



Eeyou Eenou NEWSLETTER

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

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ISSUE 5

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Crees, Parks Canada, and
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CREE KNOWLEDGE FESTIVAL

A vertical photograph of a dense forest. The scene is filled with tall, slender trees, likely pines or firs, their trunks reaching upwards. The foliage is thick and green, with sunlight filtering through in dappled patterns. In the center of the image, a large, dark, rounded rock sits on the forest floor. The ground is covered in a layer of fallen needles and leaves. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

November 11, 1975

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed November 11, 1975. The year leading up to the historic signing consisted of some of the toughest negotiating in Cree history by some of our most revered leaders.

The signing of the Agreement-in-Principle on November 16, 1974, a year before the final signing of the JBNQA, effectively ended the dispute over the James Bay hydro-electric mega project which threatened our land and our traditional way of life. Defying all odds, an Indigenous group had successfully negotiated the recognition of Aboriginal rights leading to the first modern-day treaty in Canada. These negotiations were nothing short of historic, reshaping the future of our Nation and marking a turning point in the relationship between the Cree Nation and the governments of Canada and Quebec.

Demonstrating that we were not mere bystanders but rightful stewards and protectors of Eeyou Itchee, our leaders, with great vision and determination, worked tirelessly to ensure that our voices were heard and that our rights were recognized.

Marking this important milestone, we look back with pride on the strength and resilience of our past leaders, and we celebrate the enduring legacy of their efforts. This is a time for us to remember the path that brought us here and to honour their vision, fighting for our rightful place at the table and creating the partnerships and alliances we benefit from today.

Throughout the upcoming year, leading up to the 50th Anniversary of the JBNQA on November 11, 2025, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/ Cree Nation Government invites everyone across Eeyou Istchee and beyond to join us in commemorating these important dates in our history, celebrating our resilience as a strong Indigenous Nation.

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EEPF HONOURS LEGACY OF SERVICE TO THE CREE NATION



Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF) held its first Exemplary Service Awards Ceremony on September 6th, 2024, in the Cree Nation of Chisasibi.

At this first Exemplary Service Awards Ceremony, the Valour Award was given to Officer Johnny Kawapit, Investigator Derek St-Cyr, Former Mistissini Police Officer Sylvain Proulx and Late Officer Charlie Gunner. The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Late Officer Eric Benac, accepted by his son and wife, Hayden Benac and Linda L. Shecapio. The recipient of the award for Meritorious Service was former Officer Joey Odjick, Director Shannon Nakogee accepted the award on his behalf.

The legacy of Cree policing is a valued tradition in Eeyou Istchee and we thank the EEPF family for your continued service in keeping our communities safe.



Officers Charlie Gunner, Derek St-Cyr and Sylvain Proulx received the Medal for Valor for an event that occurred in Mistissini in the middle of the night October 15th, 2010 while responding to shots fired, engaging a drunk male on a shooting spree with a 12 gauge shotgun and a "lunch pail full of rounds."

Medal of Valor recipient, Sylvain Proulx was on duty that night with fellow Mistissini Police officer Charlie Gunner and were the first on the scene in the nearly three-hour standoff while receiving gunfire. He shared his experience.

"I heard shots hit the house beside me, then I heard Charlie saying he was hit," Detective Proulx recalls.

Bleeding from minor wounds Charlie stayed on duty returning to the police station to take calls from terrified community members. Next to arrive on the scene was

Mistissini police officer Derek St-Cyr followed soon after by RCMP backup.

The incident ended with a dramatic takedown of the shooter after officers had taken between 100-120 rounds of shots towards them and the scene spread over a kilometre and a half, strewn with shell casings.

All the officers involved received the Governor General's Medal for Bravery in 2012.

Proulx is now a violent crimes detective with the Gatineau police and secretary of the police union in charge of communications while sitting on several important committees in service to his fellow officers.

Detective Proulx does not carry a gun and as a result of the incidents of that night he now lives with PTSD.

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SYMPOSIUM 2024

The Fire and Life Safety Symposium took place on September 24-25, 2024 in Mistissini and was supposed to be followed by the Cree Nation Firefighting Competition which had to be cancelled this year due to lack of participation.

Lee-Roy Blacksmith is the fire marshal at Capital Works and Services and the person in charge of putting on the event. Blacksmith says last year's competition was to be held in Nemaska but was cancelled due to the forest fires. It has been over a decade since the last firefighter's competition which is unfortunate because they are seen as good training and team building exercises.



"We had five communities confirmed but they were forced to back out at the last minute. So we decided to cancel the team events and change it to individual events and open it to the public but no one showed," Blacksmith said.

Some good did come from the event not from the competition but from the symposium workshops and booths set up in the gymnasium.

One of the booths was a CRP information booth and Blacksmith had hired a Cree certified trainer to attend and during that one day five community members were trained on the spot and they were thankful for receiving their CPR certification.

Blacksmith says the timing was wrong this year, but he is looking forward to lots of participation at next year's event which is scheduled to take place in Wemindji.



THE CANADIAN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & CLIMATE ADAPTATION CONVENTION (CEPCA)



The Canadian Emergency Preparedness & Climate Adaptation (CEPCA) Convention, held from September 24-26, 2024, in Ottawa, gathered experts and policymakers to address urgent climate risks.

CNG representatives Olivier Kölmel, Killian Abellon, from the Climate Change Unit, and Kristy Franks with the Department of Environment and Remedial Works, along with CBHSSJB's Jason Coonishish and Imi Khailat, working on emergency measures and climate adaption respectfully, participated in key discussions aimed at bolstering community resilience.

A major takeaway was the cost-saving power of early preparedness: every dollar invested in early warning systems saves six dollars in recovery. Culturally sensitive evacuation plans and real-time data sharing were highlighted as vital to improving disaster response in Indigenous communities. Another key focus was the need to integrate climate data into Canada's National Adaptation Strategy, with Indigenous roundtables planned for 2025 to enhance coordination and funding.

Universal emergency training was also emphasized as a vital tool to boost response capabilities across various scenarios, helping communities to better manage crises. Experts also pointed out a common gap in emergency management—the lack of focus on recovery. Planning ahead and building back better—whether for homes, infrastructure, or camps—is critical for long-term resilience.

These insights underscore the importance of bridging the gap between climate adaptation and emergency preparedness and response. The Cree Nation Government continues to explore ways to strengthen Cree communities' ability to face future climate risks with proactive, coordinated efforts.



AFN 3RD NATIONAL CLIMATE
GATHERING / FNCLA



Starting in Ceremony, the AFN 3rd National Climate Gathering, held from October 7-10, 2024, on Treaty No. 7 Territory in Calgary, brought together over 1,000 leaders, youth, Elders, and allies to champion bold Indigenous climate action.

Focused on self-determination, conservation, and resilience, the gathering showcased how First Nations are shaping the future of climate policy.

The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee played a central role, with Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee, CNG's Climate Change Manager Olivier Kölmel, Waswanipi's Forest Authority Department representative Michel Arès, and Steven Nitah of Nature for Justice delivering a powerful presentation on Pathways to Conservation Finance to a full room. They emphasized how Cree values can drive biodiversity recovery and restoration after forest fires through the recognition of carbon rights over traditional territories, leveraging tools like carbon credits to protect land and culture. A message that deeply resonated with the Deputy Grand Chief was,



"Mother Earth has taken care of us since time immemorial—it is now our time to take care of her."

The delegation from Wemindji—Deputy Chief Arden Visitor, Director of Environment Howard MacDonald, Youth Chief Margaret Danyluk, Youth Development Coordinator Chelsea Moses Blackned, and three youth—along with Reggie Tomatuk and Imi Khailat from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, participated in sessions addressing land-based healing, youth engagement, chronic wasting disease, nature-based solutions, and holistic climate responses through the OneHealth approach. These discussions also delved into environmental justice and the vital connections between health, land, and climate.

Additionally, the Cree Nation delegation visited green energy startup SixRing and the First Nations majority-owned Alexander Chemical Ltd. enterprise, gaining valuable insights into Indigenous-led innovation and Alberta's green energy sector.

Building on momentum from June's First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda's leadership meeting in Ottawa, where Cree leadership met with federal ministers to advance climate policies protecting Cree interests, this gathering reinforced Indigenous leadership in shaping transformative climate solutions.

PREPARING FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FUTURE CLOSURE OF THE ELEONORE MINE



Representatives from Newmont Eleonore joined the community of Wemindji for the 5th Opinagow Summit titled "Our Shared Connections" offering participants an update on the Eleonore Mine and discussions for the future.

Eleonore's earliest closure date was predicted for 2029 back in 2015. Although the life of the mine is expected to surpass that date, mine representatives are advising the Cree Nation and specifically the Cree Nation of Wemindji to start planning for the end.

Newmont is predicting plenty of opportunities for potential contracts, Cree businesses and jobs during the upcoming closing phases.

The closure of the mine will take place in two parts. The first phase of "active closure" takes between three to five years and entails dismantling infrastructure and land rehabilitation. The second monitoring phase takes place over a prolonged period to ensure the environmental stability of the land and waters.

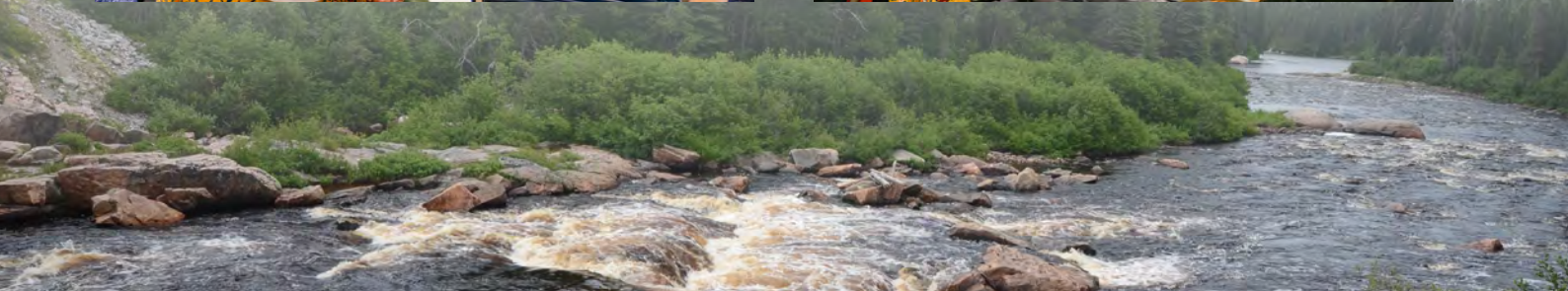
Contract and business opportunities include demolition, site security services and maintenance of power and water systems.

The Cree Nation of Wemindji with support from the Cree Nation Government were on hand to contribute with local participants in discussion groups exploring ideas for future jobs, contracts, infrastructure and the health of the land.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty was thankful to be invited to take part in the event and commented on economic possibilities for the future emphasizing the economic potential in closure phases, noting that funds are already secured for this eventual process.

"The community has an opportunity for their active participation from the beginning of the closing phases. The land users' traditional knowledge is especially a key factor to land restoration. There are economic opportunities for us in this process and it will also prepare us to adapt to life after the mine." - Chief Christina Gilpin





Led by Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee, the session brought together key leadership from both organizations to address mining impacts in Eeyou Istchee. The Department of Commerce and Industry, Department of Environment and Remedial Works, and the Cree Trappers' Association presented crucial information on topics ranging from the Cree Hunting Law to environmental assessments.



The collaborative event fostered meaningful dialogue between leadership and community members, with participants sharing their perspectives both orally and in writing. All concerns were carefully documented for future action.

KEY PRESENTATIONS INCLUDED:

- Cree Hunting Law and tallyman roles
- James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement rights
- Environmental assessment processes
- Mining Policy implementation
- Hunting, fishing, and trapping rights



“Regional Cree Trappers’ Association was pleased to be able to join the Cree Nation Government to meet the inland tallyman at the joint session... we always appreciate the opportunity to meet our members, and we look forward to addressing and responding to the key points shared at the meeting.”

Allan A. House, Chief Financial Officer/Interim Chief Executive Officer-President, Cree Trappers' Association

LOOKING AHEAD

A follow-up session for coastal communities is being planned for fall 2024. Stay tuned for date and location announcements.

CHECK OUT THE OUTCOME OF THE INLAND INFORMATION SESSION:



END OF SEASON MESSAGE TO INDOOHOO EENOUGH/EEYOUCH

The Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Coordinator of Operations Benoit Longchap was out on the land this Moose Break passing out pamphlets and spreading awareness over the new Cree Nation Moose Conservation Guidelines.

With Moose Break now over, Benoit says through his interactions with Eeyou hunters, one of the guidelines receiving mixed reactions are those warning against night hunting.



Benoit says the younger generation of hunters does not see the danger with hunting at night and say today's modern equipment makes it possible to do so.

The other side of the argument comes from the Elders who say night hunting is not worth the risk of losing a wounded animal in the dark, therefore wasting good meat.

While some hunters may have the wrong idea and avoid the Land Keepers, Benoit assures Indoohoo Eenouch/Eeyouch they are not there to hassle them or issue any tickets or confiscations.

While engaging with hunters the Land Keepers message first and foremost is one of safety, whether it's in the handling of firearms, knives or in their daily activities on the land.

The Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers would like to thank the Cree Nation for continuing to practice safety on the land while carrying out traditional activities.



IMPLEMENTING A TAG AND PERMIT SYSTEM FOR MOOSE CONSERVATION IN ZONE 17

In response to the concerning decline of 35% in the moose population as reported by the last aerial survey conducted in 2021, the Cree communities in zone 17 have taken significant conservation measures since. The Moose Conservation Cree Guidelines were established in the fall of 2022, marking a pivotal step towards preserving the moose population. Building upon this foundation, a mandatory tag and permit system for hunting moose in hunting zone 17 is now being implemented.

This new approach has been developed to address the imperative need for the recognition and respect of Tallymen in wildlife management and conservation. It has become evident that many land users are not honoring the traditional role of the Tallymen, consequently leading to a disregard for the established conservation guidelines. By instituting a mandatory tag and permit system, the Cree Nation Government, the Cree Trappers' Association, and the communities of Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, and Waskaganish aim to gather reliable data that will inform management decisions to effectively address the decline in the moose population.

The implementation of the tag and permit system signifies a collective commitment to responsible and sustainable wildlife management. It is a proactive measure that underscores the importance of upholding traditional roles and respecting established guidelines. Through this system, we seek to empower our communities to play an active role in preserving our natural resources for future generations.

By adhering to the principles of the Moose Conservation Cree Guidelines and embracing the mandatory tag and permit system, we are taking a significant stride towards mitigating the decline in the moose population. This collaborative effort will not only benefit our ecosystem but also contribute to the preservation of our cultural heritage and traditional practices.

As we move forward with the implementation of this system, we urge all stakeholders to actively participate and support these conservation efforts. Together, we can work towards restoring balance to the moose population and ensuring a sustainable future for our communities and Eeyou Istchee.

Guidelines

Zone 17

<p>GUIDELINE 1</p> <p>A limit of 2 moose per trapline must be respected.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 2</p> <p>All Cree hunters in Eeyou Istchee should limit their harvest to one moose per family.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 3</p> <p>All Cree hunters should report their moose harvest to the local CTA.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 4</p> <p>In zone 17, the moose harvest in winter and spring (January/March) is only allowed within traplines where harvest has not already reached the 2 moose limit.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 5</p> <p>Full-time Trappers and Land Users (Income Security Program) are given priority for the harvest of moose.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 6</p> <p>Avoid the harvest of female (cow) and big bull moose.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 7</p> <p>Use every parts of the animals, not leaving any waste behind and share the harvest. Hunters are invited to donate to the community freezer located at CTA office.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 8</p> <p>Hunting at night is prohibited</p>	<p>GUIDELINE 9</p> <p>Hunters from other Cree communities shall NOT be permitted to hunt moose within Zone 17. Except those invited by the tallymen.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 10</p> <p>Hunters are expected to share their harvest with elders, family, members of the community; especially low-income families.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 11</p> <p>Harvesting shall be for cultural, educational and sustenance purposes; not for the purpose of sales or any monetary profit.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 12</p> <p>Every hunters will refrain from publicizing any moose hunt on social media in respect for the animal.</p> <p>GUIDELINE 13</p> <p>The use of skidoo for chasing and the use of drones is prohibited to hunt moose in Zone 17.</p>
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CHECK OUT THE MOOSE
GUIDELINES ONLINE:





CNG SIGNS WIINNIPAAKW MOU AND ANNOUNCES TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION



On October 18, 2024 the Cree Nation Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Parks Canada and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change launching the next steps towards establishing the proposed Wiinnipaakw Indigenous Protected Area and National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in the offshore waters of the Eeyou Marine Region.

The signing ceremony took place after the closing ceremony of the 2024 Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network in Beauport, Quebec with federal environment minister Steven Guilbeault, Nadine Spence, vice president of Indigenous affairs and cultural heritage for Parks Canada signing on behalf of Canada, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachie signing on behalf of the Cree Nation.

Deputy Grand Chief Wapachee said development of the NMCA idea started in Wemindji back in the 2000s and the current Wiinnipaakw feasibility assessment process was overseen by a steering committee comprised of CNG members and representatives of Parks Canada.

"The efforts that we are announcing today marks a milestone as it will be the first time that we work on establishing protected areas for the waters of Wiinnipaakw (James Bay). Today's announcement is the result of many years of hard work and we will continue improving and expanding this network going forward"

A second announcement was made at the same event by the Gouvernement du Québec, CNG and Parks Canada that is complimentary to the Wiinnipaakw Indigenous Protected Area. Joined by Benoit Charette, Minister of the Environnement, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty and Steven Guilbeault announced their intention to work together on a project to establish the first marine protected area (MPA) in the coastal waters of Eeyou Istchee. This is a first step, discussions will continue to determine the precise area and conservation objectives.

The signing taking place after the ILCN congress was fitting as main discussions focused on Indigenous inclusion in conservation initiatives. During a panel discussion at the ILCN Congress taking place right before the announcements Grand Chief Gull-Masty was asked on her thoughts about the power of partnerships and how Indigenous-led conservation is helping mobilize and evolve knowledge.

"When I look at the participation of Indigenous peoples in conservation I frame it in two ways," The Grand Chief said.

"One, it is a secret weapon for success because you are engaging individuals that have in-depth and intimate knowledge of those spaces and second, it is seen as a guarantee. It's a guarantee on investment. You are getting social acceptability and you are essentially going into partnership with an exceedingly overqualified group, overqualified because of the knowledge they carry."



ABANDONED MINING SITE CLEAN UP



In 2008, Cree Nation Government and Cree Mineral Exploration Board conducted interviews with tallymen and land users in all Cree communities regarding abandoned mining sites on the territory. As a result, 601 sites were identified as abandoned mining exploration or unknown origin (more sites were identified related to Hydro-Québec and the federal government, among others).

The Agreement Concerning the Cleanup of Abandoned Mineral Exploration Sites on the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory was signed in 2018 between CNG, Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIRJBRG), Fonds Restor-Action Cri and Quebec. This Agreement established measures to cleanup 429 abandoned mining sites in the territory. A Steering Committee was formed to ensure implementation and oversee cleanup work. Project Manager Aurora Hernandez was appointed as the CNG representative on this committee.

Adario Masty was hired in 2020 to coordinate cleanup work. SYM Consultants, who collected information in 2008, joined the team to administer and implement the cleanup strategy. Work was delayed due to COVID-19 measures in the territory, so first site visits were undertaken in summer 2021. Visiting sites and characterizing contents is the first step in the process as it allows for a better understanding of the extent of cleanup work required and helps plan the strategy. The sites are characterized with the tallyman or an appointed family member, benefiting from their knowledge of the area. The results are recorded using



The initial focus of the cleanup plan was in Mistissini, as it has the most abandoned exploration sites in the territory; and Whapmagoostui, due to the volume of waste left and the complexity of the sites. In Whapmagoostui, there are a total of 20 abandoned exploration sites. Most notably is the Rupert site, one of the largest on the territory. Only 8 sites south of the 55th parallel are covered under the agreement. The rest are located north of the 55th parallel, requiring collaboration with Kativik for cleanup.

A group of workers in safety gear, including hard hats and high-visibility vests, are carrying a large, dark-colored pipe. They are standing in front of a white vehicle, possibly a truck or bus, which has a red fire extinguisher mounted on its side. The workers are wearing various types of clothing, including jackets and pants, and are all looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is a bright, open area, likely a construction or industrial site.

A large number of rusted metal drums (barrels) are stacked in rows in a wooded area, suggesting hazardous waste storage. The drums are arranged in neat rows, filling the foreground and middle ground. They are heavily rusted and some have white labels. The background shows a dense forest with evergreen and deciduous trees under a cloudy sky.

The cleanup of abandoned mining sites is a complex endeavor involving the Ministry of Natural Resources, EIJBRG, Cree Communities, Tallymen and Land Users. Each stakeholder has unique interests, priorities and concerns, leading to potential conflicts and challenges in decision-making so effective collaboration is crucial.

A scenic view of a river flowing through a forested landscape. The foreground is dominated by dark, dense evergreen trees on the left and a rocky, gravelly riverbank on the right. The river itself is wide and shallow, with visible rapids and white water. In the background, a dense forest of tall evergreen trees stretches across the horizon under a bright, clear sky.

SIIBII: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MUSIC

Interview with Siibii



Based in Montreal since 2017 to pursue their music career, Indigenous queer artist Siibii grew up in Mississauga and is a star that just keeps getting brighter.

Siibii has captivated audiences in cities like Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. The Cree Nation Government (CNG) caught up with Siibii earlier this year after their performance at the Fierté Montréal festival at the Olympic Stadium.



01 What was it like performing at a huge venue like the Olympic Stadium?

That was so cool! Because it was Pride there were a lot of queer artists so that felt super validating as a queer person. It was really cool to see so much talent and to be among that talent. The event was beautiful. It felt like one of those rare experiences you get in your life if you are lucky enough.

03 What kind of reaction is the song getting?

I was really nervous about that subject matter and people not responding to it, but it seems people actually do want to listen. That makes me feel really happy to know that my audiences are ready to hear these kinds of songs.

05 Thank you so much for sharing your newest project with us. Do you have a message to Eeyou Istchee?

Just for everyone to watch out for my new releases dropping sometime this winter. I can't wait for the public to hear them.

02 Your newest project has a bit of a darker tone to it, and at Fierté you performed one of those unreleased songs, can you tell us about it?

It's called "User". It's pop with electronic influence. The subject matter is about being a survivor of "grooming". It felt important to talk about.

When I was growing up back home, because of generations of intergenerational trauma, there was this air of hiding abusers. Being able to talk about it is empowering yourself instead of continuing the cycle of staying silent.

04 Is it personal?

It's super personal but it also makes you feel vulnerable, because when you create art that talks about personal stuff, you're essentially showing the world an aspect of something that you've lived through or something that you currently live through. Some people respond really well to it and some people say they're not ready and everyone has their own reasons as to why that might be.

THANK YOU SIIBII. CNG WISHES YOU SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS
IN YOUR INCREDIBLE MUSIC CAREER AND WE LOOK FORWARD
TO YOUR LONG-AWAITED NEW ALBUM.



COVER:

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

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