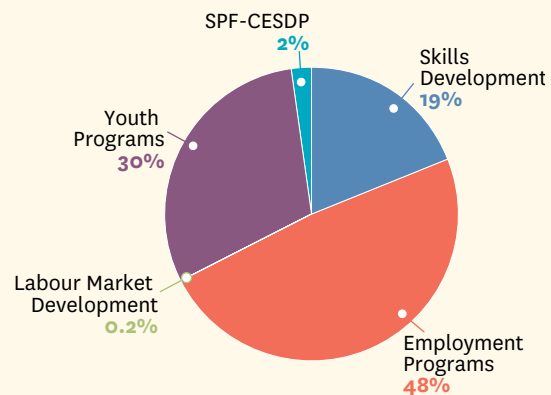
| | NUMBER OF PROJECTS | PARTICIPANT INTERVENTIONS |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Skills Development | 50 | 398 |
| Cree Internship Program | 7 | 7 |
| Employment Programs | 125 | 1034 |
| Special Programs/ Disability | 1 | 2 |
| Labour Market Development | 5 | 16 |
| Summer Student Program | 11 | 431 |
| Youth Work Experience | 12 | 154 |
| Cooperative Education | 3 | 49 |
| Science and Technology | 2 | 9 |
| SPF CESDP | 2 | 50 |
| Total | 218 | 2150 |

Note: Projects with employment and training activities in the fiscal year based on contract dates

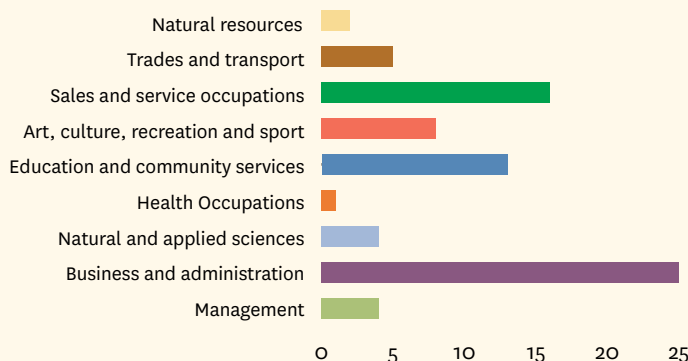
**Projects
by Program Type**



**Participant Interventions
by Program Type**

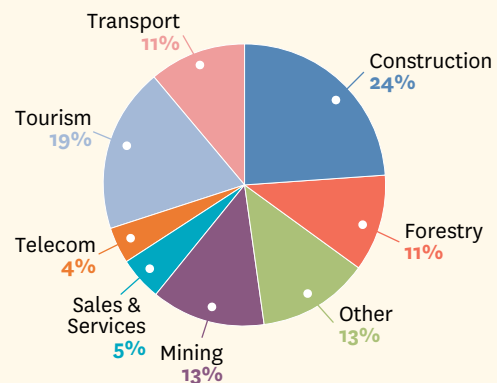


**Community-based Projects
by Training Field**



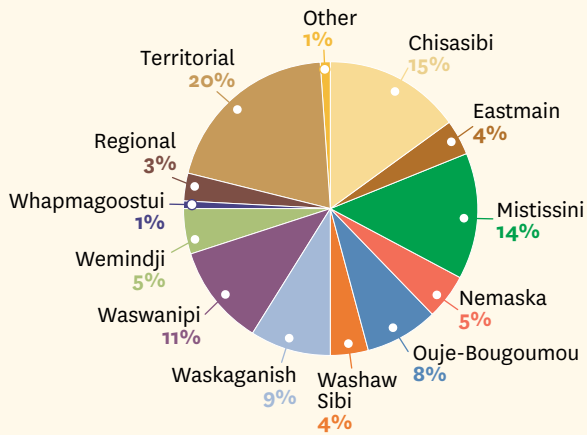
TERRITORIAL PROJECTS

Distribution by Industrial Sector



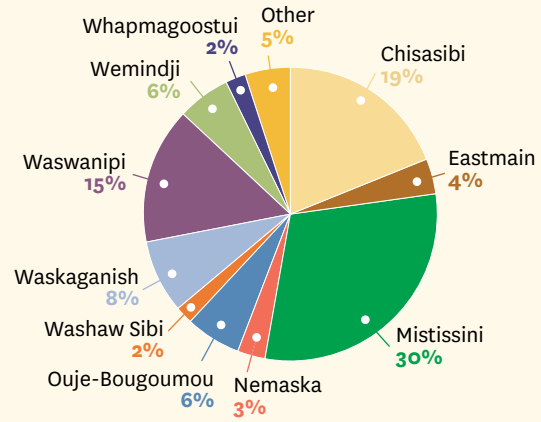
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Distribution of Projects by Training Location

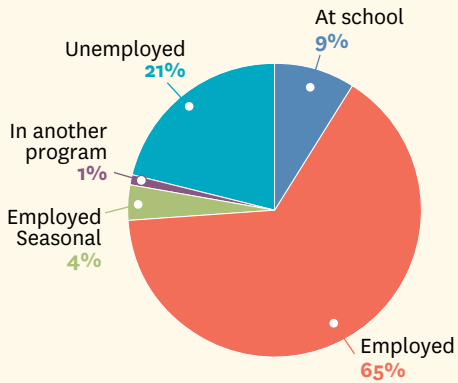


Note: Territorial and regional projects do include more than one community.

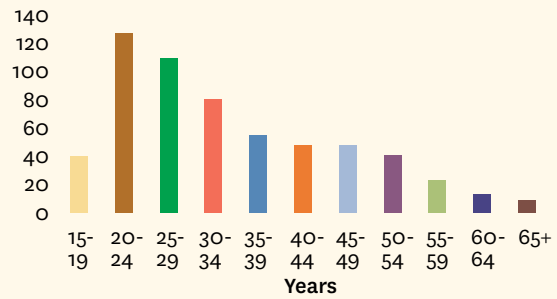
Distribution of Participants by Community



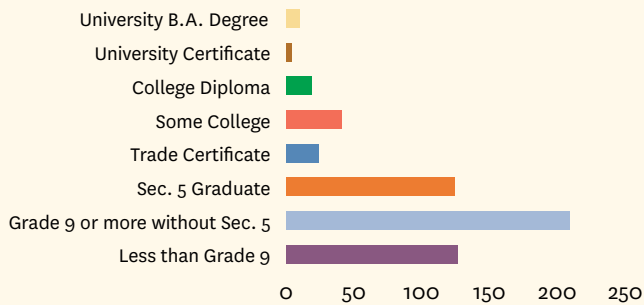
Participants' Post-training Results



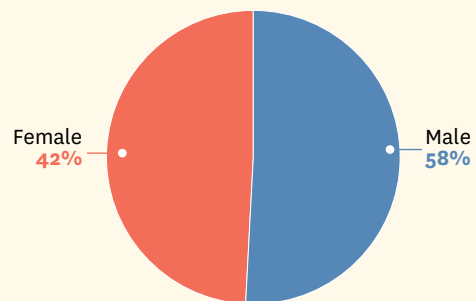
Participants by Age



Participants by Level of Education

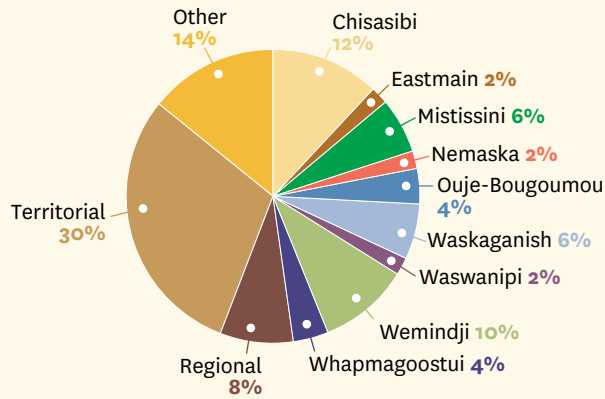


Distribution by Gender

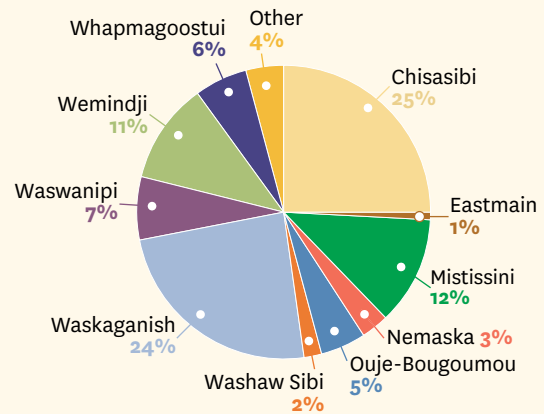


SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Distribution of Projects by Training Location

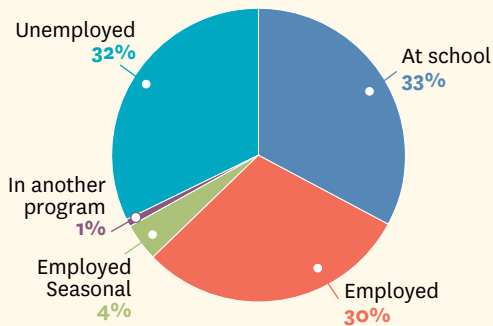


Distribution of Participants by Community

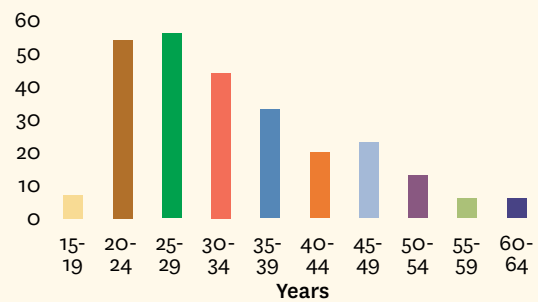


Note: Territorial and regional projects do include more than one community.

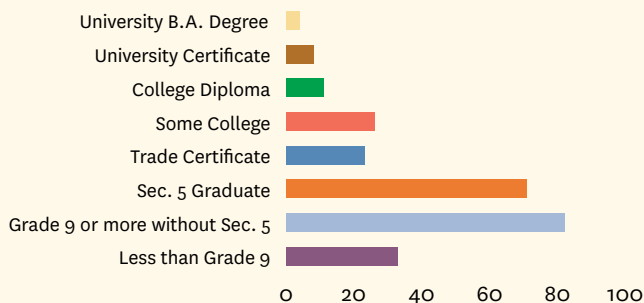
Participants' Post-training Results



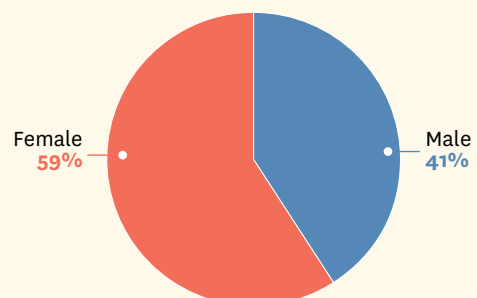
Participants by Age



Participants by Level of Education

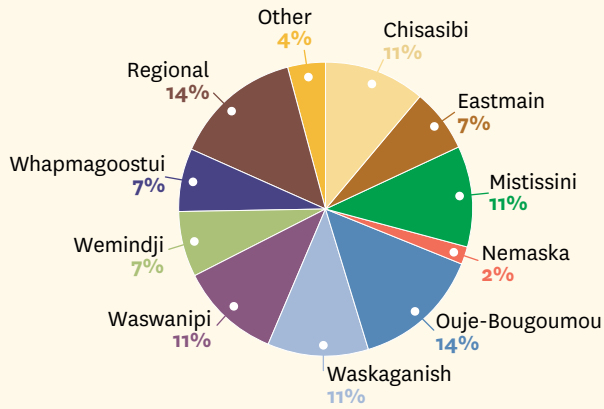


Distribution by Gender

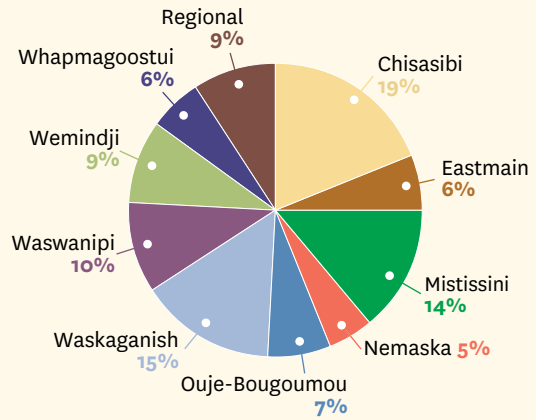


YOUTH PROGRAMS

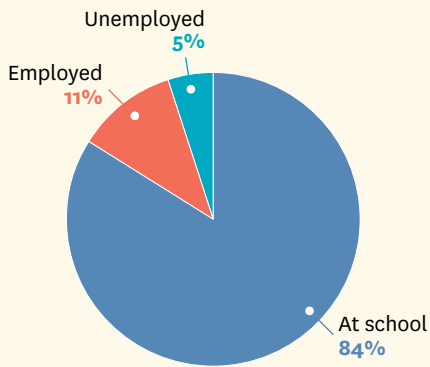
Distribution of Projects by Community



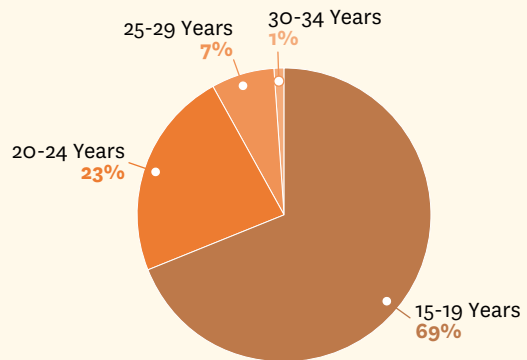
Distribution of Participants by Community



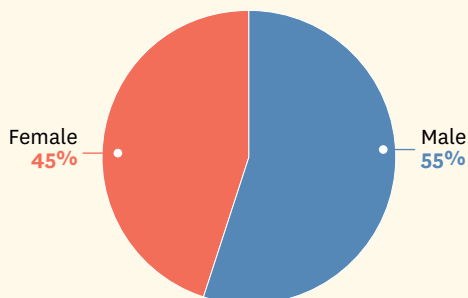
Participants' Post-training Results



Participants by Age

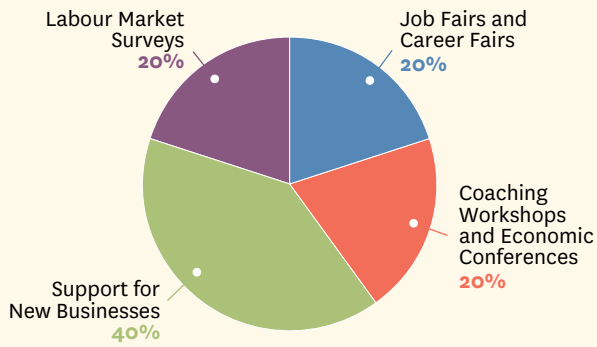


Distribution by Gender



LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS

Projects by Activity



2,360 Client Services in Fiscal Year 2020-21

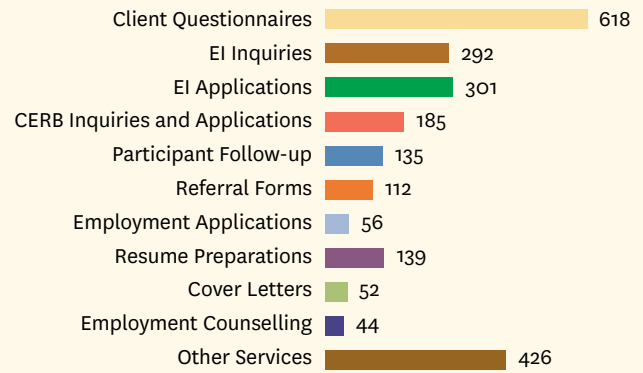


Photo: Clem Onojehuo on Unsplash





COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Message from the Director **Anthony MacLeod**

AS DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, I AM PLEASED TO PRESENT OUR 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT.

The Department of Commerce and Industry 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 projects. The Commerce and Industry team manages and oversees several funding programs, and supports local enterprises and the development of regional initiatives that promote positive socio-economic outcomes for Eeyou Istchee. This year our department saw the departure of Chelsea Petawabano, who has joined the team at Apatisiwin Skills Development. On behalf of our department, I want to thank Chelsea for her contributions and wish her all the best in her new role.

Throughout the course of the year the challenges of COVID-19 have been at the forefront of our department's activities. This year we assisted local enterprises in accessing different Federal and Provincial funding programs that were deployed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, we launched our own Eeyou Economic Response Plan, which provided \$754,000 to 39 local enterprises. This money was used to support local enterprises in restructuring or adapting their business due to COVID-19.

The department has also had the important opportunity to work on the various sub-committees created by the "La Grande Alliance" memorandum of understanding. We participated in

the discussions with the network of representatives and civil servants working in the different ministries of the Government of Québec on the topics of transportation infrastructure, critical metals, electric distribution, and telecommunication.

This year, we have taken steps towards establishing the Cree Nation Registry of Local Enterprises. The project's discovery phase has been completed, and while we are excited about the future of this project and the positive effect it will have on the local economy, it is still early in the process. We have an ambitious vision for the registry, in fact we hope it will be much more than a registry. The platform will host a database and registry but will serve as a tool for connecting local enterprises with tendering processes of projects in the region and connecting local skilled labour with enterprises.

The pandemic has created a challenging environment; however, it has reiterated the importance of local capacity for providing goods and services and we are excited to play our part in helping advance and develop the local entrepreneurship and capacity in Eeyou Istchee.

Meegwetch.

Anthony MacLeod
Director of Commerce and Industry

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Mandate

To diversify and stimulate economic growth in Eeyou Istchee.

Mission and Vision

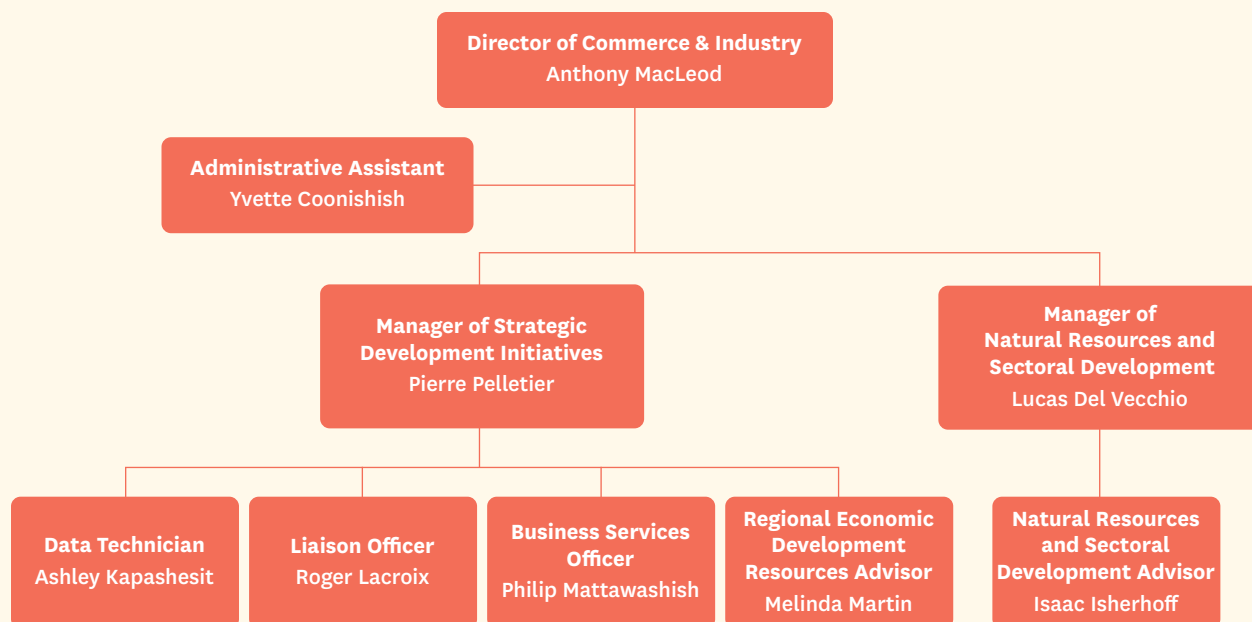
To take on a strategic role in the development and implementation of economic initiatives throughout Eeyou Istchee. To support the economic growth and well-being of Eeyou Istchee so all Eeyouch and Ee-nouch may benefit from this prosperity without compromising our culture and values.

Pillars

The Department of Commerce and Industry is driven by 3 economic pillars:

- i. Local Enterprises
- ii. Natural Resource Development
- iii. Cooperative and Sustainable Economies

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE



Our New Employee

Ashley Kapashesit Data Technician

Our department welcomed our newly hired Data Technician, Ashley Kapashesit, as of March 1st, 2021. Her responsibilities are to provide assistance with databases such as the regional Business Directory and the Cree JBNQA Beneficiary Registration System. She collaborates with local registry clerks in every community. Ashley is also responsible for the statistical data and communications for the department.

Ashley has an academic background in Business Management, Bachelor of Commerce, and Indigenous Studies. Ashley's roots reach back to Moose Factory, ON and Waskaganish, QC.

She also started a small business before working at the Department of Commerce and Industry in Mistissini. With experience in private companies and non-profit organizations, her main focus is on economic development for First Nations people. She aspires to help build a new narrative following the seventh-generation principle, by increasing sustainability and self-sufficiency in Cree communities. Ashley's inspiration is the youth, and diversity inclusions such as women in business, women in construction, and economic development.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SECTORAL OVERVIEW

Mining

Mining and Mining Exploration were two sectors that were considered essential early on during the pandemic. Our department revised COVID-19 Management plans for explo-

ration companies that were planning on mobilizing in Eeyou Istchee. The goal was to ensure that companies in the field were implementing adequate precautionary measures. In addition, it was important that we verified that they were aware of unique measures in place in Eeyou Istchee, for example that they could do business with local enterprises but there were restrictions with respect to outsiders entering Category I land and self-isolation requirements. Throughout the last year, we revised more than 40 COVID-19 Management plans, the majority during Spring and Summer 2020.

As the sector resumed its activities, we continued to play an active role in supporting the Cree First Nations in the implementation of the Impact Benefit Agreements, with active mines on the territory as well as participating in discussions with the Cree First Nations and different mine developers engaged in advanced exploration projects. The mining sector has been resilient during the pandemic and the benefits of doing business with and prioritizing local companies have been made evident this year.

Our department has been undertaking the revision of the Cree Nation Mining Policy. The Policy aims at providing a framework for how the Cree First Nations and Cree Nation Government can approach mining projects. It will also serve as a guiding document for Mining and exploration companies present in Eeyou Istchee. The Policy still needs to go through several approval steps with the Cree Nation leadership, but we are optimistic that the approval process will be complete during the next fiscal year, and that we will be able to publicly publish the new policy.

Forestry

The Director of Commerce and Industry is a member of the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council (CQFEC). The CQFEC is composed of equal members appointed by Québec and the Cree Nation Government, with the mandate to promote the development of economic and business opportunities for the Crees in forest development activities.

A mandate was issued to update the forestry portrait in Eeyou Istchee that was completed in 2014. The revision is a desktop exercise that has also included interviews and engagement with forest industry stakeholders in Eeyou Istchee. The final report has not yet been completed. The results of this exercise will help our department, and the Cree-Québec Forestry Economic Council, in orienting ourselves to better support and promote Cree involvement in and benefits from the Forestry sector.

Telecommunications

Over the past decade there have been large investments in telecommunications projects by the Department of Commerce and Industry. This year we conducted a study that provided a portrait of the current state of telecommunications in Eeyou Istchee. Many aspects were considered, from land user safety, emergency alert systems, promotion of Cree language and the operation, maintenance, and governance of telecommunications infrastructure, to name a few. As a nation, we need to strengthen the information and expertise in telecommunications to fully benefit from investment in this sector, and to ensure that services provided are meeting the wide-ranging needs of the Cree Nation.

PROGRAMS

Eeyou Economic Response Plan (EERP)

In the 4th quarter of 2020-2021, a new fund was introduced under the name Eeyou Economic Response Plan. The goal of the fund was to help Cree businesses that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. EERP Amounts Approved per Community

| COMMUNITY | APPLICATIONS APPROVED | AMOUNT APPROVED |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Chisasibi | 6 | \$153,215 |
| Eastmain | 2 | \$33,000 |
| Mistissini | 6 | \$100,701 |
| Nemaska | 3 | \$54,279 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 1 | \$25,000 |
| Waskaganish | 10 | \$173,827 |
| Waswanipi | 4 | \$84,360 |
| Wemindji | 3 | \$64,875 |
| Whapmagoostui | 4 | \$65,000 |
| Total | 39 | \$754,257 |

Table 2. Disbursements breakdown by Section of the EERP

| COMMUNITY | SECTION 1 | SECTION 2 |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Chisasibi | \$10,000 | \$143,215 |
| Eastmain | \$8,000 | \$25,000 |
| Mistissini | \$20,900 | \$79,801 |
| Nemaska | \$16,887 | \$37,392 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | \$- | \$25,000 |
| Waskaganish | \$43,840 | \$129,987 |
| Waswanipi | \$11,027 | \$73,333 |
| Wemindji | \$4,875 | \$60,000 |
| Whapmagoostui | \$40,000 | \$25,000 |
| Total | \$155,529 | \$598,728 |

We had a total of 103 applications for the Eeyou Economic Response Plan fund, and a total of 39 projects were approved.

The projects approved and amounts disbursed per community are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Disbursements breakdown by Section of the EERP

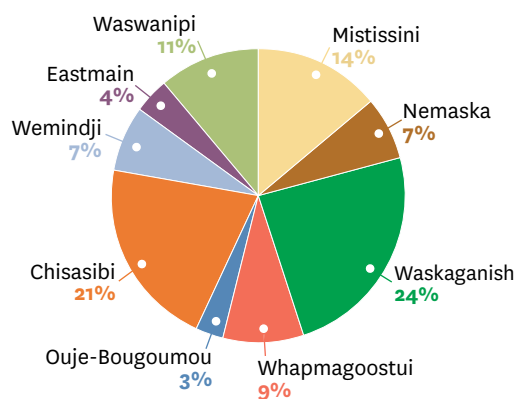
There were two sections to the EERP. The first section was created to provide funding to businesses that needed professional services, up to a maximum of \$10,000 in non-repayable funding or 100% of the total eligible project costs to restructure their business.

The second section of the program would provide up to 100% of total eligible project costs in non-repayable funding for a maximum of \$25,000 for adapting the applicant's business.

The total disbursed in section 1 and 2 of the EERP is presented in Table 2.

Approximately 20% of the overall EERP budget went to section 1 of the program, and 80% of the overall EERP budget went into section 2. This shows that the majority of the funding was provided to businesses that were aiming at adapting to the new realities brought on due to COVID-19.

Figure 1. EERP Amounts Approved per Community



Cree Entrepreneur Assistance Fund

The Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF) provides grants for new Cree Business start-ups, as well as funds for existing Cree businesses to expand, modernize and upgrade their equipment and operations. The purpose of the investments is to support one of the key economic pillars for Eeyou Istchee, Cree-owned local enterprises.

The program also provides investment in developing businesses to allow for Cree entrepreneurs to gain experience and realize new services for the communities and the region. The circulation of funds and the trickle-down effect of small business is important throughout Eeyou Istchee.

Transport, Retail, and Construction-type businesses are among the highest requests for funding through the CEAF Funds.

CEAF Highlights

This year, there were a total of twenty-six applications (26) for a total of \$1,552,059 that would create an estimated 74 jobs under the CEAF. Out of those twenty-six applications, 16 projects were approved in the amount of \$1,084,154.

Statistics for the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund for 2020-2021 can be found in Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 2.

Figure 2. CEAF Amounts Approved per Community

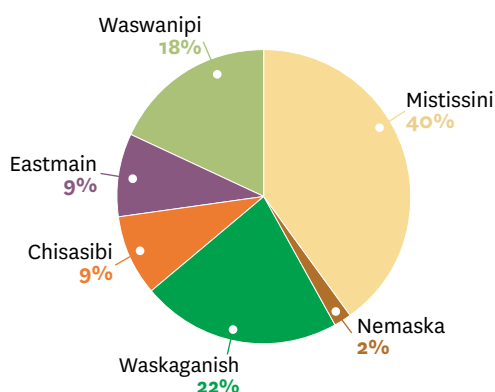


Table 3. Statistics for the CEAF

| COMMUNITY | NUMBER OF PROJECTS APPROVED | AMOUNT APPROVED | ESTIMATED JOB CREATION |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Chisasibi | 1 | \$100,000 | 5 |
| Eastmain | 1 | \$100,000 | 2 |
| Mistissini | 6 | \$437,030 | 13 |
| Nemaska | 1 | \$15,000 | 1 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waskaganish | 5 | \$239,874 | 13 |
| Waswanipi | 2 | \$192,250 | 5 |
| Wemindji | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Whapmagoostui | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 16 | \$1,084,154 | 39 |

CEAF Projects by Sector

Approximately half of the funding went to transportation businesses and 22% to construction businesses. These two sectors together accounted for 74% of the funding approved this fiscal year. The remaining funding approved this year was spread evenly between retail/restaurant, real estate, and services (see Figure 3 and Table 5 on page 122).

CEAF Investment

The total investment from the CEAF fund to Cree businesses for 2020-2021 was \$1,084,154.

This investment encompassed 16 projects and created an estimated 39 new jobs in Eeyou Istchee. In 2019-2020 the total

Table 4. Projects Approved Under CEAF

| COMMUNITY | PROJECTS APPROVED |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chisasibi | Kanapio Property Development Inc. |
| Eastmain | Wanbannutao Construction Inc. |
| Mistissini | Fresh Tracks Transport |
| Mistissini | D.Coon-Come Enterprises Reg'd |
| Mistissini | Lakeview Restaurant |
| Mistissini | Wapachee and Sons Reg'd |
| Mistissini | Awessha Store |
| Mistissini | Pimii Plus |
| Nemaska | Peter Wapachee Taxi |
| Waskaganish | Hester Transport |
| Waskaganish | Eeyou Adventure |
| Waskaganish | D & C Landscaping and Snow Plow |
| Waskaganish | Adrian Erless Transport |
| Waskaganish | Eeyou SP Mechanics |
| Waswanipi | Howard Blacksmith Transport |
| Waswanipi | Amisk Excavation Inc. |

Figure 3. CEAF Amounts Approved by Sector

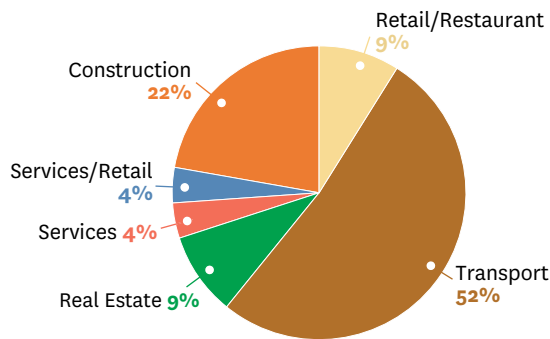


Table 5. CEAF Amounts Approved by Sector

| SECTOR | NUMBER OF PROJECTS APPROVED | AMOUNT APPROVED | ESTIMATED JOB CREATION |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Retail/Restaurant | 3 | \$95,097 | 7 |
| Transport | 6 | \$558,039 | 12 |
| Real Estate | 1 | \$100,000 | 5 |
| Services | 2 | \$45,000 | 4 |
| Services w/Retail | 1 | \$44,268 | 2 |
| Construction | 3 | \$241,750 | 9 |
| Total | 16 | \$1,084,154 | 39 |

investment was \$978,448. This year represents an increase in investment dollars of 10% compared to last year’s numbers.

The total number of projects approved this year was 16. In 2019-20 there were 14 projects approved. This represents an increase of two (2) projects approved over last year.

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 Fund was created with the intent of supporting the expansion of Cree economies within Eeyou Istchee. Generally, these funds are implicated in large-scale projects.

Applications in 2020-2021 were in the tourism, real estate, hospitality, and social/non-profit industries. Illustrated below is the statistical information for the Regional Development Fund.

This year three (3) projects were approved in the amount of \$789,269 (see Table 6).

RDF Investment

The total investment from the Regional Development Fund to Cree businesses for 2020-2021 was \$789,269. This

Table 6. RDF Amounts Approved per Sector

| COMMUNITY | SECTOR | AMOUNT |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Ouje-Bougoumou | Tourism | \$241,735 |
| Regional | Social/Non-Profit | \$165,534 |
| Regional (EERP) | Various | \$382,000 |
| Total | | \$789,269 |

year’s investment was extended to three (3) projects in Eeyou Istchee. Compared to 2019-20 there were 8 total projects approved and the 2019-20 investment amount was \$3,472,783. There was a significant decrease in the total amount disbursed for this year, due to several factors. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the external planning of projects and timeline of when projects were submitted to the Regional Development Fund. The RDF also requires other funding sources, and we saw in some instances a difficulty in accessing complementary funding for projects. There are projects in tourism, real estate and hospitality sectors for the coming year. We are also aware of other initiatives that will fall under the RDF in the coming year.

Regions and Rurality Fund (RRF)

The *Fonds d’appui au rayonnement des régions* (FARR) introduced in 2017-2018 has been replaced by the “Fonds régions et ruralité volet soutien au rayonnement des régions, Nord-duQuébec secteur Eeyou Istchee” (Regions and Rurality Fund - Support for Regional Outreach component, Nord-du-Québec, Eeyou Istchee sector). The program has changed mainly due to restructuring at the Provincial Government with respect to economic development related agencies. Funding requests and project proposals made under the old program are being redirected to the new RRF. Any project that has regional outreach that will impact more than one Cree community and contribute to the achievement of regional priorities is eligible for this program. The budget for 2020-2021 was \$750,047 of which approximately \$250,000 was already committed to ongoing and multi-year projects.

The priority areas for RRF in Eeyou Istchee are:

1. Development and implementation of a strategic housing plan to provide tangible solutions addressing the critical housing shortage;
2. Raising economic and employment activity through the private sector;
3. Supporting Cree-Owned businesses;
4. Developing the workforce;
5. Fostering connections and partnerships within Eeyou Istchee;
6. Tying economic development with nation-building.

Social Economy

The Department of Commerce and Industry oversees the Social Economy funding agreement between the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec. A new funding agreement was signed for 2020-2021. 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.

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.

SERVICES

JBNQA Beneficiary List

The department manages the JBNQA Beneficiary lists. There have been overall 80 requests regarding the beneficiary registry for this past fiscal year. Ranging from local electoral lists, regional electoral lists, statistics, and beneficiary confirmation requests. In addition, DCI has been working with the Commission de la Construction du Québec by confirming Cree membership status of the applicant. Thus, validating their eligibility in applying for a CCQ card. The following requests are listed below:

- 29 election requests
- 31 beneficiary confirmation requests
- 7 regional requests
- 13 statistics requests

Services Quebec Liaison

The role of the Liaison Officer is to provide information from Services Quebec to the Cree Nation Government and increase the accessibility of Services Quebec in the Cree communities.

The primary objective is the sharing of information on programs sponsored by Services Quebec throughout Eeyou Istchee and the communities, this information is shared at no cost and is privileged for the use of all Eeyou Istchee members. The information is mostly in French and is translated as required. All information is currently available on the Services Quebec website at quebec.ca.

Annual Action Plan

The action plan consists of numerous ways in implementing programs and building a better communication strategy with the communities. The action plan also consists of working together with ASD and other partners on job creation projects, while assisting in connecting job seekers and James Bay employers who want to integrate Cree workers into their work teams. An important part of the communication strategy includes the promotion of job applications and job postings through various means of media, such as Facebook and community pages or websites.

Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ)

In collaboration with representatives at the CCQ office in Val-d'Or, we worked on a shared strategy that would allow us to travel to the communities and share information on CCQ and RBQ. This is part of the overall strategy of ensuring individuals and enterprises in Eeyou Istchee have adequate access to the CCQ and RBQ.





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 2020-21.

Years of community consultations, led by our Protected Areas (PA) Unit, culminated in the finalization of the Protected Areas Network of Eeyou Istchee this year. Over 100,000 km² – 23% of the territory! – is now protected from industrial development. We've expanded the Department's PA Unit to ensure our capacity to assist with the many Challenge Fund projects underway across the territory, working to validate the network and support long-term PA management.

The Department's Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Unit secured over \$650,000 for new projects that will benefit the communities for years to come. An assessment of the effectiveness of fish habitat compensation plans will lead to better planning and follow-up of ESIA proponents' compensation plans. And a climate monitoring project will allow us to implement a climate monitoring station and a networking platform for climate change information in the territory.

Our Mining Unit was able to proceed with work towards the clean-up of abandoned mining exploration sites in 2020-21, despite the challenges of the pandemic. The preparatory work on site selection is complete and an exhaustive site inventory is underway. Interviews in Mistissini were cut short due to a COVID-19 outbreak in January 2021, but we are working around the challenges, and we are set to develop a prioritised list of sites to visit this year.

Our GIS Unit delivered custom GIS training to the communities in 2020-21, building territory-wide capacity to work collaboratively on lands and resources management. Our GIS and Land Use Planning Units began trial runs of our *Cree Land Use Mapping Application* prototype, which will streamline the process of collecting Cree traditional knowledge and land use data across the territory. Also, our Wildlife Unit began work on a collaborative Cree-led Management Plan for Lake Sturgeon in Eeyou Istchee.

The staff of the Environment and Remedial Works Department has almost doubled in the past ten years, and our expertise and capacity have grown exponentially. In 2020-21, we overcame the challenges of the pandemic to collaborate with other Departments, Cree communities, and Cree entities on an enormous range of files, from local wildlife monitoring projects to region-wide land use planning initiatives. I could not be prouder of the work this Department is doing to manage our territory in a way that benefits the Cree people and conserves our lands and waters and ways of life.

Meegwetch.

Isaac Voyageur
Director of Remedial Works

Photo: Neil Diamond





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 27 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,

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (ESIAs)

The Department's ESIA Unit participates in the assessment and review of all projects submitted to the ESIA procedure established by Section 22 of the *JBNQA*. The Unit is comprised of our ESIA Coordinator, Kelly LeBlanc, and our Environmental Analysts, Kaitlin Lloyd and Erica Guth, who is replacing Pernilla Talec this year.

We maintain the Cree Nation Government ESIA Secretariat and, in collaboration with our colleagues, produce the necessary analyses for the Cree-appointed members of the Evaluating Committee (COMEV), the Provincial Review Committee (COMEX), and the Cree Nation Government-Impact

Assessment Agency of Canada's Joint Assessment Committee (JAC). We ensure that continuous communications are maintained with the Cree communities, other Departments, and Cree entities to keep them informed of the status of each project and to consider their questions, concerns, and opinions. And we represent the Cree Nation Government on the Environmental Follow-Up Committees created under the various Impact and Benefit Agreements signed between mining companies, the Cree Nation Government, and the Cree communities.

ESIA Overview 2020-21

The pandemic did not slow down the ESIA team this year. The review of the Rose-Lithium mining project kept us busy, working closely with the federal government on the assessment of the project. Several new projects in the communities, and for the repair of the Billy-Diamond Highway, required our attention throughout the year. We continued work on the monitoring and follow-up of existing projects. And we were able to secure funding for new projects related to climate change and fish habitat compensation.

Projects under Section 22 ESIA Review 2020-21

We assessed 21 projects for COMEV this year, requiring work at the first stages of the ESIA Procedure (Preliminary Information & Directives). Ten of the 21 projects were exempted from ESIAs; 7 remain under analysis; 3 were given directives to proceed with an ESIA; and one file was closed due to an automatic exemption.

We assessed 24 projects for COMEX this year, requiring work at the second stages of the ESIA Procedure (ESIA Statement Review & Follow-up). Of the 24 projects, 1 new project was authorized; 6 requests for modification were approved; 7 projects were assessed and monitored for follow-up; and 10 projects and modification requests remain under review.

ESIA Project Highlights

James Bay Lithium Mine: Galaxy Lithium responded to information requests from COMEX and the JAC reviewing this proposed mine on Eastmain territory. The ESIA review was put on hold while the proponent optimized their project; the optimization report is expected in June 2021.

Rose Lithium-Tantalum Mine

Critical Elements submitted its responses to the second round of questions from COMEX in July 2020. Public hearings were held in February 2021 in Matagami, Eastmain, and Nemaska. COMEX is reviewing the results. The JAC received answers to its second information request in October 2020 and posted its Environmental Assessment Report and Draft Conditions on the public registry in March 2021. The final public consultation period for the project is ongoing; an initial meeting was held with the Chiefs and Band Councils of Eastmain, Nemaska, Waskaganish and Waswanipi in

March 2021. A decision by the Minister of the Environment is expected this summer.

Renard Mine

Stornoway Diamond's Renard mine on Mistissini traplines was put on care and maintenance in Spring 2020, but mining activities restarted in September. The Environment Committee met throughout the year.

Whabouchi Mine

Construction of Nemaska Lithium's spodumene mine was put on hold last year due to financing issues, but the project has gained a second life thanks to a new group of shareholders: Orion, Investissement Québec, Livent and Pallinghurst. The Chinuchi Environment Committee met once during the year to oversee monitoring requirements.

Forestry Roads H-West and I

Construction of forest 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. That modification was authorized in 2020-21. The proponent has submitted a request to extend roads H-West (+13km) and I (+29km). This modification request is under review.

Table 1. Select Projects (12 of 21) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEV 2020-21

| PROJECT | PROPONENT | STATUS | CREE COMMUNITY |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|
| Mineral Exploration (trenching) on the Cheechoo property | Ressources Sirios Inc. | Exempted | Wemindji |
| Blueberry expansion project | Bleuetière Pouliot et fils Inc. | Exempted | Ouje-Bougoumou |
| Whapmagoostui Kuujuaaraapik Hybrid Power Plant Project | Kuujuaaraapik Whapmagoostui Renewable Energy Corp. | Directive sent | Whapmagoostui |
| Gladiator Mining Project – Site development and ramp sinking | Bonterra Resources Inc. | Under Review | Waswanipi |
| Construction of a 120 kV power line to connect the Windfall Mine | Hydro-Québec | Directive sent | Waswanipi |
| Installation of Hydrometeorological Station at Winsh Lake | Hydro-Québec | Under Review | Mistissini |
| Bulk sampling at James Bay Mine | Galaxy Lithium Canada Inc. | Under Review | Eastmain |
| Extension and operation of a quarry and a bituminous concrete plant on James Bay Road | Société de développement de la Baie-James | Under Review | Chisasibi |
| Operation of a gravel-sand borrow pit for the Billy-Diamond Highway | Construction Norascon Inc. | Under review | Waskaganish |
| Extension and operation of the SOC-1 quarry on the La Grande-4 Road | Hydro-Québec | Under Review | Chisasibi |
| Improvement of boat ramp on the Rupert River | Cree Nation of Nemaska | Under Review | Nemaska |
| Quarry near the La Grande-3 development | Hydro-Québec | Directive sent | Chisasibi |

More detailed information is available on the COMEV website: <http://comev.ca/en/>

Eleonore Gold Mine

Les Mines Opinaca requested modifications to its Certificate of Authorization to (a) modify the tailings storage facility and (b) modify the wetlands compensation plan. Both requests remain under review. In 2020-21, the Opinagow Environment Committee initiated a Lake Sturgeon Literature Review, realized by Kaweshekami Environment Inc., to better understand the decline in lake sturgeon fishing success observed by tallymen in the study area and to protect the species. Recommendations from this report will be presented at consultations in Wemindji in the coming year.

Community Waste Management Projects

Several communities' landfills are currently at or exceeding capacity. The Cree Nations of Waswanipi, Wemindji, Whapmagoostui and Ouje-Bougoumou have initiated or submitted requests for modifications to their waste management sites to address the problem. Innovative discussions on how waste management is carried out in Eeyou Istchee will continue for the foreseeable future.

Table 2. Select Projects (16 of 24) assessed by the ESIA Unit before COMEX 2020-21

| PROJECT | PROPONENT | STATUS | CREE COMMUNITY |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Recommendations | | | |
| Construction of forest access roads H-West & I | Matériaux Blanchet Inc. | Authorized Request for modification (borrow pits) | Waswanipi |
| Troilus Mining Project Pit Dewatering | Troilus Gold Corp. | Authorized | Mistissini |
| Construction/operation of landfill trenches | Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation | Authorized Request for modification | Ouje-Bougoumou |
| Mine Principale restoration project | Quebec MERN | Authorized Request for modification | Ouje-Bougoumou |
| Renard diamond mine | Stornoway Diamond (Canada) Inc. | Authorized Request for modification (Monitoring) | Mistissini |
| Transmission of Questions and Comments | | | |
| Processing gold ore at the Bachelor site | Ressources Métanor Inc. (Bonterra Resources) | ESIA Under review | Waswanipi |
| Rose Lithium-Tantalum project | Critical Elements Corporation | ESIA Under review | Eastmain, Nemaska, Waskaganish |
| Construction of forest access roads H-West & I | Matériaux Blanchet Inc. | Request for modification (extension of roads) | Waswanipi |
| James Bay Lithium Mine Project | Galaxy Lithium (Canada) Inc. | ESIA Under review | Eastmain |
| Éléonore mining project | Les Mines Opinaca Ltée (Newmont) | Request for modification (tailings facility) | Wemindji |
| New solid waste disposal site in Wemindji | Cree Nation of Wemindji | Questions sent – ESIA Under review | Wemindji |
| Condition monitoring, annual monitoring and/or other monitoring | | | |
| Whabouchi Mining Project | Orion, Investissement Québec, Livent and Pallinghurst | Follow-up on modification (relocation of temporary construction camp) | Nemaska |
| BlackRock iron-vanadium mine | Métaux BlackRock Inc. | Follow-up | Ouje-Bougoumou |
| Municipal domestic waste landfill site | Cree First Nation of Waswanipi | Follow-up | Waswanipi |
| Troilus Mining Project | Troilus Gold Corp. | Annual post-closure inspection report | Mistissini |
| Development of a new landfill | Whapmagoostui First Nation | Follow-up | Whapmagoostui |

More detailed information is available on the COMEX website: <http://comexqc.ca/en/>.

Climate Change Projects

In 2020-21, the ESIA Unit secured \$540,000 of new funding through the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's (CIRNAC) Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program to launch the "Eeyou Istchee Climate Monitoring Project for a Resilient Future." The Department will hire a new Climate Change Coordinator to improve regional-to-local coordination and to address concerns related to climate change impacts, monitoring, and adaptation. Over the next 3 years, we will work to implement a climate monitoring station pilot project and to create a database and networking platform for climate change information in Eeyou Istchee. The project will be conducted in close collaboration with all interested communities and Cree entities.

Also this year, in collaboration with Quebec and the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment, we completed the report of the Cree Nation Consultation on the Development of the Electrification and Climate Change Plan held in Ouje-Bougoumou in November 2019. In November 2020, Quebec launched its 2030 Plan for a Green Economy, including a 5-year implementation plan and key measures and financial envelopes to address the impacts of climate change in Eeyou Istchee.

Fish and Fish Habitat Compensation Project

The ESIA Unit secured \$149,600 in funding this year from Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Indigenous Habitat Participation Program (IHPP) for a new project: *Assessing the Effectiveness of Fish Compensation Habitat in Eeyou Istchee: Cree and Scientific Perspectives*. The project will begin in 2021 in collaboration with the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA), and will lead to better planning, review and follow-up of the various proponent's fish and fish habitat compensation plans and monitoring programs in Eeyou Istchee.

MINING

The Department supports Cree communities impacted by mining activities by monitoring projects under ESIA processes, by participating in the environment committees derived from Impact Benefit Agreements, by facilitating community consultations on mining projects and issues, and by leading the clean-up of abandoned mining exploration sites. Our Mining Team is led by our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, supported by our Coordinator for the Clean-up of Abandoned Mining Exploration Sites, Adario Masty, our Environment Management Advisor, Flora Weistche, our Mining Engineer, Aurora Hernandez, and our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, who networks with the Cree Mineral Exploration Board.

Clean-Up of Abandoned Mining Exploration Sites

The Department oversees the 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 Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, sits on the Agreement's Steering Committee, and our Coor-

ordinator for the Clean-up of Abandoned Mining Exploration Sites, Adario Masty, assists with this important work.

This project was able to proceed in a limited capacity in 2020-21, working around the challenges of the pandemic. The preparatory work involving the confirmation of sites was completed and the Steering Committee approved the selection of sites, which are in the Mistissini trapline area, and worked with Quebec to confirm residual titles and claims for each site. Our Clean-up Coordinator proceeded with the digitization of old site information, and we hired a Mistissini-based, Cree-owned consulting company (Enviro-Cree, working with BluMetric Environmental Inc.) to conduct an exhaustive inventory of the sites, meeting with land users and updating maps and data with assistance from the Department's GIS Unit. This preliminary work is vital to produce the documents on which the cleanup will be based.

The pandemic complicated and delayed this phase of work, but we are nearing the end of site inventory and validation. In December 2020, a questionnaire was developed and incorporated into a GIS mapping tool for use in interviews with the tallymen. Interviews were completed in early January 2021 for 16 sites in trapline M17B, but a COVID-19 outbreak in the community put subsequent interviews on hold. During this delay, a preliminary ranking matrix was developed to evaluate and rank each site in terms of potential contamination and exposure risk. Of notable concern is the presence of radioactive material at some of the sites.



Abandoned Mining Exploration Site located on John Rupert's Trapline, Whapmagoostui

Upon completion of the interviews and corresponding update of the database, we will conduct a risk assessment and develop a prioritised list of sites to visit in 2021, after which we will develop an action plan for site characterization and clean-up.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Department Director, Isaac Voyageur, is the Regional Environmental Administrator for Category I lands, assisted by our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, our Environment Management Advisor, Flora Weistche, our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, and our Ice Monitoring Coordinator, Sammy Blackned. We provide guidance, coordination, training, and technical support to the Local Environmental Administrators (LEAs) in each of the 9 Cree communities.

The Department undertakes environmental tasks that would be incumbent on any government environment department. Every year, we provide technical guidance on issues of contaminated site management and remediation, we carry out Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments, we monitor the annual inventory and cleanup of former Hydro-Québec sites and camps, and we monitor drinking water quality in the Cree communities in collaboration with the Capital Works and Services Department. Some of these efforts were restricted in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. For example, Environmental Site Assessments could not

be conducted, the transportation of water quality samples was temporarily interrupted, a tour to the communities was postponed, and an ice monitoring training exercise was put on hold. However, other efforts continued and, by meeting virtually with the LEAs throughout 2020-21, there remained opportunities to collaborate on Community Environmental Services despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Water Quality Monitoring and Training

The Department works closely with Capital Works and Services to ensure that the water quality in all 9 Cree communities is safe for the people of Eeyou Istchee. Every year, we collect the results of water quality samples from the water operators and the LEAs. In 2020-21, local water operators had issues with transporting samples to laboratories due to the travel restrictions imposed to combat the pandemic. However, Capital Works and Services worked with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services to charter flights and surmount this challenge. Also this year, our two Departments planned a water sampling training to help build Cree Nation Government capacity in drinking water management. The training, organized by the *Services aux Entreprises de la Commission Scolaire des Trois-Lacs*, will be offered to the water operators and LEAs in July 2021.



Hydro-Québec/SEBJ-James Bay Region Site Clean-Up

Throughout 2017-2020, Quebec representatives visited a number of sites in the Cree communities to conduct soil characterization and water sampling and to plan remediation work for the coming years. All LEAs will be consulted in June 2021 to discuss the next steps of the clean-up. A total of 21 sites in Chisasibi, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Mistissini, Nemaska, Wemindji, Whapmagoostui and Waswanipi will go through the clean-up process by the end of this project.

Sea and Fresh Water Ice Monitoring Project

The Department supports the LEAs in monitoring the spring melt in coastal communities. Unfortunately, this important new project was adversely affected by the pandemic, as it is the sort of work that requires close interaction with land users, which was impossible this year except for a small window in Summer 2020. A large training exercise that had been planned for the year was postponed until 2021-22. However, the foundational components of discussion were put in place in 2020-21, many consultations and interviews were done remotely, and our Ice Monitoring Coordinator was able to defer funds for the year.

LAND SURVEYS

The Department is responsible for land regime issues that arise in the course of implementing the *JBNQA*. This work is led by our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn, and our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, in collaboration with the Cree First Nations, with the federal and provincial governments, and with Gowlings as our legal advisor.

Much of our work on territorial boundaries involves the implementation of article 4.18 of the *Paix des Braves Agreement*, which refers to the cancellation of the NBR hydroelectric project, and the review and adjustment of boundaries originally defined to take into account the NBR project. Our objective is to replace, for all Cree First Nations, the provisional boundaries in Section 4 of the *JBNQA* with a new text that will provide for updated and revised plans, registered with the Quebec legal surveys bureau. This exercise will include both Category I and II lands. Negotiated boundary changes will require Complementary Agreements to the *JBNQA*, which will require agreements between the interested parties, plans for relevant surveys, and the drafting and adoption of Orders-in-Council by the Government of Quebec and, in the case of Category IA lands, the Government of Canada. Status reports are currently in preparation for each of the affected communities. Work in 2020-21 focussed mainly on Waswanipi, Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

We have also begun work with the Cree communities to develop and implement a new land registry system under the authority of the Cree Nation Government and the Cree First Nations. And the Department will also be involved in implementing Cree governance responsibilities in Category II lands, pursuant to the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement*.

GIS MAPPING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Department's GIS Coordinator, Jonathan Elkhoury, and our GIS Analyst, Maxine Mark-Stewart, support all our

files and assist other Departments, Cree entities, and Cree communities with mapping and data management needs. Following are select achievements of 2020-21.

GIS Technical Support and Capacity Building

GIS License Agreement

Staff of the Cree Nation Government and the Cree First Nations are free to access ArcGIS products, such as ArcMap and ArcGIS Pro. The GIS Unit assists users in acquiring, installing, and configuring these products.

GIS Needs Assessment

In collaboration with several CNG Departments, we undertook a GIS needs assessment to document the current state of our GIS capacity, define goals and areas for improvement, and produce a roadmap for the Cree Nation Government to provide better GIS services to stakeholders in years to come.

Trapline Registry

The GIS Unit provides technical advice and recommendations on the Cree trapline boundary shapefile and tallyman list to aid the CTA in maintaining the trapline registry system. In 2020-21, we reviewed the tallyman list and worked on a data model and procedures to track updates.

ArcGIS Online Course

In partnership with ESRI Canada, and in collaboration with the Department's Land Use Planning (LUP) and Protected Areas (PA) staff, we developed a custom GIS training for local Cree First Nations to work collaboratively with the Cree Nation Government on matters related to lands and natural resources management. In 2020-21, the course content was defined and 9 students from 6 communities attended the 2-day training and received their certificates.

GIS Mapping and Analytics

COVID-19 Areas of Risk Map

In 2020, the Cree leadership identified areas of risk for COVID-19, advising people to avoid travel to certain regions for their safety. Working in collaboration with the Director of Cree-Quebec Relations, the GIS Unit produced static and interactive maps to inform the population of these areas.

La Grande Alliance

The Department of Commerce and Industry is working on a feasibility study for the three phases of La Grande Alliance initiative. The GIS unit produced several maps this year depicting different areas covered by the study, and we provided the Transportation and Electrification Committee with an interactive map depicting important sets of geospatial data layers to inform their discussions.

Protected Areas

As part of La Grande Alliance, new protected areas totaling 39,000 km² of lands and waters have been negotiated. We provided mapping and analysis support to the PA team and the Cree communities in this work.

Web-GIS and App Development

ArcGIS Online

This cloud-based system allows users to view, create, analyze, and share geographic information across all Cree Nation Government Departments and with the Cree communities. The GIS Unit maintains and updates site content and provides training and support to users.

ArcGIS Enterprise

In collaboration with the IT Department, we are working to install and configure the hosting server for GIS data. In November 2020, a production environment was set up and the components of ArcGIS Enterprise were installed. The enterprise geodatabase is now ready to populate with data.

Cree Land Use Mapping Application

We are working with the LUP Unit to create an app that will streamline the process of collecting Cree traditional knowledge and land use data. In 2020-21, we finalized a prototype, began trial runs, and began drafting user documentation.

Eeyou Istchee – All Data App

This all-in-one web mapping application supports lands and natural resources planning by portraying key layers of information related to the mining, forestry, energy, conservation, wildlife and occupancy sectors in one map that lets users switch layers on and off, add their own content, and print maps. In 2020-21, we improved the overall app experience and provided training to users.

Cleanup of Abandoned Mining Exploration Sites

We are developing apps to support the cleanup of abandoned mining exploration sites. Working with the Department's Cleanup Coordinator in 2020-21, we tested apps in the field and provided training and support to fieldworkers.

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 (Manager of Land Use Planning), Sarah-Anne Brochu-Hébert (Land Use Planning Advisor), Jessica Labrecque (Land Use Specialist), and Merlin Whiskeychan (Land Use Planning Officer). We provide advice and technical support to the Cree Nation Government; we facilitate the collaborations required to advance Cree interests in land use planning; and we support community-level initiatives to attain land use planning objectives. In 2020-21, working around the challenges of the pandemic, we advanced the work of the EPC and the Cree Nation Government on a range of initiatives including the following highlights.

Regional Land and Resource Use Plan

The EPC has as its main mandate the drafting of a Regional Land and Resource Use Plan (RLRUP) for Category II lands, and the provision of Cree input into land use planning for Category III lands. In 2020-21, we took the following steps to move forward on this mandate.



Preparatory work for drafting the RLRUP

In early 2021, we contracted a land use planning firm (BC2) to provide technical support for the first phase of the drafting process: gathering data, identifying information gaps, developing the concept and design of the Plan, and drafting the initial chapters. This phase is underway and will be completed by Summer 2021.

EPC workshop on the Road Network

We facilitated EPC workshops to discuss the main issues and benefits regarding the road network from each community's perspective. The outcomes of these workshops will be integrated into a new chapter of EPC Orientations and will inform the draft RLRUP as well as other initiatives such as La Grande Alliance.

EPC workshops on Cree Land Use Mapping

We facilitated two EPC workshops on Cree Land Use Mapping (see below), one to explain the mapping initiative and its relation to land use planning, and the other to discuss questions that could be asked during mapping interviews which could provide important information for developing the RLRUP.

Cree Land Use Mapping

A major collaborative initiative is underway to map land use for all the Cree communities. The Cree Land Use Mapping project seeks to enhance local Cree First Nation capacity to document and work with land use information, such that communities become ever better equipped to include Cree land use considerations in the governance of their territory. The information collected will support informed decision-making in land use planning and lands management at both the local level and the regional level. The LUP Unit is working with the GIS Unit, the Forestry Department, and others to develop innovative mapping methods and tools to accomplish this work and to facilitate communication and collaboration between the Cree communities and the Cree Nation Government.

Other 2020-21 LUP Highlights

Land Use Plan for the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR)

The Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (EMRPC) has a mandate to develop a land use plan for the EMR. This work was put on hold in the absence of technical planning staff within the EMRPC, but this year a land use planning firm (BC2) was hired to move the work forward. They will gather data, identify information gaps, develop the concept and design for the Plan, and develop a background report containing all relevant information to support the Plan by December 2021.

Access Permitting for the EMR

The Cree Nation Government is responsible for providing permits for non-Crees to access the offshore islands. The LUP Unit worked with legal advisors to develop an entry and access permitting toolkit for the EMR. Consultations are underway with the coastal First Nations' councils to get their input on the toolkit.

Other Collaborative Efforts

The LUP Unit collaborated on the Cree-Quebec Participation Table for drafting the Public Land Use Plan (PATP) for the Eeyou Istchee James Bay region; we collaborated on the Participation Table for drafting the PATP for the Kativik Region; and we worked on the Advisory Committee for updating the Kativik Master Plan and developing a new Zoning Bylaw.

PROTECTED AREAS

The Department's Protected Areas (PA) Unit is led by our Protected Areas and Conservation Specialist, Chantal Otter Tétreault, and includes our Challenge Fund Program Administrator, Lindsay Notz; our Conservation Program Officer, Robin Campbell; our Environmental Program Officer, John Shecapio; our Cultural Program Officer, Jamie Stevens; and our Financial Program Officer, Cassandra Danyluk, whose position will be temporarily filled by Sarah Hughboy-Biron in 2021. The PA Unit works with other Departments, Cree entities, Cree communities, and the federal and provincial governments to develop and implement protected areas in the territory. Here are some highlights from 2020-21.

Finalization of the PA Network

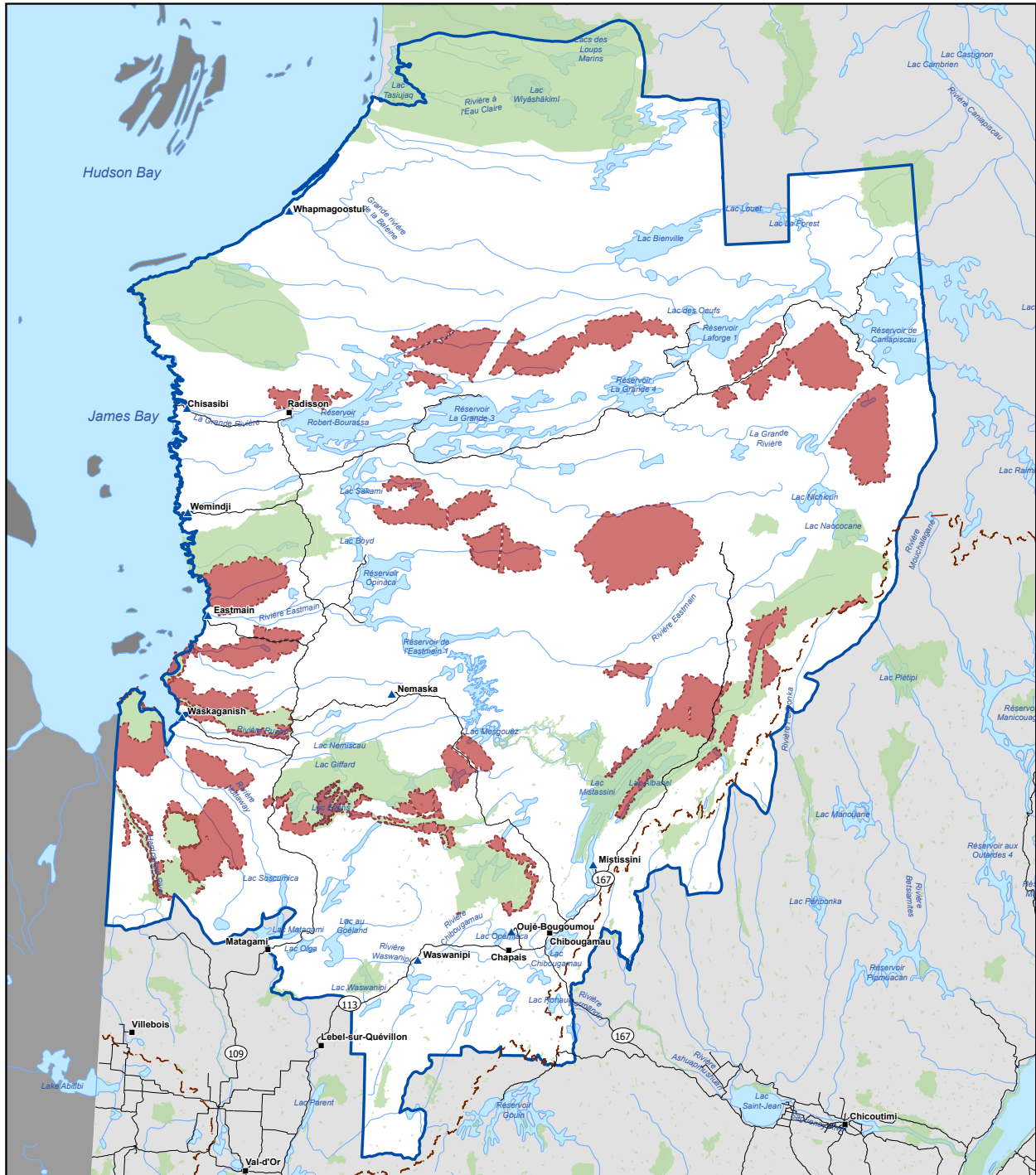
The establishment of the protected areas network was finalized at the end of 2020, when the Cree Nation Government and the Government of Quebec made a joint announcement that 23 new territories reserved for the purposes of a protected area (TRPPA) were being designated in Eeyou Istchee. This addition of roughly 39,000 km² of new protected areas means that we have exceeded our target to protect 20% of Eeyou Istchee and Quebec has met its target to protect 17% of the province. With a PA network that now totals 100,000 km² (an area roughly the size of Iceland!), a full 23% of the territory is protected from industrial development. This achievement is largely due to the solid proposals the Cree Nation Government delivered to Quebec following the robust community engagements of 2015-2019.

Work continues towards granting permanent, legal status to these areas by 2025 (e.g., as Quebec National Parks or Biodiversity Reserves). In the coming year, the PA Unit will conduct knowledge acquisition and public consultations to finalize PA boundaries, draft conservation plans, and assess impacts on the natural and social environments stemming from obligations under the JBNQA.

Challenge Fund

We are collaborating with the Cree communities, the CTA, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA), Nature Canada, and the Cree Nation Youth Council, working together under the umbrella of the Cree Nation Government, on a 4-year project based on a collection of proposals that share two core missions: to finalize and validate the PA network in Eeyou Istchee with ongoing consultations and data collection; and to assist the formation of the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Program for long-term PA management. In 2020-21, we built the PA Unit that will support the Challenge Fund activities highlighted in our original proposal to Environment

Protected Areas Network



| | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| ▲ Cree community | ■ Town | — Road | — JBNQA | ▭ Eeyou Istchee | ■ New Protected Areas | ■ Existing Protected Areas |
|------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|

Projection: UTM Zone 18 NAD 83
 Sources: CTA/CNG Eeyou Istchee, NRCan CanVec 5M, MELCC Protected Areas
 Document Name: PA_CNG_20210122
 Date: 2021-01-22

0 20 40 80 120 160 Kilometers

ᑕᕐᑎᕐ ᑎᕐᑎᕐᑕᕐ
Cree Nation Government
Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and we began developing projects with the Cree communities and Cree entities.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, several projects were successfully completed in 2020-21, including the following highlights. Visit www.eeyouconservation.com for more information.

Youth Snowshoe Journey

The Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation Youth Council, and Whapmagoostui First Nation hosted an 8-day traditional youth snowshoe journey, “Miyuughinwhythatau Istchee” (which translates to “Let’s protect the land”), from the north shores of Burton Lake into Whapmagoostui, from March 26-April 3, 2021. Cree youth aged 13-35 learned first-hand from Cree Elders and guides about protected areas and traditional knowledge and skills related to traveling on the land. Prior to departure, 5 youth and community members participated in a 2-day Ice Safety and Rescue Course, acquiring future employment skills for field studies.

Waswanipi Wapistan Project

The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi is monitoring American marten populations (wapistan in Cree) using nest boxes, photographic bait stations, and Cree knowledge at 64 sites inside and outside of protected areas, with low, moderate, and high disturbance levels. The project team consists of two Waswanipi Land Keepers, a Coordinator, a liaison officer, and tallymen. In 2020-21, research equipment was purchased (tablets, data collection software, weather stations, spy cameras), field studies were undertaken, and a Working Group was established with staff from Waswanipi, the Cree Nation Government, and academic experts.

Protection of Cultural Resources

The PA Unit is supporting the Cree Nation of Chisasibi’s project to collect key cultural information for new PAs, interviewing Elders and land-users and documenting Cree place names and narratives through storytelling. A database of cultural heritage will be created, and intangible heritage (legends, songs, healing ceremonies, collective memories, etc.) will be documented. This project will wrap up in 2021-22 and will provide guidance for future Cultural Resource Management within the PA network.

Water Quality Monitoring Project

The Cree Nation Government is collaborating with the Cree Nation of Nemaska to undertake a water quality monitoring project for Dana and Evans Lakes (within the Chisesaakahikan and Broadback River Biodiversity Reserve). Tallymen have raised concerns that forestry activity and changes to wetland drainage patterns are potentially degrading water quality through increased sedimentation in these lakes. We are working with an NGO, Water First, to design a sampling plan and develop a training regime for Cree staff from Nemaska to conduct fieldwork in Summer 2021, if weather and pandemic protocols permit.

Ecotourism Research

COTA is conducting research on ecotourism trends in Eeyou Istchee, case studies of Indigenous ecotourism projects in other jurisdictions, and a legislative review of potential ecotourism products permitted within protected areas. Successful engagement sessions were held in Wemindji, Waskaganish, and Chisasibi in 2020-21; further sessions are planned for Waswanipi and Chisasibi.

Moose Population Survey

The Cree Nation Government collaborated with Quebec on a moose population survey in the southern part of Eeyou Istchee (Zone 17 and part of Zone 22) from February 11-March 2, 2021. For several years, concerns have been raised by Cree hunters about possible population declines of this cultural keystone species, potentially due to the impacts of development, increased access, possible over-harvesting, climate change, and the prevalence of moose ticks. Five helicopters surveyed the study area this spring, two fully staffed by Cree teams from Mistissini and Waswanipi.

Plan Nord

Quebec and the Plan Nord Society resumed the working group on the priority allocation of 30% of the territory of Plan Nord as “northern conservation areas,” a new designation under the amended Natural Conservation Heritage Act. The Cree Nation Government is observing this initiative, remaining diligent in ensuring that it respects our inherent rights and that any development within these designated areas is compatible with Cree conservation goals.

Tawich National Marine Conservation Area

The work to conduct a feasibility study in the Eeyou Marine Region (from Waskaganish to south of the La Grande River) is underway. The Steering Committee was established with two members from each government, including our Protected Areas and Conservation Specialist Chantal Tétreault, working alongside Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull. In 2020-21, our work focused on developing a communication strategy on how to best approach and educate the coastal communities about the potential of developing a National Marine Conservation Area in the offshore region.

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*, Part III of the *EMR Land Claims Agreement*, and other agreement provisions as they relate to the management and conservation of wildlife in Eeyou Istchee.

Our Wildlife Unit is led by our Manager of Environment, Cameron McLean, and includes our Environment Management Advisor, Flora Weistche, our Wildlife Administrator, Emily Sinave (on maternity as of December 2020); our Wildlife Biologists, Tania Couture (temporary) and Maya



The Youth Snowshoe Journey at their last camp: Brady George, Wesley George (Youth Guide), Abraham George, Matthew George, Gilbert Dick Jr., and Geordie Rupert (Guide)



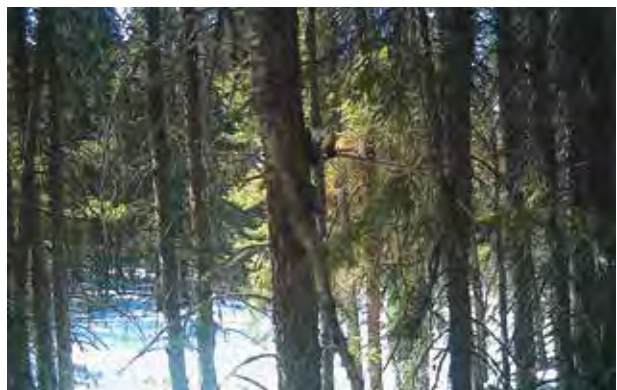
The Youth Snowshoe Journey, overlooking Whapmagoostui before arrival: Abraham George, Geordie Rupert (sitting); Matthew George: Gloria Kawapit; and Brady George



The Youth Snowshoe Journey, led by Geordie Rupert (youth leader), with Wesley George, Gilbert Dick Jr., Brady George, Matthew George, Donovan Kawapit, and Abraham George



Monitoring Marten through the Waswanipi Wapistan Project
(Photos by Eliane Grant)



Marten and Moose caught on camera in the Waswanipi Wapistan Project

Longpré Croteau; our Wildlife Technician, Anderson Jolly, and our Senior Science Advisor, Alan Penn. We support the Cree Nation Government, the Cree communities, and Cree entities in the conservation of healthy wildlife resources and natural biodiversity across the territory and the safeguarding of Cree rights and interests. Every year, we respond to a multitude of wildlife issues at local, regional, provincial, and federal levels. Here are some highlights from 2020-21.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee

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. HFTCC sub-committees and working groups are tasked with specific mandates. The Wildlife Unit 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. Files worked on in 2020-21 include Moose management, migratory and woodland Caribou, as well as issues relating to small game.

Lake Sturgeon Management Plan

In response to the designation of Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) as a species of special concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, a management plan was initiated for the Southern Hudson Bay-James Bay Lake Sturgeon, which is almost entirely found in southern Eeyou Istchee. The *JBNQA* protects the Cree right to harvest; however, we must follow the conservation principle to ensure the availability of this species for future generations. To this end, we are collaborating with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) on the development of a Cree-led Management Plan for the species, working closely with the Cree communities.

In 2020-21, we began planning workshops to be held in the 9 Cree communities with the following goals: to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the status of Lake Sturgeon on Cree territory; to gather traditional knowledge and concerns of community members regarding the conservation of fish populations and fish habitats; and to discuss opportunities for the Cree First Nations to steward possible management activities.

A contribution agreement was signed in March 2021 for this project, which is funded under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk. A collaboration agreement is being drafted between the DFO and the Cree Nation Government to ensure future collaboration in the creation and implementation of the Lake Sturgeon Management Plan. We have already consulted other Cree entities and representatives on this project, including the CTA, the local band offices, Chiefs, and Councils of the Cree First Nations, and Niskamoon Corporation.

Knowledge Acquisition of Species at Risk in Lac Bienville

This multi-year project funded by the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk addresses knowledge acquisition for the

boreal caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), listed as Threatened, and knowledge acquisition and inventory surveys for the Harbor Seal—Lacs des Loups Marins subspecies (*Phoca vitulina mellonae*), listed as Endangered. The project was undertaken from June 2018 through March 2021 within the Apishikimiish area, better known as Lac Bienville, located in the northern portion of Cree traditional territory. This area sustains a wealth of wildlife populations and, according to traditional knowledge, is considered within the ranges of the unique freshwater seal subspecies and the boreal caribou.

Interviews with tallymen, hunters, and land users were conducted in March 2019 and again in November 2020 to gather detailed information on the presence of these species in the Apishikimiish area and to collect traditional knowledge of both species' ecology and behavior. Two environmental DNA (eDNA) water sampling expeditions were undertaken in 2020-21, in collaboration with Quebec's Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP), Tursujuq National Park, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the DFO. A total of ten sites in Lac Bienville were sampled in September 2020, and eight sites were sampled in March 2021. Analyses of the September water samples, along with a previous sampling effort from May 2019, detected low traces of freshwater seal DNA, which suggests their possible presence in Lac Bienville. Samples from March 2021 are yet to be tested. Further improvement and validation of the eDNA protocol and additional sampling is needed to confirm the sub-species' presence.

Through this project, we are improving our knowledge gathering and survey methods, increasing knowledge of these species' ecology and distribution, evaluating possible protective measures for potential seal habitat outside the Tursujuq National Park boundaries, increasing community awareness of the species, and engaging local communities in data collection and recovery actions.

Research Project Proposal on Lake Trout Winter Fishing

Quebec is conducting a study on Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) populations to assess the capacity of certain northern populations to support winter sports fishing. The Aquatic Wildlife Working Group, composed of representatives from Quebec, the Cree Nation Government, the Maki-vik Corporation, and the HFTCC, met this year to discuss the lakes on Category III lands where winter fishing of Lake Trout remains possible for non-beneficiaries. A consultation with CTA representatives and tallymen of the concerned communities was held in March 2021 to discuss concerns with the study and to share knowledge regarding Lake Trout and fishing in the territory. Results of the consultation, along with a lake analysis conducted by the Cree Nation Government, were communicated to the Working Group. The lakes chosen to be sampled through this project have been selected following collaborative discussion with Cree entities.



CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

Message from the Director **John Longchap**

AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT, I AM PLEASED TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT STOOD OUT DURING MY FIRST FEW MONTHS OF WORK IN THIS DEPARTMENT. STARTING A NEW JOB IN A PANDEMIC ERA IS NOT THE MOST IDEAL EXPERIENCE. FOR THIS REASON, I THANK EVERYONE THAT HELPED FACILITATE MY TRANSITION INTO MY NEW POSITION.

Like most organizations, our department has had to navigate through the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Capital Works and Services had to postpone projects last year and will restart these projects this summer, along with the newly approved 2021-2022 projects. We met with each community to discuss their construction protocols and the Cree Nation Government developed construction protocols guidelines to follow.

Housing remains a top priority for the Cree Nation. We continue to promote the Private Home Ownership subsidy program for Crees to build their own homes. The funds can also be accessed by the communities and their Cree-owned Development Corporations to build and sell houses to Crees. An objective is to have more private homes built on a yearly basis.

Capital Works and Services is responsible to build and maintain all offices owned by the Cree Nation Government. Our procurement team is responsible for managing the assets, procurement of supplies and leases for all Cree Nation Government departments, which includes: Apatisiwin Skills and Development, Child and Family Services, Commerce and Industry, Eeyou Eenu Police Force, Environment and Remedial Works, Government Services, Human Resources, Justice and Correctional Services and Social and Cultural Development, as requested.

Another important service we provide to the communities is our Water Support Services. We help to ensure that each community has the appropriate equipment and technology for clean drinking water and wastewater management services, including offering training needs in these areas.

Fire Protection and the application of the Regional Fire Protection By-Law is under our responsibility. Aside from adhering to the by-law, we also support each community with their equipment needs. On an ongoing basis and to keep up to date with the standard Fire Protection Act requirements, we facilitate training and upgrading of skills for the local firefighters.

Finally, we would not be able to develop and present projects for approval and funding without the collaboration between our Capital Planning team and the Directors

of Operations and Treasurers of each community. We have quarterly meetings with the DO's and Treasurers to discuss a wide variety of topics that communities require for healthy living and smooth running of local operations. A subset of this group is our Cree Nation Government Technical Committee, which is composed of 3 members from the communities, internal technical staff, and a representative from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). There is a rotational schedule with the 9 communities which changes every two years. Their role is to ensure that projects meet the established criteria funding and program requirements.

In conclusion, I will end with our Mission Statement, which we will continue to work towards together as a team:

“Ensuring that the Eeyou/Eenu local and regional governments’ infrastructure and related services enhance people’s quality of life”.

John Longchap
Director of Capital Works and Services

*Whapmagoostui Residential
Northern Development Phase 1D*



OVERVIEW

Over the last year, we have worked on the integration of our staff and our managers through holding quarterly meetings and by diligently following-up on our activities. For the next fiscal year, as our department is now fully staffed and is well-integrated, we will continue our strategic planning. This will include determining our values for the whole department, each of our sections' vision for the next few years and our planned vision until the end of the current New Relationship Agreement (NRA) with Canada in 2028.

Moving forward, we will continue to work on our current files, while directing all the required efforts to assist in:

- Facilitating the implementation of the Private Homeownership program;
- Ensuring, through the Technical Committee's assistance, all of the required infrastructure as per the NRA program structure is recommended for funding by the Board/Council;
- Developing housing and town planning standards;

- Training and supporting the Local Housing Inspectors;
- Ensuring that the local fire departments have the proper facilities and equipment and that the local firefighters are sufficiently trained so that the Cree assets are well protected; and
- Ensuring that the Capital Assets of the local and regional Cree governments are properly maintained.

The following report will present to you all the activities and files that we have worked on throughout the year.

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

The organizational structure of the department personnel reflects the two main divisions of the department:

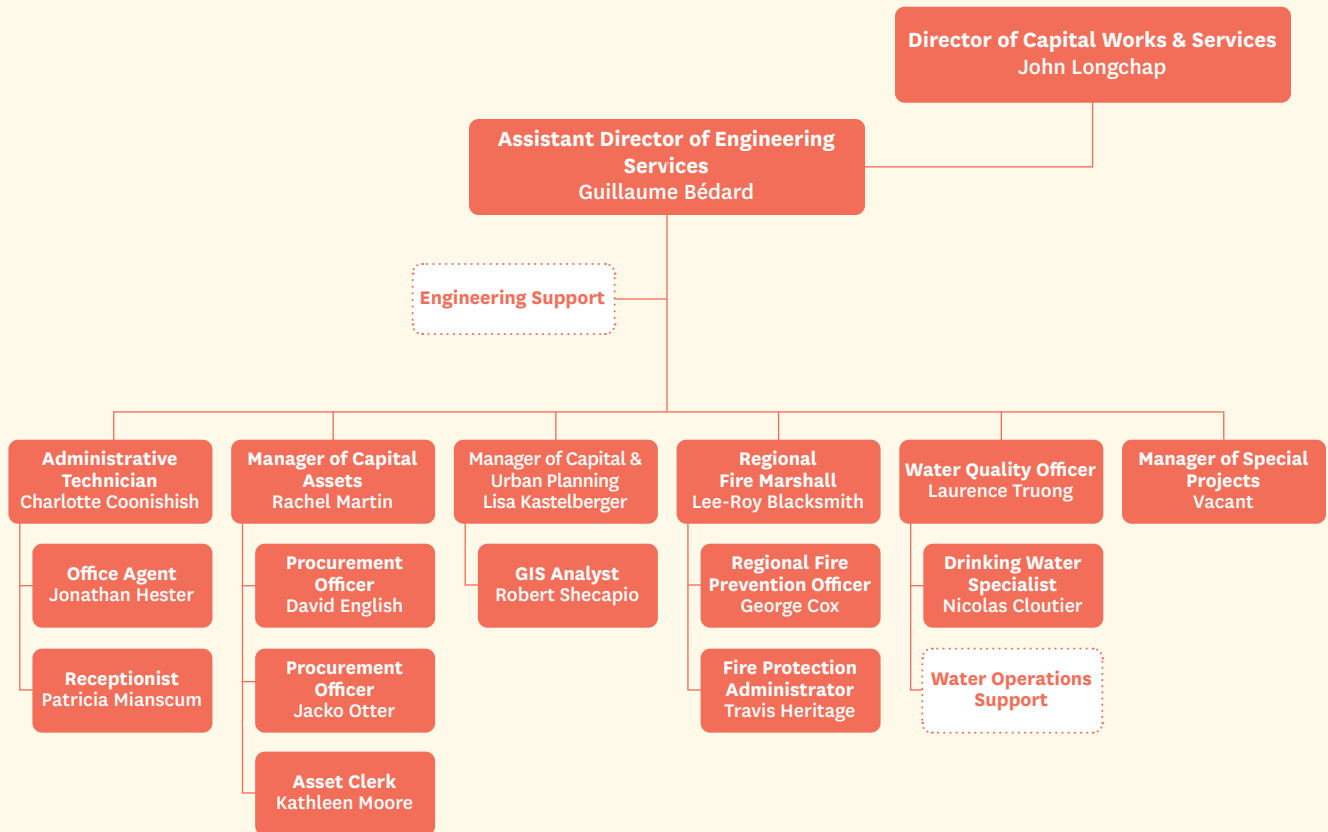
1. Capital Planning & Engineering Services; and 2. Regional Capital Works Programs and Services.

The department has been divided between two offices for efficiency purposes with partial decentralization to Val-d'Or as shown in figures 1 & 2, "Organizational Diagram: Approved Personnel Structure for 2020-2021", on the following pages.



Figure 1. Organizational Diagram, Approved Personnel Structure 2020-2021 (Montreal Office)

Capital Planning & Engineering Team
(Montreal)



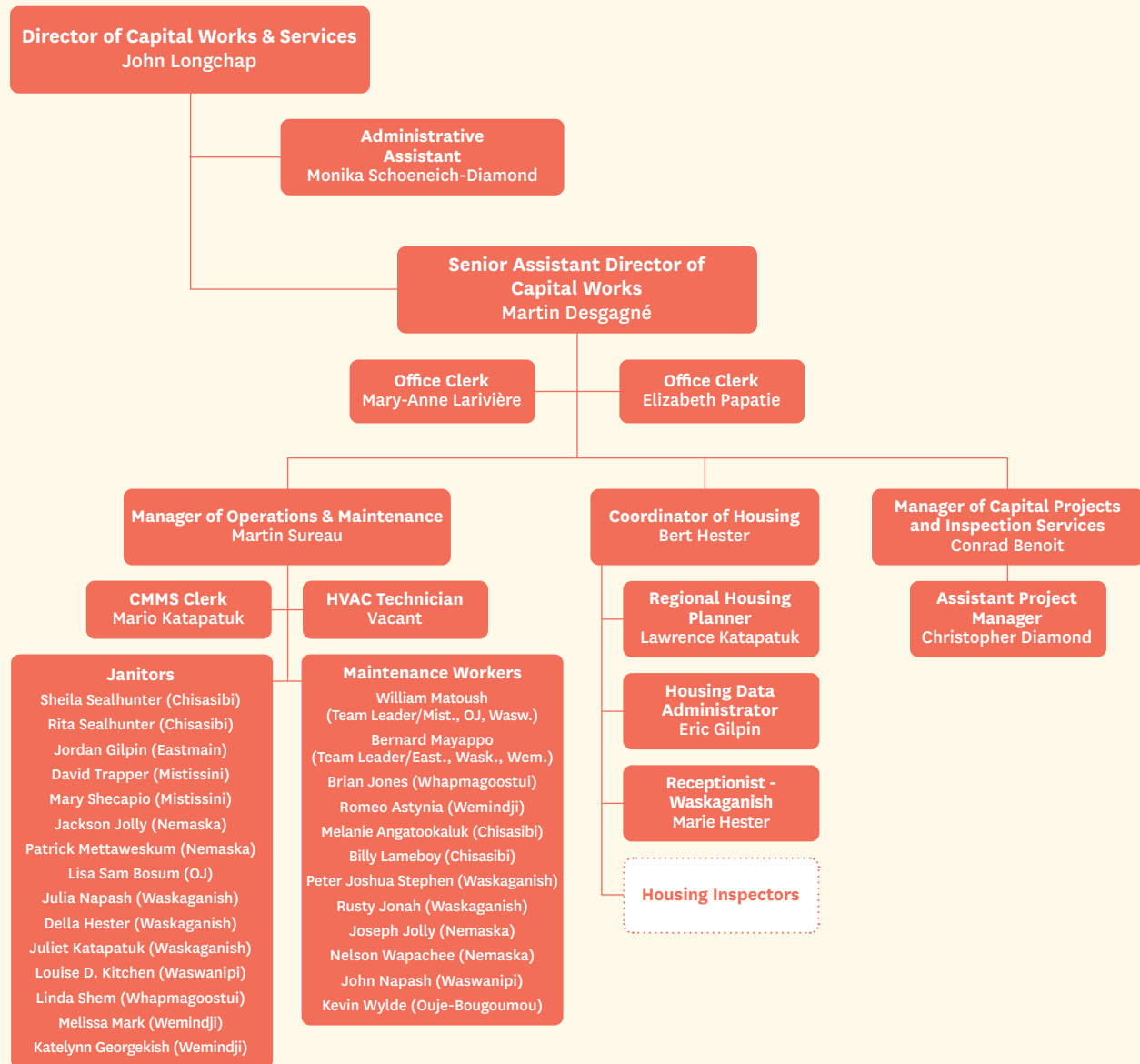
Legend:

Permanent Position

Contractual Service

Figure 2. Organizational Diagram, Approved Personnel Structure 2020-2021 (Val-d’Or Office)

**Regional Capital Works
(Val-d’Or)**



Legend:

Permanent Position

Contractual Service

CAPITAL PLANNING AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

Capital Planning Activities

The Capital Planning team has been actively planning and monitoring the capital projects carried out at the local administration level through funding provided by the Federal New Relationship Agreement (NRA) since 2008.

This team manages the administration and annual update of the NRA Five-Year Capital Plan, incorporating local government projects from all nine Eeyou Istchee communities. The team ensures that technical standards are respected per project, prior to the recommendation of projects for funding. The final budget is approved by the

Board/Council of the Cree Nation Government in December of each year for the upcoming fiscal year’s projects. A total of \$106,533,239 worth of projects for all nine communities was approved for 2020-2021, as seen in Table 1 and Figure 3.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

In order to provide useful mapping information about the existing nine Cree communities, GIS technologies are a practical solution in the development and delivery of spatial data, maps and information products concerning essential sanitation services and related infrastructure data. In 2020-2021, the community maps displaying basemap data of the existing nine Cree communities were updated and maintained using the latest digital mapping data. Parallel work includes maintaining the municipal infrastructure data and maps for Whapmagoostui, OujeBougoumou, 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 initiatives. 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.

Project Reporting & Monitoring

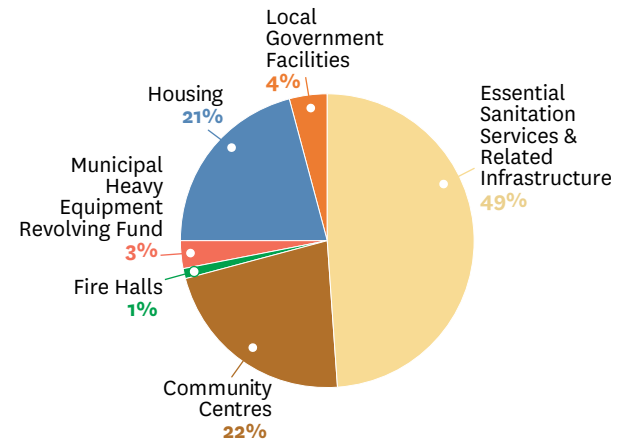
CWS is responsible for maintaining an ongoing record of all capital projects realized with NRA funding. This entails keeping an inventory of supporting documentation for all projects funded through the NRA, including copies of contracts, proposals, cost estimates, tender and as-built plans and specifications, 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.

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. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions, a tour of the communities was not possible, therefore a virtual tour through Microsoft Teams was done whereby each community was asked to prepare a slideshow of pictures of on-going capital projects. A selection of the submitted pictures is shown on the following page.

Table 1. Approved 2020-2021 NRA Local Projects, per Program

| PROGRAM | 2020-2021 |
|---|----------------------|
| Local Government Facilities | \$3,823,394 |
| Essential Sanitation Services & Related Infrastructures | \$51,835,554 |
| Community Centres | \$23,578,172 |
| Fire Halls | \$1,540,642 |
| Municipal Heavy Equipment Revolving Fund | \$3,715,959 |
| Housing | \$22,039,518 |
| Total | \$106,533,239 |

Figure 3. Summary of Approved 2020-2021 NRA Local Projects





Whapmagoostui Residential Northern Development Phase 1D



Waskaganish Pavement Catch-up Program in Existing Streets



Nemaska New Youth Centre



Mistissini Community Wellness Housing Phase one



Justice Wemindji warehouse expansion

WATER SUPPORT SERVICES

The Water Support Services' (WSS) mandate is to support the water treatment staff throughout the nine Eeyou Istchee communities. This year, due to travelling restrictions, site visits and operational support were impeded. The focus of the WSS team was on the following 4 key tasks:

Creation of new position: Water Quality Coordinator

The department welcomes Laurence Truong, P.Eng. as the new Cree Nation Water Quality Coordinator. Laurence's work will include the implementation of the upcoming By-Law concerning the Quality of the Drinking Water and assist communities in the Regional Sampling Program (RSP).

Regional Sampling Program (RSP)

The RSP was first initiated in April 2020 but put on hold in June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was relaunched progressively in the nine communities over the year once transportation routes were confirmed. At the present time, the RSP is ongoing in all communities.

Water Support Services Assistance

Table 2 presents the files related to WSS projects between April 2020 and March 2021.

New Water Initiative

The new water initiative project was created to improve their remote assistance services. Due to the present sanitary situation and travel restrictions, the WSS instigated the project to fulfill the need for remote assistance and reliable data collection. The main goals of this new initiative are to:

- Improve remote assistance for your drinking water and wastewater local team;
- Allow 24/7 access to operational data for troubleshooting purposes;
- Ensure safe water for the population of the community, and;

- Ensure the preservation and integrity of the land and the environment.

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 2021, these activities included the following:

Support to Local Governments

Project management support continued to be 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 2021-2022 NRA funding applications.

During the special construction season of 2020, most contracts were postponed by a full year with the exception of one project carried mostly by local workers, consisting of installing a storm drainage system under the streets of the community.

Considering the impossibility of carrying out many projects in the communities, CWS worked to develop guidelines on what were deemed reasonable additional costs in the requests from contractors that saw their worksites paused during the year. This guide was designed to help the communities who were starting to receive many requests for such COVID-19-related claims.

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 continued to update a long-term NRA draft scenario, scheduling all foreseen capital investments required in the nine (9) Cree communities.

Table 2. Water Support Services Assistance

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Onsite and remote operational assistance for the new water treatment plant in Waswanipi |
| 2 | Onsite visit to Mistissini for an introduction to wastewater monitoring and dissolved oxygen probe coaching |
| 3 | Technical support on the SCADA/HMI for Eastmain water treatment facility by Innovlogic |
| 4 | Remote support to local water treatment staff with Regional Sampling Program implementation |
| 5 | Preparation of a local monitoring program tailored to each community for wastewater and drinking water, including the purchase of new laboratory equipment. |
| 6 | Preparation of a wastewater training program with the Cégep de Shawinigan |
| 7 | Technical assistance for the installation of the new control panel of the drinking water distribution system of Oujé-Bougoumou |
| 8 | Training planning for 2021-2022 (OCARE & wastewater training) |

FIRE PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Fire Protection Team has pivoted to a virtual method to support local trainings, meetings, and equipment purchases for the nine local Fire Departments. Unfortunately, the implementation and enforcement of the Regional Fire Protection By-Law has experienced setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the Fire Protection Team has introduced the Fire Underwriters Survey with the objective of establishing the local community's Dwelling Protection Grade, which is necessary to determine insurance premiums for local private homeowner's insurance premiums. Lastly, two new fire trucks were purchased for two local Fire Departments.

Equipment Purchases

All Fire Department equipment must follow a public tendering process through the CWS Procurement division. The Regional Fire Marshall reviews all documents and specification alongside local Fire Department personnel and procurement consultants prior to recommending purchases.

Fire Apparatus

The purchase of fire trucks was approved for two communities. An aerial ladder was purchased for the Ouje-Bougoumou Fire Department and a pumper truck was purchased for the Eastmain Fire Department. Ghyslain Roberts, a fire equipment procurement consultant, works in close collaboration with the Regional Fire Marshall by producing the plans and specifications of the fire apparatus purchases.

Local Fire Department Equipment

The Fire Marshall procured two sets of Bunker Gear, SC-BAs with Cylinders, Fire Hoses, and Hydraulic Rescue Tools for various local Fire Departments. 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

Due to COVID-19, the training program has experienced setbacks and research into a virtual method for fire protection training experienced challenges given the physical nature of the training requirements. The Fire Protection Team continues to invest in local fire protection capacity by offering NFPA 1001 training through training providers like Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) and the Fire Marshall continues to accept training cohorts during the pandemic and offer more virtual training support and respect local community pandemic protocols. The aim is to maintain a minimum level of fifteen (15) trained and certified Fire Department personnel in each Local Fire Department.

Fire Department Management Software

The Fire Marshall emphasized the importance of maintaining local Fire Department coordination and collaboration through the regionalized Fire Protection Management Software, known as BeeOn. The BeeON software platform serves to monitor personnel and equipment needs of all nine local Fire Departments. The platform is important as it serves as a real-time link to all local Fire Departments and facilitates future procurement and CWS Fire Protection budget projections.

Fire Prevention Activities

In 2020-2021, CWS provided fire prevention programs virtually for the local Fire Departments. CreeCO which administers the umbrella Insurance Program, stated that fires remain the highest dollar losses for the Cree Nation Communities and 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 Cree communities.



Waswanipi's New Fire Truck



Regional Fire Protection Community Tours

The Regional Fire Marshall has scheduled a community tour to visit each Local Fire Department to gather information and to assess the local Fire Department operations. The Regional Fire Protection file is closely monitored by having bi-weekly meetings between the Regional Fire Marshall, the Regional Fire Prevention Officer, and the Fire Protection Administrator. Quarterly meetings with the local Fire Officers and regional CWS Fire Protection support staff are held virtually. The purpose of these meetings is to provide updates and to ensure the continuing progression of various files. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted these visits online with the use of Microsoft Teams software, whereby the CWS Fire Protection Team can continue to offer support to the local Fire Departments in Real-time.

Emergency Preparedness & Planning – COVID-19 Pandemic

CWS continues to collaborate with various stakeholders in the development of emergency preparedness and response plans on behalf of the nine Cree communities. The COVID-19 pandemic required a coordinated Public Health response and resulted in the creation of the Regional Emergency Core Group, whose task is to exchange information with health professionals and assist the local first responders on how best to serve the public. The Fire Protection Team participates in various briefings via conference calls, to effectively disseminate information across department lines. The

communities have received federal funding to assist Local Government's efforts in mitigating the COVID-19 threats to public health either through additional training or through the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE). Further, the local Public Safety Officers (PSO) have started to use the BeeON Software to assist in creating a real-time database of travelers leaving and entering their respective communities to support Public Health initiatives with contract tracing protocols.

Fire Underwriters Survey for Private Homeowners' Insurance

The CWS Fire Protection Team have introduced the Fire Underwriters Survey with the objective of establishing the local community's Dwelling Protection Grade by assessing the fire protection services and related water infrastructure. The Dwelling Protection Grade is necessary to determine insurance premiums for local private homeowner's insurance. The Fire Underwriters Survey is nearly completed to assess the insurance classification for private homeowners' insurance. The goal is to reduce the insurance premiums paid by community private homeowners. CWS' role is to provide all relevant data pertaining to each of the nine Fire Departments' capacity in terms of fire apparatus and training levels of local personnel, as well as to identify local infrastructure such as fire hydrant locations and other community assets.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING

The COVID-19 pandemic required a coordinated Public Health response and resulted in the creation of the Regional Emergency Core Group.

PROCUREMENT & ASSET MANAGEMENT

CWS is responsible for managing procurement activities, leasing agreements, and the tracking of assets for the Cree Nation Government. The procurement team is responsible for the acquisition and delivery of goods and services as well as the tendering of construction projects. In 2020-21, over \$24M in purchase orders were issued by CWS for goods, services, and construction contracts.

Figure 4. Breakdown of Purchases Made

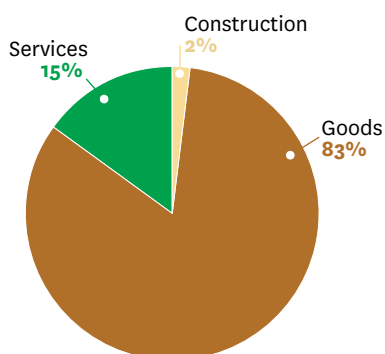


Figure 5. Percentage of Purchases Made Per Cost Bracket

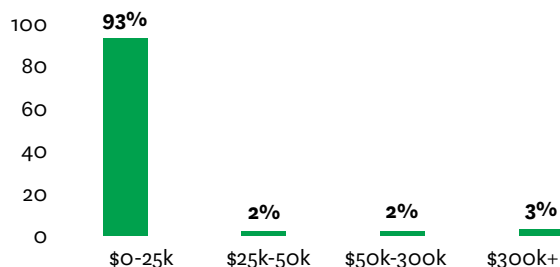


Table 4. List of Call for Tenders in 2020-2021

WHAPMAGOOSTUI FIRST NATION (WFN):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Whapmagoostui community storm drainage materials | 3. Paving of roads in Whapmagoostui |
| 2. Construction storm drainage WFN | 4. Storm drainage materials |

EEYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE (EEPF):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5. EEPF house in Eastmain | 9. EEPF vehicles 2021 |
| 6. EEPF duplex in Chisasibi | 10. EEPF garage construction in Waswanipi |
| 7. EEPF duplex in Wemindji | 11. EEPF garage construction in Eastmain |
| 8. EEPF garage construction in Eastmain | |

CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES (CWS) DEPARTMENT:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 12. Replacement of drinking water well heads in Eastmain | 15. Regional solid waste management assessment engineering services |
| 13. House, Duplex, and triplex construction in Waswanipi | 16. Modular manufacturing of 5plex building for rapid housing initiative |
| 14. Regional and local capital assets & housing inventory IT Advisory Services | |

JUSTICE & CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (JCS) DEPARTMENT:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 17. Community wellness Chisasibi lot #1 | 22. Community wellness Waskaganish lot #2 |
| 18. Community wellness Mistissini lot #1 | 23. Community wellness Chisasibi lot #3 |
| 19. Community wellness Waskaganish lot #1 | 24. Community wellness Mistissini lot #3 |
| 20. Community wellness Chisasibi lot #2 | 25. Community wellness Waskaganish lot #3 |
| 21. Community wellness Mistissini lot #2 | |

APATISIIWIN SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT (ASD) DEPARTMENT

26. Training Centre in Ouje-Bougoumou

WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 27. Wildlife Protection vehicles | 28. Wildlife Protection ATVs, snowmobiles, and trailers |
|----------------------------------|---|

CWS FIRE PROTECTION TEAM:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 29. Custom pumper and aerial ladder truck | 31. Extraction tools and equipment |
| 30. SCBA | 32. Fire department training facility |

ENVIRONMENT & REMEDIATION WORKS DEPARTMENT:

33. Terms of Reference Service Contract Protected Areas

REGIONAL CAPITAL WORKS

Capital Works Division

The Capital Works Division of CWS oversees the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and the construction of the facilities and housing required by the various departments of the Cree Nation Government. The division also has a support team for the housing file in the Cree communities.

Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Activities

As of March 31, 2021, the Capital works division oversaw the O&M of 24 public buildings (approx. 240,000 square feet), 1 warehouse, and 97 housing units (approx. 150,000 square feet), for a total of 122 facilities in the Cree communities as per Table 5 below.

In order to carry out the O&M works, there is a team of:

1. Fifteen (15) Janitors;
2. Thirteen (13) Maintenance workers (two acting as team leaders);
3. One (1) Heating, Ventilation, and Air conditioning Worker (HVAC) (vacant position due to pandemic);
4. One (1) Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) Clerk; and
5. One (1) Manager dedicated to that work.

The types of O&M activities that are carried out by the Maintenance Workers can be classified in three major maintenance categories: Preventive, Corrective & Predictive.

Since April 2016, the O&M team has been using a CMMS and has over 1100 preventive maintenance templates for the buildings' equipment. Over the length of this fiscal year over 650 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 com-

munities. This is subsequent to an agreement established between the Cree Nation Government's Department of Child and Family Services and CWS. As of December 1, 2020, the Cree School Board is overseeing activities of the ASD Training Centers, and over the course of next year the maintenance will be fully given over to the Cree School Board.

The CWS department also has a team in charge of construction activities, as per the Table 6. These projects were executed for the Cree Nation Government's Departments of the Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EPPF), Justice and Correctional Services (JCS), the Apatisiwiin 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 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, building construction and O&M, and housing construction and operations.

Table 5. Assets under the responsibility of CWS for Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

| | QUANTITY OF FACILITIES |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Regional Buildings | |
| Apatisiwiin Skills Development (ASD) Office | 1 |
| ASD Training Centres | 2 |
| Cree Nation Government Head Office | 1 |
| Cree Nation Government Office | 1 |
| EPPF Detachment | 9 |
| EPPF Headquarter | 1 |
| Justice Facilities | 9 |
| Warehouse | 1 |
| Sub-Total | 25 |
| Housing Units | |
| Cree Nation Government Housing Units | 34 |
| EPPF Housing Units | 63 |
| Sub-Total | 97 |
| Total | 122 |

Figure 6. Cree Nation Government Buildings Work Orders

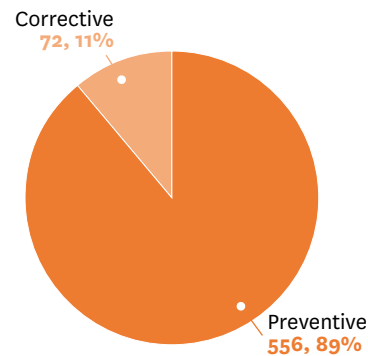


Figure 7. Childcare Centre Work Orders

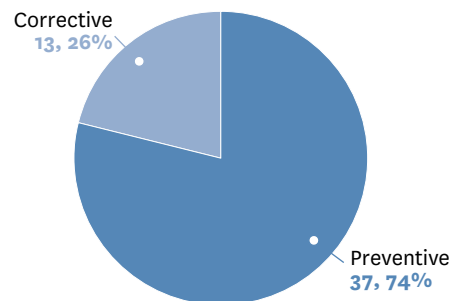


Table 6. Construction Activities of Regional Capital Works

| PROJECT | VALUE OF CONTRACT | ADVANCEMENT | | | | DELIVERY DATE | CONTRACTOR |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| | | Q1 2020/21 | Q2 2020/21 | Q3 2020/21 | Q4 2020/21 | | |
| EEPF Housing with Transit in Eastmain | \$760,201 | - | - | - | 5% | June 2022 | Naococane |
| EEPF Duplex in Chisasibi | \$1,032,238 | - | 26% | 40% | 54% | December 2021 | Niigan |
| CNG Triplex and Housing Unit in Waswanipi | \$2,482,653 | - | 2% | 5% | 5% | June 2022 | Naococane |
| CNG Staff Housing Renovations in Nemaska | \$635,000 | - | 30% | 30% | 60% | July 2021 | Project Management Approach |
| CNG Units 5A & B Fox Trail in Nemaska | \$180,419 | - | - | - | 60% | June 2021 | Qualinet |
| EEPF Vehicle Impound in Eastmain | \$220,484 | - | - | - | 5% | December 2021 | Naococane |
| EEPF Vehicle Impound in Waswanipi | \$ 297,893 | - | - | - | 9% | December 2021 | Naococane |
| ASD Office Renovations in Chisasibi | \$227,000 | - | - | - | 18% | July 2021 | CBCC |
| EEPF Triplex in Mistissini | \$1,150,000 | 60% | 60% | 60% | 60% | December 2021 | Makaahiikan |
| Cree Nation Government Triplex in Mistissini | \$1,150,000 | 60% | 60% | 60% | 60% | December 2021 | Makaahiikan |
| Cree Nation Government Duplex in Mistissini | \$750,000 | 60% | 60% | 60% | 60% | December 2021 | Makaahiikan |
| Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Whapmagoostui | \$381,800 | 100% | - | - | - | December 2019 | Minheku Construction |
| Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Eastmain | \$338,300 | 100% | - | - | - | December 2019 | VCC |
| Justice Facility Wood Siding Replacement and warehouse expansion in Nemaska | \$329,000 | 100% | - | - | - | December 2019 | Vieux Poste |
| Justice Facility Warehouse Expansion Projects | \$1,178,400 | 90% (Mist.) 73% (Others) | 90% (Mist.) 73% (Others) | 90% (Mist.) 73% (Others) | 90% (Mist.) 73% (Others) | June 2021 | Kesi (Mistissini) VCC (Ouje, Waswanipi, Wemindji, Chisasibi, Waskaganish) |
| Commerce and Industry Business Hub in Mistissini | \$349,991 | 80% | 89% | 89% | 100% | January 2020 | Nisk |
| EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Whapmagoostui | \$100,000 | 20% | 50% | 50% | 50% | August 2021 | Project Management Approach |
| EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Wemindji | \$50,000 | 70% | 100% | 100% | 100% | June 2020 | Project Management Approach |

Table 6. Construction Activities of Regional Capital Works (Continued)

| PROJECT | VALUE OF CONTRACT | ADVANCEMENT | | | | DELIVERY DATE | CONTRACTOR |
|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | Q1 2020/21 | Q2 2020/21 | Q3 2020/21 | Q4 2020/21 | | |
| EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room Nemaska | \$70,000 | 70% | 70% | 70% | 100% | May 2020 | Project Management Approach |
| EEPF Detachment Lifescan Interrogation Room in Ouje-Bougoumou | \$30,000 | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | August 2021 | Project Management Approach |
| Community Wellness Housing Phase 1 Chisasibi | \$901,700 | - | 87% | 87% | 95% | June 2021 | Chee Bee Cree |
| Community Wellness Housing Phase 1 in Waskaganish | \$1,037,010 | - | 32% | 32% | 32% | September 2021 | Naococane |
| Community Wellness Housing Phase 1 Mistissini | \$624,050 | - | 98% | 98% | 100% | December 2020 | M.Y. Construction - VCC Joint-Venture |
| Total | \$14,276,139 | | | | | | |

CREE NATION HOUSING FILE

CWS provides housing support and services in the Cree communities. The Coordinator of Housing, the Housing Data Administrator, and the Regional Housing Planner are all dedicated to the Cree Nation housing file. Their respective activities are summarized below.

Coordinator of Housing

Update on Community Social and Rental Housing

The community social and rental housing program with the CMHC housing projects went well, with minor delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the communities have completed or are in the final stages of completing their Section 95 projects and are now preparing to work on new projects for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Reaching Home Program (RHP)

The reaching home (RHP) is Canada's homelessness strategy as part of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. The Cree Nation Government has applied for the funding and signed an agreement with Canada under RHP to build 22 additional permanent bedrooms and sanitation facilities

in existing homes in the Cree communities. Most of the projects for this program have started or are in the planning phase. The communities will benefit from this to provide additional living space for the community's members.

Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)

The Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) addresses the urgent housing needs of vulnerable populations by rapidly building new affordable housing to support people experiencing homelessness or temporary accommodations. The Cree communities will be getting 55 housing units in the form of 5-plex modular housing units built within a year. This modular unit is being constructed in manufacturing settings due to the nature of the rapid housing project. The delivery for the units will be in the Summer of 2021, the local governments will build the foundations for these modular housing units, as to compliance, is planned for the end of the year.

Other Activities

Attend regular meetings for Cree Nation Government housing files via virtual Microsoft Teams and follow-ups for the CHMC's section 95 housing files for each Cree community.

Table 7. Details the Regular meetings for the housing file

| MEETINGS | LOCATION | DATES |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Eeyou Miichuwaap Quarterly Meetings | Microsoft Teams | Quarterly |
| CWS Val-d'Or Coordination Meeting | Microsoft Teams | Monthly |
| Director General and Treasurers meeting | Microsoft Teams | When required |
| CWS Special Monthly Staff Meeting | Microsoft Teams | Monthly |
| Coordination Meeting for the inspection services provided by the Cree Nation Government to CTM | Microsoft Teams | Monthly |

Housing Data Administrator

Inspection Services for the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Mamuitun Program

The housing team is supported by four (4) housing inspectors from the communities who perform inspections on social housing on behalf of the CMHC on a part-time basis. The inspectors carry out inspections for the new social housing units being built under the CMHC Section 95 program.

CMHC Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program Projects (RRAP)

The housing team assisted the Cree communities in work descriptions and cost estimates of the housing units for housing modifications required to meet the tenant's needs. This

also included the final inspection of the housing units. Several housing units received funding through the RRAP.

CMHC Physical Condition Review (PCR)

The housing team assisted in the PCR with the Conseil Tribal Mamuitun. This included on-site inspections and online reporting through CMHC's website server for the Cree communities. Unfortunately, some activities had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inspection Services for the Board of Compensation (BOC) Insurance File

Cost estimates were prepared to repair houses affected by floods or fires, and the reports were submitted to the BOC and the communities that filed the insurance claims.



CMHC housing unit in Waskaganish (May 13, 2021)

Urgent Housing Renovation Mold

Major housing renovations were performed in several communities. The renovation projects included windows and exterior doors, sidings, and roofing shingles. Most work took place on the exterior of the housing unit because of the COVID-19 safety measures set by the Public Health.

Regional Housing Planner

Cree Regional Housing Action Plan

A public information campaign continued concerning housing issues, and the housing planner distributed essential information to promote homeownership in the Cree communities. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting travelling restriction set by the provincial, regional, and local governments, there were fewer conferences, general assemblies, or meetings held in person. Most in-person gatherings were done virtually. Regardless, promotional items were sent to each community to distribute at the local stores and public buildings.

Regional Radio Show on Housing

Through the James Bay Cree Communications Society (JB-CCS), the Regional Housing Planner hosted thirty (30) minute radio shows every month concerning current and future homeowners and other related issues.

Eeyou Miichuwaap Quarterly Meetings

The Regional Housing Planner coordinated and chaired meetings with the support of the Housing team for the Eeyou Miichuwaap regional forum of exchange among the communities. Four (4) meetings were held throughout the fiscal year 2020-2021 virtually via the Microsoft Teams. The Eeyou Miichuwaap meetings were full days to discuss and follow-up on the Cree housing file in the communities. The sessions were held in March, June, September, and December.

Community Private Housing Initiative

The Regional Housing Planner participated in the Cree Nation Government Housing File meeting with CWS department and HCN Group to discuss the Community Private Housing Initiative. CWS is working on the communication plan to inform the housing departments, individuals and corporations concerning the new housing initiative. An email address was also created for community members and corporations to obtain information and ask questions (privatehousing@cngov.ca). A web page within the Cree Nation Government website was also created to promote and inform the Cree Nation on this private home ownership initiative (<https://www.cngov.ca/community-private-housing/>). To date, 50 subsidies to Cree individual owners in the Cree Nation have been approved, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Community Private Housing Initiative - Subsidy Disbursements

| COMMUNITY & FISCAL YEAR | NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS | TOTAL FOR HOUSING SUBSIDY | TOTAL FOR SERVICE CONNECTION | APPROVED SUBSIDY DISBURSEMENTS |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chisasibi | 17 | 2,259,642 | 183,600 | 2,443,242 |
| 2019-2020 | 15 | 1,985,000 | 162,000 | 2,147,000 |
| 2020-2021 | 2 | 274,642 | 21,600 | 296,242 |
| Mistissini | 5 | 516,740 | 40,500 | 557,240 |
| 2019-2020 | 4 | 416,500 | 416,500 | 416,500 |
| 2020-2021 | 1 | 100,240 | 100,240 | 100,240 |
| Nemaska | 5 | 505,500 | 54,000 | 559,500 |
| 2019-2020 | 5 | 505,500 | 54,000 | 559,500 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 7 | 751,600 | 56,700 | 808,300 |
| 2019-2020 | 7 | 751,600 | 56,700 | 808,300 |
| Waskaganish | 5 | 656,281 | 54,000 | 710,281 |
| 2019-2020 | 2 | 259,600 | 21,600 | 281,200 |
| 2020-2021 | 3 | 396,681 | 32,400 | 429,081 |
| Waswanipi | 5 | 558,500 | 40,500 | 599,000 |
| 2019-2020 | 5 | 558,500 | 40,500 | 599,000 |
| Wemindji | 6 | 778,800 | 64,800 | 843,600 |
| 2019-2020 | 6 | 778,800 | 64,800 | 843,600 |
| Grand Total | 50 | 6,027,063 | 494,100 | 6,521,163 |



Private housing unit in Waskaganish (May 13, 2021)

Table 9. Approved 2020- 2021 Department Budget

| | 2020-2021 |
|--|--------------------|
| Department Direction | \$595,955 |
| Regional Capital Works | \$524,788 |
| Technical Committees And Related Support | \$77,600 |
| Capital Planning and Engineering Services | \$791,915 |
| Housing Support Services | \$235,657 |
| Regional Fire Prevention Support | \$148,705 |
| Fire Protection Training & Other Initiatives | \$600,00 |
| Water Support Services | \$469,000 |
| Grand Total | \$3,443,620 |



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 PRIVILEGE TO ONCE AGAIN BE ABLE TO SHARE WITH YOU ALL, THE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR TEAM FOR 2020-2021.

As always, we would like to recognize and acknowledge 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 professionals, 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, like all other departments of the Cree Nation Government, we focused a lot of our energy on preventing the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring the best possible services to our clientele. To this end, we have worked with our many partners who support children in varied areas of 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 Apatisiiwin 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 Learning and Child Care Framework (IELCC).”

Because of our ability to manage numerous programs at the regional and local levels, our Cree childcare centres 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 mention 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.

Kelly Pepabano
Director of Child and Family Services

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 head office is based in Mistissini, with three full-time employees working there. The rest of our team is, much like our services, spread all over our territory and beyond. One employee is based in Waskaganish, two are in Waswanipi, two are based in Montreal, one is in Quebec City, and four are working out of our Chisasibi office. We are proud that our team is represented in many communities, increasing our presence and visibility throughout Eeyou Istchee.

The Cree Nation Government's Child and Family Services Department Team has the mandate to oversee, manage and administer the Cree Nation Government's obligations under the funding agreement with le Ministère de la Famille, to implement and to oversee all Cree childcare services in Eeyou Istchee. This mandate involves monitoring the quality of services provided in all Cree childcare centres and ensuring that all acts and regulations are adhered to and respected.

Our goal is to empower the childcare centres and build a strong network of childcare management leaders and professionals through the Cree Child and Family Services Centres Association.

The Child and Family Services Department's team provides support to childcare centres in Eeyou Istchee. We listen, guide and communicate, so that children and families may get quality services that respect our Cree values, culture and language.

At the end of 2020-2021, 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 persons 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). Coordinators and administrative assistants assist most of the Directors within our 16 facilities. 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 the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 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 to support their operations. These programs and agreements have a significant impact on the economic vitality of our communities, as they injected 25 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.

In November 2020, the negotiation of our new agreement had resumed. Our negotiating team consists of Melissa Saganash, David Heritage, Matthew Sherrard, Michael Petawabano, Kelly Pepabano, Pamela Norquay and Christine Duff. No new meeting has been scheduled as of January 2021.

- 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 that aim to improve high-quality early learning and childcare 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 to facilitate the delivery of health promotion services to children and families through the *Â Mashkûpimâtsit Awash* program.

B. Support to Childcare Centres in the Nine Cree Communities

- In 2020-2021, we continued to support the nine existing child and family services centres' management teams as well as local boards of directors. 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.

C. Accessibility and Affordability of Child and Family Services

- At the end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 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 of 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 regularly 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

The Department provides opportunities for training and development for staff members and persons who wish to pursue a career in early childhood development. This internal capacity building is important to promote the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of children while incorporating Cree heritage and culture in the programs.

Here is an overview of the measures taken in 2020-2021:

College-Level Training Programs

Each childcare centre must 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 graduates of the programs that we sponsor also find employment in the Cree School and Health Board organizations.

This year, there were no graduation ceremonies in Eeyou Istchee due to the COVID-19 health crisis.

Special Needs Education - Aboriginal and Inuit Children

- 11 students from the Cree First Nation of Wemindji will graduate from the CEGEP de St-Félicien's Special Needs Education – Aboriginal and Inuit Children training program in April 2021.
- Twenty students from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi were registered, 16 of which will graduate from the CEGEP de St-Félicien's Special Needs Education – Aboriginal and Inuit Children training program in May 2021.

The ENCS and Special Needs training programs are still in demand throughout Eeyou Istchee, as local needs for trained educators in the communities are high.

Much appreciation goes to Apatisiwin Skills Development, Plan Nord, the Cree Nation Government and CEGEP de St-Félicien, all of which are very generous in supporting the delivery of these important programs in Eeyou Istchee. We also need to thank the CEGEP instructors, who are making an important contribution by inspiring their students and all childcare workers to become true professionals.

Financial Administration and Bookkeeping

Our very efficient regional finance team continued to provide support to all administrative employees in charge of the financial administration of childcare centres. Team members also spent countless hours preparing the financial statements for the year-end audits.

Inspection of Facilities and Programs

Our Inspection Officer carefully reviewed the operations and facilities within our network of Child and Family Services Centres. She also provided recommendations for changes and improvements as required. Not all inspections were carried out in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Our inspector carried out full inspections of the childcare centres in Ouje-Bougoumou, Waswanipi, Waskaganish and Wemindji. She ensured follow-up on all the inspections that were carried out during the fiscal year.

IELCC Funding

Cree Educational Program

This year once again has been an exciting one for our educational program.

In February 2021, the new Cree Educational Program and Activity Planning guide was presented to the Child and Family Services Department staff, the Childcare Centre Directors, and the Pedagogical Counsellors. We are now in the final stages of putting together the final version of the Educational Program, which will be implemented in 2021-2022. We are also finalizing the training manual and activity guide that complements the Educational Program.

In the winter of 2019, we launched a call for stories for Cree children's books. We wanted to give everyone in our communities an opportunity to become authors. We received many great stories and are in the final stages of having them published. The new collection will include two books for infants, two books for toddlers and three books for preschool-aged children. All books deal with matters that are close to our hearts and highlight subjects that are culturally relevant to Eeyou Istchee. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the launch of the new books, we plan to have the collection distributed free of charge through our childcare centres and Cree Health Board Awash services by the summer of 2021.

On November 20, Children's Day, we were reminded that children have the right to be respected and grow up in an environment that allows them to reach their full potential. 2020-2021 marked our fourth year of participation in Quebec's Early Childhood Week.

Finally, our Pedagogical Advisor continued to provide necessary support on the educational program for educators within our childcare centres.

Under the IELCC funding, we created a new program to fund special projects within our childcare centres and beyond. A Special Programs Officer was hired in September 2020 to ensure that the information about the funding available is passed on to the childcare centres. The new Officer also oversees the process of receiving funding applications and managing grants.

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 children, with an approach centering 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. Our Advisor also continued her collaboration with a consultant who is developing materials related to the second phase of the Nurturing program.

Special Needs Program

Our Special Needs Advisor has been working with a speech-language therapist Consultant, thanks to funds received from the Jordan's Principle program. Together, our Advisor and the Consultant have launched a pilot project to provide speech-language therapy services through tele-practice for children within the childcare centres. This innovative project allows children to be assessed through Zoom sessions and ensures follow-ups and the development of individual intervention plans. This project will be completed in March 2021.

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.

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

Photo: Andrew George on Unsplash



our sixteen childcare facilities. In addition, we continued to utilize Roch Mandeville and his team's services to coordinate maintenance and renovation projects for our childcare centres.

In 2020-2021, we had minor renovation projects in Oujé-Bougoumou with new air conditioning units and Mistissini for the new phone system and door mechanisms.

COVID-19

Child and Family Services COVID-19 Best Practice Guide

The Child and Family Services developed a guide intended for the Cree Childcare Centres in Eeyou Istchee, in accordance with provincial guidelines set by the Quebec Public Health, Ministère de la Famille, and CNESST, as well as with regional orientations provided through the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree Nation Government.

Health Survey App

We are in the final process of implementing a digital Health Survey application. This application will help parents and childcare centres decide if they should admit a child or not, based on health indicators. In addition, if ever there is an outbreak or if someone tested positive for a disease such as COVID-19, we will be able to start a contact tracing process.

Emergency COVID-19 Funding

All 16 facilities received \$35,000 of additional funds in 2020-2021 to cover extra janitor/cleaning supplies and the salaries of their safety protocol officers.

Coordination with MF for Safety Equipment

We have been coordinating with Ministère de la Famille for all safety equipment, including disposable masks and reusable visors. Each centre receives a shipment of masks every month.

Maternal and Child Health Program

In partnership with the Cree Health Board, the Maternal and Child Health Program allows us to participate in the delivery of health promotion services to children and families through the Â Mashkûpimâtsît Awash program.

This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic, part of our funding went to the OLO program, which provides weekly coupons to pregnant women in Eeyou Istchee. The program is available to all women living in the communities. Supporting documentation and activities also allows women to develop knowledge on food budgeting and healthy cooking for themselves and their families. Women who wish to do so can also access the program in the post-partum period.

We also worked in collaboration with the Youth Councils to offer Goose Break Bundles for young families, to encourage them to go out on the land. Councils proposed projects like the "Adopt a young family" program, which was implemented in the past to encourage the practice of cultural activities.

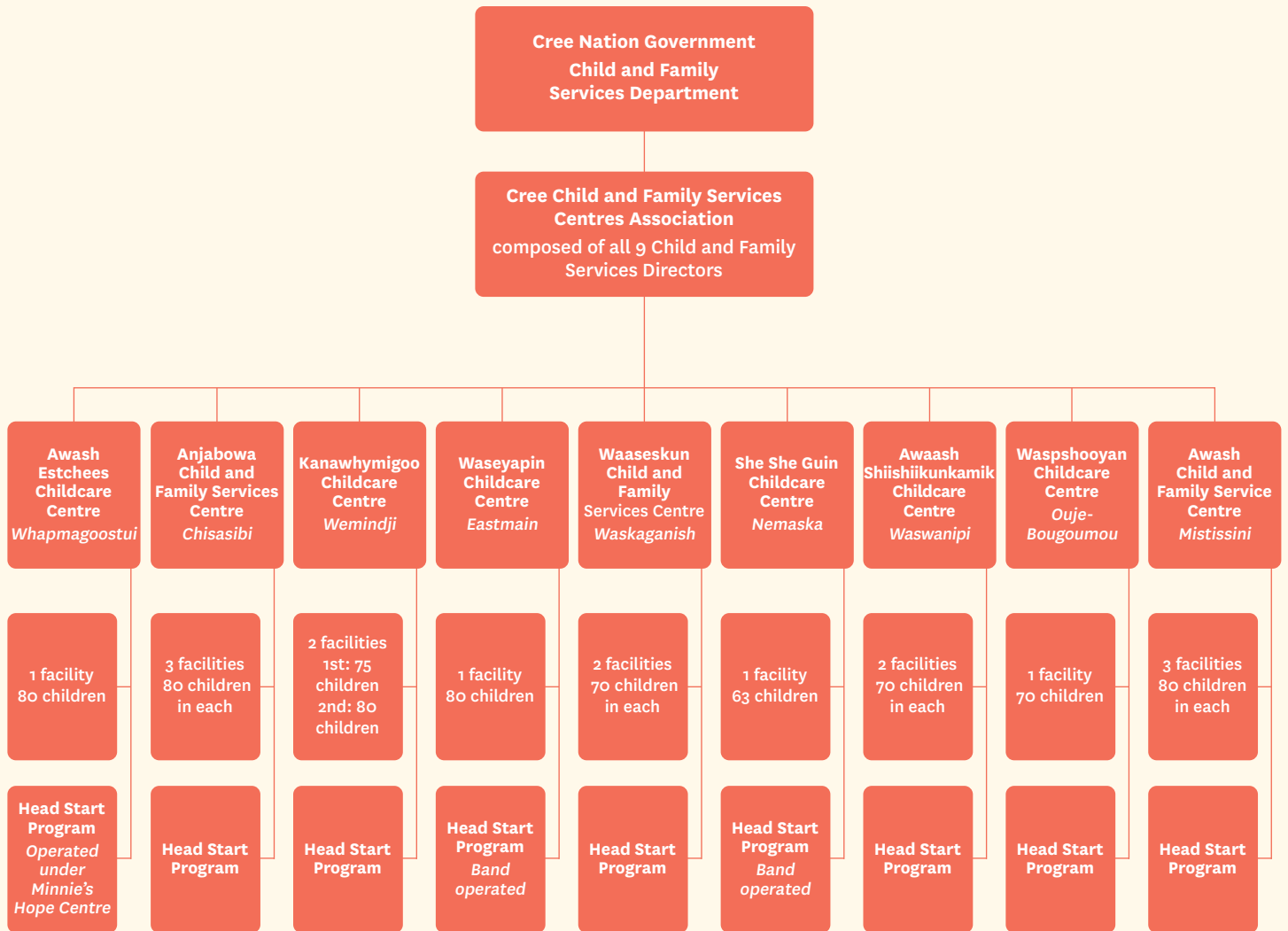
E. Liaison

- 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 liaison with other First Nations organizations 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 Miyupimaatisiun 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 2021-2022

1. Offer increased support to 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 & 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, and other sponsors.
7. With the support of Apatisiwin Skills Development and the CEGEP de St-Félicien, we 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. 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, 2020-2021





JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Message from the Director

Donald Nicholls, B.A., LL.B., B.C.L., LL.M

ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, IT IS ONCE AGAIN MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO OUR PART OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORT.

This year has been an opportunity for us to reconnect as families, organizations, and communities. With the COVID-19 restrictions, we have focused on values, relationships, and innovations to accomplish our mandates. While some environments have become more restrictive with the onset of the pandemic, others have given us the opportunity to see positive changes in the system.

As we began the year with the onset of measures and COVID-19 outbreaks, correctional institutions responded by refusing to accept new people in their general population or by imposing isolation measures to reduce the possibility of COVID-19 transmissions. Unfortunately, the outbreaks early on in these institutions were not by the inmate population but by the workers who had gone on vacation outside of the country. This situation emphasized the point that measures need to be taken seriously by everyone for them to work effectively. By the summer, all institutions had adopted isolation measures and testing when entering or exiting a facility.

The courts have also had a transformation, with the onset of mandatory isolation laws in each community and complementary checkpoints at the community entrances, the flow of people from other regions was greatly reduced. An

investment we had made 12 years ago with state-of-the-art video conference equipment now gave us the option to hold court hearings by video conference for regular and emergency court sessions. It was not without growing pains, as judges adopted the use of platforms like Teams, which did not exist when we programmed our systems, and so we had to create new bridges of compatibility. We also put in place plexiglass barriers and wash stations at the front of each facility, we purchased 16,000 medical disposable masks and we created markers in each room that could help people determine if they were two meters from anyone else. We instituted regular meetings with the judges and parties to review any issues we could improve upon. For the most part, by the summer, the docket had been caught up on, and we were into the swing of things. We had worked with prosecutors to review files for those who would normally go into preventative custody while awaiting trial to reduce these numbers significantly.

Our school-based programs were impacted as there were little in-person classes, so we adjusted to online presence and other community-based engagements with families. We would like to thank the Cree-Quebec Judicial Advisory Committee for their continued collaboration and work with our



Youth Camping trip in Waskaganish



Mistissini Canoe Trip

Department. We had to change to online meetings, and this was done seamlessly. As the term of the Quebec representative as Chair of the Committee came to an end, Flora Blacksmith became the new Chair of this Committee for the next two years. We congratulate her on this appointment, and we thank Josiane Gendron for her two years of service in this role.

We were not able to host a national conference as we had planned this past year due to the pandemic and travel and gathering restrictions. As such, realizing there was hardship on people due to the pandemic as well, we decided to give \$10,000 to each community food bank to help its citizens over the Christmas holiday season. As most families could not go out to shop, or go on vacation, it meant at least as a family they could have some good meals together over the holidays.

The federal government has continued to look at the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through Bill C-15. It has also looked at the decriminalization of simple drug possession in Bill C-22 to reduce Indigenous Peoples and other minorities in detention. There are some concerns over how this Bill will be implemented further to the first reading of the legislation in Parliament, given the power provided to parties who have historically disproportionately applied the law against Indigenous Peoples. There is also the draft federal Bill C-23, which introduces an expansion of the use of video conferencing in hearings. The Cree communities also introduced mandatory isolation laws that have to be renewed every few months and which call for isolation of citizens who leave the region to zones determined by the public health authorities to be riskier than the Cree region. The implementation of these provisions has led to further adjustments to the provision of essential court and correctional services to the Cree Nation. The Department was able to adapt and create new protocols to respect the need for new health safety measures while ensuring that the basic tenants of justice and corrections remained constant.

In June 2021, the Government of Canada put in place legislation to officially create a statutory holiday on September 30th to acknowledge and recognize First Nation, Inuit and Métis survivors of the residential school experience and their families. The discovery in Kamloops, British-Columbia, at an old residential school of the remains of 215 children buried on the grounds of the former school raised national concerns that similar graveyards may exist throughout Canada at other residential school sites. In fact, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) stated that this is the case, and the general public considered this a national injustice perpetuated on Indigenous children and communities. Further, along with the TRC, other federal and provincial inquiries have issued Calls to Action and recommendations to attain a level of justice and move towards reconciliation that have yet to be implemented to this day. There is hope that governments will start to fulfill these obligations in a meaningful way, so that we as nations can move forward.

The Department and facilities have remained operational throughout the first year of the pandemic. The preventive measures put in place, and education of staff and the public, helped immensely. We added air purifiers in all public areas to further enhance how we view our commitment to the public to continue to provide essential services to the communities. Leadership has asked us to balance the Jordan's rule that people should not wait too long for their hearing, and we have worked with others to ensure this is accomplished as well.

We look forward to what the future will bring, and are inspired by the collaboration of the leadership of all organizations and communities. We continue to work well together with a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other. One area which we will need to address in the year to come is the construction of new projects such as the Tiny Home Communities, which will be of great benefit for rehabilitation and reintegration and will help to reduce the number of people in custody.

Whapmagoostui



SCAN ME
to learn more





DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE & CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

COURT NOTICE

You will be required to remove your mask when appearing before the judge.



Remove the mask from behind by holding the strings with clean hands.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Chisasibi (819) 855-2120
Eastmain (819) 977-2400
Mistissini (418) 923-2661

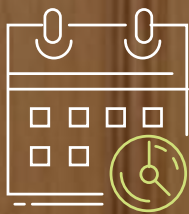
Nemaska (819) 673-2400
Oujé-Bougoumou (418) 745-2260
Waskaganish (819) 895-2126

Waswanipi (819) 753-2770
Wemindji (819) 978-3300
Whapmagoostui (819) 929-3796

COVID-19

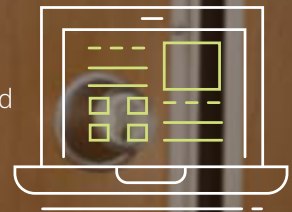
The Department pivoted after the advent of the global pandemic to ensure that operations and staff and client safety were prioritized. This involved collaboration and advocacy with the federal and provincial courts, detention facilities, as well as local and regional entities. It also required a particular holistic approach to staff health and wellbeing.

Our priority over the last year was to ensure that our services could **CONTINUE** in manner that respected all **HEALTH** and **SAFETY PROTOCOLS**.



AT TIMES our facilities moved to **APPOINTMENT ONLY** and our staff working hours became staggered depending on the **LEVEL OF MEASURES** in each community.

LAPTOPS were available for staff who needed to work at home for a period so that programs and client files would keep **PROGRESSING**.



We printed a variety of materials to inform the public about **SAFETY MEASURES**.



We provided **TRAINING** related to **ANXIETY** and **TRAUMA** in **INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES** and for when working with clientele to also add skills related to the **REALITIES IN THE COMMUNITIES**.



At **ALL OF OUR FACILITIES** we made sure to have measures in place to keep community members and our staff **SAFE** and **PROTECTED**, such as:



Disposable Masks



Strategically Placed Air Purifiers



Hand Sanitizing Stations



Hand-Washing Station

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 both before and as they come into contact with the systems of justice and corrections.

10 New positions **CREATED THIS YEAR**

- 2ND** Justice Project Officer
- 2ND** CAVAC Officers
- 2ND** IT Positions
- 1^X** Media and Communications Specialist
- 2^X** Corrections Administrative Assistants
- 2ND** Corrections Program Officer
- 1^X** Corrections Liaison Officer

Our **DEPARTMENT** with its

25 REGIONAL STAFF | **52** LOCAL STAFF

EMPLOYS a total of

77 STAFF MEMBERS

We have a **VARIETY** of positions, both

REGIONAL

LOCAL

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Coordinators • Managers • Psychologist • CAVAC Officers • Administrators • Native Parajudicial Workers • Court Liaison Officers • Specialists • And other positions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptionists • Community Reintegration Officers • Prevention Program Officers • Community Justice Officers • Primary Youth Workers • Prevention Program Assistants |
|---|--|



Capacity Building

Every year, we endeavour to build capacity within our Department to better meet the needs of our communities. This year, our employees built skills in office management, counselling, trauma response, and personal development.

Some of the **TRAINING** taken by our staff this year:



Mental Health Counselling Skills Certification



Canadian Red Cross Psychological First Aid Training Certification



Responding to Trauma in Indigenous Communities Certification



Forgiving for Restoring Training



Dealing with Difficult Situations and People



CICR Conflict Resolution Group #9



PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Prevention programming like most other services had to adapt during the implementation of various levels of preventative measures during the pandemic. It became clear early on that cross-organizational collaboration was the most effective way to accomplish this new mode of program delivery.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>We develop programs for our children and youth OF ALL AGES</p> | <p>We focus on the LIFE SKILLS that lead to better decision making</p> | <p>We look for successful evidenced-based programs, fitting with our Nation's core IDEALS and PRINCIPLES</p> | <p>We adapt them to reflect our connection to our LAND, CULTURE, BELIEFS and deliver them in the CREE LANGUAGE</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

Creating a **STRONG NETWORK** for our **YOUTH** in a partnership with:





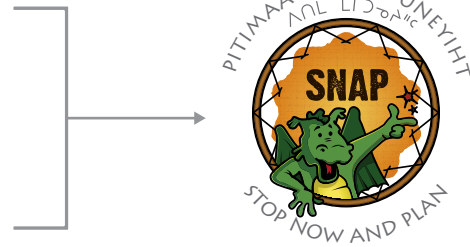
SCAN ME
to learn more



STOP NOW AND PLAN®

Stop Now And Plan®, in collaboration with the Child Development Institute and the Cree School Board, works with children on essential life skills such as how to deal with conflict, anger, frustration and anxiety. Having someone to help them identify the root cause of a decision can create an environment where change can occur in their lives.

PARTNERSHIPS are key to the **SUCCESS** of this program:



WHAT IS SNAP?

1

SNAP teaches children to use their self-control.

2

SNAP is about learning how to think before you act.

3

SNAP is about communication and problem solving.

4

SNAP is about bringing families together

5

SNAP is about standing strong together

6

SNAP is about creating happier & healthier environments



SNAP is offered to children

6-11
YRS OLD

THIS YEAR we reached

13000
STUDENTS

We are **PROUD** to be able to offer this program through **ALL** of the

9

CREE COMMUNITIES OF EYYOU ISTCHEE

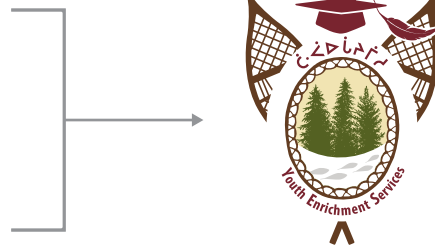
CAMPING TRIP with students to Km48 in Waskaganish



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.

PARTNERSHIPS are key to the **SUCCESS** of this program:

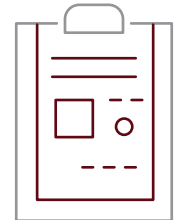


Our **PRIMARY YOUTH WORKERS** offered

121
DAYS OF SERVICE

Having received a **TOTAL** of

33
INDIVIDUAL REFERRALS



BREAKDOWN OF REFERRALS



ELEMENTARY

6



SECONDARY

27



MALE

20



FEMALE

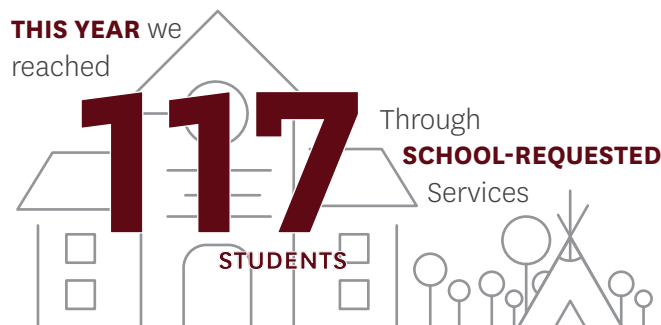
13



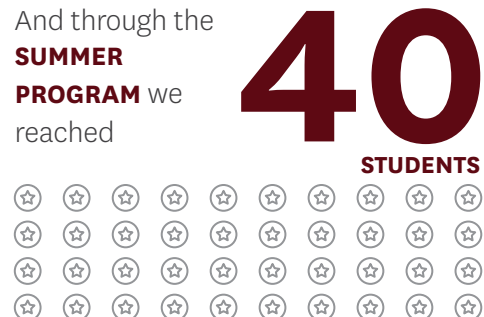
AVERAGE AGE

12

THIS YEAR we reached



And through the **SUMMER PROGRAM** we reached



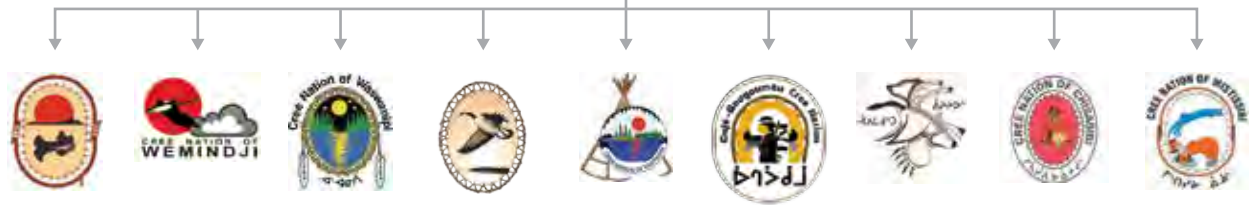
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a key to effecting positive change and integrating local values in any initiatives or services provided. Whether it is through the Justice Funds, the Employee Initiatives or the many projects initiated by the Community Justice Committees, we create opportunities for partnerships and inclusiveness. We provide information workshops, Facebook pages, websites, virtual meetings, and participate in general assemblies to engage with the public whenever we can. We work with key stakeholders in local governments and other regional organizations who share a common objective when working with our clients.

Given the economic hardship on many industries and businesses because of the pandemic, this year we decided to help out families in the **CREE COMMUNITIES** that may

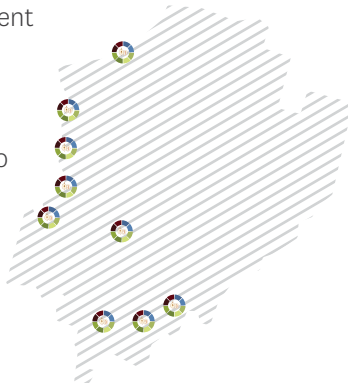
\$100K

have been impacted. So, we **DONATED** to **EACH** Cree community food bank initiative during the Christmas holidays \$10,000 to **HELP FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS OUT.**



In Mistissini, the **WREATH OF HOPE FOUNDATION** was one of these holiday food bank initiatives that the **CREE NATION OF MISTISSINI** identified to make this donation to.

The Department, along with other Cree Nation Government Departments, made a **VIRTUAL TOUR** of all Cree communities to **CONNECT** with and to collaborate to make more of an impact with programs and services, and **LISTEN** to their concerns and vision.



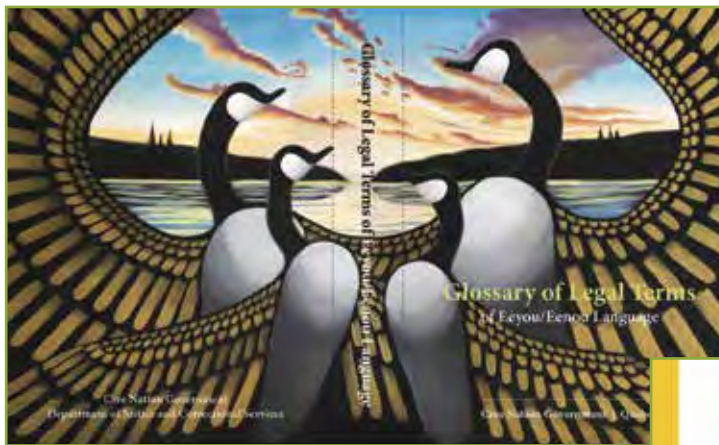
We were also featured in **THE NATION** as a way for us to create a **DISCUSSION** about **CREE JUSTICE**



CULTURAL AWARENESS

We know that the key to the holistic values that make families and communities strong is located in our culture and language. The majority of initiatives that we support are either on-the-land programs or integrated with Cree culture and skills for our clients. It not only gives our clients an opportunity to learn more of their culture, but the instruction is done by Elders and traditional teachers that can provide guidance and support for their transformation.

THREE PROJECTS we have worked at for a few years to develop are:



GLOSSARY OF LEGAL TERMS

LIVING & WORKING IN EEOU ISTCHEE



ELDERS WISDOM BOOK



EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES

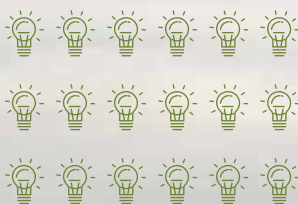
The pandemic gave our staff the chance to deploy more local initiatives in the communities they live and work. These were funded through our Employee Engagement Fund, which we created to build on the local connections and passions of our staff and to encourage them to go beyond normal duties - with the goal of supporting healthier and safer Cree communities.

As we adapted to the changes of this year, **OUR TEAM** continued to create programs that would have important local impacts. We know that having **COMMUNITY-BASED** initiatives for our clientele, is an effective way to make **POSITIVE CHANGE**.



We developed

18
INITIATIVES



All of these initiatives **REACHED**

425
PARTICIPANTS



With a **TOTAL** expenditure of more than

\$76K

For projects like

-  Beach Day
-  Kids Canoeing Camp
-  Sewing Program
-  Essay Contest
-  Youth Camping at Fort George
-  Youth Lunch Program

COMMUNITY JUSTICE COMMITTEES

Community Justice Committees play an important role in the Cree communities. The Committees have the ability to hear a number of cases locally instead of going through the court process. Committees are also involved in providing therapy and mentoring for youth and adults who come into contact with the justice system.

EACH COMMUNITY in Eeyou Istchee is home to a Community Justice Committee (**CJC**). This body, which is composed of community **VOLUNTEERS**, plays an important role in creating a Justice system that respects our **CREE VALUES** and **WAY OF LIFE**.



CJCs are made up of

75
MEMBERS

Which includes →



COMBINED, all of the **CJCs** have responded to...

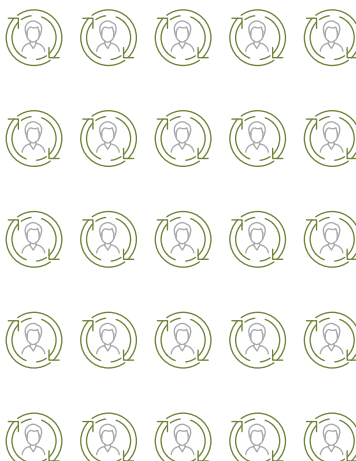
64

CASES



25

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES



21

GLADUE REPORT REQUESTS



CJC PROGRAMMING

Community Justice Committees are involved in developing programming that focuses on our clients and often integrates traditional values and culture in their delivery.

Despite the impacts that COVID protocols have had in our **REGULAR PROGRAMMING**, Community Justice Committees **CONTINUED** offering and supporting a wide range of **INITIATIVES** and **EVENTS** throughout the **COMMUNITIES**.

THIS YEAR we hosted

43
INITIATIVES

SOME EXAMPLES (See corresponding picture below)

1

Parka-Making

2

Sewing Project

3

Youth Canoe Trip

4

Fishing Program

TOGETHER, these programs impacted

960
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

With a **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** of more than

\$434K



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.

Prevention protocols in all of Eeyou Istchee were a limitation for many of the amazing projects that our funds support. Yet, they continue to be available to support **LOCAL PROJECTS**.



We now have

2

AVAILABLE FUNDS



CRIME PREVENTION FUND

A fund to prevent and combat crime and support the creation of safer communities.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FUND

A fund to empower the Cree youth while promoting their general welfare.

We supported

7

PROJECTS

SOME of the projects we **APPROVED** for funding include:



CREE PARENTING MENTORSHIP



MISTISSINI CANOE BRIGADE



ADULT MOBILE TREATMENT PROGRAM

COMBINED,
they reached

156

PARTICIPANTS

To support these projects we distributed **OVER**

\$214K



Maggie

Sara G

Love

Matthew N

Nicole Longe

Trudy-Lynn

April-Leah

Frances

Audrey

Kayla

Jody

Shecapio

Sarah

William MacLeod

Antonio Awachish

Anthony Gannar
Kjofan Swallow
John Brien



SCAN ME
to learn more

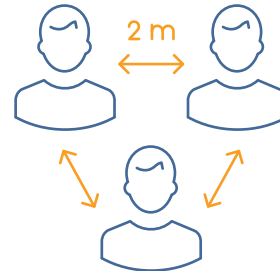


SERVICES TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

Our Cree CAVAC officers support victims and witnesses through a difficult process. The strength of our team is their passion for contributing to the lives of those impacted by criminal acts, and they do so in the Cree language and approach victims and witnesses in an appropriately cultural way. The Cree CAVAC differ from others in Quebec as they generally travel over 100 days a year to other communities to provide services over a vast geographic area. The Cree team approach is about community, inclusiveness, active listening, and helping victims to navigate legal, health, and other resources in their community. During the pandemic, our team maintained services to victims and witnesses using phone and technology allowing them to stay in contact with our clientele



Adjustments were made due to COVID-19 but we managed to continue supporting **VICTIMS** throughout the year.



3

Existing CAVAC Officers

+

2

New CAVAC Officer positions **CREATED THIS YEAR**

=

5

Total **CREE CAVAC** Offices in Eeyou Istchee

1

New **SPECIALIST POSITION** also created this year



CAVAC LIAISON OFFICER (SEXUAL VIOLENCE)
To focus on sexual violence at the regional level



SCAN ME
to learn more



Our team supported

322
CLIENTS

 **118**
Male

 **39**
0-17

 **178**
18-35

 **204**
Female

 **71**
35-50

 **26**
51+

Some of the **SERVICES** we offered our **CLIENTS** include:



Post-Traumatic
Intervention



Giving referrals
for specialized
support



Providing legal
information



Support
throughout the
court process



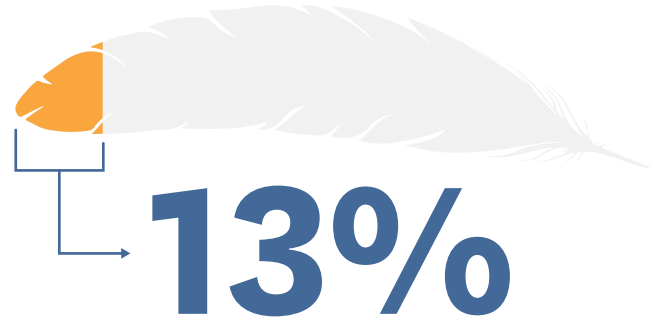
Poster distributed through communities

This year we took part in the **MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN** in an effort to promote safer communities and used **#MOOSEHIDECAMPAIGN** and **#SAFERCOMMUNITIES** to start the discussion on social media.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CANADA

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS:

Even though domestic violence is cause for national concern, Indigenous people and communities, including those in Eeyou Istchee, continue to be seriously impacted by it.

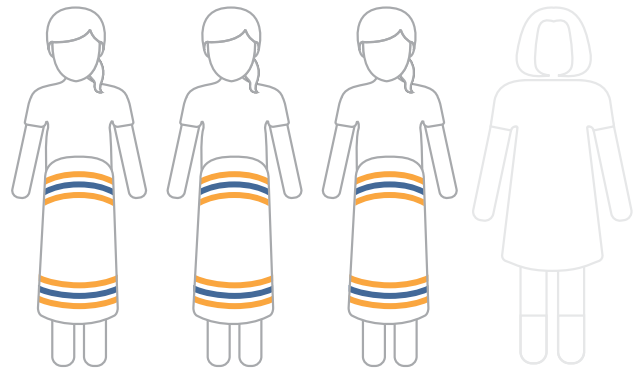


of all **INDIGENOUS WOMEN AGED 15+** living in the provinces stated having been **VIOLENTLY VICTIMIZED**.

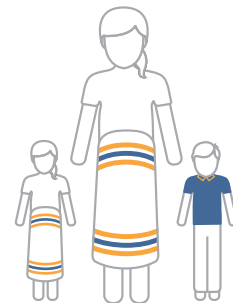
Indigenous women also report a higher rate of **VICTIMIZATION**.

3X

MORE LIKELY to being a victim of a violent crime.



Based on current trends from data we requested from the **EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE (EEPF)**, in 2020 there were a total of



This violence is also felt by **CHILDREN** close to the victim. Which may have lifelong **REPERCUSSIONS**.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE CREE NATION

WOMEN'S SHELTERS IN EEOYOU ISTCHEE

With the Cree Board of Health (CBHSSJB), we have established **2 WOMEN'S SHELTERS IN EEOYOU ISTCHEE** to support women and children in more serious situations.

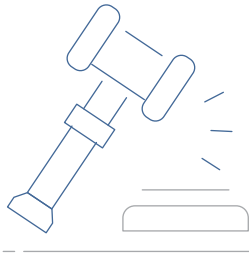


In order to further address the issue of domestic violence, we created a new position, the **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LIAISON OFFICER**, who is establishing a **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE** that will work on addressing the domestic violence in the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee.



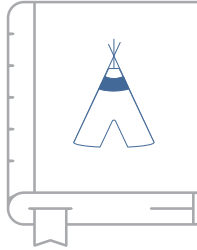
COURT

One of the biggest challenges during the pandemic was to ensure that every individual had their "day in court." While our communities were closed to incoming visitors, we accommodated Quebec judges and legal personnel through our state-of-the-art videoconference facilities. Protocols were put in place to ensure safety of staff and the public during all hearings. We also installed air purifiers in our lobbies and courtrooms, along with hand-washing stations.



644

Criminal Offence Cases



402

Cree Law Cases



47

Youth Offender Cases

We also held many hearings through our **VIDEOCONFERENCING SYSTEM**



69

Criminal Court Hearings



163

Youth Protection Court



26

Client Meeting Hearings

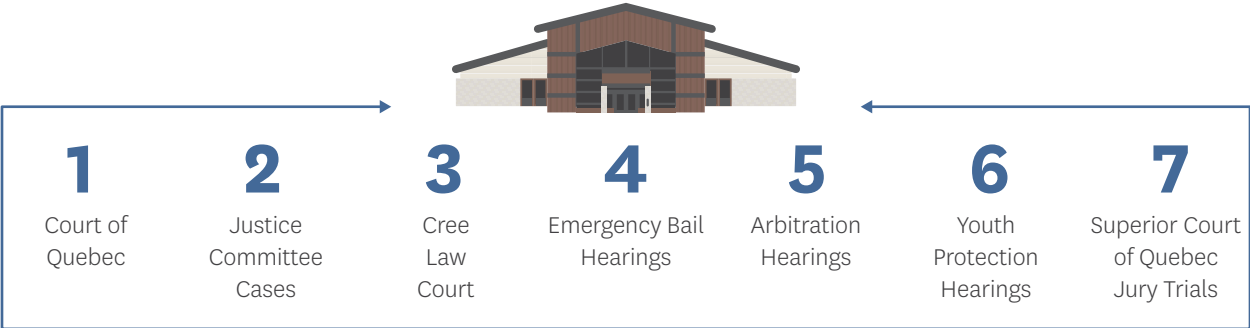
For everyone's safety, **ALL OF OUR COURTROOMS** were retrofitted with **PLEXIGLASS**



Yearly Evolution of Number of Cases by Court Type



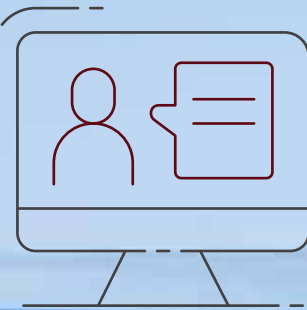
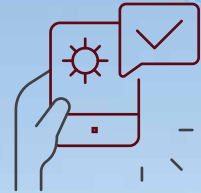
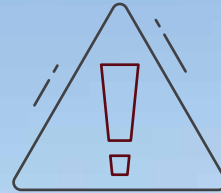
Our **FACILITIES** are also able to host a variety of courts and cases, such as:



CORRECTIONS

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 reoccurring.

Although much of our access to correctional facilities was limited due to the pandemic, our department **ADAPTED** to ensure the continuity of services for our **CLIENTS**.



OUR DEPARTMENT PSYCHOLOGIST

continued to offer her services through video conferencing platforms. Through this pandemic her services are crucial for clients.

THIS YEAR she provided

146

SESSIONS



CONTINUED PRESENCE FOR OUR CLIENTELE

During the pandemic we made effort to maintain services to our clientele through workshops in Corrections facilities and halfway houses. We were still offering food programs, health services, Elder mentoring, and other relevant programs.

64

SAFETY FIRST DURING THE PANDEMIC

Return to home communities following a period of detention is an obligation of the federal and provincial governments, during COVID the Department provided these services. We worked with the local public safety and health officers to ensure safe and coordinated travel for any clients who was released over the COVID period. 64 such arrangements were made by staff.

3

NEW POSITIONS TO EXPAND SERVICES TO CLIENTS

Three corrections positions were created this year to expand the services we can provide to each community to rehabilitate and reintegrate client back into their communities. These new positions will complement the environments we create with the Service Centers and Tiny Home Communities.

NEW C.R.E.E. PROGRAM LOGO





SCAN ME
to learn more



COMMUNITY TRANSITIONAL CENTRES

The Department continued to execute its plan to build Tiny Home Communities in the Cree Nation. These small communities will assist in the transition of Cree individuals who were required for a variety of reasons to leave their community. This is a collaborative effort with various stakeholders that is designed to support willing, responsible Crees to reconnect with their community while receiving physical, mental and social services.





The services will be given to **CREE CLIENTS** that are

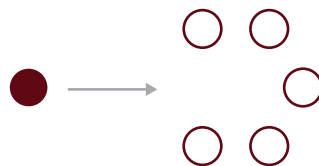
| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Redirected from courts or detention | Transitioning from detention | Waiting for court dates and under peace orders | Facing stringent socio-economic barriers | Coming from addictions and mental health programs |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|---|

This project is made possible with the help of a **COLLABORATION** between:

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |
| Department of Justice and Correctional Services | Cree Board of Health | Apatisiwin Skills Development | Cree Communities |

Our residents will benefit from a variety of **SERVICES**, such as:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| CAREER COUNSELING | LAND-BASED PROGRAMS | ADDICTIONS PROGRAM | PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS |

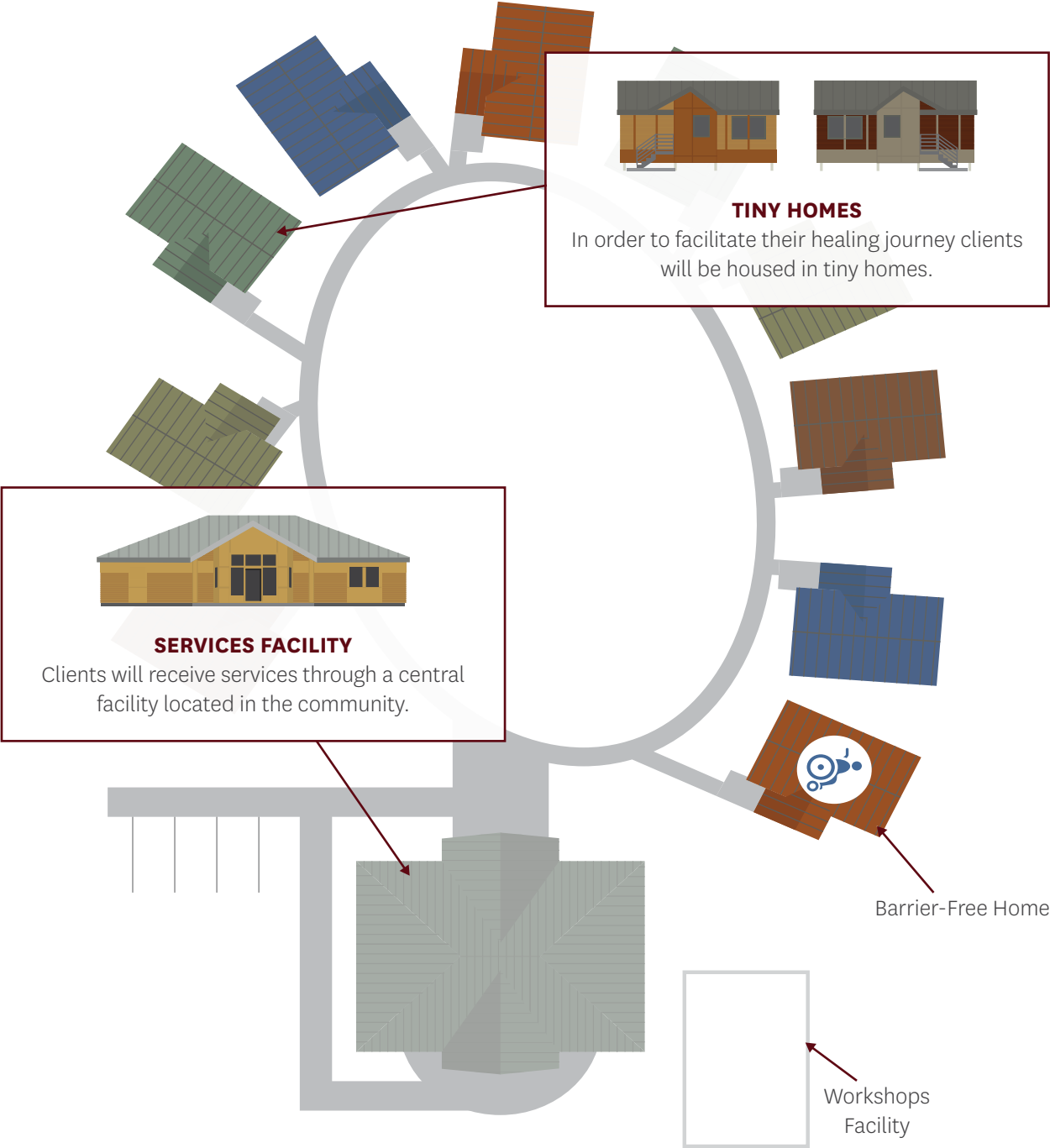


By working with various **PARTNERS** and by balancing traditional **CREE CULTURAL** approaches with contemporary best practices, we are helping our people **REINTEGRATE BACK INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES**.

Tiny Home Community

The Tiny Home Community is about creating an environment that is safe and provides opportunities for clients to grow and reintegrate back into their families and communities in a healthy way. The idea is to provide an environment that allows personal space to work through trauma, and a central building where wraparound services can be provided and life skills taught.

TINY HOME COMMUNITY LAYOUT

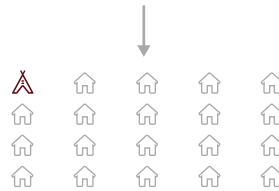


CORRECTIONS IN CANADA

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS:

In January of 2020 the Correctional Investigator of Canada announced that the proportion of Indigenous individuals under federal sentence had increased to an all time high.

Even though Indigenous People represent **5%** of the population.



They make up **30%** of the population in federal custody.¹



From **APRIL 2010 TO 2020** there was a sharp contrast between **INDIGENOUS** and **NON-INDIGENOUS** inmate populations.¹

2010 ← → **2020**

+43.4%

**INDIGENOUS
INMATE POPULATION**

-13.7%

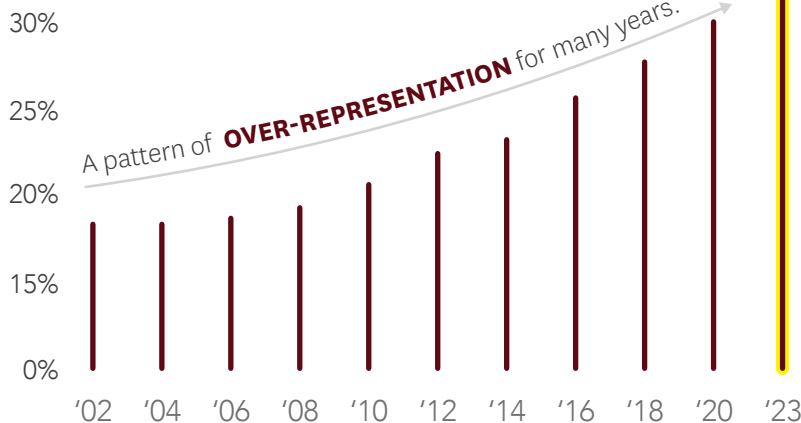
**NON-INDIGENOUS
INMATE POPULATION**

Indigenous people suffer from **INCARCERATION RATES** that are

6-7X
THE NATIONAL RATE¹

FEDERALLY INCARCERATED INDIGENOUS POPULATION

Since 2002¹



If this trend continues, by **2023** Indigenous People will represent

33%

**OF THE INCARCERATED
POPULATION IN FEDERAL
FACILITIES.¹**

Source

1. <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/press/press20200121-eng.aspx>

CORRECTIONS IN THE CREE NATION

Looking at the **CALLS TO ACTION** by the **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION**, the **VIIEN'S COMMISSION** and the **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR**, we have been implementing measures and programs to address the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the system.

| # | RECOMMENDATIONS/ CALLS TO ACTION | OUR ACTION  |
|---|--|---|
| 1  | Provide FUNDING and allow INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES to care for offenders | One implementation is the REGIONAL YOUTH HEALING CENTRE which will keep our youth in our communities as we support their healing journey. |
| 2  | Enhance the role of INDIGENOUS ELDERS . | Clients get REGULAR VISITS from our Elders as a form of counselling and as mentors when they return home. |
| 3  | Increase access to CULTURALLY RELEVANT correctional programming. | Many of our programs utilize our LAND and TRADITIONS as a source of HEALING . |
| 4  | Improve REINTEGRATION services in Indigenous communities. | A REINTEGRATION OFFICER and PROGRAMS in every community, gives individuals a chance at community reintegration. |
| 5  | DEVELOP TOOLS responsive to the needs of Indigenous people. | Our corrections staff, including our CREE PSYCHOLOGIST , is dedicated to keeping CONTACT WITH and SUPPORTING Cree detainees. |

45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE JBNQA

On April 30 1971, the Premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, announced the James Bay Hydroelectric Project. The Cree were not consulted, and their consent was not sought. They were forced to take legal proceedings to defend their rights and way of life.

The Kanatewat decision of 1973 which halted the project is key, not only for the Crees, but for all Indigenous peoples in Canada, as it recognized Indigenous rights to the land. That decision from Justice Albert Malouf of the Quebec Superior Court built on the Calder decision of the Supreme Court of Canada earlier that year. The Calder decision broke new ground in the recognition of Aboriginal rights in Canada, at a time when the concept was embryonic and the leading case was St. Catharine's Milling, from another era entirely. Calder provided key support to the Aboriginal rights arguments of the Crees in the Kanatewat legal proceedings. Although suspended a week later by the Quebec Court of Appeal, the Kanatewat decision brought Quebec and Canada to the negotiating table. These negotiations led to an Agreement-in-Principle in November 1974 and then to the final James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of November 1975, the first modern Aboriginal land claim agreement and treaty in Canada.





CREE-QUEBEC NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT (PAIX DES BRAVES)

Signed on February 7, 2002, this agreement sets the basis for the establishment of a new nation-to-nation relationship. It is also a key agreement for increased participation of the Crees in mining, forestry, and hydroelectric development in Eeyou Istchee. It was concluded in 2002 to settle disputes with Quebec regarding failure to implement JBNQA.



2002

2007



AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE FOR THE CREES

The agreement represents the new relationship with Quebec to fulfill a number of provisions in Section 18 on the Administration of Justice that remained unimplemented for over 30 years. It also expanded some powers to allow for new developments related to justice since 1975 such as crime prevention initiatives to reduce overall over-representation of Indigenous People in the legal system.

CREE-CANADA NEW RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

This agreement was concluded to settle longstanding Cree-Canada court proceedings regarding failure to implement JBNQA. The Crees assume certain obligations of Canada under the JBNQA relating to justice, economic and community development, and human resource development. Canada provides funding to enable Crees to assume these obligations.



2008

2013



CREE-QUEBEC GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

Landmark Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement signed which expands Cree management and planning authority to Category II lands and establishes new Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government replacing the James Bay Municipality (MBJ).

CREE NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT AND CREE CONSTITUTION

The Governance Agreement and Cree Constitution strengthen Cree self-governance on Cree community lands subject to federal jurisdiction (Category IA lands) in the context of the 1975 JBNQA. It was also at this time that the "Cree Regional Authority" was changed officially through legislation to the "Cree Nation Government".



2017

2019



ACT RESPECTING THE CREE LANGUAGE OF EYYOU ISTCHEE (FIRST CREE NATION GOVERNMENT LAW)

Cree Nation Government Enacts 'Historic' Cree Language Bill. This Act is the first piece of legislation to be enacted by the Cree Nation Government. 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.

LEGISLATION



UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)

In December 2020, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Using as a starting point the former Bill C-262 introduced in Parliament by Romeo Saganash in 2016, this new Bill, which received Royal Assent on June 21, 2021, affirms that UNDRIP has application in Canadian law and provides a framework for the federal government to ensure that its laws are consistent with it.



FIREARMS LEGISLATION

In February 2021, the Government of Canada introduced new legislation to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act to combat gun-violence and make communities safer (Bill C-21). Among other things, this Bill would allow individuals, such as friends or family members, to apply to the courts for the immediate removal of another individual's firearms. It would also create a new offence for altering a cartridge magazine to exceed its lawful capacity and impose tighter requirements for the importation of ammunition.



CHANGES TO CANADA'S OATH OF CITIZENSHIP

In response to a Call to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, legislative amendments to Canada's Oath of Citizenship were introduced by the Government of Canada in October, 2020 (Bill C-8). This Bill proposes to modify the current to Oath of Citizenship to add a reference to the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. The Oaths of Citizenship is a solemn declaration that newcomers must make on the day they are granted citizenship.



QUÉBEC LEGISLATION TO PROMOTE THE EFFICIENCY OF PENAL JUSTICE

Bill 32, which was introduced in the National Assembly by the Government of Québec in June 2019, is now in force. This Bill contains a number of measures to improve the efficiency of penal justice, including by extending the use of tele-warrants and by allowing the use of technological means for bail hearings, on certain conditions.



JUSTICE ACCESSIBILITY

New provincial legislative amendments (Bill 75) are now in force to address certain consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on justice accessibility and efficiency. Among other things, these amendments promote the use of technological means by the courts.



ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCE

In 2021, Bill 84, An Act to assist persons who are victims of criminal offences and to facilitate their recovery was passed at the National Assembly of Québec. This Bill proposes a reform with respect to assistance for

persons who are victims of criminal offences, including the current victim compensation regime. It recognizes the rights of persons who are victims of a criminal offence and establishes measures to respond to their needs in order to facilitate their recovery.



DRAFT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In response to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bill C-23 proposes targeted changes to the Criminal Code to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of the criminal justice system. These changes include expanding, for accused persons, the availability of remote appearances by audioconference and videoconference in certain circumstances. They also allow for the use of electronic or other automated means for the purposes of the jury selection process and revise the existing telewarrant process to allow peace officers to remotely apply for a wider range of investigative orders.



NEW CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORMS

Bill C-22, introduced by the Government of Canada in February 2021, repeals certain mandatory minimum penalties of imprisonment for certain offences involving firearms, weapons, substances, and drugs. One of the stated objectives of this measure is to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the judicial and correctional systems, and to better help those struggling with substance use and addiction. This new Bill would also allow for a greater use of conditional sentences and establish diversion measures for simple drug possession offences, such as diversion to addiction treatment programs. This Bill would provide the police and prosecutors with the flexibility to treat simple drug possession as a health and social services issue, rather than a criminal one.

These measures are welcome, but represent only a part of the solution, particularly when it comes to dealing with addiction and reducing the over-representation of Indigenous people in the judicial and correctional systems. Many experts and stakeholders, including Public Health Authorities support Bill C-22, but also agree that the Government needs to go further and decriminalize simple possession of certain drugs.



NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

On June 3, 2021, Bill C-5, *An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)* received Royal Assent. The stated purpose of this Act is to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 80 by creating a statutory holiday for federally regulated workers called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Bill C-5 also indicates that this holiday, which would be observed on September 30, would seek to honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis Survivors and their families and communities and to ensure that public commemoration of their history and the legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

CONCLUSION

As we look forward to what is to come for the Department for Justice and Correctional Services, we are excited to be able to construct the Tiny Home Communities as they will help us make a real difference in providing a supportive and structured environment for Cree clients that come to receive necessary and constructive services, and will help them achieve personal and professional goals in the future. It will be complemented with the expansion of our Education and Employment program, and the work we do to address the root causes of harmful activities in the communities. We also look forward to the building of more Cree services to enhance the accessibility, fairness, impartiality and accountability of the legal system. It is only with vision based on values and an investment into our own people that we will achieve the success needed to transform our society and reduce harm. There are many people entering fields of law, justice, corrections and therapy that will have incredible opportunities to make impacts in their communities, with us or in partner organizations.





SCAN ME
to learn more





SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Message from the Director Rodney Mark

IT IS WITH GREAT GRATITUDE I ADDRESS THE CREE NATION IN THIS ANNUAL REPORT. THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM, LIKE MANY OTHERS IN EYYOU ISTCHEE, HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WORK FROM HOME AND OCCASIONALLY GO TO THE OFFICE.

A majority of work and touching base was done through Zoom or Teams or conference calls. I am very thankful to my team for having kept going forward despite the crisis we have faced starting at the beginning of March 2020. During this time of the year, there is a mad rush with meetings and other year-end matters to finish. However, we were able to complete most of the worked required as this COVID-19 continues.

Moving forward with all entities that we have collaborated with, we 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. We want to thank the Regional Cree Trappers' Association and Cree Health Board Public Health department for their collaboration on some projects we achieved.

For your review, you will find our activities, events, and funding programs that we administered this past year in partnership with the communities and entities. As you will see, there are various programs initiated by communities ranging from sport, promotion of cultural programs, awareness of the importance of health within our communities, to most importantly, engaging youth on education. We wish to express our thanks to all the proponents for the local projects and programs they initiated and implemented. As a department, working with communities is a priority in addressing the social wellbeing of our Nation.

*Rodney Mark
Director of Social and Cultural Development*

Photo: Neil Diamond

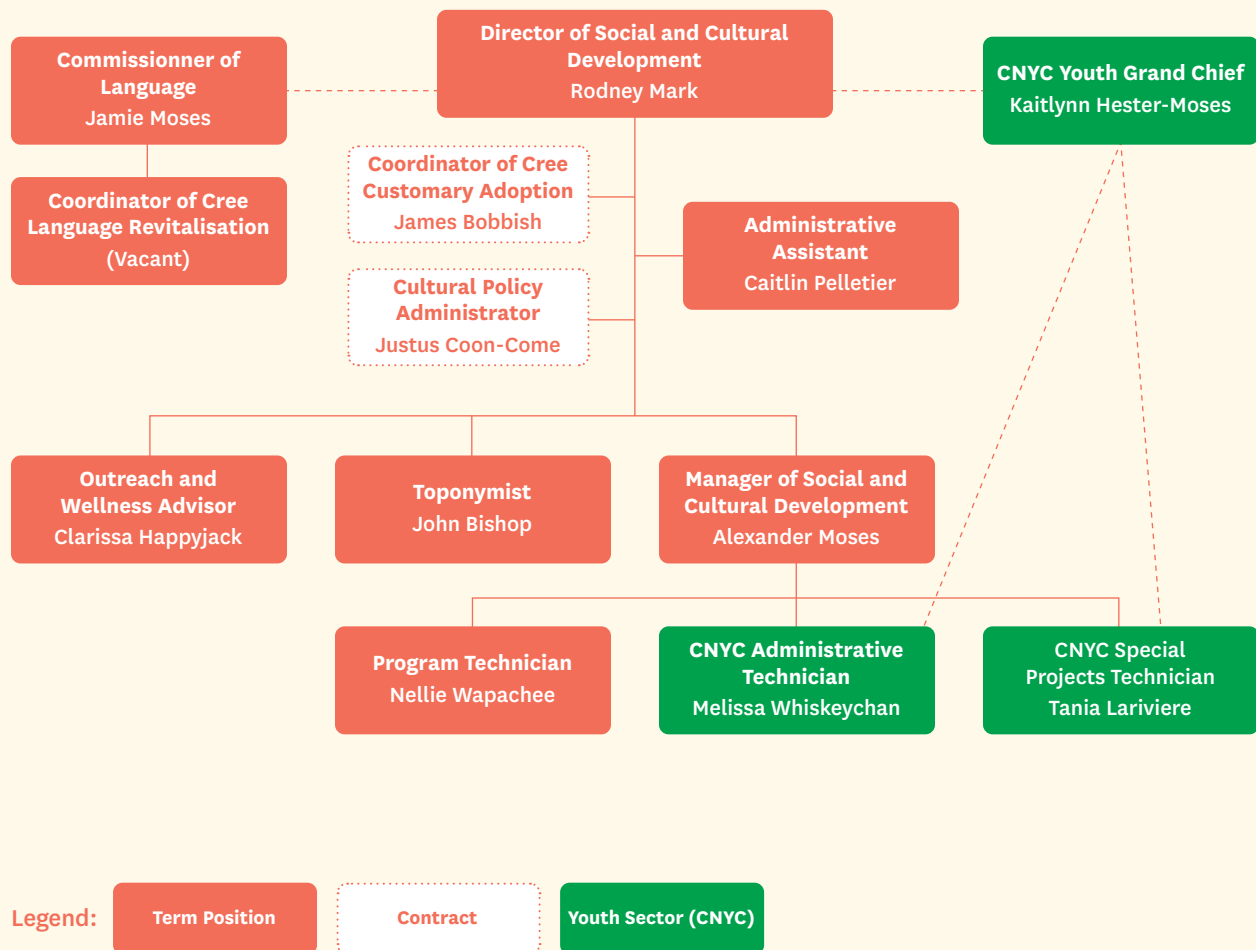


DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

Over the year, we have seen minor changes within the department positions and titles after a review of the Human Resources Salary Structure. This included an alignment of personnel’s roles, titles to current activities and initiatives and the role of the department. These changes will enable our department to further support social and cultural development in Eeyou Istchee.

Figure 1. shows the Social and Cultural Development department structure, permanent positions, and contract for specific files.

Figure 1. Department of Social and Cultural Development Work Chart, 2020-2021



FUNDING AGREEMENTS

The Department negotiates and manages agreements from several provincial ministries and makes funds available to Cree organizations and communities through the application process, agreement implementation, providing support and reporting.

The Department committed funding to over 50 local and regional programs and projects across Eeyou Istchee. We have three major funding programs within Social and Culture to support these initiatives through a call for proposal process, review, and recommendation to our management committee.

The funding programs are listed below; Program objectives/pillars, the list of programs & projects, and the amount of financing.

Cree Alliance for Solidarity

The Cree Alliance for Solidarity is a new funding program for the Department of Social and Cultural Development, that is now operational for its 2nd year. The Alliance for Solidarity responds to the Government’s desire to support the deploy-

ment 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;
- 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;
- ensure the participation of people living in poverty and social exclusion in the implementation mechanisms of the agreement.

Cree Youth Development Fund

Funding Agreement with Secrétariat à la Jeunesse, Cree Nation Youth Council and Department of Social & Cultural Development.

Figure 1. Cree Alliance Funding, 2020-2021

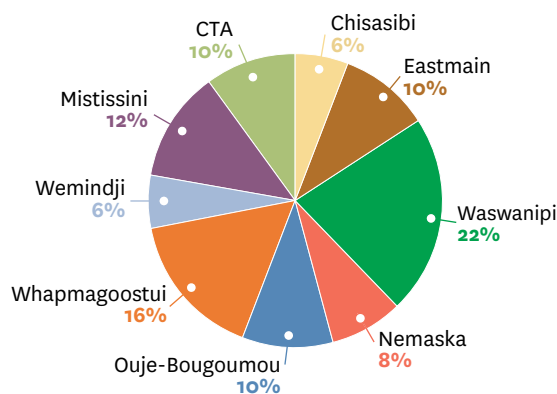


Figure 2. Funding-SAJ, 2020-2021

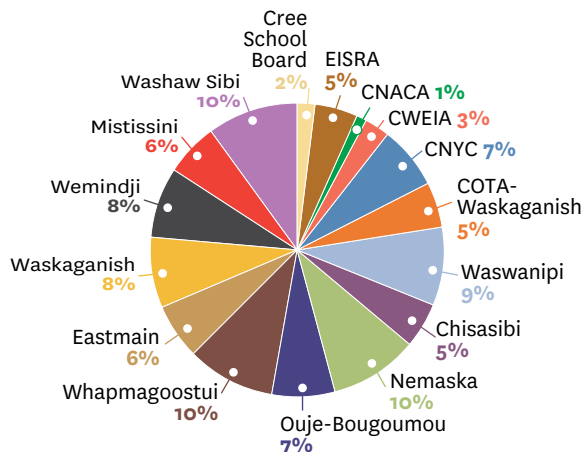


Table 1. Cree Alliance for Solidarity – Programs and Projects Committed, 2020-2021

| PROJECT NAME | COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION | APPROVED AMOUNT |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Sports Program | Chisasibi | \$25,000 |
| School Support | Eastmain | \$40,000 |
| Poverty & Exclusion | Waswanipi | \$46,878 |
| Habitual Learning in Sports | Nemaska | \$30,000 |
| Sports of Social development | Ouje-Bougoumou | \$40,000 |
| Sport for School Support | Waswanipi | \$40,000 |
| Community Collaboration | Whapmagoostui | \$40,000 |
| Drivers Education | Wemindji | \$25,000 |
| School Community Program | Whapmagoostui | \$24,500 |
| Aashuumiit | Mistissini | \$50,000 |
| Food Resource | Cree Trappers’ Association | \$40,000 |

The Cree Youth Development Fund is a 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

This is the final year for the current agreement with SAJ & Cree Nation Government/CNYC. The Youth Grand Chief and the Manager of Social and Cultural Development and Youth support staff met with Secrétariat à la Jeunesse (SAJ) to discuss the renewal of the funding agreement for another five years (2 million contributions). With the consultations conducted by CNYC through Online surveys, Community Tour and regional events, CNYC developed “Cree Youth Strategic Action Plan 2021-2026, which was delivered in February. SAJ supported the Cree Youth Strategic Plan by awarding the new funding agreement for 2021-2026.

Table 2. Cree Youth Development Fund (SAJ) – Programs and Projects Committed, 2020-2021

| PROJECT NAME | COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION | APPROVED AMOUNT |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Education and Support | | |
| Ride to rise 2020 | Cree School Board | \$8,000 |
| Wiinipaakw Tours Solidarity Cooperative | COTA-Waskaganish | \$20,000 |
| Sport for School Support | Waswanipi | \$20,000 |
| Youth Council Recreation | Chisasibi | \$20,000 |
| Habits through Sports | Nemaska | \$20,000 |
| Youth and Recreation | Ouje-Bougoumou | \$20,000 |
| Sport & Recreation | Whapmagoostui | \$20,000 |
| Drivers Education | Wemindji | \$25,000 |
| School Community Program | Whapmagoostui | \$24,500 |
| Aashuumiih | Mistissini | \$50,000 |
| Food Resource | Cree Trappers' Association | \$40,000 |
| Health and Active living | | |
| Softball | Eastmain | \$10,000 |
| Basketball League | EISRA | \$20,000 |
| Mobile Camp | Whapmagoostui | \$25,000 |
| Culture and Tradition | | |
| Tipaachmuh | CNACA | \$3,500 |
| Cree Language | Ouje-Bougoumou | \$4,000 |
| Canoe Brigade | Washaw Sibi | \$25,000 |
| Adopt a youth-Spring Hunting Program | Waskaganish | \$10,000 |
| Skins Storytelling (workshops) | Wemindji | \$20,000 |
| Youth Land based Program | Wemindji | \$15,000 |
| Canoe Journey 2020 | Waswanipi | \$17,500 |
| Social and Personal Development | | |
| 3rd Miss Eeyou/Eenou Nation (MEEN) | CWEIA | \$12,500 |
| Eastmain Sport Camp for Social Development | Eastmain | \$15,000 |
| Youth Week | Ouje-Bougoumou | \$8,000 |
| Youth Achievement Awards | Washaw Sibi | \$5,000 |
| Youth Week 2020 | Washaw Sibi | \$15,000 |
| Youth Week 2020 | Waskaganish | \$15,000 |
| Citizenship and Participation | | |
| JBNQA Treaty Simulation | CNYC | \$30,000 |

Elders 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.

The Elder's Program funding, objectives are broken into five 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

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE PURSUITS

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, our department made significant progress in its work to support Cree culture and language. The past year saw the appointment of Mr. Jamie Moses of Eastmain as the first Commissioner of the Cree Language, work to develop a regional Cultural Policy, as well as continued progress on the Place Names Program.

Commissioner of Language

The Cree Nation has appointed its first Commissioner of Language.

Director Rodney Mark, in collaboration with the Director of Human Resources Nancy Bobbish, and leadership assembled a small committee to undertake the interviews of the applicants for the position. Based on the interviews with the three leading candidates, a recommendation was made to Board/Council on November 17th, 2020, that Jamie Moses of Eastmain would be named the first Commissioner of the Cree Language, as per the criteria stipulated in Bill 1: An Act Concerning the Cree Language.

The appointment of Mr. Moses represents a significant moment in the history of efforts to support the Cree

Figure 3. Elders Funding, 2020-2021

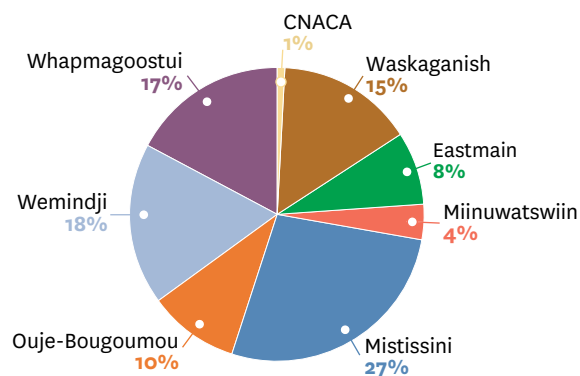


Table 3. Elder's Funding Program- Programs and Projects Committed, 2020-2021

| PROJECT NAME | COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION | APPROVED AMOUNT |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| Tradition and Culture | | |
| Sachimuweushtutin Mosquito hat | CNACA | \$3,000 |
| Chisheinnu Chiskutamaachewin fishing & Medicine | Mistissini | \$30,000 |
| Elders Lunch and Teaching | Waskaganish | \$30,000 |
| Tourism-Tradition & Culture | Waskaganish | \$25,000 |
| Community Services-Heritage Project | Wemindji | \$15,000 |
| Elders Council | Eastmain | \$30,000 |
| Community Participation | | |
| 2020 Sundance Miinuatswiin | Miinuatswiin | \$12,500 |
| Traditional Knowledge Keeper Program | Whapmagoostui | \$20,000 |
| Weechadowch Chainou Program 2020 | Mistissini | \$35,000 |
| Healthy Living | | |
| Eenou Entukwiin Kanuhtataau | Mistissini | \$30,000 |
| Healthy and Safe Environments | | |
| Elders Outreach Services | Ouje-Bougoumou | \$35,000 |
| Elders Snow Removal | Wemindji | \$30,000 |
| Wemindji Cares | Wemindji | \$20,000 |
| Health and Safety support | Whapmagoostui | \$40,000 |
| JBNQA Treaty Simulation | CNYC | \$30,000 |

language in Eeyou Istchee. As a department, we very much look forward to collaborating closely with him and supporting his efforts.

Specifically, our department is ready to support the incoming Commissioner by:

- Briefing him on efforts to date and obligations emerging from Bill 1: An Act Concerning the Cree Language and assisting him in setting his initial priorities.
- Assisting him and leadership in establishing a sustainable funding model for his office. Funding the first year of activity for his office: our department budget currently has the necessary funds for the Commissioner's first year of activity, allowing them time to negotiate the longer-term funding mentioned above.
- In coordination with Commissioner Moses and the HR department, we interviewed candidates for a Coordinator of Cree Language Revitalization. We expect to introduce the successful candidate shortly and look forward to the key role they will play under Commissioner Moses to develop regional language policy and programming.
- Coordinating applications to the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage's Indigenous Language Component. Commissioner Moses led an effort to have communities apply to fund language coordinators in the communities. While we do not yet know whether the applications will be successful, the discussions were very productive and demonstrated a desire in the communities to build capacity to support language programming.

As soon as the Coordinator of Cree Language Revitalization is in place, we look forward to working with Commissioner Moses to develop a strategic plan for his office.

Message from the Commissioner of Language

Wachiya. In January 2021, the Board/Council of the Cree Nation Government appointed me as your first Commissioner of the Cree Language. I am Jamie Moses from the community of Eastmain. I have served in the field of Culture & Language for over 15 years in my community, where I have been involved in a great deal of regional programming. I am very excited to have been given this opportunity, and I look forward to working with you on behalf of our language.

In 2019, the Board/Council of the Cree Nation Government passed its first law, an Act Respecting the Cree Language of Eeyou Istchee. This law was an important step – a recognition by our leadership that we need to act to support our language. I will begin work to implement the Act in coming months.

Since being appointed, I have begun communicating with various partners in the field of language. I have communicated with other Language Commissioners in other territories to learn from their experience. I have also begun reaching out to the Cree communities, discussing the needs within their communities and administrations. Some have language departments, and some do not, but all were very receptive to building capacity and working at the local level to develop language programming.

We will also have an additional team member, a Regional Coordinator of Cree Language Revitalization, who will

manage my office and work with me to coordinate a regional approach to supporting our language. This candidate is set to begin work in late spring of 2021. I would like to thank the previous Language Coordinators under the Cree Nation government who have performed great work in developing the Language Department. Their work has helped establish a Language Commissioner's Office.

The Cree School Board has been the leader in the field of Cree Language education since it began operations in the 70's. They have trained many Cree Language and Cree Culture teachers, produced great material, printed dictionaries, created online dictionaries and resources, and translated many non-existing Cree words. With the creation of a Language Commission, they will continue to play a huge role in influencing our direction as we move forward. I am excited to work with them.

With the arising challenges of language preservation, I believe to maintain our language, we must include the younger generations in setting the plans to tackle the issue. We must maximize gathering stories from our knowledge keepers, the elders. We must find creative ways to encourage our youth to learn our traditional activities and speak our language. Many influences, such as technology, threaten our Language. The modern lifestyle minimizes our time out on the land. It is important that we partner with many entities, create new material, adapt to the fast-paced technologies, and highlight our language on signs, posters, radio, and the internet.

If we want to maintain our language, we all have to take part. It starts around our dinner tables and around our teepees. Our language is part of our identity. It belongs to our Land, Eeyou Istchee, to our ancestors, and with our work together, I am confident it will also belong to the future generations to come.

I look forward to seeing you and working with you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you want to get involved.



Jamie Moses, Commissioner of Language

Place Names Program

Work on the place names program continued this year, even though the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted interviews with elders and landowners. The pause in interviews allowed for work to proceed on database management and the analysis of previously gathered names. We regularly field requests for place names information, and 2020 saw significant requests from the Assinica and Albnel-Mistassini-and-Waconichi Wildlife Reserve and the Cree Trappers' Association. Notably, the Assinica and Albnel-Mistassini-and-Waconichi Wildlife Reserve used the information provided to install several bilingual signs along the Route du Nord.

We are also in the process of developing Cree-language reference maps for the territory – beginning with the James and Hudson Bay Coasts, the Eastmain, Broadback, and Rupert rivers. We hope to be able to distribute these online in the coming months.

Over the spring and early summer, we collaborated with the Cree School Board to provide maps for their Cree history curriculum. We are also continuing to collaborate with Cree Nation Government Environment and Remedial Works Department on the development of protected areas and are actively participating in the Access and Occupancy Committee established as part of the Grande Alliance initiative. In addition, we are collaborating with the Eeyou Planning Commission secretariat on the development of criteria for recognizing cultural sites as part of their regional planning efforts.

Finally, we are participating with other Cree Nation Government Departments in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Working Group that aims to improve and coordinate the use of GIS across the Cree Nation Government. The Place Names Database managed by our department will be an important element of the ArcGIS Online platform currently being developed.

Cultural Policy

Over the past year, the Department of Cultural and Social Development began collaborating closely with Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI) to develop a Cultural Policy for Eeyou Istchee. The development of this policy was an action item in the 2018-2021 agreement between the Cree Nation Government, ACCI, and Quebec's Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCCQ). We believe that the development of a Cultural Policy will help set regional priorities and help regional stakeholders promote and support culture, language, and arts in the territory. We also expect that the Cultural Policy will provide a foundation for negotiating the next 3-year agreement with MCCQ. These negotiations will begin in the fall of 2021.

As part of this effort, Justus Coon Come of Mistissini was hired on contract as a Cultural Policy Administrator from August 2020 to February of 2021. His primary role was to undertake consultations with regional stakeholders on priorities that should inform the cultural policy development. ACCI engaged Tyrone Moses of Waskaganish to assist Justus with these consultations.

Based on the consultations thus far, we expect to engage regional leadership and stakeholders in focused discussions and present a draft policy in the coming months.

OUTREACH & WELLNESS

Improving Access to Nutritious Food in Eeyou Istchee Committee Collaboration with Cree Health Board

The Access to Nutritious Food Committee works in collaboration with Cree Nation Government and Cree Health Board on variety projects to help communities by gathering and developing community engagement. The committee is currently working on the files:

Food Engagement Sessions

Food Security and Action in Eeyou Istchee to support development in a Regional Food Action Plan through the engagement and mobilizations with the communities and stakeholders. The sessions are to assist the committee and to develop co-facilitators to create a shared action plan to help improve our Cree Communities by knowing the beneficial factors of the local traditional food, while promoting local food networks across the Cree communities. The goal and initiative is to promote our local traditional healthy foods and Cree culture. The Food Engagement sessions will take place in June 2021.

Food Engagement Sessions

Day 1: June 1 - Setting the Table: Access to Food in Eeyou Istchee

Day 2: June 2 - Access to Traditional Food

Day 3: June 14 - Access to Healthy Store-Bought Food

Day 4: June 16 - Producing food locally.

Food security update

Good Food access fund of \$100,000. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Social and Cultural contribution, in collaboration with Cree Health Board & Cree Trappers' Association, focused on providing Emergency Food access to support families by supplying traditional food in each community.

Water Fountain update

The project aims to reduce plastic pollution and waste in the Eeyou Istchee and promote health initiatives to our communities & individuals by having access to these water fountains. The committee selected two communities (Eastmain & Waswanipi) as a pilot project in the sports facilities and youth centres in early 2021.

COVID-19 restrictions in the James-Bay region, status of the project is delayed. The project will be extended until mid-2021.

NEW Regional Committee to Combat Mistreatment to Vulnerable Adults

The regional committee focuses on Elders abuse and mistreatment for all the Cree Communities. The initiative of the new committee is currently in development with stakeholders of Cree Health Board, Cree Nation Government Social and Cultural department, Justice and Correctional Services, and other regional organizations that have started in the fall of 2020.

The Committee focuses on the elders intervention in the Cree Communities. This is done through the creation of task forces, as well as collaboration and communications with differently entities that can assist and support elder's needs.



The Committee is in the process of establishing its mandate for each organization that will better define roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

CREE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION/GUARDIANSHIP CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Background

After changes to the *Civil Code of Québec* in 2018, the Board/Council of the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government designated the Cree Nation Government as the Cree competent authority to certify certain Cree customary adoptions and guardianships, effective June 1, 2019.

A combined regional-local approach was proposed for Eeyou Istchee following the recommendation of a Cree Customary Adoption Working Group made up of representatives of the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government and the CBHSSJB, and consultations with the Cree First Nations and regional Cree entities.

The Cree certification process will be carried out by the Cree Nation Government in collaboration with local committees set up by interested Cree First Nations, and with the collaboration of the CBHSSJB. The Cree Nation Government has created a Regional Coordinator position to assist with these matters, which James Bobbish continues to fill on an interim basis.

The Quebec Registrar of Civil Status has now included the Cree Nation Government in its register of Indigenous com-

petent authorities. This allows the Cree Nation Government to officialize an existing Cree customary adoption or guardianship, on request. This depends on the relevant Cree First Nation setting up a local committee, and on the customary adoption or guardianship meeting the requirements of the Cree certification process.

Recent Developments

The Interim Regional Coordinator, James Bobbish, met with the leadership of several Cree communities over the course of the year to promote establishment of these local committees.

As a result of these meetings, several Cree communities have now created their local committees. Once they are operational, these committees will play an important role in determining if a given customary adoption or customary guardianship was carried out according to the local custom, and meets the certification requirements. The Regional Coordinator will continue to work with these communities to help them to select and orient committee members. He will also help other interested communities to establish their committees. Interested Cree First Nations who have not yet created a local committee are encouraged to contact James Bobbish in this regard.

The Cree Nation Government has developed tools and a guide to help Cree First Nations to set up these local committees. These tools and other implementation documents are being finalized for publication shortly, further to collaboration with the CBHSSJB.

Overview of the Cree Certification Process

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.

- 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;
- At least one adopter/guardian must be a member of a Cree community that has set up the relevant Cree local committee;
- 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 the 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 process, the Cree Nation Government also considers: (i) criminal background checks for adopters/guardians and other adults living in the home; (ii) “character check” questionnaires filled out by people who know the adopters/guardians well; and (iii) certain information and/or input of a Director of Youth Protection.

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 cree-adoption@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.

YOUTH SECTOR UPDATE

Message from the Grand Youth Chief

Wachiya. First and foremost, I would like to thank our Creator/Cheminduu for guidance, wisdom, and strength during the most difficult year for our people in Eeyou Istchee and all people in the world. I want to extend my recognition to our youth for their best efforts, abilities, and hard work to do what they can. My heart goes out to our people!

It is a great pleasure to present the Cree Nation Youth Council’s Annual Report. This report contains our administrative activities, programs, youth representation, contributions and partnerships. The Cree Nation Youth Council’s current focus is to tackle and initiate the youth’s priorities and needs in various beneficial programs and services as follows: Education, Cree Culture & Language, Healthy Active Living, Business, Social Development and Citizenship & Participation.

This year was a challenging year to adapt and find new and creative ways to connect to our youth of Eeyou Istchee without having gatherings. The virtual world taught us new skills to quickly meet our youth’s needs, priorities and initiatives. It brought many obstacles, but our organization developed stronger teamwork.

I want to share my appreciation to the Cree Nation Youth Council team and all Youth Councils, Youth Departments and staff who continue to achieve our vision and pave our way to our future.

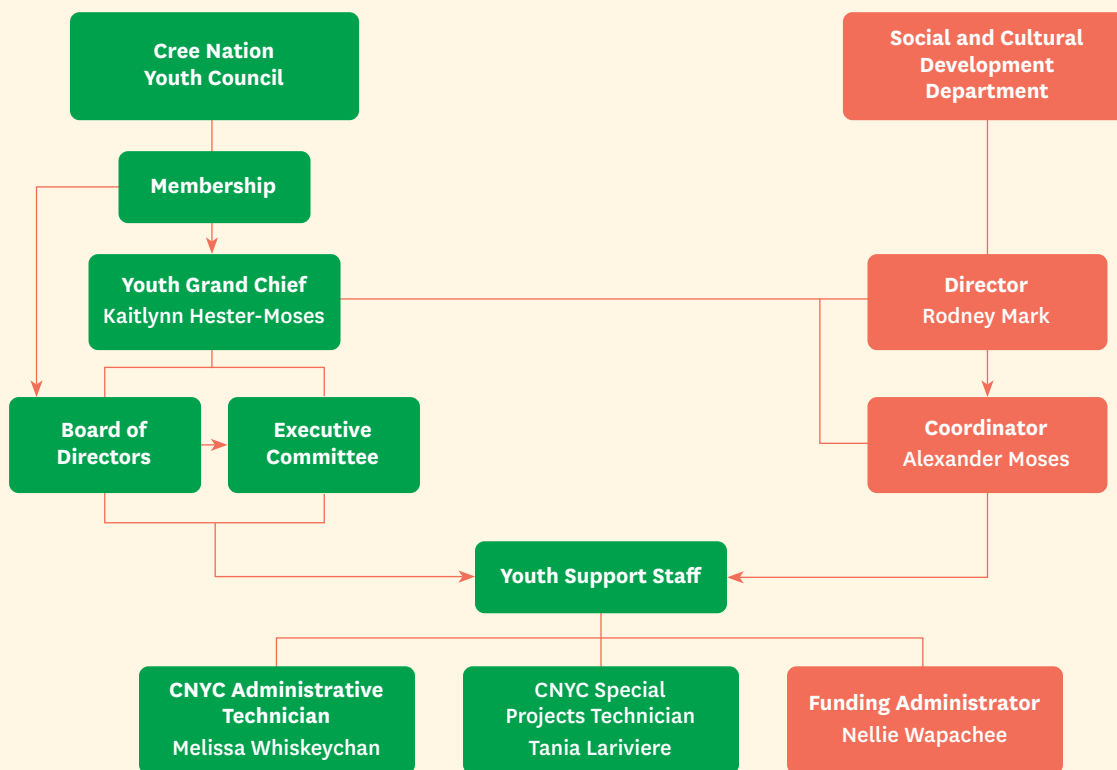
I thank our team for their commitment and hard work. The Cree Nation Youth Council would also like to extend their appreciation and support from our Cree Nation Government, Social and Cultural Department, SAJ, and all our partners who contributed to our programming for our youth.

Meewgetch!

Kaitlynn Hester-Moses, Grand Youth Chief



Figure 1. Cree Nation Youth Council Organigram



Supporting Staff
 Special Projects Technician, Tania Lariviere
 Administrative Technician, Melissa Whiskeychan
 Funding Administrator, Nellie W. Gray

Administrative

The Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) is a governing body led by a Board of Directors comprised of young, elected leaders from each of the 10 Cree communities and their 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.

Our administration focuses on proposing meetings, training, planning sessions, communications and implementing and promoting our programs, projects, and organization mandate.

Meetings and Our Staff

Table 4. Meetings, 2020-2021

| BOARD | EXECUTIVE |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 14, 2020 • July 8, 2020 • August 12, 2020 • October 21 & 22, 2020 • January 20, 2021 • February 2 & 3, 2021 • March 15, 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 11, 2020 • March 27, 2020 • April 8, 2020 • June 2, 2020 • July 30, 2020 • August 11, 2020 • September 16 & 17, 2020 • December 8 & 9, 2020 • January 25, 2021 • February 25, 2021 |

Youth Sector Activities (2020-2021)

The Cree Nation Youth Council focuses on facilitating, developing, and delivering programs based on the following six priorities identified with the Cree Youth action strategy (2017-2021):

- Education
- Culture & Tradition
- Health & Active Living
- Business & Employment
- Social & Personal Development
- Citizenship & Participation

Based on these pillars, the CNYC dedicates itself to provide regional events and programming targeting Cree youth aged 13-35 from all ten communities by providing networking and self-development opportunities. 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.

The implementation of all these efforts through the CNYC special projects is made possible by the funding provided by the Cree Nation Government and the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse's Cree Youth Strategy agreement (ending in 2021). Currently, in the process of renewal, the updated Cree Youth Strategy will roll out a new set of pillars in the upcoming fiscal year based on the results of the recent survey deployed through the territory during the Fall of 2020.

Ultimately, this fiscal year was focused on the adaptation and renewal of our efforts to outreach to our youth, which is well represented in our new logo by Samuel McLeod adopted during this year's Annual General Assembly. Due to the many challenges related to the pandemic's ever-changing constraints, we could not deploy as many events and programs as we would have liked. However, we remain hopeful for what is to come as we have learnt many lessons in extending our outreach and the rise of virtual programming, which will be of great use to the future of the Cree Nation Youth Council.

Programming and Events

Stay at Home – Social Media Challenges

Date: April 2020

Outreach: Regional (Virtual)

Partnerships: Mistissini Youth Council, Cree Health Board (Ushiniichisuu Department)

Objective: Engage and support youth at home during the initial pandemic lockdown

Activities: Tik Tok videos, Photo submissions, etc.

At the early stages of the pandemic, strict measures were observed within our region to limit the spread of the novel COVID-19 virus within our communities. As a result, community members were encouraged to remain at home in isolation and limit social interactions with people from different households. Considering the importance of socializing for our youth's well-being and mental health, the CNYC worked in collaboration with the Mistissini Youth Council and the Ushiniichisuu Department (CHB) to host regional social media challenges for the first few weeks of the pandemic. This included making vid-

eos and taking pictures according to the day's theme inspired by current trends and the safety measures promoted by the Cree Health Board (Ex: Dance challenge, Proper hand washing, Ça Va Bien Aller rainbows, etc).

Goose Break Subsidy

Date: April – May 2020

Outreach: Regional (Deployed locally)

Objective: Support and promote land use and Cree culture during the pandemic

Also in response to the pandemic lockdown, the CNYC deployed funds from its Special Projects to allocate a subsidy to all communities for their annual Goose Break programs. This was done to increase their local capacity to subsidize youth to go out on the land and allow the youth to confine in spaces where they could practice Cree culture and have a form of cultural safety during uncertain times.

Cree Nation Youth Day

Date: August 14, 2020

Outreach: Regional (Deployed locally)

Objective: Celebrate, recognize, and acknowledge our youth in our communities within Eeyou Istchee

Cree Nation Youth Day is observed annually, and funds are deployed regionally to each community to host a local event celebrating Cree Nation Youth Day. These take the form of activities such as outdoor cookouts, car rallies, etc.

JBNQA Governance Training

Date: August 19-21, 2020

Outreach: Board of Directors

Objective: Educate our young leaders in matters of governance and treaty rights

Activities: Online workshop/lecture with Peter Hutchins

Considering the role of the CNYC as a place of learning for our young leaders, a great importance is placed on the theme of governance. To give them more knowledge of the subject, our Board of Directors got to follow a three-day training delivered by Peter Hutchins, one of the lawyers involved in the process leading to the signature of the James Bay Northern and Quebec Agreement in 1975. This activity was a way to promote the exchange of knowledge and invite them to learn more about the treaties and agreements that affect them and the youth they represent. This was also a means to facilitate the transmission of intergenerational knowledge with the objective to further promote the importance of our JBNQA and the necessity for our youth to know what it entails.

31st Annual General Assembly

Date: November 10-12, 2020

Theme: Aashuumiih – Pass it on to me!

Outreach: Regional (Virtual)

Objective: Train our youth in matters of governance and practice their role in decision making

Activities: Resolutions Training, Community Speed Dating, Governance Matters

This year's Annual General Assembly was the first regional event delivered virtually by the CNYC. Local delegations gathered locally and tuned in through Zoom. Our general assembly was focused on teaching our youth how to formulate resolutions and understanding the importance and power of them establishing the changes and actions they want to see. In this regard, training was delivered to them by Maamuu Consultants. During this edition, the youth also voted on a new logo and were presented the new Cree Youth Strategic Plan taking effect in the next fiscal year. One of the highlight activities was the Community Speed Dating which allowed them to connect with youth in other parts of the territory and get to know them better.

EeYouth Strong – Online Programming

Date: February – March 2021

Outreach: Regional (Virtual)

Partnerships: Cree Health Board (Uschiniichisuu Department)

Objective: Offer tools resources to promote holistic health/ miyupimaatsiwiin within our youth

Activities: Virtual Workshops, Live Cookout Videos and Social Media Challenges

As the pandemic continued, the CNYC assessed a great need to outreach to the youth on matters such as physical, emotional, and mental health. Originally intended to be an in-person event, EeYouth Strong became a pilot project for a series of virtual workshops and challenges deployed weekly. With the help of the Uschiniichisuu Department, facilitators were brought in to deliver a workshop based on themes such as nutrition (Stephanie Sicard), physical health (Elijah Mianscum), resilience (Scott Wabano), culture (Jamie Moses, Stacy Matches, Alexandra Coon) and coping with anxiety (Desiree Petawabano).

Grand Alliance – Information Session

Date: February 17, 2021

Partnerships: Cree Nation Government

Outreach: Regional (Virtual)

Objective: Encourage our youth to be informed on important matters that affect them

Activities: Presentations, Question Period, Livestream

Considering the growing interests and concerns for the Grand Alliance, an information session was organized by the CNYC to facilitate the communication between the youth and the Cree Nation Government. This information session, for which youth signed up to attend or tuned in live, served as a platform to demystify certain claims about the Grand Alliance and provide a space for youth to have their questions answered on the matter.

1st Inspire Hope Awards

Date: March 26, 2021

Outreach: Regional (Virtual)

Objective: Celebrate and recognize the accomplishment of our youth to inspire others

Activities: Live Entertainment, and Awards

Over the years, the Inspire Hope Conference series has become one of the CNYC's best known events. However, with the impossibility of hosting it in person, the format was changed to Recognition Awards. Nominations were submitted regionally by individuals throughout the territory who then voted for the youth. The event culminated with a virtual Award's Ceremony hosted live on our Facebook page and JBCCS.

Winter Journey

Date: March 27 – April 3, 2021

Theme: Miyughinwhythatau

Outreach: Local (Whapmagoostui)

Partnerships: Environmental and Remedial Works (Challenge Fund), Cree Nation of Whapmagoostui

Purpose: increase public awareness, understanding, and interest in Protected Areas for Eeyou/Eenou

The Cree Nation Government, the Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) and Whapmagoostui First Nation collaborated to organize and carry out a traditional youth winter journey through the Challenge Fund. This journey took place between the community of Whapmagoostui and the Burton Lake, Roggan River and Point Louis XIV protected areas. During this project, youth got to partake in an Ice Safety and Rescue training by Boreal River, benefit from the transfer of knowledge and cultural practices on the land, as well as increase their awareness about protected areas. Originally intended to be regional, the outreach of this project was reduced to a locally lead event in respect of the COVID safety measures and travel restrictions in place. A documentary by Benjamin Masty capturing the journey and the youth's increasing awareness of protected areas will be released in the months to come.

Photo: Benjamin Masty



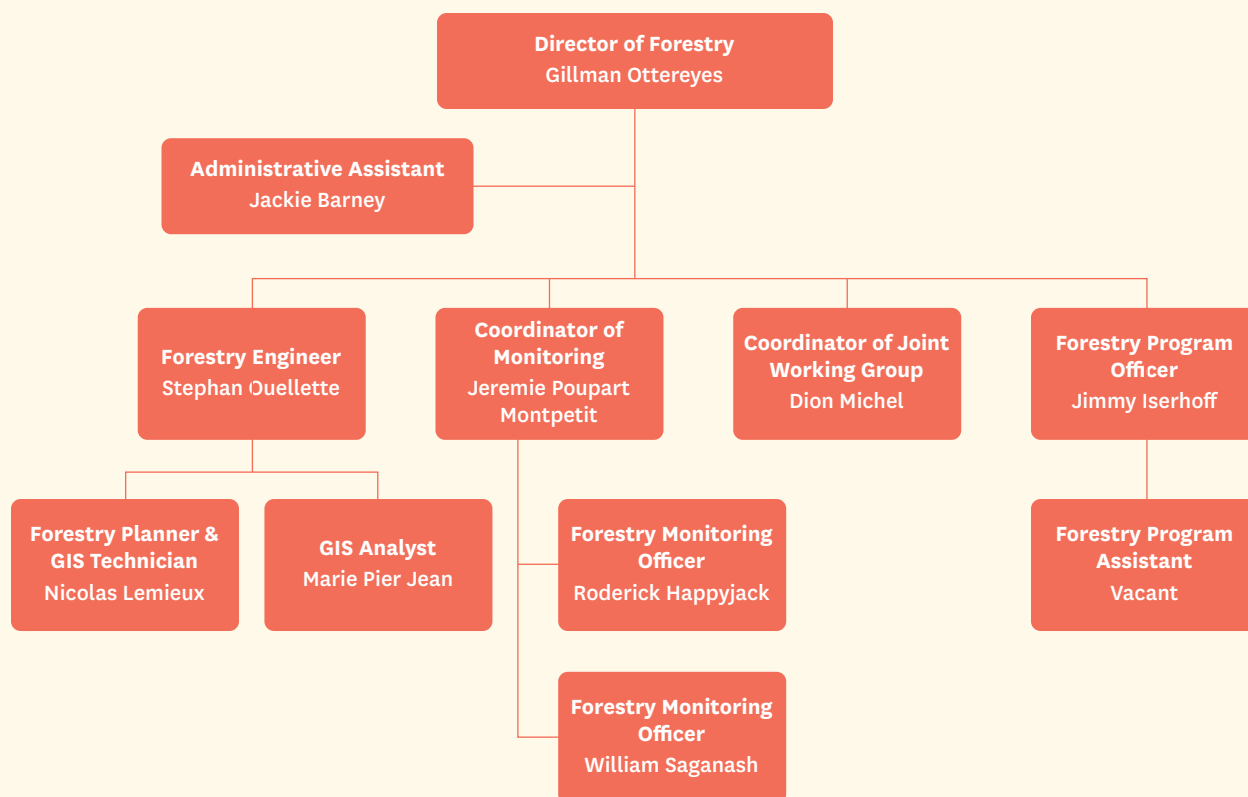
INTRODUCTION

It is the mandate of the Forestry Department to administer the forestry regime and oversee all forestry-related programs of the Cree Nation Government. The scope of our mandate will increase year by year throughout the 2020s, as the Cree Nation Government assumes greater responsibility for forestry planning and management in Eeyou Istchee.

Chapter 3 of the Paix des Braves Agreement established the Adapted Forest Regime (AFR), aimed at balancing industrial forestry operations with the activities and rights of Cree land users. The Baril-Moses Agreement established a similar regime for the Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou traplines east of the height of land. The Forestry Department works to ensure that the rules and protections of Chapter 3 are applied across the territory.

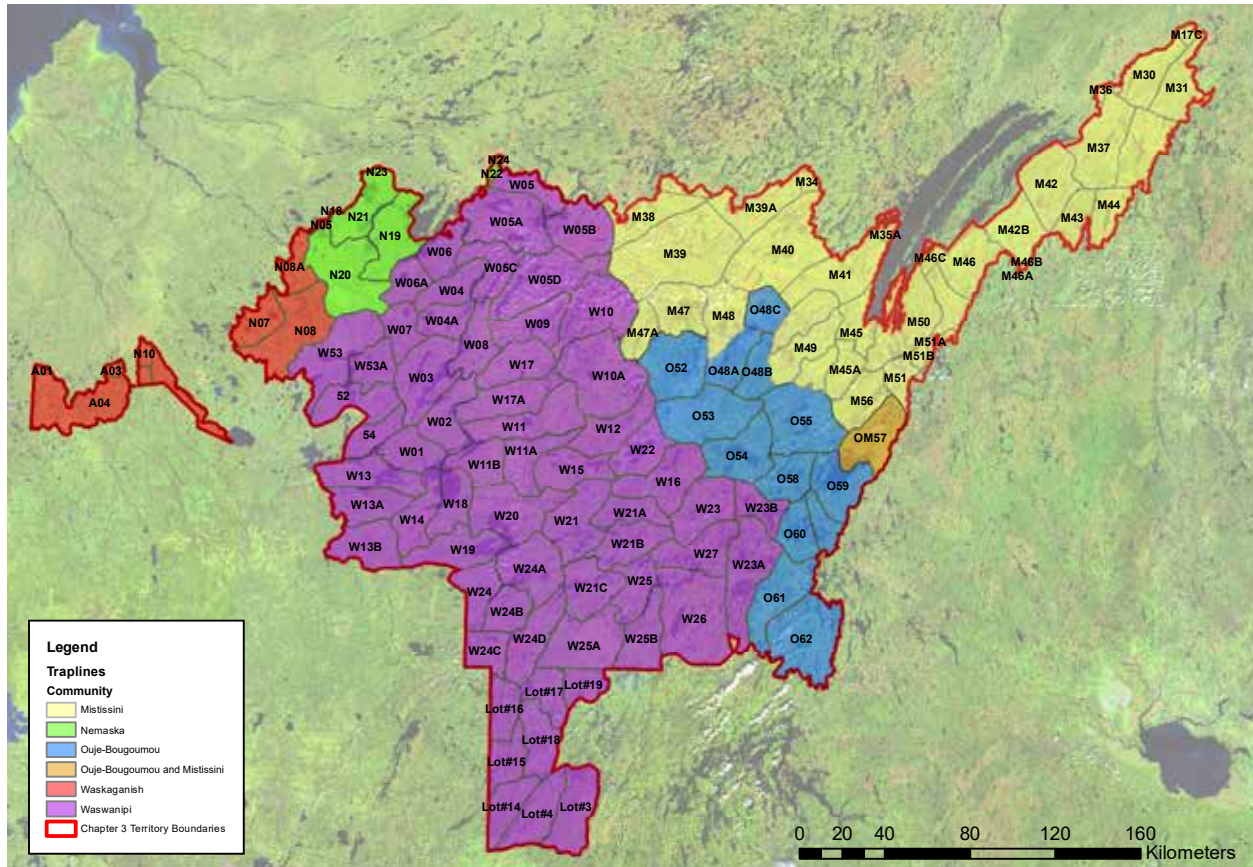
The Governance Agreement signed with Quebec in 2012 established a Collaborative Forestry Regime for Category II lands, to be implemented in two five-year phases. During Phase One (2021-26), the Cree Nation Government will increase its forest management and planning capacities with financial and technical assistance from Quebec, which assumes core responsibility for forestry planning. By the time we enter Phase Two, this Forestry Department will have the training, expertise, and capacity necessary to meet the new obligations of the Cree Nation Government and prepare all forestry management plans for traplines in Category II lands. Hence the work of this Department in 2020-21 focused on building our capacity for the future.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT STAFF

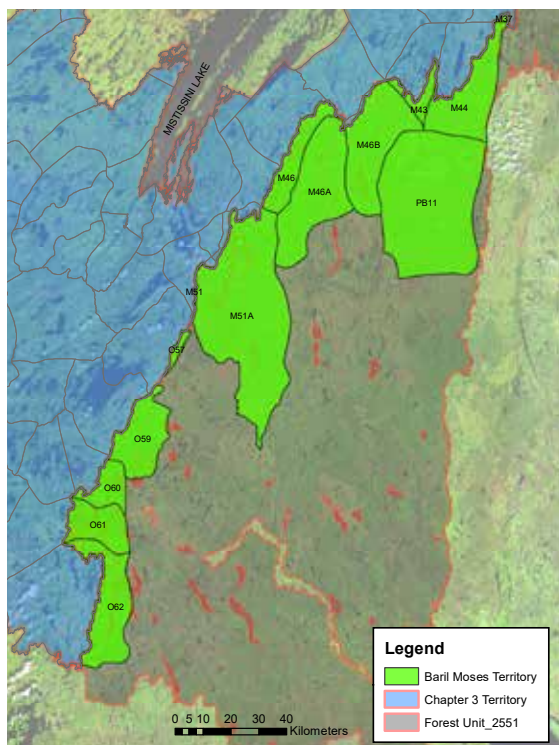


CREE COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY FORESTRY

Traplines within the Chapter 3 Territory



Baril Moses Territory Boundary



FORESTRY ACTIVITY IN 2020-21

Table 1 shows forestry-related activities within the Chapter 3 territory in the 2020-21 forestry season. 116 traplines were affected, including 83 traplines that experienced harvesting, 90 impacted by forestry roads, and 42 subject to silviculture activities.

Assisting in the implementation of 3.6o of the *Paix des Braves*

The Crees have the first right of say on 15% of the silvicultural work budget within the Chapter 3 territory. Our Forestry Engineer assists the Commerce and Industry Department in providing contracts and distributing the work among eligible Cree companies. Table 2 presents the budget allocated to each silvicultural enterprise in 2020-21.

CREE TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement Program mitigates the impacts of forestry. It addresses the practical concerns of Cree trappers and land users by funding local projects that enhance and reinforce Cree traditional activities. Jointly funded by the Cree Nation Government and Quebec, the Enhancement Program provides immediate concrete support for tallymen, trappers, and Cree land users whose traditional activities have been affected by industrial forestry.

Enhancement Funding 2020-21

More than \$3 million was disbursed this year on over 500 enhancement projects that will benefit 122 traplines across the territory. Thirty-eight (38) funding agreements were recommended for approval, totalling \$3,046,318.06, which represents disbursements of 89.32% of the overall Enhancement budget for 2020-21. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of disbursements by community.

Figure 1. Enhancement Disbursements 2020-21

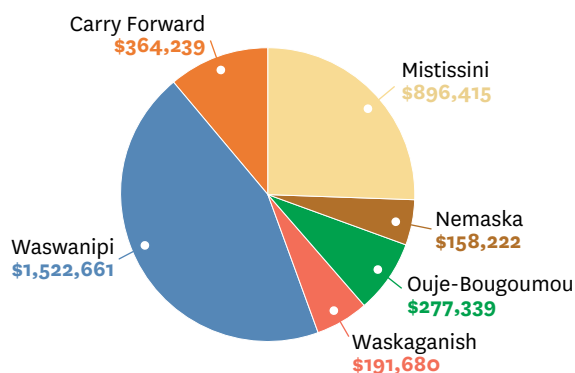


Table 1. Traplines affected by Forestry Activity 2020-21

| COMMUNITY | HARVESTING | | ROADS | | SILVICULTURAL | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Waswanipi (62) | 49 | 13 | 57 | 5 | 37 | 25 |
| Mistissini (32) | 22 | 10 | 20 | 12 | 1 | 31 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou (12) | 10 | 2 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Nemaska (7) | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Waskaganish (3) | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Total (116) | 83 | 33 | 90 | 26 | 42 | 74 |

Table 2. Budget distribution for Cree silvicultural enterprises 2020-21

| ENTERPRISE | BUDGET (\$) | % OF THE BUDGET |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Staakun Enterprise | \$996,130 | 50.11% |
| Dooden | \$187,290 | 9.92% |
| Weshthau | \$186,381 | 9.38% |
| Miiyunakutaw | \$186,381 | 9.38% |
| Eenatuk Forestry | \$421,784 | 21.22% |
| Total | \$1,977,966 | 100% |

Table 3. Enhancement Funds Available and Disbursed 2020-21

| COMMUNITY | FUNDS AVAILABLE | DISBURSEMENTS |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mistissini | \$993,876.56 | \$896,415.33 |
| Nemaska | \$158,222.04 | \$158,222.04 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | \$277,339.28 | \$277,339.28 |
| Waskaganish | \$234,717.93 | \$191,680.20 |
| Waswanipi | \$1,746,401.31 | \$1,522,661.21 |
| Total Funds | \$3,410,557.12 | \$3,046,318.06 |



Spot check on Nemaska cabin construction, September 2020
(Talleyman: Billy James Jolly)

Enhancement Projects

The main goal of the Enhancement Agreement is to conciliate changes due to forestry activities and address the practical needs of trappers. Projects eligible for funding include replacing or relocating facilities (camps, docks, etc.), constructing boat landings, upgrading sites of interest (gathering places, etc.), snow removal and road maintenance in cases where such activities facilitate access to a camp, projects that facilitate travel by trappers, and other measures that reinforce the exercise of hunting, fishing and trapping activities.

Also eligible for funding are stream enhancement work, beaver and muskrat relocation, spawning ground enhancement and related preparation projects, as well as trail network development, portage and snowmobile trail enhancement, silviculture work, and other wildlife habitat enhancement projects, such as moose yards – all projects that enhance the productivity of traplines and assist Cree land users in coping with the impacts of forestry.

Table 4 shows the total projects funded and traplines benefitted by the Enhancement program in 2020-21.

Renewal of the Agreement

The *Agreement Regarding Cree Traditional Activities Enhancement* was signed in 2005 and renewed in 2013. Negotiations are in progress to renew the Agreement for a further term. In 2020-21, the Forestry Department undertook a thorough review of all facets of this program; the resulting report is in the final stages of completion.

Site Visits

Every year, we conduct Annual Monitoring Spot Checks for projects funded through the Enhancement Program in the previous year. Despite the obstacles posed by the pandemic in 2020-21, site visits were conducted in July, August, and September by Forestry Department staff, with Community Forestry Program Officers and representatives from Quebec. With a rare exception, projects were found to have been completed satisfactorily.



Spot Check on Mistissini cabin renovation, August 2020
(Talleyman: Stanley Mianscum)



Spot Check on Waskaganish trail to boat landing area, September 2020 (Talleyman: Lawrence Katapatuk)

Table 4. Enhancement Projects 2020-21

| COMMUNITY | TRAPLINES ENHANCED | TOTAL PROJECTS |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Waswanipi | 61 | 297 |
| Mistissini | 36 | 152 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 13 | 41 |
| Nemaska | 4 | 4 |
| Waskaganish | 8 | 8 |
| Totals | 122 | 502 |

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT WILDLIFE FILES

Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy

Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves Agreement* recognizes the importance of Mixedwood stands and their rarity in the territory. It requires the collaborative development of a distinct approach to managing forestry activity in these stands. Following extensive consultations with each community affected by commercial forestry operations, the Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy was completed this year, developed by Quebec in close collaboration with the Cree Nation Government, through a joint committee of experts.

A “mixedwood stand” is defined as a forest stand composed of a blend of softwood (coniferous) and hardwood (broad-leaved) trees. Mixedwood stands create a diversity of rare critical habitats, food sources, and travel corridors for many species in Eeyou Istchee, including species sensitive to the impacts of forestry and species of high interest for the Crees, such as moose. They are an important part of the forest matrix for both their ecological role and for the role they play in Cree life and Cree history. Mixedwood stands are invaluable sources of materials, resources, and medicines for the Cree people. And because they are rare, they are used as landmarks for Cree tallymen. The conservation of mixedwood stands is thus a key issue for the Forestry Department.

The objectives of the Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy are: to maintain a number of mature mixedwood stands in each trapline; to ensure mixedwood stand renewal; to maintain young diversified mixedwood stands; and to limit impacts on hardwood and softwood annual allowable cut. The Strategy uses the trapline as the basic planning scale. Each trapline is allocated a maintenance threshold for mature mixedwood stands, based on the concept of a critical habitat threshold for species that are sensitive to forest management.

In December 2020, the Cree Quebec Forestry Board remarked on the success of this collaborative accomplishment when it recommended that the Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy be implemented with ongoing monitoring to ensure that the quality of wildlife habitats in the Chapter 3 territory and on each of the traplines is maintained.

Wildlife Habitat Directives

Closely related to the Mixedwood Stands Management Strategy, but with more far-reaching objectives, Chapter 3 calls for the collaborative development of practical directives guiding the forestry planning process to foster the protection and development of wildlife habitats. A joint Cree-Quebec committee has been working on elaborating on these wildlife habitat directives. In 2020-21, Forestry Department staff facilitated discussions on the directives, aiming to provide better insight into wildlife protection from a Cree land user’s standpoint and more directly include traditional Cree knowledge. The deadline for completing Directives has been delayed, due in part to the pandemic, giving us the coming year to continue contributing to this file.

Woodland Caribou in Chapter 3 territory

There is little habitat left in the Chapter 3 territory for the woodland caribou, a threatened species. A joint Cree-Quebec subcommittee has been working on this file since March 2018, and in 2020-21, despite the obstacles of the pandemic, the work progressed slowly. Quebec representatives presented the province’s scenarios of ecosystemic harvesting, and Cree representatives made suggestions for improvement. As of March 2021, Quebec’s scenarios are ready to be presented to the Cree communities. However, this is a very complex file, and it will be difficult to reach a consensus with the various users of the territory.

Revision of Sites of Interest and Relocation of non-listed Biological Refuges

Chapter 3 of the *Paix des Braves Agreement* allows for 1% of the total area of a trapline included in a development unit to be identified as Sites of Interest, on which no forest development activities may be undertaken unless the tallyman agrees otherwise. Such sites might include seasonal camps, burial sites, fruit-picking areas, archeological sites, bear dens, portage trails, or other sites of interest to the Cree people. The Agreement also provides for the creation of Sites of Wildlife Interest for each trapline. These areas, which total 25% of the productive forest area on any given trapline, provide a further layer of precision for forest management activities in sensitive wildlife habitats identified by the tallymen.

Since the Agreement was signed in 2002, many changes in the territory affect these 1% and 25% identifications. For example, new protected areas have been created, such as the aquatic reserve around Waswanipi Lake. Natural changes such as forest fires have had an impact on the amount of land or productive areas that can be statistically included in the size of sites of interest. The Forestry Department has compiled all of these statistical changes and is now working with the tallymen to revise their 1% and 25% areas to ensure that they benefit from the full protection of lands afforded by the Agreement. Our GIS Analyst and Forestry Planning Officer are also using this exercise to relocate unregistered biological refuges on many traplines.

To be able to accomplish this work, our GIS Analyst conducted a full meticulous review of the supporting datasets with Quebec this year. In December 2020, we submitted the first results to Quebec. We will continue with this important work until all areas of special interest and unregistered biological refuges are relocated to meet the needs of the tallymen and other Cree users of the traplines.

Forestry Planning IT Capacity

A first step in undertaking our new responsibilities in forestry planning is to ensure that we have the capacity to obtain and store the digital data on which the framework of the Collaborative Forestry Regime rests, and to transfer forestry management data from Quebec to the Cree Nation Government. Throughout 2020-21, our Forestry Planner and GIS Analyst worked with Quebec to initiate this data transfer. Staff underwent GIS training in order to migrate to a new software

(ArcGIS Pro) and, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government's IT experts, we set up an in-house computer data storage system to meet our future forestry planning needs. As this data transfer involves confidential information, we developed a data-sharing agreement with Quebec, working around the challenges posed by the pandemic.

FORESTRY JOINT WORKING GROUPS

The Department's Joint Working Group Coordinator works with the communities affected by forestry to find collaborative solutions 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 5 Cree communities affected by forestry has a Joint Working Group (JWG), created to harmonize forestry activities with the activities of Cree land users. The objectives of the JWGs are: to ensure the participation of

the Crees in the planning of forest development activities in the territory; to ensure that forest development takes into account the protection of wildlife habitats and Cree traditional ways of life; and to resolve disputes that arise between users in regard to forestry. The JWGs are a collaborative Cree-Quebec effort. 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.

The JWGs monitor a wide range of forestry activity, including the volumes of wood harvested and silvicultural treatments undertaken, the application of the harmonization measures, the evolution of the forest and its regeneration, and the impacts on Cree land users. They monitor operations to ensure that they conform with approved forest plans and with the standards of the adapted forestry regime and to identify any problems resulting from forest develop-



ment activities. The Department's Field Monitoring Program (see below) assists with this extensive on-the-ground work.

A key highlight of our JWG Coordinator's work in 2020-21 is the creation of Consultation Process Guides that will inform our future work. A diagnostic project on forestry harmonization conducted by the CQFB identified several problematic elements in the implementation of forestry plans regarding the accessibility of procedures, delays in work completion, and lack of validation related to the consultation and conflict resolution process. To address these issues, three guides are currently under draft: 1) the *Internal Operating Rules (IOR)*, which will define operations, specify mandates, and explain the process that each JWG member must respect; 2) the *Harmonization Management Guide*, which will provide a template and clarify steps in the harmonization process; and 3) the *Conflict Resolution Guide*, which will frame a process for ensuring that every land-use conflict is appropriately addressed in sequential steps. Our Field Monitoring Coordinator and JWG Coordinator are working with their Quebec counterparts to hasten the completion of these consultation process guides.

The Annual Cycle of Forestry Planning Consultations

On April first of each year, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government, Quebec authorizes forestry companies to harvest wood in the territory. Cree representatives from each of the 129 affected traplines are consulted in the forestry planning processes and in monitoring the implementation of forestry management plans – a process that can require mediation and conciliation in the event of disagreements as plans are implemented. This consultation process is a collaborative effort led by Forestry Department staff, including our Forest Planner, JWG Coordinator, and our Field Monitoring team.

PRAN Consultations

Early in the calendar year, we assist the Joint Working Groups 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. In 2020-21, the pandemic delayed this process due to the difficulties of consulting with tallymen whose traplines were affected by the planned harvest. However, we were able to work remotely to allow for consultation and the harmonization of plans. A good deal of time and effort in the spring and summer 2020 was put into successfully aligning the planned areas with the annual harvest. In July 2020, following the issuance of the Annual Programming authorized by Quebec, planning began for special consultations for the modification of operational integrated forest management plans (PAFIO).

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

2020-21, we were better equipped to conduct this complaint assessment and conflict resolution work, thanks to the launch of our Field Monitoring Program (see below). In collaboration with our Forest Planner and the Joint Working Groups, our monitoring staff went into the field to ensure that all complaints were subject to a thorough evaluation process and that data was collected and provided in time to resolve each matter.

Among such files in 2020-21, validations were made over specific road outlines (Lot#15, W11A, W24A), and harvesting block limits (W13B) to ensure compliance with the current planning and the agreements reached during consultations. Further activities were realized to document road blockages and forestry infrastructure that would prevent road access for local land users (W02, W04A, W08). We also put in place a special project documenting road incidents between Cree land users and forestry workers, following several complaints regarding unsafe practices on forest roads.

Monitoring and Modifications

Throughout the year, we monitor forestry activities and oversee disputes and problems that arise, ensuring that appropriate consultation is undertaken prior to any modifications of the approved forest management plans. In 2020-21, monitoring and counselling sessions were offered to the tallymen of several traplines subject to major conflicts (W11A, W12, W23A, W24, W24A, W24B) to document current issues, evaluate alternatives, and gather field data to improve on planning or the location of land protections. Special counselling sessions were provided to some land users (W23A, W24B) to draft a harmonization plan that will ensure a level of protection over culturally important landmarks such as traditional mountains, important waterways, and sensitive wildlife areas. Counselling sessions were also offered to the tallymen of traplines subject to minor conflicts (W26, W27, W53A), which should result in field monitoring sessions in the coming year.

Special Consultations

Department staff facilitate further consultations as necessary throughout the year to settle local forestry-related disputes that arise during the harvesting season, working in collaboration with the Joint Working Groups. In 2020-21, for example, we assisted in consultations and data gathering required for the finalization of the conciliation process for trapline W16, working to ensure that appropriate protections are granted for identified sensitive areas.

THE FIELD MONITORING PROGRAM

Perhaps the brightest highlight of the Forestry Department's capacity-building efforts this year is the launch of our Field Monitoring Program, developed to assist the Joint Working Groups in fulfilling their mandates. While monitoring operations had previously been completed by external sources, this in-house Program will better address issues from the Cree perspective, shifting the focus of monitoring from industrial objectives to Cree cultural and conservation objectives, and at the same time increasing our independence

by enhancing the capacity of the Cree Nation Government. Furthermore, the program creates opportunities of field monitoring employment and development in the Cree communities. With benefits that radiate far beyond its original mandate, the Field Monitoring Program brings cutting-edge technology and forestry data-gathering techniques to support traditional knowledge acquisition, transmission, and consideration in forestry operations and lands management.

Under the leadership of our Field Monitoring Coordinator, with our monitoring team in place by Fall 2020, we initiated a testing period for the implementation of field work procedures. As the pandemic restricted travel between Cree communities at that time, testing was mainly conducted around the Waswanipi community and southwards near Senneterre. From January 2021, the activities covered a larger portion of the territory and at the end of April 2021, the program was fully operational throughout the territory covered by Chapter 3 of Paix des Braves.

As forestry activity near Nemaska and Waskaganish has decreased significantly in recent years, the Monitoring team focused most of its efforts in this first year of operations on the 3 communities impacted by current implementation of forestry plans. Over the course of 2020-21, we reached out to land users and tallymen from more than 40 traplines across the Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, and Mistissini communities. Of these, 29 traplines benefitted from field monitoring of over 130 issues spanning a range of elements, including harmonization measures, camps and cultural areas, complaints and damages to infrastructure, and monitoring of wildlife. Table 5 summarizes our efforts.

We are ready to increase our monitoring efforts in the coming year, assisting more land users from more traplines and communities across Eeyou Istchee. In 2020-21, we acquired most of the team's critical field tools, including safety equipment, field communications devices, and office resources. During this first year of the Program, the team rented its transportation and field equipment. However, future acquisition of our own fleet of vehicles (trucks, ATVs,

snowmobiles, boat, trailers) will allow for greater independence and long-term cost-effectiveness.

In 2020-21, our Field Monitoring Coordinator began developing a new monitoring protocol that serves Cree land users and encompasses all facets of the consultation process. He also began discussions to acquire and introduce the STRATA-FIMS and GIS online tools to our monitoring practices, along with ongoing staff training, to improve data harvesting and transmission and enhance the quality of data validation following field activities.

The initial objective of our Field Monitoring Program was to provide monitoring services only over Category II lands, to support the Cree Nation Government as we progress into Phase 2 of the Collaborative Forest Regime. However, following an assessment of the issues, complaints, and conflicts affecting forestry-related land use in the different Cree communities, we realized that operations should be extended over Category III lands as well, to assist with file resolution and data gathering. Similarly, though initially intended to support the JVGs in fulfilling their mandates regarding the implementation of field harmonization resulting from forestry consultations, the scope of the Field Monitoring Program has quickly expanded into answering wider issues, such as land users' complaints on forestry, wildlife protection, cultural site location and protection, and conflict resolution. To capitalize on our staff expertise and exploit the benefits of our field work, the monitoring team is also contributing to the harvesting of data for other files within and beyond the Forestry Department. Table 6 summarizes the Program's activities and benefits.

This has been a year of capacity-building and expansion for the Forestry Department, and these are just some of the ways that we have worked on behalf of the Cree communities to oversee forest management in the territory, enhancing our independence and improving our economy while mitigating the impacts of forestry and protecting our ways of life.

Table 5. Monitoring of traplines 2020-21

| COMMUNITY | TOTAL TRAPLINES | TRAPLINES ON CAT II LANDS | HARMONIZATION | CAMP AREAS | CULTURAL AREAS | COMPLAINTS | WILDLIFE AREAS |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Waswanipi | 23/62 | 13/22 | 35 | 47 | 14 | 7 | 3 |
| Mistissini | 4/32 | 4/22 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 2/12 | 0/7 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Nemaska | 0/7 | 0/0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waskaganish | 0/3 | 0/0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 29/116 | 17/51 | 46 | 59 | 15 | 8 | 3 |

Table 6. Scope of the Field Monitoring Program, 2020-21

| MANDATE | SERVICE | BENEFITS TO LAND USERS |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Field Monitoring | Harmonization assessment (JWG consultation process) | -Providing data on harmonization -Documenting the state of completion -Documenting tallyman satisfaction -Reporting on required corrective measures |
| | Wildlife assessment | -Locating spawning areas (e.g., walleye) -Documenting moose yards -Identifying bear den locations |
| | Cultural site assessment | -Locating traditional burial grounds -Locating Kaban/Sojourn areas -Locating spring water sources -Identifying important cultural landmarks |
| | Damage assessment | -Locating washed out roads -Documenting camp damages -Documenting road incidents |
| | Complaint assessment | -Evaluating outlines of forestry blocks -Validating planned road outlines/limits -Documenting land use issues |
| Forestry Counselling | Harmonization planning | -Explaining the scope of potential requests -Finding alternatives to rejected requests |
| | Forestry agreements training | -Explaining the scope of forestry agreements, forestry practices, and silvicultural treatments to land users -Providing tools to improve management practice on traplines |
| | Conflict resolution | -Providing support to the JWGs on data gathering and discussion of alternatives |





EYYOU EENOU POLICE FORCE

Message from the Interim Police Director Sherman Masty

THIS PAST YEAR BROUGHT A SITUATION TO OUR COMMUNITIES THAT WE HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WORKING ON THE FRONTLINE AS FIRST RESPONDERS. IF THERE WAS A TIME FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO JOIN HANDS, THIS WAS THE PERFECT MOMENT.

In March 2020, as COVID-19 cases were reported in different parts of the country, the Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EPPF) lost no time to draft and launch Operation Epidemic focusing on its mandate to ensure community safety while respecting freedoms and acting in concert with other organizations at both local and regional levels. All year long the EPPF prioritized safety for the communities, the citizens, and its staff. For example, all detachment commanders were asked to sit on local Task Force Committees and make sure local officers contributed where they were needed.

The EPPF also continued with its mission by responding to calls, initiating crime prevention activities, and enforcing the law upon those posing a threat to community safety.

The information below provides a summary of the various achievements reached during the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

TRANSITION

This was a year of transition for the EPPF. Director David Bergeron left the organization and resumed his regular duties at the Sûreté du Québec after an extended sick leave; he was on a secondment from the SQ. Toward the end of the year, Deputy-Director Jim Hester took a well-deserved retirement after nearly 42 years of service in the Cree communities. We wish them well in their new endeavours.

This situation led to a shuffle at the Regional Police Headquarters, where Inspector Sherman Masty became Interim Director while Captain Donathan Saganash took charge of the operations as Deputy-Director, assisted by Lieutenant Audrey-Anna Icebound, and Lieutenant Patrick Masty who took the Captain positions in Chisasibi and Wemindji, respectively.

These positions are expected to be posted in the spring/summer of 2021 and it will be up to the Selection Committee to make recommendations to the Cree Nation Government. This committee has three members: The Executive Director of the Cree Nation Government, the Chairman of the Police Commission, and the Cree Nation Government Director of Human Resources.

This year also saw the hiring of Mrs. Sarah Saganash as Controller of the EPPF. Her role is to assist Senior Management by taking charge of the administration in support of operations. Among other things, she is responsible for the budget follow-up, civilian staff, bridging with the Cree Nation Government's Human Resources, disciplinary processes, as well as IT and Material Resources. Upon entry, she was given the important task of setting up the Eeyou Eenou Call Dispatch Centre.

Due to COVID-19 precautionary measures, only one meeting took place with the Cree Nation Government Police Commission and the focus was policing services and identifying priorities for the upcoming year.

STAFFING

In term of staffing, this past year was no exception and increasing the number of staff remained a challenging task. However, EPPF was able to maintain global staffing revolving around ninety members. (See Figures 1 and 2)

RECRUITMENT

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Cree Nation Government Human Resources Department, fifty-two interviews were conducted which led to the hiring of thirty-one new officers. The downside of this success was the high turnover rate. Travel restrictions imposed under COVID-19 guidelines caused additional stress. Overall, twenty-eight officers opted to resign. Most of them were hired by police forces closer to their homes. Most of our contractual officers are from the southern part of the province and the vast majority are planning to pursue careers in their region.

To become a full-fledged police officer in the province of Quebec, a candidate must meet the requirements of the Quebec Police Act. The first step is submitting to a full character investigation before entering college in the Police Technology Program in order to graduate with a Diploma of College Studies (DEC) or an Attestation of College Studies (AEC). The latter is based on DEC program curricula and is more flexible which allows for the particularities and reality of Cree candidates.

Figure 1. Eeyou Eenou Police Force Organizational Chart, updated May 10, 2021.

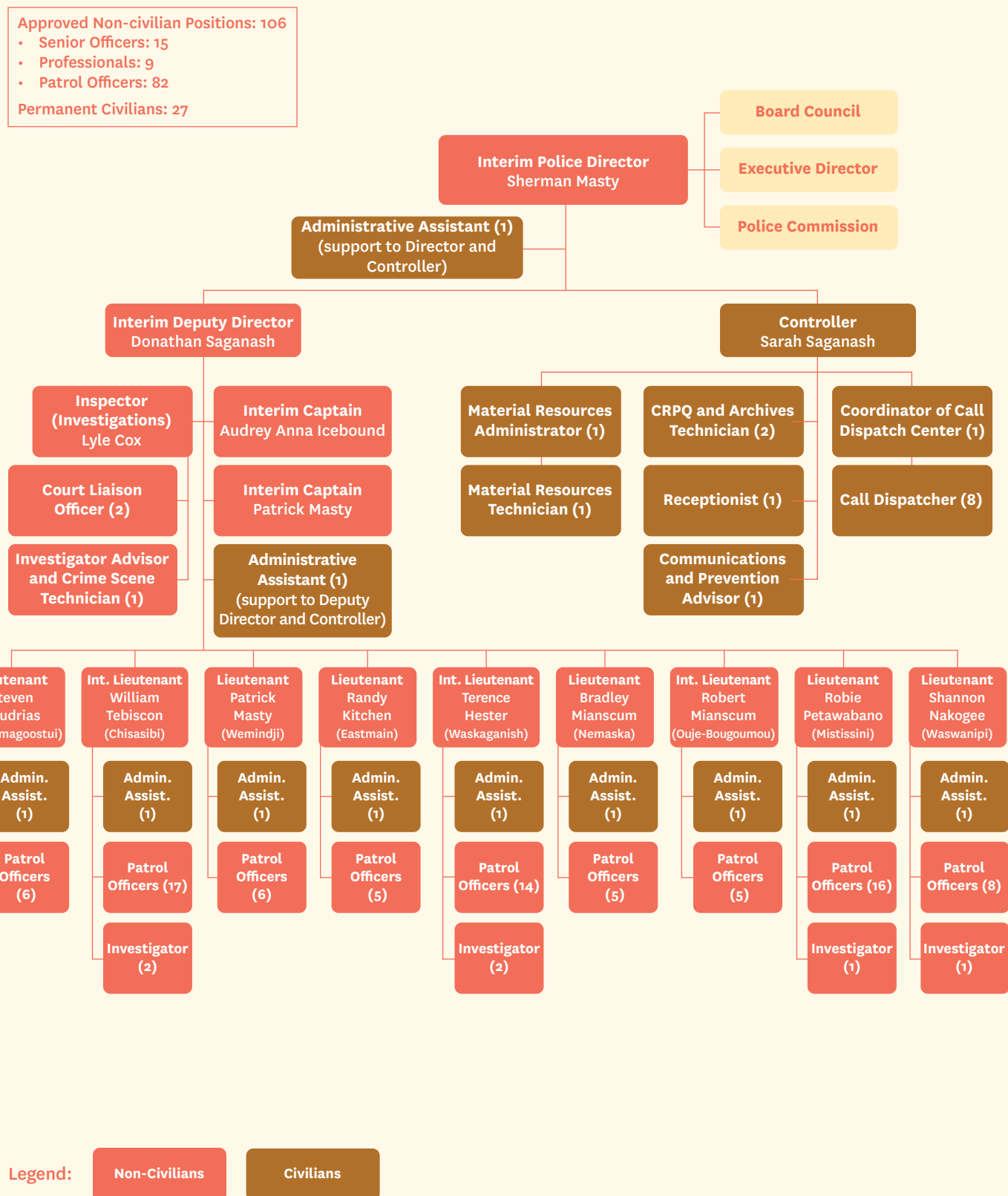
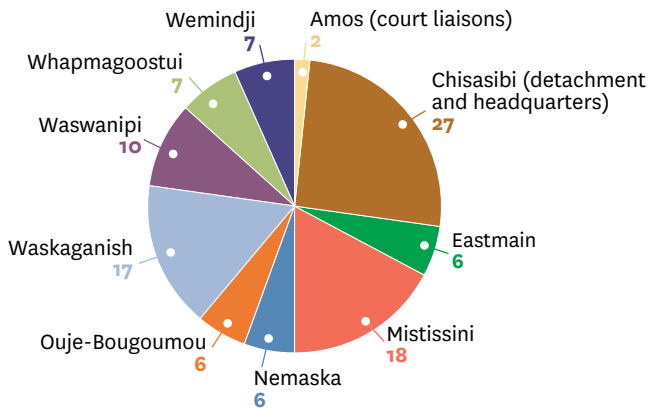


Figure 2. Approved positions for non-civilian staff per community, 2020



We currently have nine Cree candidates attending this program at the Abitibi-Témiscamingue College in Rouyn. Once the AEC program is completed, they will move on to the Quebec Police Academy (ENPQ) where they are expected to graduate by the end of 2021. It must be said that this program is quite demanding both physically and mentally, and those who succeed deserve high regard. Their success reflects on the entire Cree Nation which makes us very proud.

As for civilian staff at headquarters, the EEPF recruited Mrs. Jessica Fortin-Bisson as a new CRPQ Archives Technician since Marie-Pier Roy became the Call Dispatch Centre Coordinator. The training process for eight full-time dispatchers for the Eeyou Eenuu Call Dispatch Centre also began.

TRAINING

Training doesn't stop when joining the organization but is a continuous process through which professional skills are updated and upgraded. Figure 3 provides a list of additional training provided to EEPF members. While most training resources are directed to rank and file members, Senior Officers are not left aside as they also receive training adapted to their particular needs, namely management skills.

POLICING SERVICES

Although COVID-19 remained a concern throughout the year and created countless hurdles, the focus on improving policing services remained. One decision that will carry major impacts for years to come is the Cree Nation Government's Management Committee approval of the creation of a call center within the EEPF, to be staffed by trained personnel, and equipped with the latest technology. Its implementation will be gradual, starting with Chisasibi and expanding to include all Cree communities as a new radio-system is installed.

At the same time, the Management Committee approved the acquisition of an upgraded radiocommunication system which will be compatible with the Call Dispatch Centre. The

Call for Tenders was published at the end of the current fiscal year and bids should be in by mid-2021.

Last but not least, the Management Committee approved three additional investigator positions to be filled in Chisasibi, Waswanipi, and Waskaganish in response to the increased occurrences of criminal cases within Eeyou Istchee.

OPERATIONS

In June 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls presented its report, followed in September by the presentation of the Viens Commission report. Both inquiries looked at the way aboriginal women have been treated in the judicial system and submitted a comprehensive list of recommendations.

Upon review of these reports, the EEPF conducted a thorough review of all sexual offense cases dating back to its creation in 2011. This led to the implementation of Operation Fishnet, the largest operation ever conducted by the EEPF. The objective was to assess each case and determine if it had been dealt with properly and in accordance with best practices. If there were flaws, the case was reopened and an investigation plan was set up with a determined follow-up. From start to end, 867 cases were reviewed, and no efforts were spared in completing the mission. The strategy was to thoroughly examine every side from the victim all the way to the Crown Prosecutor. Training was provided to officers, investigators, and senior officers alike. Each knew what their role was and an experienced retired police officer was appointed as Coordinator in order to make sure the plan was respected.

Figure 3. Training for Eeyou Eenuu Police Force staff, 2020

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| In-house Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal investigation of a sexual assault <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 Lieutenants and 5 Investigators - Inspector and Director • Supervisory course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 Lieutenants |
| Recall and ENPQ Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Radar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 officers • DataMaster Tech (impaired driving by alcohol) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 officers • Alco-Sensor FST Calibration Tech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 officers • Impaired driving by drugs - online course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all officers and Lieutenants • Pistol requalification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all EEPF policing staff up-to-date • Taser requalification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all EEPF policing staff up-to-date |



DAY 1 OF COVID-19 VACCINATION IN WASKAGANISH

January 16, 2021

Local EEPF Officers
getting vaccinated against
COVID-19

Photo: Rupert Stream/CBHSSJB

In addition to this major operation, the EEPF responded to a vast number of incidents as shown in Table 1 subdivided per type of occurrences and location.

For the past 10 years, the EEPF has invested time and effort to update its practices and integrate a policing community database called the Centre des renseignements policiers du Québec or the Quebec Police Intelligence Centre, better known as the CRPQ. It is used by all policing agencies in the province to interface with other Canadian police organizations and internationally with Interpol. The EEPF is part of this network which is used for sharing criminal intelligence between police forces and public bodies concerned. It is at the heart of the fight against crime.

When responding to any event, a police officer must complete an occurrence report as soon as they intervene with a person suspected of having committed a criminal offense. This report is recorded at the Quebec Police Intelligence Centre (CRPQ). From there on, the disposition of an offender's case is shared with the policing community and it is updated throughout the criminal trial.

This information is dynamic, which means it is constantly updated as new information becomes available. Table 2 is an example of the list of the number of people the EEPF would have in its database on a given day. The presentation is generic in order to prevent the identification of people involved.

Of course, such information is strictly confidential and queries are made on a need-to-know basis. Those violating this rule are subject to strict sanctions including immediate dismissal.

EQUIPMENT

The EEPF, in conjunction with the Capital Works and Services Department, is seeking bids to upgrade its obsolete radio-communication system which was inherited from previous local organizations. This system, along with the Call Dispatch Centre, is essential to improve policing services as well as officer safety. Dispatchers will be prioritizing calls and dispatching first-responders on site where needed while compiling preliminary information. Since the Call Dispatch Centre will have its own Coordinator, services to the public and supervision of staff will be improved around the clock.

FACILITIES

Following the Management Committee's recommendations, the Cree Nation Government has approved construction of new facilities for Chisasibi and Ouje-Bougoumou detachments. The expansion and renovation of Waswanipi and Wemindji detachments were also approved.

CONCLUSION

Despite difficult conditions brought about by COVID-19 and the ensuing precautionary measures, the EEPF remains constant in improving the quality of policing services by working in close collaboration with the Police Commission and other community stakeholders. We look forward to the next year.

In closing, Eeyou Eenu Police Force Senior Management would like to express its sincere gratitude to all staff working on the frontline for their dedication and constant focus on safety. To the communities we serve: Thank you for your continuous support.

Table 1. Eeyou Eenu Police Force Crime Statistics by Community, 2020

| | CHISASIBI | EASTMAIN | MISTISSINI | NEMASKA | OUIE-BOUGOUMOU | WASKAGANISH | WASWANAPI | WHAPMAGOOSTUI | WEMINDJI | ALL DETACHMENTS |
|--|-----------|----------|------------|---------|----------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|
| Offenses Against the Person | 216 | 31 | 244 | 72 | 60 | 192 | 155 | 114 | 81 | 1165 |
| Crimes Against the Property | 60 | 17 | 114 | 42 | 35 | 93 | 83 | 67 | 29 | 540 |
| Other Offences Under the Criminal Code | 51 | 11 | 23 | 12 | 6 | 84 | 34 | 10 | 8 | 239 |
| Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) | 8 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 32 |
| Vehicle Traffic Offences | 33 | 8 | 47 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 25 | 33 | 17 | 187 |
| Community By-Law | 227 | 9 | 249 | 81 | 19 | 303 | 147 | 33 | 75 | 1143 |

**Table 2. Example of Centre des renseignements policiers du Québec (CRPQ)
Statistics for Valid Cases, Eeyou Eeenu Police Force by Community, 2020**

| | CHISASIBI | EASTMAIN | MISTISSINI | NEMASKA | OUE-BOUGOUMOU | WASKAGANISH | WASWANUPI | WHAPMAGOOSTUI | WEMINDJI | ALL DETACHMENTS |
|---|-----------|----------|------------|---------|---------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|
| Release Order | 13 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 45 |
| Promise to Appear | 1 | | | | | 4 | 1 | | | 6 |
| Recognizance to Keep the Peace | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 2 |
| Undertaking | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Promise & Undertaking | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 32 | 1 | | | 39 |
| Probation Order | 14 | 3 | 37 | 6 | 6 | 31 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 113 |
| Conditional Sentence | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Probation & Conditional Sentence | 6 | | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 16 |
| Probation & Prohibition from Driving | 2 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 4 |
| Probation, Conditional Sentence & Prohibition of Firearms | 2 | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 8 |
| Probation & Prohibition Order of Firearms | 10 | 1 | 21 | 4 | | 8 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 57 |
| Prohibition of Firearms | 8 | 3 | 20 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 68 |
| Prohibition from Driving | 13 | 2 | 10 | 2 | | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 38 |
| Prohibition Respecting Sexual Offences | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 2 |
| Probation & Prohibition Respecting Sexual Offences | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |

EYYOU COMMUNICATION NETWORK



Message from the President/Chairman/Director Alfred Loon

WE RESPECTFULLY SUBMIT OUR ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CREE NATION, REGARDING THE ACTIVITIES THAT EYYOU COMMUNICATION NETWORK UNDERTOOK FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21.

This year Eeyou Communication will have been operating for ten (10) years. We still remember the challenges we faced when we embarked on such a major telecommunication initiative. Perhaps one of the most remarkable achievements of ECN is that it is a stand-alone Network. We do not rely on any of the major Telecom players to provide Telecom services in Eeyou Istchee/Baie James, which is uncommon in Canada's telecom ecology. The Cree Nation Government made a wise investment decision when they chose to support the venture ECN.

The COVID-19 pandemic has offered us an opportunity to witness the resiliency of organizations and their operations across the region. We were fortunate enough to have only suspended our operations two weeks, after which we resumed our activities as an essential public service. We, of course, had to modify installation procedures and practices for both our residential and commercial clients, but ECN has been instrumental in the continued operations of a range of service providers.

Cree organizations have found various ways to continue operating. For some that has meant scaling down, for others, it has entailed working almost exclusively from home. This year has brought a great deal of change in workplace protocols and spaces. However, the one thing all of these adaptations have in common, is that they have largely depended on access to the Internet. We strongly believe that without the ECN Network, the organizations and people who rely on the network would not have been able to efficiently complete their duties as assigned by their employers.

Without the high-quality services ECN offers the James Bay region, the necessary transitions for adapting to pandemic conditions would have been much more complicated and difficult. Not only have employees across the region relied on the multitude of media platforms that have made life possible in the past 14 months, but it has been instrumental in the continuation of education for our young people. The Cree School Board was able to initiate an education platform that enabled the students to complete their studies even with schools physically closed.

Finally, we want to bring attention to ECN's position within the larger context of Canada's Telecom ecology. Representatives of ECN have been invited to participate in a number of conferences as speakers and panellists. This

has been an exciting opportunity to meet with other First Nations communities, share our story and strategy, and learn from others.

The rest of the report will address the activities of ECN personnel and their accomplishments throughout the year.

EYYOU COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Eeyou Communication Network (ECN) is a not-for-profit telecommunication 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 to benefit communities, residents, businesses, organizations and governments.

ECN has 25 employees, including eight Crees located throughout Eeyou Istchee (Waskaganish, Wemindji, and Ouje-Bougoumou), James Bay (Chibougamau and Chapais), Val-d'Or and Montréal.

Fiber-to-the-Home ("FTTH")

In 2020, Eeyou Communication Network (ECN) concluded its FTTH project, completing the connection of the community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon to the most powerful and reliable network in the region.

2020 has been a milestone year for ECN in its FTTH project as it now provides Internet to more homes in Eeyou Istchee and James Bay than any other service provider.

Furthermore, in 2020, ECN completed a project with the Cree School Board to connect all its residences with FTTH Internet, which constitutes approximately 275 connections. The project was delivered on time for the new school year starting in September 2020, which was important to support COVID-related teleeducation initiatives.

Connection of Éléonore and Bachelor mines

ECN connected the Newmont Eleonore and the Bonterra Bachelor mines with fiber optic. While the Bachelor project constituted in the deployment of only about 1km of fiber optic cable, the Éléonore project required more than 120 km of buried fiber optic cable deployment; a \$3.6M project funded in part by the Société du Plan Nord. These projects should significantly increase these mines' capacity to improve their efficiency in a mining 4.0 environment.

Route Billy-Diamond Highway

Renovation works continued on the Route Billy-Diamond Highway in 2020, with again over 100 dig-up sites. These works caused four fiber optic cable breaks, which did not cause outages because of the redundancy of ECN's network.

Network redundancy

In 2020, ECN secured funding to implement a redundant network link between Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini. This link will close a network "ring" that connects the communities of Ouje-Bougoumou, Chibougamau and Mistissini. This new link will be done using microwave technology and will require a new tower built on the 167 road between Chibougamau and Mistissini. It will have sufficient capacity to carry voice and other critical traffic, as well as some Internet traffic, when fiber cable breaks occur. This project will be completed in 2022, as it is currently in design phase.

Other redundancy projects are being considered for the future, such as a submarine network interconnecting the coastal communities, and fiber optic redundancy for the communities of Nemaska, Chapais and Radisson.

Human resources

ECN concluded some important improvements in its human resources department by implementing multiple HR and occupational hazards safety management systems, as well as implementing the usage of "Spot" satellite rescue systems and subscribing to Airmedic for air transport and search and rescue. As ECN personnel is

constantly moving throughout the territory, these measures ensure that our personnel is safe in any situation.

Furthermore, ECN significantly increased its internal capacity to reduce its dependency on 3rd party service providers. Training in the fields of outside plant works (cables, poles, etc.) and optoelectronic equipment management were done so that our team can resolve most technical issues internally as well as proceed to smaller-scale fiber optic cable deployments on its own.

Eeyou Mobility

Eeyou Mobility is a new project from ECN in partnership with the James Bay Eeyou Corporation and SSi Canada Inc. to deploy mobile cellular service throughout Eeyou Istchee James Bay, with the intent to cover all communities, as well as most roads of the region, and to provide the best cellular connectivity of the region at an affordable price. Eeyou Mobility has deployed its systems in trial mode in the communities of Ouje-Bougoumou and Nemaska in early 2021. It will launch commercially in all Eeyou Istchee James Bay communities in 2021. Eeyou Mobility has been in discussion with various governmental entities to fund highway and access roads coverage since 2019.

Eeyou Mobility has deployed its systems in trial mode in the communities of Ouje-Bougoumou and Nemaska in early 2021. It will launch commercially in all Eeyou Istchee James Bay communities in 2021.

Photo: Grand Chief at launch of Eeyou Mobility



CHIEFS



Chief Daisy House
Cree Nation of Chisasibi
P.O. Box 150
Chisasibi QC JoM 1E0
Tel: (819) 855-2878
Fax: (819) 855-2875



Chief Kenneth Cheezo
Cree Nation of Eastmain
P.O. Box 90
Eastmain QC JoM 1W0
Tel: (819) 977-0211
Fax: (819) 977-0281



Chief Thomas Neeposh
Cree Nation of Mistissini
187 Main Street
Mistissini QC GoW 1Co
Tel: (418) 923-3461
Fax: (418) 923-3115



Chief Clarence Jolly Sr.
Cree Nation of Nemaska
32 Machishteweyah Street
Nemaska QC JoY 3Bo
Tel: (819) 673-2512
Fax: (819) 673-2542



Chief Curtis Bosum
Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation
207 Opemiska Meskino, Suite 217
Ouje-Bougoumou QC GoW 3Co
Tel: (418) 745-3911
Fax: (418) 745-3426



Chief Allan Jolly
Cree Nation of MoCreebec
Eeyoud
P.O. Box 4, 62 Hospital Drive,
Moose Factory ON PoL 1W0
Tel: (705) 658-4769
Fax: (705) 658-4487



Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi
141, Route 111 Ouest
Amos QC J9T 2Y1
Tel: (819) 732-9409
Fax: (819) 732-9635



Chief Clarke Shecapio
Cree Nation of Waskaganish
70 Waskaganish St., PO Box 60
Waskaganish QC JoM 1Ro
Tel: (819) 895-8650
Fax: (819) 895-8901



Chief Marcel Happyjack
Cree Nation of Waswanipi
Dion Blacksmith Building
Waswanipi QC JoY 3Co
Tel: (819) 753-2587
Fax: (819) 753-2555

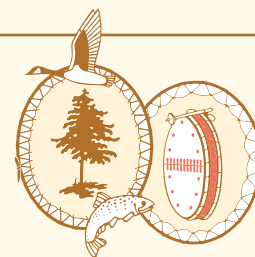


Chief Christina Gilpin
Cree Nation of Wemindji
21 Hilltop Drive, Box 60
Wemindji QC JoM 1Lo
Tel: (819) 978-0264
Fax: (819) 978-0258



Chief Robbie Kawapit
Whapmagoostui First Nation
P.O. Box 390
Whapmagoostui QC JoM 1Go
Tel: (819) 929-3384
Fax: (819) 929-3203

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE)/CREE NATION GOVERNMENT



Executive 2020-2021

Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum
Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull
Clarke Shecapio
Curtis Bosum
Christina Gilpin

Board/Council Members 2020-2021

Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum
Deputy Grand Chief Mandy Gull
Paul John Murdoch, Corporate Secretary

Chiefs

Chief Daisy House
Chief Kenneth Cheezo
Chief Thomas Neeeposh
Chief Clarence Jolly Sr.
Chief Curtis Bosum
Chief Annie Mapachee-Salt
Chief Clarke Shecapio
Chief Marcel Happyjack
Chief Christina Gilpin
Chief Robbie Kawapit
Chief Allan Jolly

Community Representatives

Robbie Tapiatic
Daniel Mark-Stewart
Richard Shecapio
John Henry Wapachee
Gaston Cooper
Jean-Denis Cananasso
Gordon Blackned
Irene Neeeposh
Frank Atsynia
John Mamianskum

Cree Nation Government Head Office

2 Lakeshore Road
Nemaska, QC J0Y 3B0
Tel: (819) 673-2600
Fax: (819) 673-2606
cree@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation – Ottawa

81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 900
Ottawa, ON K1P 6K7
Tel: (613) 761-1655
Fax: (613) 761-1388
gccei@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation - Montreal

700 de la Gauchetière West, Suite 1600
Montréal, QC H3B 5M2
Tel: (514) 861-5837
Fax: (514) 861-0760
cng@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

Embassy of the Cree Nation – Québec

200 Grande Allée Est
Québec, QC G1R 2H9
Tel: (418) 691-1111
Fax: (418) 523-8478
cree.embassy@cngov.ca
www.cngov.ca

CREDITS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Dr. Abel Bosum
Mandy Gull
Bill Namagoose
Michael Petawabano

Cree Nation Government

Nancy Bobbish
Kaitlynn Hester-Moses
John Longchap
Alfred Loon
Anthony MacLeod
Rodney Mark
Sherman Masty
Donald Nicholls
Gillman Ottereyes
Kelly-Lee Pepabano
Tina Petawabano
Nadia Saganash
Louisa Saganash
Melissa Saganash
Matthew Swallow
Isaac Voyageur

Special thanks to all contributors

Rita Blackned
Luci Bobbish-Salt
Charlotte Coonishish
Lucas Del Vecchio
Jimmy Iserhoff
Paul Joffe
Tania Larivière
Lillian Loon
Alexander Moses
Stephan Ouellet
April Pachanos
Jérémie Poupart Montpetit
Geoff Quaile
Nicolas Robitaille
Alice Rondeau
Nellie Wapachee
Sheila Weapenicappo
Gerald Weistche
Pearl Weistche
Paul Wertman

Communications

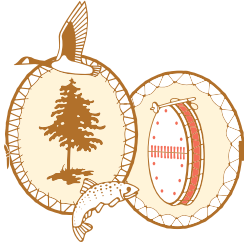
Brendan Forward
Jamie Pashagumskum
Joanne Ottereyes

Graphic Design

Beesum Communications

Photo Credits

Joshua Loon
Katherine Morrow
Jamie Moses
Tatiana Philiptchenko
Flora Weistche (Face mask on cover)



·ΔσνδΔγελ ρρρρΔγελ ν αααααα (Δγελ ααα)
Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

Δγελ ηηηηηηηη
Cree Nation Government
Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

