

Eeyou Eenou

NEWSLETTER

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE) / CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

ΓωḃϽ"϶ΡΆΖι | AUGUST 2024

ISSUE 3

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Thank you to everyone that contributed to this issue's images and content.

WRITER AND INTERVIEWS

Jamie Pashagumskum

EDITOR

Joanne Ottereyes

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Brendan Forward Kim Wapachee-McDougall

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Kristy Franks
Environmental Advisor

THANK YOU TO: Linden Spencer Entrepreneur

Please send feedback to:

Cree Nation Government 2 Lakeshore Road Nemaska, Quebec J0Y 3B0 communications@cngov.ca

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LATEST ISSUES



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1. RETURN OF THE EEYOU ISTCHEE SUMMER GAMES

MISTISSINI, JULY 14-21, 2024

AFTER A 13-YEAR HIATUS, THE EEYOU ISTCHEE SUMMER GAMES ARE BACK BRINGING TOGETHER 6 CREE COMMUNITIES IN A SPIRIT OF COMPETITION, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

The Eeyou Istchee Summer Games began on July 14th, with over 500 athletes joining in the opening ceremonies from Mistissini, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Washaw Sibi, Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui. The games bring together young athletes aged 9 to 18 from across the Cree territories to compete in over 40 events, including track, field, and aquatic sports. These competitions are designed to promote sportsmanship and excellence while highlighting the importance of community and cultural exchange. In addition to the youth events, traditional games for adults are also included, emphasizing the preservation and celebration of Cree traditions.

Cultural activities play a significant role in the games, with CNACA organizing several workshops and activities each days. An artisan market, immersive mural at the Youth Centre, and workshops at the Cree Justice tent were also offered.

Events were livestreamed by the James Bay Cree Communication Society and brought together online and onsite spectators from throughout the Cree Nation offering an important opportunity to celebrate youth athletes and strengthen ties between communities.

"I want to congratulate each athlete that was part of the Eeyou Istchee Summer Games. While so many of us celebrate athletes that have achieved so much. I want you to all realize that every one of you are capable of achieving greatness and this is your moment to shine."

- Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty



ἱ Δ"ϽΠΡσ·Δ^ι EVENTS



The Eeyou Istchee Summer Games' newly designed logo

As part of the relaunch the Eeyou Istchee Summer Games unveiled a new logo to commemorate the event. A blend of traditional elements, natural landscape and colours intended to bring a sense of energy, tranquility and awe to the games.

Our aim is to create an aesthetic that not only feels friendly and long-lasting but also has the power to transport individuals to moments of shared joy and communal spirit. In essence, the brand aspires to be a visual representation of the enduring and captivating legacy of the Eeyou Istchee Summer Games.

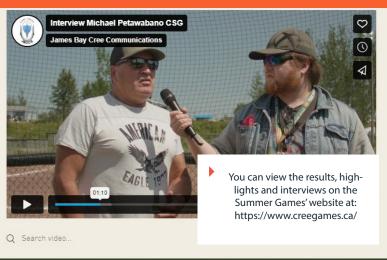
An event made possible by partnership and communities

The event was organized by Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association. It was made possible by over 24 sponsors and aa sheering committee including:



This incredible support provided many unique features to the event including cultural workshops and artisans, onsite medical care and mental health services provided through CBHSSJB's new Mobile Clinic, facilities, coaches and officials to oversee and organize the games and much more. In addition, the host community of Mistissini provided food, lodging and onsite support throughout the games.

Want to watch a game, interview or highlight?



"The Cree Summer Games are an important part of celebrating our youth and our heritage as physically active people. All throughout the year, our ancestors used their skills as paddlers, runners and people who moved across the land to survive and thrive in Eeyou Istchee. The competitions we hold over this week are a celebration of that shared history our communities have."

- Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee

The Eeyou Istchee Summer Games will be returning to the Cree communities in the Summer of 2026. In between this time the Cree School Board will be hosting a Traditional Winter Games Innu Metawewin 2025.

We would like to acknowledge the incredible collaboration of all that are helping to make these games possible and the important role it has for strengthening our ties as a Nation and to fostering positive youth development. To all the athletes, we hope this experience is one that you carry with you and we congratulate your dedication leading up to and during the 7 days of the Summer Games.

MEDAL RESULTS BY COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
Mistissini	68	48	35	152
Waswanipi	36	42	45	123
Ouje-Bougoumou	10	18	16	44
Chisasibi	12	13	3	28
Washaw-Sibi	2	4	5	11
MoCreebec	1	0	0	1





PAST AND UPCOMING EVENTS

2. ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE GRAND ECONOMIC CIRCLE



The 2024 Annual Gathering of the Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples of Quebec took place in Montreal in June where Cree success was prominently showcased.

Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard specifically referenced the JBNQA many times while on stage at the function taking place at the HEC in Montreal. In an onstage discussion both Picard and Hydro-Québec President and CEO Michael Sabia directly referenced the JBNQA with the more recent Paix des Braves agreement and pointed out former Cree Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses, who was sitting in the front row.

This was the fifth gathering of the economic circle with this year's installment focusing on networking opportunities between First Nation communities and industry.

"We launched the big economic circle back in 2021 under AFNQL and our economic commission." Picard told CNG saying that changing mindsets plays a large role in economic prosperity for First Nations communities. "We need to believe that we can do it and move away from this, colonized minds, colonizing ourselves."

Also in attendance was Constant Awashish from the Council of the Atikamekw Nation.





"SIMPLY, IT'S BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN NONINDIGENOUS CORPORATION, COMPANIES,
ENTREPRENEURS AND FIRST NATIONS. TO OPEN THEIR
EYES TO ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT FIRST NATIONS
REPRESENT FOR ENTERPRISE. WE HAVE DIFFERENT
VIEWS, WE HAVE DIFFERENT VALUES, WE HAVE A
DIFFERENT STORY, BUT WE ALL WANT THE SAME
COMMON GOAL, A BETTER LIFE FOR OUR FAMILIES."

Waswanipi Chief Irene Neeposh was present and was spotted participating in an interactive networking activity on topics such as, social acceptability, territorial overlap and economic development vs culture and tradition.

This is what she had to say about her experience.

"Deeply appreciated the economic circle for Indigenous peoples. A collection of thoughts on fostering self-sustainability and preserving cultural heritage in modern times. Meegwetch!"





Former Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses says it is a valuable experience for First Nations in the province to come together exchanging information and sharing valuable experiences.

"It's a good movement to have to ensure inclusion in the economic development of Quebec as well as in our respective communities. It creates spinoffs and provides job opportunities, contracts, training, skill development, and know-how for our people."

The next gathering of the Grand Economic Circle will be hosted by the Atikamekw Nation, November 12, 2024 in Trois-Rivières.





UPCOMING **EVENTS**

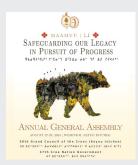
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CREE NATION BUSINESS SUMMIT

AUG 23-25, 2024

Hosted in collaboration with the Department of Commerce and Industry and Eeyoupreneur, the Cree Nation Business Summit will be happening in Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee.



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AUG 27-29, 2024

Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Wemindji, Eeyou Istchee.



BOARD COUNCIL WASKAGANISH

SEP 18-19, 2024

Meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Waskaganish, Eeyou Istchee.



3. NATURE'S ARCHITECT A GLIMPSE INTO BEAVER POPULATION IN THE HEART OF EEYOU ISTCHEE

The Cree Nation Government recently sat down with Nemaska Tallyman Samuel Mettaweskum and his wife Evadney to discuss nature's architect, the busy beaver.

Samuel says the beaver population has declined drastically since hydro development but there are also other factors depleting the population recently that have him a little puzzled.

A staple in traditional Cree diet, beaver has always been a valuable food source throughout the Eeyou Istchee ecosystem. Samuel recalls being on portages as a youth with elders coming across a beaver lodge, they would mark it with a stake to help find it in the winter. He learned many extremely affective traditional techniques from elders, but Samuel acknowledges Eeyouch are not the only highly skilled beaver hunters.

The beavers' main predators are bears, wolves, wolverines, and eagles. Bears hunt beavers by collapsing the door of a beaver lodge, trapping the beaver inside and then getting to them down through the top.

A wolf will wait until the beaver comes on land to collect food and hunt them on land since beavers are not fast runners. Wolverines, although there are not many in the area, are still a great danger as they will kill and eat any beaver they come across.



amiskw Beaver

Eagles hunt beaver by grabbing them in their powerful talons, flying them up to great heights and then dropping them to the ground. Samual admits this is not the nicest way to hunt but the eagle is still a very effective and dangerous hunter.

When asked about the future of the beaver Samuel would like a study done to determine why beaver populations on his trapline are not as high as they should be.

Evadney acknowledges there are traditional training programs such as hunting and trapping beaver, but she would also like to see more programs teaching today's youth on traditional techniques of cutting and preparing wild game, hides and pelts.







4. NEW HYDRO QUEBEC PRESIDENT AND CEO MEETS WITH CREE LEADERSHIP



New Hydro Québec President/CEO Promises Not to Repeat the Mistakes of The Past

"IF WE WERE THINKING ABOUT DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT. IT WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH YOU,"

PROMISED HYDRO-QUÉBEC'S MICHAEL SABIA TO GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY.

Hydro-Québec's President and CEO made the announcement at the Cree Nation Government Board Council meeting in Nemaska this May. His comments were in response to a Radio-Canada article speculating Hydro-Québec is planning more high voltage transmission lines in Cree Territory.

"The answer is no, we have no such plan," or any other development plans behind closed doors he went on to explain.

Mr. Sabia is very new to the position, inheriting the job from his predecessor who stepped down last April.

He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and has Economics and Political Degrees from the University of Toronto and Yale. He served as the Deputy Minister of the Department of Finance Canada from 2020 to 2023.

In November Sabia tabled a plan to better position Quebec for what he calls 'the inevitable energy transition around the world.'

In Nemaska he prematurely revealed Hydro Quebec's new wind energy plan which he called ambitious, requiring much determination.



GOVERNANCE









"What we've been doing so far is not working," Sabia stated saying HQ's goal is a series of wind power facilities capable of creating 10,000 megawatts of power or more. Hydro's offer of partnership for these projects is open to any Indigenous community interested who would not only be partners, but equity owners.

The president and CEO then took some hard questions from Chiefs and band representatives.

Nemaska's Chief Clarence Jolly asked for better maintenance of Hydro constructed roads, like the infamous Route du Nord, connecting his community to the outside world.

Eastmain Deputy-Chief Daniel Mark-Stewart questioned the CEO about Cree consent and Chiefs Irene Neeposh and Micheal Mianscum had questions on Hydro Quebec's failure to provide Crees with meaningful jobs.

Chief Daisy House highlighted how projects need to be accepted by communities rather than imposed on by the south.

In the end, most present were satisfied with Mr. Sabia's responses and some remarked his answers were transparent, inclusive, candid and even refreshing.

None were more pleased than Youth Grand Chief Adrian Gunner (not present at the meeting), who questioned why the Cree Nation Youth Council was told they were ineligible for Hydro-Quebec sponsorship money for the first Cree Nation Summer Games happening this summer.

"Consider it done," was Sabia's immediate response.

In closing Hydro's president told everyone to keep their eyes open for more Indigenous-focused wind energy announcements and initiatives this summer.

Regarding Cree/Hydro relations Sabia reminded the Cree Nation not to take anything for granted.

"Talk is talk, but you have to keep us to account."

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty reminded the president that next year is the 50th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA and, although it is a challenging subject for Crees, she invites him to join us in commemorating the milestone.



6. Cree, Inuit, Naskapi Forum meet in Montreal.

On June 26, the Cree, Inuit, Naskapi Forum met in Montreal to provide updates on activity in the territory and to discuss self-government initiatives such as challenges, achievements and latest advancements. Of great interest was Makivvik Corporation President Pita Aatami's update on recent developments in the province's northern region.

Makavvik, an Inuit word meaning "to rise up", is the organization mandated to administer compensation from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement with a focus on economic development, housing, environmental protection and preserving Inuit language and culture.

Aatami says Quebec's Inuit have been in discussions with the province for over 50 years and is hopeful they are getting closer to what they want to see in terms of self-government.

On December 20, 2023, Aatami signed an MOU with the Premier of Quebec to negotiate a self-determination government in what the Makivvik president calls a very ambitious goal to have an agreement in place for December 2024.

"I want to be the decision-maker but in partnership with the Cree and Naskapi," the Makavvik president said, participating online.

In the meantime, Aatami sent a letter to the premier of Quebec calling for a moratorium on mining in the territory until the self-government agreement can be resolved.

According to the Inuit president part of that resolution will come from reopening the JBNQA.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, although supportive, did clarify that some of the terms demanded by the Inuit are not in line with the position of the Cree Nation explaining we may be in a more unique situation than in the Nunavik region, as we have a shared jurisdiction, governing in partnership with the non-Indigenous Jamesian population.

The Grand Chief suggested more dialogue is needed among Cree, Inuit and Naskapi partners on major announcements going forward. Naskapi councilor Jeremy Einish, who's responsibilities include hunting, fishing and trapping rights, the environment and economic development, agreed asking for more consultation from the Makavvik president. Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach Chief Theresa Chemaganish, also would have liked to meet with the Makavvik president in person and discussed traditional land over-lap, reminding the forum that traditional lands may have Inuit and Cree names, but some of those same lands have Naskapi names as well.

Aatami made assurances that, no matter the outcome, traditional land use agreements between Cree, Inuit and Naskapi will be honoured.

Inuit governance community consultations are currently ongoing but one of the main requests Makavvik is hearing is for more Inuit legislative powers and they say the recent Bill C-92 is a step in the right direction.



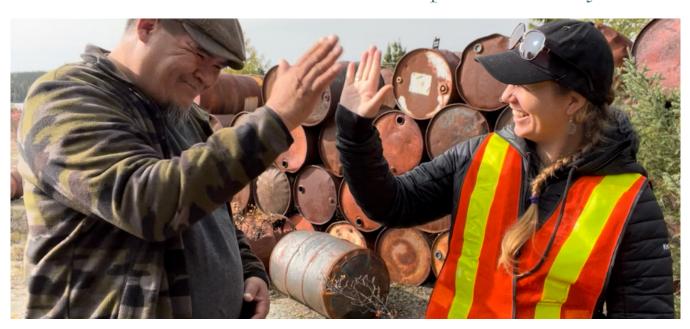






GOVERNANCE

7. Mid-Canada Line Cleanup is underway!



The Mid-Canada Line Cleanup is underway in Quebec and being led by Cree traditional land use experts.

The Mid-Canada Line is a series of decaying military bases stretched across the 55th parallel. The long obsolete radar stations were built in the 1950s as a Cold War early detection system protecting North America from Soviet attack.

There are 42 sites in need of cleanup in Quebec with seven chosen for this pilot project, and four of those sites in Cree territory, running through Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi traplines. Three are in the Whapmagoostui region and one on a Chisasibi trapline. Cree land users, a Whapmagoostui group and a Chisasibi group, are hired for cleanup teams and have been trained in wilderness first aid, workplace safety, and spill management.

Kristy Franks is the Cree Nation Government's Environmental Advisor working hand in hand with communities and band councils. There are also two environmental experts from the south with experience working on similar jobs, but the focus is on the project being led by Cree land experts.

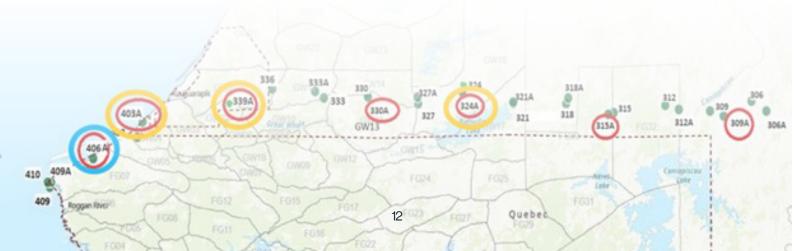
"This is such a beautiful project as an example of teamwork, there are loads of people involved. Land users are really happy this is happening after so many years," Kristy said.

Phase One of the cleanup is cleaning out physical debris (such as old oil drums and pipe) from sites and then assessing the extent of contamination and the need for further environmental cleaning of soil and water from fuel leaks.

"For some of the sites we know there is contamination. It's obvious, you can smell fuel when you move the soil with a shovel," Franks said.

The cleanup project is funded federally, but the seven sites chosen for the pilot project did not meet federal levels of contamination so it was decided that the Quebec government will be paying those costs with 100 percent of the funds going directly to communities.

Visits to all four Cree sites have been done and work is underway with Phase One scheduled for completion by October 2024. The big project upcoming in later phases will be cleanup of the site at Cape Jones which will be a big one.





7. BEING YOUTH CHIEF AND AN ENTREPRENEUR

Interview with Linden Spencer



Entrepreneur and Youth Chief from Eastmain Linden Spencer is the proud owner of three companies. Linden has been in business partnership with his brother Lindros since 2020, co-owning his first construction business Eastmain Excavation.

Coming in right in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the company started out on rocky ground but, with the help of the CNG and relief funding provided to businesses in the Cree Nation, Eastmain Excavation is now hitting pay dirt.

Linden also owns a bus service, Nouchimi Mayheux and EGJ Nouchimi a construction company handling large scale civil projects in the James Bay area. Linden credits his business sense to his upbringing.





"MY DAD GREW UP A BUSINESSMAN, THAT'S WHERE I GET MY 'GO TO'
MENTALITY," HE SAID. "HE DID A GREAT JOB RAISING US AND I WANT TO FOLLOW
IN HIS FOOTSTEPS. I OWE HIM A HUGE THANK YOU FOR WHERE WE ARE TODAY."

Eastmain Excavation's first job was landscaping around the community of Eastmain and the jobs kept coming. With each successful venture, Linden says the key to their success was continuously investing back into the company.

As an indication of their success, the company has just recently purchased a 36-ton shovel worth around \$300K and a flatbed truck worth close to half a million dollars.

The company was also instrumental in providing local training, offering residents the chance to receive their CCQ construction safety certificate, a requirement for everyone working in construction.

"I'm actually proud of it, everyone who did the course got their safety card," Spencer admitted.

The company is now in the process of bringing back the construction safety course this summer and, in conjunction with Apatisiiwin Skills Development, they are also planning to provide a local operator's training course in excavation.

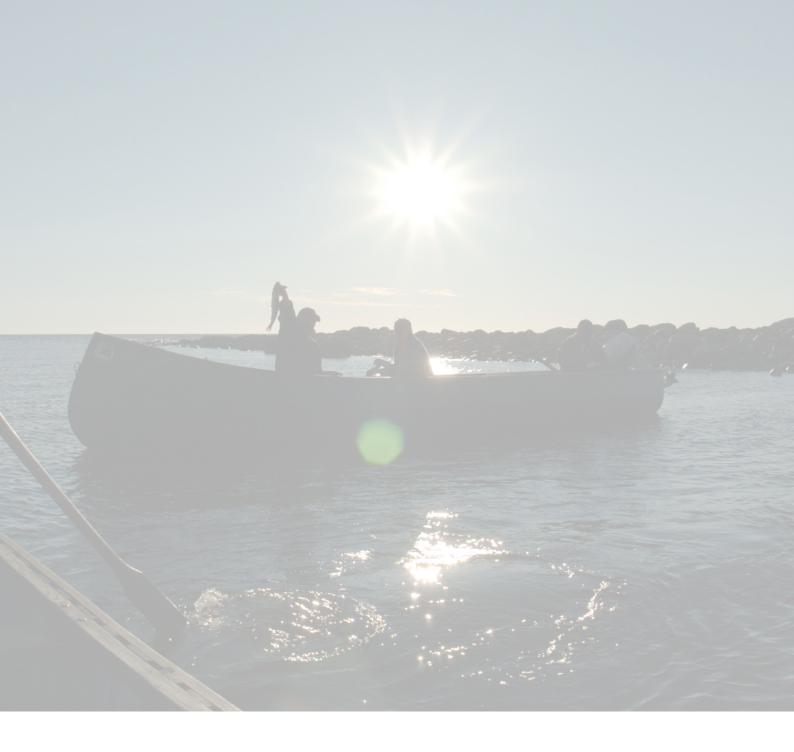
"Don't quit", is Linden's advice to his fellow Cree youth.

Linden has two daughters and a partner Naomi Linklater from Moose Factory.

"DON'T QUIT, THERE IS GOING BE A DOOR THAT'S SHUT ON YOU BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER DOOR THAT YOU CAN GO THROUGH. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP, DO SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE AFRAID TO DO AND JUST BELIEVE IN YOURSELF." BECAUSE ANYONE CAN DO ANYTHING WHEN THEY BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES."

Linden Spencer





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NEXT ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 2024



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Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

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