

**Cree Nation Land Use Planning
Community input on land use planning goals**

**EEYOU ISTCHEE
REGIONAL SYNTHESIS**

**Compiled by the
Eeyou Planning Commission**

April 2018

CONTEXT

The *Eeyou Planning Commission* (EPC, or “the Commission”), was created by the Cree Nation Government after the signing of the *Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement* (2012). Its principal mandate is to prepare a draft Regional Land and Resource Use Plan for the parts of Eeyou Istchee designated as Category II lands under the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (1975). Its main goal in doing so is to help balance development and conservation, and to help protect the Cree way of life (*Eeyou Eetuun*).

The EPC is also mandated to work towards building a collective vision concerning land and resource use throughout all of Eeyou Istchee—including not only the areas designated as Category II lands but also Category IA, Category III, and the Eeyou Marine Region. To this end, the EPC will collaborate with the entities responsible for the planning in these areas to *harmonize* the various land and resource plans in the region.

To identify the values, issues and visions that will guide land use planning in Eeyou Istchee, the Commissioners and the EPC Secretariat staff worked together to organize work sessions in the nine Eeyou communities. In each of these, we held open house meetings and carried out individual and group interviews with land users, Elders, youth, women, and local government representatives.

In early 2018, we produced and distributed community-level reports summarising these values, issues and visions as they were expressed in each of the communities. This regional synthesis report combines the key elements emerging from these community-level reports so that these elements can inform our approach to land use planning for Eeyou Istchee as a whole.

SUMMARY OF LAND USE THEMES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Each Cree community has its own distinctive history, culture, and faces distinct sets of social, economic, and environmental issues that together shape how it approaches land use planning. Common themes are persistent across all the communities, however:

- *Cree occupation of the land;*
- *Governance and lands management;*
- *Environmental and wildlife protection;*
- *Industrial exploitation of natural resources;*
- *Economic activity and Cree employment;* and
- *Eeyou Culture and language.*

The table below lists and these and the sub-themes associated with each.

Table 1. Land use themes identified by community members

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Cree occupation of the land	<p>1.1. Condition of the land (p.3)</p> <p>1.2. Access to the land (p.4)</p> <p>1.3. Cost of accessing and staying on the land (p.4)</p> <p>1.4. Transmission of traditional skills (p.4)</p>
2. Governance and lands management	<p>2.1. Information, communication and public participation (p.5)</p> <p>2.2. Role of Elders and experienced land users (p.5)</p> <p>2.3. Tallyman and trapline system (p.6)</p> <p>2.4. Management of hunting, trapping and fishing pressure (p.6)</p> <p>2.5. Waste management and littering at camps and in communities (p.7)</p> <p>2.6 Recreational cabins and hunting and fishing by non-Crees (p.8)</p>
3. Protection of environment and Wildlife	<p>3.1. Protection of ecologically sensitive sites (p.9)</p> <p>3.2. Protection of culturally sensitive sites (p.10)</p> <p>3.3. Protection of wildlife (p.10)</p> <p>3.4. Protection of freshwater resources (p.10)</p> <p>3.5. Cumulative nature of environmental impacts (p.10)</p>
4. Industrial exploitation of natural resources	<p>4.1. Forestry (p.12)</p> <p>4.2. Hydroelectric power generation (p.12)</p> <p>4.3 Mining (p.13)</p>
5. Regional economic activity and Cree employment	<p>5.1. Participation in regional economic development (p.13)</p> <p>5.2. Industrial development on Cree terms (p.14)</p> <p>5.3. Economic activities with low environmental impact (p.14)</p> <p>5.4. Local employment and returns from development (p.14)</p>
6. Eeyou culture and language	<p>6.1. Cultural programs (p.15)</p> <p>6.2. Culture camps (p.15)</p>

LAND USE PLANNING THEMES

THEME 1. CREE OCCUPATION OF THE LAND

Land use planning in Eeyou Istchee must enable the continuity of Cree occupation: the land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, berry picking, camp life, and traditional cooking that are the center of Eeyou culture

Community members and leaders often mentioned how their ability to be on the land depends on environmental, cultural and economic factors that must be addressed by land use plans. It requires a clean and healthy environment; that the respect of the animals is ensured; that families are able to access the land reliably, safely, and at costs that they are able to afford. It also requires that the extensive sets of bush skills required to travel, to set up and maintain camp, to acquire and prepare food are passed on to young people.

Sub-theme 1.1. Condition of the land

Hunting, fishing, trapping and the other activities at the core of Cree life and Cree culture require healthy ecosystems that support healthy wildlife populations.

Industrial resource extraction has affected significant portions of Eeyou Istchee. Some specific implications of these activities for land use planning are discussed in details below (Theme 4: Industrial exploitation of natural resources). What is important to highlight here is how the cumulative effects of several projects taking place across the territory gives the families a sense that their territory is shrinking.

River diversions and the creation of reservoirs for hydroelectric production have caused the permanent flooding of family hunting territories. Related hydroelectric infrastructure (power stations, dikes and roads) built by Hydro-Québec also contribute to this 'carving out' of territories. In Chisasibi, for instance, several of these traplines are underwater.

In the southern portions of Eeyou Itschee, forestry removed the trees and disturbed animal habitats in way that rendered them unable to support hunting. In Waswanipi, only a handful of traplines remain unaffected by forestry, whereas others are left with only very small portions that can support traditional activities.

Elsewhere, mineral exploration activities and in some cases, the establishment and exploitation of actual mines, further subtract from the total area useable for Cree occupation.

For families whose traditional hunting territories have been heavily impacted by hydropower, mineral or forestry exploitation, it becomes more difficult to occupy the land and to carry out traditional activities. In some cases, these families rely on invitations or permission, from other tallymen to access other families' traplines. Even when granted, these permissions may come

with restrictions that contribute to the difficulties of Cree occupation (see sub-theme 2.3. Customary tenure and trapline system).

Sub-theme 1.2. Access to the land

Difficulties in accessing traplines are a common challenge to Cree occupation of the land. Forestry roads, for all of their negative impacts, have made it easier for many Crees to access their own family hunting territories. In areas above the northern limit for forest allocations, and especially in Whapmagoostui, air travel is frequently required to access inland traplines. Snowmobile access is possible in some areas, but trips from road-served areas to some Cree camps can be very long, sometimes taking eight hours or more. These challenges make it difficult for people to move in and out of their traplines and hunting areas. If land users have to leave their remote camp, for example to go to a medical appointment, the trip back to camp can be too costly to be worthwhile, and the hunting season and activities may be then cut short.

Sub-theme 1.3. Cost of accessing and staying on the land

Going out on the land is expensive. This is especially the case when the family hunting territory is far from the community and requires air travel. In those cases, the flight alone can cost the land users thousands of dollars, and prevent them from bringing younger family members along for the experience and education. For others, it is the cost of owning and maintaining a boat, snowmobile, or truck, and the cost of fuel, that presents a challenge.

Access to the subsidy programs that are designed to help offset the costs of travel and of establishing and running camps is sometimes difficult, the procedure unclear, or the compensations deemed insufficient. The largest of these subsidy sources, the Income Security Program, is designed to support full time hunters, excluding those who have jobs or other commitments in the community. Some full time hunters who benefit from these funds report that they are sometimes insufficient in the context of low price of fur, which discourages commitment to full time hunting.

Sub-theme 1.4. Transmission of traditional skills

Many Crees are limited in their ability to spend time on the land because they lack the required skills and knowledge required to hunt, fish, trap, tan hides, cook and preserve meat, make snowshoes, and maintain a camp. The underlying issue here is cultural literacy, which declines in part because there are fewer opportunities for youth to learn these skills from their Elders.

There are also important public safety consequences to this issue: people who are inexperienced or not knowledgeable about the land and how to live on it—for example, how to travel over tricky rapids or ice—may place themselves in dangerous situations as they attempt to reach parts of the land to pursue traditional activities.

Planning for Cree lands, many have observed, should seek to enhance opportunities for Crees to learn about how to live on the land (See also theme 6 Eeyou Culture and language).

THEME 2. GOVERNANCE AND LANDS MANAGEMENT

Community members and leaders have expressed interest in using land use planning to help improving the soundness, fairness and accountability of decisions about how lands and resources are allocated and used across Eeyou Istchee.

In all of the communities, members have spoken of their wish for a greater and more proactive participation of Cree representatives in regional structures of governance to respond to external pressures for resource exploitation and similar intrusions to Cree life in the territory.

Discussions on this broad theme of governance and lands management have also highlighted issues concerning how lands and resources are allocated and used by Cree community members. Several of these comments hinted at the dissatisfaction with the way the tallyman and trapline system of land tenure is practiced, or at least, with what is perceived by some as a lack of clarity on the role of the tallyman in the changing social landscape of Eeyou Istchee, and on how this title is passed on in families.

Sub-theme 2.1. Information, communication and public participation

This item refers to the nature of communication and public participation concerning projects affecting community lands and territories. Comments on this element did not directly speak of specific proponents or governmental departments or agencies. Rather they highlighted a general feeling of inadequacy vis-à-vis these exchanges as a whole. Many feel that they are left out of input on important decisions, or that they are not always provided with all the necessary and critical information that they would need to arrive at an informed decision. In some cases, the knowledge of Cree land users and Elders is inadequately documented, and where it is documented, it is not compiled into a form that is readily usable for decision-making.

At the same time, there is a widespread feeling that there are simply too many consultations, that community members and land users are overly solicited for presentations, interviews, focus groups for the many initiatives in the region, and that their participation, while sometimes taxing to the solicited individual, does not adequately influence decision about, or the outcome of, these projects.

This calls for measures to improve the coordination of communications to consultations of Cree communities, enabling community members to understand the issues, the stakes, and the role their feedback will play in decision-making.

Sub-theme 2.2. Role of Elders and experienced land users

Community members frequently highlighted the importance of ensuring a greater role for Elders and experienced land users in decision-making. Elders are the holders of critical Eeyou cultural knowledge about the land and the stories, values and practices that have traditionally informed our use of the land. Experienced land users and tallymen have excellent and detailed

knowledge of the current condition of their traplines, and a good understanding about how different land use scenarios might affect that condition.

There remain questions on how specifically this wisdom and knowledge of Elders and experienced land users could be given a greater role in helping guide decision-making and lands management.

Sub-theme 2.3. Tallyman and trapline system

The third element of this governance and lands management theme pertains to the role of the tallymen and the tallyman system in lands management and the regulation of Cree harvesting. Some even speak of a breakdown or crisis of the Cree traditional land management.

One issue illustrated in the quote above pertains to reports that Crees community members do not ask the tallyman of a given territory before going to hunt, trap or fish there; that they do not respect his or her requests about where, what, and when they can stay or hunt, trap and fish; and that they do not share their kills with the tallyman and his or her family.

Conversely, community members have also reported a shift in tallyman-based land tenure and management: some tallymen, they argue, see themselves as the owner, rather than custodian, of their family hunting territory. In this sense, hunting territories are treated by some tallymen as a piece of real estate from which they increase their personal gains by excluding others. This is seen as running contrary to the tallyman's responsibility of ensuring the well-being of the animals and of the Crees—not just him or herself. In some cases, the issue is that a tallyman may be reluctant to share his responsibilities with family members, or that family members have difficulties agreeing on succession when a tallyman is replaced, sometimes leading to conflicts and sub-division of territories.

At the same time, others wish for tallymen to have *greater control* over what happens in their trapline. A related point of contention concerning this tenure system has to do with questions on the degree to which the tallyman is responsible for decisions about long-term and large-scale infrastructure and resource exploitation projects such as roads and mining infrastructure. This type of project calls for considerations that are of a different order than the more traditional decision-making role concerning, for example, how much and when hunting and fishing takes place in which parts of their territory.

Sub-theme 2.4. Management of hunting, trapping and fishing pressure

This point is directly linked to the one discussed above: it has to do with reports that the stress to the customary tenure and harvesting system leads in some parts to over-harvesting, misallocation, mismanagement, and wasteful practices by Crees themselves.

Some have issues with what they perceived as a shift in the role and nature of family hunting territories (traplines) away from communally managed, and toward what some almost consider as property or real estate. This shift, they argue, concentrates hunting and fishing in specific

areas. Historically, families would access other territories in response to factors such as shifts in the abundance of certain kinds of animals, and the intensity of previous hunts. Indeed the land use record of Elders attests to this, as many have extensive knowledge of several traplines that they occupied at different times in their lives. With traplines being now seen as more narrowly associated with specific families and individuals, the flexibility of this system of resource allocation across communities is seen as diminished.

There are complaints of hunters killing more than needed, and not sharing their meat with other community members. Hunters kill more than their own family can consume, sometimes in order to sell the surplus, advertising their offer on social media. This practice is justified and tolerated in times of financial hardship, when such a sale can help a family pay bills or groceries, but some report that this is becoming an increasingly common practice even in the absence of hardship.

Elders have mentioned that freezers have contributed to worsening of these trends of overharvesting and not sharing. Hunters kill animals, and instead of sharing what they cannot consume at a given time, they store it in a freezer. For this reason, in Ouje-Bougoumou, and perhaps elsewhere, freezers are sometimes referred to as “stingy boxes”, in that they encourage “stingy behaviour”. In some cases, meat in the freezer for too long, becoming spoiled, and is thrown away to make room for new ones.

Taken together, these issues confer a sense that shifts in harvesting management practices undermine the long-term sustainability of both wildlife populations and Cree culture. Community members proposed several suggestions to address this. These include redefining and revising the role of the tallymen, and requiring hunters to report all their kills, better monitoring of wildlife populations, and putting quotas in place as needed.

A related point, discussed below (sub-theme 2.6 Non Cree hunting and occupation of the land), is that this strengthened Cree hunting management system and ethic should apply to non-Crees hunting in Eeyou Istchee.

Sub-theme 2.5. Waste management at camps and in communities

There is a concern that some Cree community members are not taking sufficient care when disposing of waste. This problem has been observed in the communities themselves, on Category I lands, but also across territory as whole, including during youth expeditions, “canoe brigades” and similar gatherings and cultural initiatives on the land.

This trend is made worse by the facts that families bring more supplies to camps than they used to, many of which are disposable, generating more waste. There are reports of waste being improperly disposed, just left as litter instead of being burned or taken back to town. There is an interest in improving waste management practices, though education, improving recycling programs, and making it easier to follow good waste management practices at camp.

Sub-theme 2.6. Recreational cabins and hunting and fishing by non-Crees

There are issues and concerns about the activities of non-Cree land users in Eeyou Istchee, most specifically those that come to the area to hunt and fish. For Cree families, these lands are their backyard, their garden, their grocery store, their home, where their hunting and fishing rights can only be respected if access to hunting areas and to animals are not restricted by others. Non-Crees often act as if they consider Category III lands as “crown lands” open to all. They remain unaware or oblivious to local and customary management, and do not seek permission from tallymen or from families to hunt in their territories. Crees feel that in many cases these hunters do not show adequate respect of the animals: they are inexperienced and hunt carelessly, they do not properly handle and butcher kills, they waste meat, leave litter.

Such behavior is deeply troubling for Crees, who often express a willingness to share the land when it is respectful of Cree values and when it does not interfere with the Cree way of life. In fact, most people interviewed maintain that they welcome visitors, and that the land is large enough and animals plentiful enough to be shared with all, but that sharing entails basic respect of rules and customs. In other communities, however, especially those in the south, some feel that their hospitality has been exhausted, and that access to outsiders should simply be curtailed.

This influx of people has been accelerated by the proliferation of the road network in Eeyou Istchee. Forestry roads especially have made it easier for non-Crees to reach areas that had until then been the almost exclusive domain of the Crees and neighboring First Nations groups. This influx is thus most noticeable in the forestry-affected area. Non-Cree hydro-Québec workers have also been quite active around Nemaska, many returning there to hunt or fish during vacation or after their assignment there, going to sites they had noticed during their work in the area. In Chisasibi and Wemindji territories, non-Cree caribou hunters travel from the south in the winter use the James Bay Highway or the Trans-Taiga road. In some communities, especially those in the south and in Nemaska, the growing presence of non-Cree hunters has been reported by many as a pressing issue, as something that undermines Cree ability to be on the land.

A directly related item is the establishment of recreational cabins by non-Cree land users in Eeyou Istchee. This is seen as especially disruptive because it allows the ‘grounding’ of some of the behaviour described above.

An important point here is that the Cree approach to site selection for the establishment of camps tends to differ from the non-Cree approach, and these differences can cause problems. Crees usually build several cabins together at a single site near to the necessary resources for a camp, but far enough away from sensitive habitat areas as to not interfere with wildlife. Non-Crees usually build only one cabin per site, which leads to a larger ‘footprint’ overall. Moreover non-Crees’ approach to site selection is seen as insensitive to its impact on animal habitat, often opting to be as close possible to vulnerable habitat so as to render hunting and fishing easier.

This is an especially pressing issue in the territories of the southern communities, such as Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou, where in some parts the high density and heavy use of non-Cree cabins curtails Crees' ability to use that part of their territory. In some of these areas, cabins are so heavily concentrated on certain lakes or in certain areas that they discourage Crees from building their own cabins there. Sometimes tallymen spend time and money preparing a site for their own cabin, only to go back there and find that a non-Cree has built on the site. In other cases, Crees whose camps and hunting areas are close to non-Cree cabins are routinely, and falsely, accused of stealing from non-Crees.

THEME 3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

The need to protect greater portions of Eeyou Istchee from the environmental damage caused by resource extraction and by excessive and inappropriate hunting and fishing practices figured prominently in as a priority in every Cree community. There is a strong sense that commitment to environmental protection must be at the core of the land use planning process. The importance of protecting ecologically and culturally sensitive areas was especially highlighted in the communities whose territory has been most heavily impacted by forestry or hydropower exploitation.

In general, there is a strong interest in seeing that land use planning should start by identifying the sensitive areas requiring protection, and considering other land uses only after that point.

Sub-theme 3.1. Protection of ecologically sensitive sites

Community members of every community mentioned several sites that they consider to be ecologically sensitive and in need of protection. These are often key wildlife habitat areas, such as moose yards or caribou calving grounds; areas where specially valued plants are harvested; or lakes and rivers with a particular significance for their water quality or the fish habitat they support.

In general, the recommendation made was to the effect that Elders, tallymen and experienced land users are best equipped to help understand where the sensitive sites, what they mean and what would be needed to protect them.

Related to this is the suggestion that significant sites that have already been damaged by development activities should be restored and then protected.

The environmental protection sought by the Crees is first and foremost the protection from the impacts of industrial exploitation of natural resources: mining, forestry and hydropower. Secondary to this is the protection from non-Cree occupancy and hunting impacts. In this sense, it is the customary Cree land use of hunting, fishing and trapping that people want protected: environmental protection for the Crees entails measures that will protect and enhance these uses, rather than hinder them.

Sub-theme 3.2. Protection of culturally sensitive sites

Culturally sensitive sites that Crees want to see protected include, but are not limited to, grave sites, camp sites (past, current, and future potential sites), archaeological sites, sites where specific stories took place, sites where community members traditionally gathered (e.g. Old Nemiscau, Old Factory), and sites of historical interest to the communities. For many, these sites stand as monuments to the Cree way of life and are, in their own way, as critical to the continuity of that way of life as the land itself. It is also important to highlight that in Eeyou Istchee it is often impossible to clearly disentangle or distinguish between *ecological* and *cultural* elements of concern.

Sub-theme 3.3. Protection of wildlife

Many community members mentioned the need to take special care of animal populations, to ensure their health and protect them from the more onerous impacts of development. These concerns are differentiated from those regarding ecological and cultural sites because animals are the subject of harvesting, and there are concerns that the combined effects of industrial development and irresponsible harvesting (both non-Cree and Cree) will deplete these populations. The goal is to ensure that sufficient protection measures are in place to allow wildlife populations to thrive for generations into the future.

Sub-theme 3.4. Protection of freshwater resources

In all of the communities, members have spoken of the critical importance of protecting freshwater sources, lakes and rivers. This concern of water protection has been especially highlighted in the communities where water resources have been impacted.

For example, Eastmain is mainly preoccupied with the protection of the lakes in its territory because few remain intact. Mistissini would like to ensure the protection of Mistissini Lake and others that are at the center of this community's existence. In Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou, the main concern is the destruction of spring water sources and the impact that forestry, mining and other industries have had on lakes and rivers, often rendering their water unfit for consumption.

Across all of Eeyou Istchee, there is a strong concern about the potential impact that mining and other industrial exploitation of natural resources can have on contaminating water sources, whether it is hydroelectric reservoirs altering taste, or the long-lasting impact and uncertainty regarding the nature of site contamination following spills of mining residue reservoirs.

Sub-theme 3.5. Cumulative nature of environmental impacts

Depending on their locations, family hunting territories can be affected by the environmental impacts from any combination of resource extraction activities: the expansion of the road network, flooding and river diversion for hydroelectric production, forest cuts, and mineral exploitation and exploitation. Industrial developments bring a sense that available land to carry

out these activities is 'shrinking', being curtailed by expanding and proliferating hydroelectric reservoirs, dams, weirs, roads, transmission lines, mining infrastructure, forestry cuts. To this list is added the constraints on traditional activities imposed by the growing numbers of non-native hunters using parts of territories, often causing Crees to avoid these areas. In some cases, all these can co-exist in one hunting territory, thereby greatly diminishing that family's sense of how comfortably and safely they can stay out on the land.

The cumulative nature of these impacts is invariably brought up at meetings and consultations by proponents: impacts from hydro-development are brought up during consultation about mining and forestry projects, forestry impacts are brought up in discussion about mining and hydro development, impacts from mining are brought up in discussion about hydro and forestry, so on. There is a sense in the communities that this cumulative nature of impacts is insufficiently taken into account when new projects are brought forward.

Minimizing the environmental impacts from industrial activity on the condition of the land—their actual ecological effects—is an important way of contributing to the continuity of Cree occupation. In addition to this, hunters avoid certain areas not so much because of clearly identified ecological problems with those areas. Rather, they do so because they have heard of, or noticed evidence of industrial activities, for example, mineral exploration equipment left behind, and in the absence of clear knowledge about the nature of these activities and their potential impact, they may choose to avoid setting traps or fishing near that area. In those cases, a well-integrated, reliable, and up-to-date database about the nature of human activity and their environmental impacts will be a key resource to address, and in some cases, alleviate these concerns.

THEME 4. INDUSTRIAL EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

As is the case in most of northern Canada, the primary domain of economic activity in the region is in the primary sector: industrial exploitation of the natural resources that are minerals, timber, and energy, in this case, in the form of hydropower.

Crees are acutely aware of this reality and they most often welcome industrial development projects such as mineral exploration and exploitation. In some cases, they actively participate in those, even initiating them.

There are important caveats to this overall welcoming position, however: Eeyouch want these projects to take place in ways that ensure the animals are respected, that the Cree way of life can continue, that areas deemed sensitive for ecological and cultural reasons be given particular attention, and that in some case, these areas be excluded altogether from such plans.

Sub-theme 4.1. Forestry

Forestry has affected the vast majority of the family hunting territories below the northern limit for commercial forestry allocations at some point in recent decades. Many community members consider that the impacts from these cuts outweigh what they gain in return.

First, they feel that their perspective is insufficiently considered in forestry planning, despite the mechanisms set out for this purpose in the 2002 *Agreement Respecting a New Relationship Between the Cree Nation and the Government of Quebec* (“Paix des Braves”). Many report that their attempts to ensure the protection of sensitive areas and influence forestry activities through existing consultation process have not yielded the results they expected or hoped.

Second, there are objections to the way that forestry practices are carried out. A common complaint is that the forestry companies replant commercial varieties (e.g. jack pine) instead of replacing the original tree species that were cut (e.g. black spruce). Another complaint is that the pesticides and other products used on the replanted trees discourage wildlife from feeding on these for years. Third, there is also the issue that forestry operations restrict Cree land use for extended periods of time, make full-time hunting and trapping difficult or impossible in certain areas, but without providing appealing jobs or adequate compensations. Fourth, forestry has a negative impact on water, both spring water sources and lakes and rivers, rendering them non-potable. Fifth, forestry roads and their traffic are reported as detrimental to Cree activities on the land, as forestry trucks can be a danger and a nuisance.

Sub-theme 4.2. Hydropower generation

The development of infrastructure to generate hydro-electric power has had widespread impacts across several Cree communities since the beginning of Hydro-Québec’s La Grande Project in the 1970s.

Chisasibi has been the most heavily impacted by the submersion of traplines, the loss of the community-gathering site that became LG1, the alteration of hydrological systems in much of the region, the transformation of lakes and rivers into reservoirs with restrictions on navigation and fishing, and the alteration of travel routes and land based activities. Nemaska, Wemindji, Eastmain and Waskaganish have also seen substantial impacts.

Many of the impacts from these projects are permanent. That being said, community members have suggested ways in which the impacts of hydroelectric developments can be mitigated or limited in the future.

First, across the communities there is a great apprehension, if not an outright opposition, to the possibility of additional large-scale hydroelectric projects in the territory. This includes the possibility of expansion of existing facilities. Second, land users and community members feel that, again, their input is not sufficiently integrated into planning and decision-making regarding the nature, location and timing of the diverse activities surrounding hydroelectric

development. Third, there are concerns about the ecological effect of the chemicals that are used to control vegetation around hydroelectric infrastructure such as transmission lines. Some report that the animals avoid feeding on plants that are sprayed with these chemicals, or that they become sick when they do. Fourth, many community members raise concerns about what they perceive as inadequate waste management practices from Hydro-Quebec workers active in the territory, causing local pollution and environmental damage. The bottom line, as with forestry, is that many community members voice a desire to do things differently, to have more say in hydroelectric development to ensure it is as compatible as possible with the Cree way of life.

Sub-theme 4.3. Mining

The impacts of mineral exploration and exploitation are unevenly distributed across the different Cree communities' territories. All communities have seen mineral exploration to varying degrees of intensity, but not all have had mines constructed and operating on their territory, much less seen the entire mining cycle through from beginning to end. Ouje-Bougoumou and Waswanipi especially have a large number old abandoned mining exploration and exploitation sites in their community extent. Wemindji, Mistissini and Nemaska now each have a large mining project on their territory. These are newer, modern projects, which are the object of impact benefit agreement between the communities and the promoter.

Community members are divided about the desirability of these projects, but overall there are widespread concerns about the potential impacts of mining activities, especially the risk of water contamination. Events such as the breaking of the levee and spill at the tailing pond of the defunct Opemiska mine near Waswanipi in 2008 have heightened those concerns. Many community members brought up the need to ensure that mines engage in excellent environmental management, taking care to minimize the risk of contamination and impacts on the Cree way of life.

THEME 5. REGIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND CREE EMPLOYMENT

Community members expressed their desire for Crees to take more control of economic development in Eeyou Istchee. Many enthusiastically emphasized that they are not anti-development, and that they are not averse to sharing their territory with non-Crees and proponents of natural resource exploitation projects. What is critical is that these projects and activities take place in ways that respect Cree values and that they allow for a greater role for Cree initiative, leadership, and provide greater benefits to the communities.

Sub-theme 5.1. Greater participation in regional economic development

Many community members expressed a desire to take a more prominent and proactive role in the economic activities in the territory. They want to have more agency in the process and steer it towards a future that will be fulfilling for the Cree people and ensure the continuity of the Cree

way of life. It is believed, or hoped, that a more direct Cree involvement in these development projects will help ensuring that those project serves Cree economical, environmental, and cultural interests. A related implication of this is that a greater Cree involvement in the projects will help maximizing the proportion of value-added investment on the territory, instead of shipping out raw materials for processing elsewhere.

Sub-theme 5.2. Industrial development on Cree terms

While Crees who spoke with us often pointed out that they are not anti-development, they are against development that imposes too high a cost on Cree lands, culture, economy and society. They want to have more influence on the industries that are active on the territory, not to stop these activities necessarily, but to regulate and as needed, restrict them. For example, some suggested that industrial activities should respect the Cree calendar for activities on the land and strive not to interfere with these, such as goose break and moose break.

Sub-theme 5.3. Economic activities with low environmental impact

In line with the previous item, many community members have expressed an interest in pursuing economic activities that are more environmentally friendly and widely seen as more compatible with the Cree way of life than industrial extraction of natural resources. These could include eco-tourism and cultural tourism, or the commercialization of non-timber forest products such as mushrooms, and Labrador tea. There is a great interested in seeing initiatives concerning these types of activities being converted into long-term commercial activities.

Sub-theme 5.4. Local employment and returns from development

Another frustration expressed by community members with respect to development is the lack of local employment and economic returns of project developments. This was particularly clear in the area of construction and other contracts on Category III lands. Crees are often unable to bid on these contracts because they or their companies do not have the requisite certifications or union membership. It was also mentioned that Cree-non-Cree partnership companies—which were created to overcome this problem—are built in a way that uses the status of the Cree partner entity for access to markets, impose on it an undue share of the risks, while also providing most job opportunities and profits to the non-Cree partner entity. There is hope that future approaches to development will prioritize Cree employment opportunities and greater returns on investment in the communities.

THEME 6. EYYOU CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The goal of keeping the Cree culture and language alive and strong for future generations was highlighted in every community. Elements of this goal are greatly intertwined with environmental protection and the ability of the Cree to pursue traditional occupation. Because the vitality of Eeyou culture is intimately tied to the health of the land and the ability of community members to continue the Cree way of life there, what benefits the one benefits the

other, and what harms one harms the other. Many community members observed a long-term trend of decline in Cree language and culture, and they hope to reverse this trend.

Sub-theme 6.1. Cultural programs

One common suggestion for helping the long-term viability of Cree culture and language is to ensure that cultural programs are maintained across the territory. These programs are most effective, many suggest, when they take place on the land and not in the community, and when they help connecting Elders and youth.

The transmission of Cree language in its richness, it is argued, often requires one's engagement with traditional way of life. For example, the vocabulary that goes with making snowshoes extends to the terrain and conditions under which different tree species grow, the names of the species themselves, the skills and tools needed to appropriately harvest and shape the trees, and much more. Such elements, and their wider cultural dimensions, are very difficult to teach in town settings.

These programs are also useful when they enable relations where Elders can transmit their knowledge and skills to youth. One key consideration here is that Elders sometimes lack the physical fitness to carry out traditional activities, whereas youth often lack the expertise. Guidance of Elders in this context can help youth acquire needed cultural and language skills while also providing the Elders with the extra help and care to ensure they can safely spend more time out on the land.

Sub-theme 6.2. Culture camps

Comments about culture camps, or cultural facilities outside of the community used for education in Cree culture and language, came up in several communities. The general idea is to have a site well outside the community for use in cultural instruction and community gatherings, a site that is protected from the environmental impacts of industrial resource extraction activities. Such camps already exist in some if not most of the Eeyou Istchee communities, for example Mistissini's Murray's Lodge, Waskaganish's Smokey Hill. There are other sites used for traditional style community gatherings and activities such as Chisasibi's Fort George, Wemindji's Old Factory, Waswanipi's Old Post, and Nemaska's Old Nemaska. These are all sites of historical importance to communities, but it is not clear if all of these are used or usable regularly for cultural education. Some, like Old Nemaska, seem to be in need of upgrades if they were to host such activities on a regular basis, others would present greater logistical challenges if the intention were to use them regularly.

APPENDIX: PLANNING THEMES BY COMMUNITY

This regional report is a synthesis of the content of the nine community-level reports produced earlier. The tables below provide a summary and examples of how the themes came up in each of these community reports.

CHISASIBI

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	Teach youth to hunt and harvest as their Elders did, without overkilling and while using all of the animals.
Governance and lands management	Revise the trapline system and its implementation to ensure that the way it is being implemented respects Cree values (i.e. traplines are not about ownership). Ensure non-Crees engage in safe hunting practices that do not affect Cree safety or rights, and observe Cree values regarding respect for the animal.
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Protect sensitive environmental and cultural sites. Protect water as a critical resource for people and wildlife so it does not become contaminated by development.
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Limit impacts from existing hydroelectric development and refrain from adding to existing infrastructure
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	Carry out economic development through partnerships and collaborations that allow Crees to have a strong say, to ensure development respects Cree values
Eeyou culture and language	Improve and increase opportunities to learn Cree culture and language, so that the knowledge of Elders is passed on

EASTMAIN

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	Enhance the Cree presence on the land by make it easier for Crees to go out, through cultural programs and subsidies
Governance and lands management	Develop more governance structures that will protect the Cree way of life Improve management monitoring of the land, in part through integrating land users into information-gathering and decision-making Revise the trapline system to ensure Cree ways (e.g. terms of access given by a tallyman) are respected Put in place better management of Cree waste disposal especially at camps and remote locations
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Protect sensitive areas that are critical for harvesting, culture, animal populations, water protection Ensure that Cree harvesting respects a set of rules based on Cree culture and the sustainability of wildlife populations
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Take care to minimize chances of contamination and ensure full restoration of mining sites

Regional economic activity and Cree employment	Increase local influence over development, including through pushing industries (tourism, non-timber forest product harvesting) that are more compatible with the Cree way of life
Eeyou culture and language	Improve and increase cultural programs and establish a new community cultural site

MISTISSINI

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	Enhance the Cree presence on the land by creating more opportunities for community members to spend time there and learn from Elders Provide better access to the land for community members, through subsidies, preventing or mitigating negative impacts of development on travel, keeping portage trails open etc.
Governance and lands management	Development measures to ensure non-Crees are aware of and respect hunting laws and Cree rights on Category 1, 2 and 3 lands Better educate community members and land users on, and integrate them into, rights and decision-making about the land
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Protect the lake as a key resource for Crees with environmental, cultural and heritage value
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Monitor forestry practices to ensure they adhere to agreements in place and respect Cree rights Ensure that community members are fully integrated into decision-making on these sectors, especially land users
Eeyou culture and language	Develop measures to ensure Crees remain fluent in their culture and language, perhaps through better community programming and more time on the land

NEMASKA

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	Ensure Cree culture is effectively passed on to future generations, in part by limiting the amount of (industrial development) projects on the territory
Governance and lands management	Improve communication procedures and integration of land users into decision-making Make improvements to community infrastructure (gas stations, lagoons, roads etc.) to improve public health and safety Educate non-Cree hunters on Cree rights and hunting practices, and ensure these rights and practices are respected Work better with non-Crees to limit non-Cree occupation on the territory and advance projects of common interest
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Improve monitoring, in part through increasing the number of wildlife offices on the territory Ensure that key areas for Nemaska are protected (existing proposals include Broadback river, lake Evans), including old Nemaska

Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Limit impacts of existing hydroelectric development and force Hydro to take existing Cree land uses better into account
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	Preserve the heritage of Nemaska while providing opportunities for youth and others to engage in social, economic and educational development See that Nemaska Crees take a stronger role in leading and managing development on their territory, to maximize benefits while minimizing damage to Cree land and way of life
Eeyou culture and language	Preserve the Old Nemaska site and improve infrastructure there

OUJE-BOUGOUMOU

Themes	Description
Governance and lands management	Strengthen the role of Ouje-Bougoumou and Crees in general in the governance of their territory for better resource management and balance between environment and development Work with non-Cree population to ensure they respect sensitive areas, Cree rights and practices on the land Address the continuing efforts of non-Cree communities to expand their territories and powers in order to protect Cree rights Revise the trapline system to address concerns about traditional governance, access to the land and the role of the tallyman
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Protect Ouje-Bougoumou lands, to ensure that it is as intact as possible for future generations to continue Cree way of life Take special care to ensure that water resources are well protected, managed and rehabilitated as needed Regulate Cree and non-Cree harvesting to protect the sustainability of animal populations
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Reduce forestry and improve forestry management practices to bring them more in line with Cree values Ensure that mining in Cree territory is done in a way that protects land and water as much as needed for Cree way of life to continue
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	Take advantage of position of Ouje-Bougoumou to capitalize on positive relationships with non-Crees Take charge in carrying out development that is in harmony with Cree values, e.g. through effective planning and having good information on the state of the territory for baselines etc.
Eeyou culture and language	Ensure the transmission of Cree culture and language to future generations, including skills, and stories.

WASKAGANISH

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	<p>Ensure all Crees have the opportunity to practice the Cree way of life.</p> <p>Ensure that Cree traditional use and occupation of the territory is sustained or increased.</p> <p>Minimize the impacts of climate change and environmental change on the Cree way of life.</p> <p>Address low fur prices and qualifying period for ISP program as barriers to making an income hunting fishing and trapping.</p>
Governance and lands management	<p>Integrate sound waste management practices into Cree life on the land and the activities of proponents.</p> <p>Integrate Elders into decision-making on governance, land and culture.</p>
Protection of environment and Wildlife	<p>Protect ecologically and culturally sensitive sites, including camps, the Broadback River, refer to tallymen, Elders and knowledgeable land users in doing so.</p> <p>Look into how best to monitor Cree harvesting so as to be able to regulate harvesting as needed to ensure wildlife populations remain healthy</p> <p>Protect the Smokey Hill site</p>
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	<p>Acknowledge and monitor/mitigate impacts of hydroelectric development.</p> <p>Make an inventory of gravel resources and similar construction materials in Waskaganish region, assess current and future needs and make a plan for meeting those needs.</p>
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	<p>Take initiative with governments and proponents to ensure that Crees are equal partners in decision-making and governance</p>
Eeyou culture and language	<p>Inventory and protect sites of archaeological and historical significance, including gravel pit at km 29.</p> <p>Create programs and policies that support the growth and development of Cree knowledge (e.g. cultural program at km 29).</p> <p>Create programs and policies that support the transmission of Cree values and teachings.</p> <p>Create programs and policies that support the growth and development of Cree language</p>
Other	<p>Acknowledge the role of HBC in the development of Waskaganish</p>

WASWANIPI

Themes	Description
Governance and lands management	<p>See that Waswanipi Crees, supported and advised by Elders and knowledge holders, play a bigger role in the governance of the territory.</p> <p>Play a bigger role in lands management, including compelling non-Crees to follow Cree teachings and guidance (e.g. as set out by tallyman).</p> <p>Ensure that non-Cree occupation of the territory does not interfere with Cree rights or Cree occupation of territory.</p> <p>Enforce agreements in such a way as to ensure that Cree rights and related Cree occupation of the territory is respected, and translates into having a real say over development.</p>
Protection of environment and Wildlife	<p>Push for more protected areas, including but also beyond the Broadback river, especially sensitive areas for animals and water.</p> <p>Protect remaining non-impacted water resources and address the widespread damage to water resources.</p>
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	<p>Better integrate Cree perspective into forestry planning and management practices, i.e. not harvesting in sensitive areas, replant same trees that were cut.</p> <p>Work closely with mining companies to ensure existing and future mines have land-friendly practices with respect to contamination and waste management.</p>
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	<p>Exert more control over development to ensure it goes forward in a way that is compatible with Cree value and way of life.</p>
Eeyou culture and language	<p>Promote programs or other activities that support fluency in Cree culture and language, including the use of place names.</p>

WEMINDJI

Themes	Description
Governance and lands management	<p>Create and push a Cree vision for the territory ahead of the interventions associated with Plan Nord, Quebec government, Hydro-Quebec and other proponents, etc.</p> <p>Try to better control sports hunters activities, ensuring that they respect Cree rights, values and activities on the land</p> <p>Improve communication and consultation with community members, to ensure they are fully informed and better integrated into decision-making, while avoiding needless duplication.</p> <p>Strive for inclusive governance that involves public participation and discussions as a good approach to addressing development projects.</p>
Protection of environment and Wildlife	<p>Prevent over-hunting, trapping and fishing through deployment of Cree conservation officers</p>
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	<p>Improve the monitoring and regulation mining exploration activities and their impacts</p> <p>Ensure that process is complete and authorization is delivered before projects go ahead.</p>
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	<p>Create more collaborations with other Cree communities to provide coordination required for all communities to benefit from business and development.</p>

	Explore different development opportunities and strategies (eco-tourism, pushing into the category 3 contract market, renewable energy) to put Crees at forefront of development in the territory.
Eeyou culture and language	Improve and increase programs, facilities etc. that will help ensure full transmission of Cree culture and language to future generations

WHAPMAGOOSTUI

Themes	Description
Cree occupation of the land	Ensure that Cree traditional use and occupation of the territory is sustained or increased. Improve Cree access to the land through infrastructure (trails, better air travel), programs and subsidies.
Governance and lands management	Reconsider the trapline system in relation to the goal of enhancing Cree access to the land. Work more closely with the Inuit to see if it is possible to reduce doubling up on basic services and improve relations with respect to land use.
Protection of environment and Wildlife	Expand the protected areas in Whapmagoostui territory to include Lac Bienville and other sensitive lakes and habitats. Greater accountability and transparency with regard to decision-making concerning activities and development on the territory
Industrial exploitation of natural resources	Improve monitoring of the impacts of existing and prospective development, and improve information on the state of the land. Monitor and document impacts of hydroelectric development especially in the Lac Bienville area, and find resources to help address and mitigate these impacts. Monitor and document impacts of mining exploration and potential exploitation, and find resources to help address and mitigate these impacts.
Regional economic activity and Cree employment	Create resources, training, and space to realize Cree-led economic development initiatives, such as a business incubator.
Eeyou culture and language	Maintain Cree language skills with the next generations. Ensure that Cree knowledge and culture is passed on to the next generation through programs and teachings
Other	Consider building a road to link Whapmagoostui to the South, but while being careful to maintain the beneficial aspects of Whapmagoostui's relative isolation.