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SUMMIT REPORT August and September 2023

The Regional Cree Trappers' Association in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government presented the First Edition of the Maanuu Upihkaapuutau Summit 2023 on proficient harvesting. To fully represent the reality of the vast territory of Eeyou Istchee and of our members, two Summits were held, one inland and one coastal.

To organize such events, a coordination team was created. It included Flora Weistche of the Grand Chief's Office, Thomas Stevens and Mary Jane Salt of the CTA. In each host community, a local coordinator was hired.



The first edition was held in Mistissini, at the Sports Complex, on August 15 and 16, 2023, while the second was held in Chisasibi, at the Mitchuap Building, on September 13 and 14, 2023.

Breakfasts and lunches were offered to participants as an occasion to gather. Cultural activities and displays were set up for members to enjoy during the afternoon. On the first evening, a banquet was held followed by entertainment.

Both events followed a similar flow, with the opening prayer, 2 conferences or discussions in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. The agenda and topics covered were however adapted to meet the needs of the respective areas.

The subjects presented at the Summits included:

- Mentoring Youth to Preserve Our Culture
- Moose and Cree Harvest Management/Caribou (Strengthening Cree Governance of Land and Wildlife Management)
- CTA Cabin Insurance Program
- The role of the Tallyman and the Eeyou Hunting law
- Preserving our Cree Language

- Niskamoon programs
- Discussions at the first summit - Inland:
 - Eeyou Istchee land keepers and wildlife protection officer,
 - Sturgeon Management,
 - Forestry and Wildlife Directives,
 - CNYC.
- Discussions at the 2^e summit - Coastal:
 - Eeyou Istchee land keepers and wildlife protection officer,
 - Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (2^e summit only - Coastal),
 - Eelgrass (2^e summit only - Coastal),
 - The impact of climate change,
- Land base Programming of the CBH and medical bush kits,
- National Marine Conservation Area Feasibility Assessment project (2^e summit only - Coastal),
- Economic Security Program (1st summit only – Inland),
- Developing our Protected Areas (1st summit only – inland).



Presentations are available on the CTA website, under events (<https://cree-trappers.ca/PresentationsFilesSummit2023#form-content>).

In Mistissini, after the prayer opening by an Elder, participants heard an opening speech of Deputy Chief John S. Matoush, the welcoming words of Grand Chief Mrs. Mandy Gull-Masty and the remarks of Mr. Arden Visitor, President of the Cree Trappers' Association. At the end of the 1st Summit, Mr. Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador offered the closing remarks.

In Chisasibi's Chief, Ms. Daisy House, greeted participants of the second summit after the prayer. Soon followed the words of welcome from Deputy Grand Chief Mr. Norman A. Wapachee and remarks of Mr. Arden Visitor, President of the Cree Trappers' Association.



On the 2nd day, Grand Chief Ms. Mandy Gull-Masty and Mr. Elijah Sandy, Vice President of the CTA closed the conference.

The First Edition of the Maanuu Upihkaapuutau Summit 2023 on proficient harvesting was most successful. More than 500 participants came together to share ideas and talk about sustainable harvesting, access to the land, species preservation and Cree Way of Life. 25 speakers come together to inform participants and share the traditional Cree knowledge.



Summary of conferences

Mentoring Youth to Preserve Our Culture

by Rodney Mark,
Director of Social and Cultural Development opened the stage
with his presentation

This presentation emphasized the need to support efforts to secure cultural expertise for the future generation. The main concern expressed regards the viability of the traditional life in the community and land. Solutions proposed involve mentorship programs. This permits to secure the expertise and focus on the knowledge, the practice and the culture.



Notes taken by the participants regarding Mentoring our future generation:

In order to ensure that the culture is kept for future generations, we need to ensure that the youth have access to divers Eeyou Istehee courses such as snowshoe making, traditional hunting tools, canvas-making workshops and homemade tools like shovels, chisel and crooked knives. It is essential for the youth to learn the different types of wood, in order to collect for the right purposes. There are different types of woods that must be taught to the youth as the one for firewood, snowshoes or to heat cabins, they do not use the same resources.

We always say that our youth are our future, it is essential that we ask our community what program and courses they would want to see or participate in. If the youth are given courses that they are not interested in, they will be discouraged. We should never force a course/program to be taken if they don't have interest in doing so, keep them interested.

Essentially, we need to support the youth access. The programs we currently offer, and the funding allocation received are not enough. We need to receive more allocation and need to have a bigger range of programs. The programs we currently have are too short, the knowledge is vast, and we have a limited time to transmit the information. In addition, we should include surveys to be taken by the youth, this would help us know their aptitudes of the traditional knowledge as well as their level to adapt the program.



What to remember

The youth is the future of the community, the programs must reflect the interest of the future generations. If they do not, the youth will lose interest and the effort to secure the cultural expertise will be lost.

The range of programs offered must be wider, to present those programs there must be more funds available and there must be a bigger range of time accessibility when mentoring the youth.



Moose and Cree Harvest Management/Caribou (Strengthening Cree Governance of Land and Wildlife Management)

by Ms. Nadia Saganash and Mr. Isaac Voyageur,
respectively Coordinator of Cree-Quebec Agreement
Implementation and Director of Environment and Remedial
Works

Strengthening Cree Governance of Land and Wildlife Management was presented by Nadia Saganash and Isaac Voyageur on August 15, 2023, and only by Isaac Voyageur on September 13, 2023.

It shares the importance of the recognition and preservation of the Cree land tenure system as well as the forming of foundations that ensure the protections of their rights.



The speakers shared the new challenges the community is faced to. Mainly regarding the study of the caribou population that had declined 11% from 2020 to 2022. Procedures were established in permitting the harvest of caribous in Cree territory. The moose population surveys on zoning 17 showed a decline of 35% from 2009 to 2021.

Throughout this presentation, participants learned about the guidelines that are enforced to protect the health of the caribou and moose population in Eeyou Istchee and to preserve the culture and traditions in harvesting. Finally, there was an overview of the role of the Tallymen in the preservation of the wildlife population.



Notes taken by the participants regarding the Cree Harvesting practices:

The hunting practices have changed, we must teach common sense and the effects of overharvesting. People have limited traditional knowledge. It is important to teach the youth the same thing, as they are our future as well as offering training for land users.

In addition, float planes should be available at all times for these practices. We should have clear guidelines on where the hunt is accessible and the quantity of animals that are available. Let's not forget that hunters must ask permission to the Tallymen when wanting to hunt in a certain area.

We should enforce the respect of the seasonal periods for harvesting, limit kills and teach not to catch any females in order for them to reproduce. Ensure that everyone respects the seasons, look after those who do not respect these measures and if it's possible, share meals with families' members instead of over-killing.



What to remember:

Essentially, it is important to understand the effects of what overharvesting does to the wildlife. Know the role of the Tallymen and ensure that the guidelines are clear and respected for the community in order to certify a hunting for future generations to come.

CTA Cabin Insurance Program

by Abel Rabbitskin and Daisy Shecapio in August and only Ms. Shecapio in September, respectively Insurance Liaison Officer and Director General at Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation

CTA Cabin Insurance Program summarized the history, the policy, the requirements and the guidelines regarding the cabins. For starters, the CTA cabin program was developed by the Regional CTA to aid the participating Cree hunters and trappers in protecting their cabins and contents.



Briefly, the Cree Collective Deductible Insurance Program (CCDIP)s' role is to assist and support the Regional CTA and Local CTAs in preparing and processing cabin insurance.

- Currently 263 cabins are insured at the cost of \$745/year,
- The insured value is of \$36,750,
- The deductible per incident is of \$5,000 fire and theft, \$25,000, flood and water damages.

There are procedures and guides to follow when insuring a cabin.



Notes taken by the participants regarding the Cabin Insurance:

Throughout the last couple of years, the inflation has increased drastically, the cost of living is no longer the same as it used to be. Having bill payments one month late is not enough, the economic security should consider the inflation, so we can pay for the cabin insurance without consequences. The money value is not adjusted fairly considering the current financial situation, isolation premiums need to be included in the policies. Also, if the compensation matched the actual inflation, more people would be involved.

As well, we must teach the youth regarding old traditional ways of having a security income to ensure they can pay the insurance.



What to remember:

The main concerns the participants have regarding this subject are related to the cost of the insurance cabins and the fact that it does not take into consideration the inflation



Interviews

There were as well interviews hosted by Christine Petewabano on the following topics:

- Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers and wildlife protection officer training with Ms. Nadia Saganash and Mr. Benoit Longchap (1st Summit - Inland) and by Mr. George Head, Harry House and Willie Loon (2nd Summit – Coastal).
- Sturgeon Management with Management with Ms. Maya Longpré-Coteau.
- Forestry and Wildlife Directives with Mr. Richard Shecapio



Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Wildlife Protection Assistant Program

by Nadia Saganash.

Coordinator of Cree-Quebec Agreement Implementation

Briefly, this program was put in place 3 years ago, the main goal of this program is to train members to assist Tallyman in monitoring, surveillance, improving, protecting and management of wildlife and ancestral land.



Questions for Nadia Saganash from Moderator Christine Petawabano

1. Can you provide a brief overview of the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Wildlife Protection Program and the significance relations to the Cree Governance objectives and cultural preservations?

The program is there to support the wildlife protection officers and in applying Quebec legislation. It also supports Cree Tallyman in promoting cultural activities and building capacity as well as empowering the Cree nation in undertaking the responsibilities, applying the

guidelines and implementing different initiatives. Example moose guidelines and raising and improving Cree local nations.

2. Can you elaborate more on the non-traditional practices?

Over the years different concerns were brought by the Tallymen, for example over harvesting or hunters using other equipment to hunt with. We want to bring back the traditions and values that were used before, this program is there to address these matters.

3. Career opportunities on this program, what's needed to be eligible?

It's part of the government agreement, 19 wildlife's assistant officers were negotiated, currently we have 4 and 1 coordinator. It is a land based career opportunity.

4. How is your department reaching out to recruit this opportunity to the young members?

They attended local Annual General Assemblies to promote employment and we currently need to negotiate more funding for our expenses and promote the employment.



Questions for Nadia Saganash from Public

Member Paul Dixon from Waswanipi shared stories wildlife habitat in Waswanipi traplines. Member Paul Shecapio from Ouje-bougoumou, shared stories on forestry matter.

1. Member Don Saganash senior from Waswanipi, what happened to the ones that took the game Morton course in the past?

The office was taxed and still in discussion. The Cree Nation will soon have their own wildlife officers and the Cegep accepted our request to be considered a course.

2. Member Robert Kitchen from Waswanipi, can Tallymen be hired to be wildlife officers because they know the land.

Yes, it is possible for the Tallyman to take the training and gain certificate.

There is a need for the traditional knowledge from the land to be preserved. The **Land Keepers Wildlife Protection Assistant Program** is a good way to assist the wildlife protection officers applying Quebec legislation. The land keepers also support Cree Tallyman in transmitting the knowledge. It is opened to anyone.

Sturgeon Management Plan

by Maya Longpré-Coteau,
Coordinator of Cree-Quebec Agreement Implementation

The Cree Nation Government, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and CTA have been working together in creating a sturgeon management plan. There is a special concern in Eeyou Istchee regarding the decrease of the sturgeon population. It needs to be addressed before it becomes an endangered species.



Questions for Maya Longpré-Coteau from moderator Christine Petawabano

1. Why is the Cree Nation Government working on a threat management plan for sturgeon?

Canada did an evaluation and sturgeon is a special concern therefore working together with CTA and CNG regarding the agreement that was signed in 2022 on sturgeon management plan.

2. How did you obtain the information and the findings on the sturgeon?

We did community tours, interviewed Tallyman and land users (total interviewees: 76) did workshops and scientific statistics.

3. Does the threat management plan currently talks about not to over harvest the fish?

The 3rd community tour in Mistissini, and it will be discussed on different conservative measures to obtain different plans to protect the sturgeon and guidelines people want to establish.

4. What has been the response from the members?

People have been agreeing with us.

5. What are the next steps, will this be available to the people?

It will be documented and will be available to members to obtain.



Questions for Maya Longpré-Coteau from Public

1. Member Peter Coon from Mistissini, has the food source for sturgeon been observed?

It is possible there has been a change in the food due to hydro diversions and forestry.

Member Ronnie Otter from Waswanipi shared stories on forestry. Member Abel Neeposh from Mistissini recommended that sturgeon to be reserved for native consumption only.

I believe sturgeon is only reserved for natives in zone 22.

2. Member Abel Wapachee from Nemaska asked how can a Tallyman manage his trapline not to over-harvest sturgeon?

Part of the management plan, guidelines were planned to be created and these guidelines may help the Tallyman. One of the objectives of this program is to assist the Tallymen in sturgeon habitat.

Member Charlie Bosum from Ouje-Bougoumou told stories on sturgeon spawning areas in his trapline.

Host recommended to this Tallyman to be part of the sturgeon studies with his knowledge.



What to remember:

The sturgeon stock is at risk. It is important to preserve the resource. A plan has been put in place by the Cree Nation Government, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the CTA.

However, every harvester has a responsibility in preserving the sturgeons.



Forestry Regime

by Richard Shecapio.
Cree Nation Government



Currently, there are 5 communities (Waswanipi, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Mistissini and Ouje-Bougoumou) impacted by the forestry. The Forestry Regime was created to assist the Tallymen and traplines who were impacted. In December, we are hoping the cycle to be complete, also in coming months we will be doing communities consultations.



Questions for Richard Shecapio from Moderator Christine Petawabano

1. Will the forest fires have an impact on the Forestry 5-year plan?

The impacts that are caused by natural disturbance, the special plans come to effect, the statics were taken from SOPFEU: 22 million cubic feet were burnt, that's 2.5 million per year they take trees, that's 10 years of forestry burned wood loss, we didn't want the forestry companies to take the trees that were not burnt, the priority was forestry companies can salvage what was burnt. The consultation process on the affected area maybe felt we had the answers of what was affected.

2. Is there policy stating forestry companies cannot touch the burnt areas?

The Quebec government must reprocess where forestry companies can continue their harvest.



Questions for Richard Shecapio from the public

1. Member Robert Kitchen from Waswanipi, concerns on the impacts on wildlife on forest fires. Can this matter be brought to the Quebec Government, restoration of wildlife, trees, can CTA, Forestry, Environment and Niskamoon work jointly in preparing the restoration on land and wildlife?

The restoration is in discussion.

Member concerns not being allowed to go to their traplines because it was burnt and polluted.

We have been affected by the forest fire and it's a process in assessing everything,

2. Member Paul Dixon, where are habitat directives?

Member Paul Shecapio about boundaries on JBNQA, there are 14 traplines that are neighboring other nations trapline, will it be tabled?

3. Member Don from Waswanipi, when can we do natural growth in the burnt areas? And are the forestry companies being monitored? I think this time wildlife needs a break. The wildlife directives, why haven't they been in discussion? Where does the Cree Nation Government stand with this matter, the forest companies are not following the wildlife directives?

There was a delay, hopefully this fall we can have more information for our members.

Member Thomas Jolly from Nemaska, to protect our way of life is the role and mandate of CTA, I want to see our own nation create our own destiny. It's time to discuss this issue at CNG-level time to protect our knowledge. I urge CTA and CNG to table this matter.

The preservation for future generations of wildlife protection is in the process.

Member Thomas Coon, there's no room to share our traditional knowledge in these meetings that are held, our Elders are the professor.



What to remember:

The Forestry Regime is there to support the Tallymen and traplines that are impacted by the industry.

The recent forest fires have brought up changes and they will have impacts on the wildlife.

Cree Board of Health Programming

by Bertie Wapachee, Lisa Petagumskum and Thomas Chakapash, respectively Chairperson of the CBHSSJB, AED Nishiiyuu and PPRO Pre-Hospital Emergency Measures

Briefly, this presentation included the guidelines for the Cree medical brush kit. This tool permits to response to emergency in remote areas. Training is available and the medical brush kit is accessible to the community.



The goals are to increase the ability to handle health care in the bush and enhance own primary responsibility for health matter. The presenters were happy to report that in 2022–2023, there were 111 newly trained bush kit representatives in the 9 Cree communities. This work was carried out jointly with local CTA in each community.

In this same presentation, the Land-based activities and the strategic regional objectives within regards to the CBHSSJB act were also discussed. This program aims to provide healing to our people using land base programs, cultural teachings, traditional medicine teachings and traditional ceremonies. Each community has their own roles and budget also the Tallymen were encouraged to work jointly with this program in providing access to their land and share their knowledge.



Questions for Bertie Wapachee, Lisa Petagumskum & Thomas Chakapash from Public

1. Member Philimine Mianscum from Mistissini, are there coordinators in each community and is there a limit in number of people who can apply to this program?

There will be Nishiiyuu Community Activity Organizers in each community. This program is open to everyone and anybody who needs healing can apply.

2. Member Christine Petawabano from Mistissini, in terms of eligibility are the non-beneficiaries allowed to apply to the program?

Under the region law 18, priority is given to Natives because they can share the knowledge and teachings; non-beneficiaries can also apply and the criteria are yet to being established.

3. Member Paul Dixon from Waswanipi recommends not to discriminate against applicants who have disabilities.

This fall there will be a Traditional Knowledge Keeper Gathering more information to follow.

4. Member Ronnie Otter from Waswanipi expressed concerns about youth losing their traditional knowledge and recommends teaching to our youth about sport hunting and recommends CTA to establish traditional programs for the youth.



What to remember:

The CHB is active in preserving Cree culture. The bushkit makes staying on the land safer.



Preserving Our Cree Language

by Jamie Moses,
Cree Language Commissioner

This presentation explained his role: to promote and enhance our Cree language and culture. He explained that if we want to promote our Cree language, we need to establish by laws regarding the use of the Cree language in entities and governance. He gave the example of a program that was established within the Cree School Board to help our teachers promote our language through education. We need to preserve our language and culture and pass down to the future generation.



Economic Security Program

by Serge Lariviere & George Shecapio,
respectively Director General and Program Assistant Services at
the Cree Hunters Economic Security Board

The speakers briefly presented the *Economic Security Program* was defined as an income security program to provide a guaranteed income and benefits to the eligible members. The original mission was to help beneficiaries go to bush that needed financial security and chose that way of life. 12% of the Cree population are enrolled in the program. Our goal for the coming years is to tour the communities and explain the rules of the program and give support to the local committees by providing information to the chief and council.



Notes taken by the participants regarding the ESP program:

Regarding the ESP, the leadership policy should be reviewed annually as well as yearly. Increases should be considered in the policies. There should be a space for the Act of God situations and natural disasters as well as the steps to be taken.



What to remember:

The program needs to be reviewed for full time hunters and trappers to reflect the reality.

Developing our Protected Areas

by Allan Matoush.

Community Relations Officer at Strateco Resources

This presentation mentioned the facts regarding the protection of the land from mining and forestry. There is still a lot of work to be done, yet throughout the years we have managed to protect many traplines both inland and Wiinniibek.



Notes taken by the participants regarding the Current Forestry situation:

The concerns that we currently have is that Hydro lacks information given to us, they are just creating jobs. The land and wildlife are getting damaged by all of this mining. Eeyou didn't know the impact it had on the wildlife; having too many rocks and the dumping sites and its effect on the territory. We need to be informed and protect the land and water to the best of our abilities.

The sad reality that we currently have is we don't care anymore of the land; we abuse it by using air transports such as helicopters. These air transports are disturbing the hunting areas and the wildlife which makes the animals run away to a safer and quiet area. In the past, we have always respected the land, we should start doing this again.

Furthermore, in order to protect and conserve our land, we request more funding into the trapline watch of our land. It would be beneficial for us and the community to protect the wildlife for many reasons listed above, therefore, instead of having \$1,000 we need \$2,000.



What to remember:

It is important to respect the wildlife and all it has to offer the community. The community now realizes the impact of current development have on the preserved land and water area. They must be able to protect the areas and to do so, they must be fully informed of what is around them and the possible consequences.

The role of Tallymen and the Eeyou Hunting law

by Dr. Philip Awashish,
JBNQA signatory

During his presentation, Dr. Philip Awashish shared the evolution in time and the way of life transformation of Eeyou as well as the historical background regarding our rights. Briefly, here are some major points shared in this presentation; on November 15, 1975, when the Crees signed the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), Protecting the Cree rights, on section 23. The JBNQA recognized and acknowledged the existence of indoh-hoh Istchee and Indoh-hoh Ouje-Maaooch.



In addition, we have Cree laws, created by customs and traditions, we still value our Cree laws. The Tallyman system role is recognized under the JBNQA. The Tallyman's role is the caretaker of the land and wildlife and is to be respected and solve unforeseen circumstances. Also, they are the ones to pass down the land, in general they are the keepers of our Eeyou Ithuun.

The un-dho ishhee system is really a family hunting ground and the Tallyman are appointed by the family, the difference is we are governing our hunting territories in our ways not the Quebec government way.

Finally, we should not call our land traplines, In-doh-hoh Istchee is our traditional name. We should not call the land care takers Tallyman; our traditional name is Inhoh-hoh Ouje-maaou. The trapline and Tallyman system was created by Quebec government that's not our traditions.

This presentation was followed by breakout groups and discussions linked to the presentation.



Questions Period to Dr. Philip Awashish from Moderator Christine Petawabano

1. The signing of JBNQA, when Tallyman and trapline were discussed, can the agreement be amended according to the present situation?

Today our traditions have changed, since we have access roads, airports, and electricity. A lot have changed, hydro, mining, forestry companies have come to our lands, it's very difficult to balance in making Eeyou happy and make non-natives happy, the non-natives see the land as money, that's what we face today as negotiators.

1. Member Robbie Kitchen from Waswanipi, acknowledge Dr. Philip presentation. I want to bring back the right the control our trapline, Cree landlords, we need to arise this matter to the Canadian government.
2. Member Johnny Sagnash from Waswanipi, recommend traplines not to be split, the forestry or mining money shouldn't go to the Tallyman, it should go towards the community.

3. Member Paul Dixon from Waswanipi, shared knowledge and forestry companies only plant trees that do not support the wildlife habitat.
4. Member Edward Brien from Mistissini, traplines conflicts needs to be resolved.
5. Member **Ronne** Otter from Waswanipi, the forest companies don't comply with the laws.
6. Member Abel Wapachee from Nemaska, the role of Tallyman resolution that was past, is it possible to gather Tallyman and bring their concerns? We need to control the over harvest, we need to manage and stand together for the future generation.
7. Member Sophia Gunner from Mistissini, can we have our own CTA office? And create a special council for Tallyman so their voice can be heard.

Member Charlie Isheroff from Mistissini, shared stories transferring his trapline.

Member Emma from Mistissini shared stories.

Member Paul Shecapio from Mistissini shared his acknowledgement to the presenters.

Dr. Philip acknowledged the members' concerns and opinions.





Notes taken by the participants regarding the

Tallymen:

1. How can the Tallymen share their traplines?
2. Will there be guidelines for the traplines?

Terminology to reflect on; Our hunting area, not only my hunting area... The traplines were there before I was born and will be there after I pass.

The role of the Tallyman is to help keep track of the harvest and the health of the traplines. Their role must be adapted to the new realities regarding the environmental changes and the development of certain areas. In the past, traplines were divided by the flow of rivers and mountains, usually divided in half between the neighbours.

As well now, the traplines ensure to keep us under control. It's a good way of protecting the wildlife. The Tallymen have great responsibilities, they must take care of the land, do an inventory in March and ensure the good hunting practices.

Assessment of the Eeyou Istchee trapline system:

- Eeyou Hunting Law included mutual respect, respecting our land and our neighbours.
- Respecting the boundaries and revising them with the neighbouring traplines.
- Ensure that the inventory at the end of March is completed properly and monitor the changes.

In addition, some youths do not know or fully understand the purpose of having hunting territories. We need to teach the youth about hunting and harvesting areas as they are the future Tallymen. Regarding the Tallymen teaching, there should be an age limit imposed of a maximum of 60 years old to transfer knowledge to another member.



What to remember:

The role of the Tallyman evolves throughout time, we need to find ways to better adapt to the new realities. In addition, we must teach the youths the purpose of these people.

Niskamoon Programs

by Mark Dunn and Robbie Tapiatic,
respectively President at Conseil SYM Consulting and Director of
Remedial Works

Briefly, the presenters explained the Hydro-Quebec diversion. They added that Niskamoon Corporation seeks to develop projects in collaboration with Cree land users and other beneficiaries who were impacted by the hydroelectric development in Eeyou Istchee. The funds vary from year to year, and the local Niskamoon Officer can give more information regarding this subject.



The Coastal Habitat Comprehensive Research Project

by Ernie Rabbitskin, Robbie Tapiatic and Melanie-L. Leblanc, respectively Special Projects Manager at Niskamoon, Director of Remedial Works at Cree Nation Government and Research Wildlife Biologist, Niskamoon Corporation

The speakers shared the current factors affecting the state of the Eelgrass and its' impact on the waterfowl presence. The next steps include the monitoring, getting more detailed investigations as well as practical habitat enhancement measurements.



The impact of climate change, Eeyou Istchee Climate Monitoring for a Resilient Future project

by Killian Abellon,
Coordinator of Climate Change at CNG

This presentation briefly explained the role and guiding of the *climate change advisory committee* in the communities as well as the criteria of the weather station with the equipment at their disposal. There was also a mention of related to projects with 3 phases of outreach component.



National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) Feasibility Assessment Project

by Mr. Christopher Beck,
Coordinator of Marine Conservation.

This presentation explained the steps towards permanent protection status, the NMCAs and how to recognize them and ensure that they are respected. This presentation also provided the key opportunities linked to an NMCA.



Notes taken by the participants regarding the protected areas:

There should be an initiative to put in place, as of reducing the development of mining, forestry, hydro dams, etc. We need to preserve the area and realize the effects of these developments on the environment, traplines and the flow of the rivers. As for the traplines systems, the people will need to work together with other traplines to become united and use the resources available.

In addition, we should know our rights and laws regarding our land, not to destroy the land and not to contaminate the water in order to have a healthy ecosystem. The wildlife needs healthy areas in order to produce.



What to remember:

Essentially, we must take care of the environment in which we live in, preserve it and respect the ecosystem. Ensure that we know our rights and follow these rights.

Grande Alliance

by Johnny Saganash & Ian Diamond,
respectively Liaison Officers at Vision Eeyou Istchee consortium

In the context of The Grande Alliance, there is an ongoing study of feasibility to build roads and railways to control the mining issue along the Billy Diamond highway. The Grande Alliance has been put in place since March 2021 to address the many challenges the communities were faced with, such as:

- The population is growing.
- The transportation needs are growing.
- The road safety & maintenance are an issue.
- The natural resource projects are growing.

We are currently at the stage of communications and should see operations in more or less 10 years from now. The Crees will continue with this study for the next coming years and there will be many more events to come regarding this project.



Interviews were also hosted by Mr. Gordon Neacappo on the following topics:

- Eeyou Istchee Land keepers and wildlife protection officer training
- Eeyou Marine Region with Mr. Fred Tomatuk and Ms. Stephanie Varty

CONCLUSION

Both editions of the Summit, in Mistissini in August, and in Chisasibi in September, were a great success. As a matter of fact, more than 500 participants gathered to listen to the twenty presentations on various topics and to share their knowledge, ensuring Cree culture remains vibrant.

Furthermore, the First Edition of the Maanuu Upihkaapuutau Summit 2023 on proficient harvesting featured many cultural activities where artisans and organizations displayed their skills.

Through these events, the Cree Trappers' Association, in collaboration with the Cree Nation Government, have given the members an opportunity to gain a better understanding of key files. In return, the organizers have heard the existing concerns. They will be taken into consideration in the action taken to secure the cultural expertise to preserve the land for future generations.



As a first-time edition of the Summit was appreciated by the participants, the CTA is exploring the possibility to hold a Summit on a yearly basis, even adding a day to allow even more exchanges.

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