

**Cree Nation Land Use Planning  
Values, Issues and Vision**

**Report on community input  
on land use planning goals**

**MISTISSINI**

**Compiled by the  
Eeyou Planning Commission**

**December 2017**

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# **1. Introduction**

After millennia of caring for the land, but being largely excluded from government planning for their homeland, the Crees finally had their right and responsibility to plan for the future of Eeyou Istchee recognized in the 2012 Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement. Shortly afterward the Eeyou Planning Commission was formed, with a representative from each of the 10 Cree communities, to work on land use plans in Eeyou Istchee, ensuring they stay as true as possible to Eeyou Eetuun.

Land use planning for Eeyou Istchee starts with understanding what vision Crees have for their communities, and what issues stand between them and realizing that vision. To this end, in 2017 the Eeyou Planning Commission working with the Cree Nation Government conducted open houses and focus groups in the 10 Cree communities. The goal of this exercise was both to better understand the values, issues and vision that need to be at the core of a Cree land use plan, and to share information about the new land use planning processes in place. This report describes some of how the Crees of Mistissini see their community, the challenges they face, and their vision for the future of their lands.

## **1.1 History of Cree Land Use Planning**

In ancient times as in the present, Crees have always planned their use of the land. Understanding that the well-being of Eeyou Istchee is a pre-condition to the well-being of Crees, and that everything on the land is deserving of respect, Crees considered and planned out their hunting, fishing, trapping, harvesting and travels across the land with the greatest of care.

As the years went by and the presence and activities of non-Crees increased – including not just fur-trading but mining, forestry, hydroelectricity, tourism and more – Crees continued to plan their lives on the land with the same care they always had. But things had changed. Ecosystems transformed by forestry or hydroelectric development did not respond the same way they once did. Mining or even whole new communities displaced traditional hunting spots. The animals behaved differently, responding not just to Crees but to non-Crees whose own occupation of the territory made itself increasingly felt. At the same time, communities became more sedentary and the need for jobs increased. Crees saw opportunities in these new activities and industries occurring on the territory, and in partnerships with the non-Crees with whom they now shared Eeyou Istchee – opportunities to live from and care for the land in new ways, to draw from Cree tradition and ingenuity to meet the needs of a changing world.

In the 2012 Cree-Quebec Agreement on Governance, Crees obtained formal mandates with respect to land use planning – the right and responsibility to compile and share a Cree vision for Eeyou Istchee, shaped by the Elders' teachings that have always informed and guided Cree land use. Basically, land use planning offers Crees the opportunity to do as they have always done, which is to create and implement a plan for how they want to use the land. There are many more activities to consider now than there used to be, and many more people and partners to work

with. But the value Crees place upon balance, that is, upon developing and caring for Eeyou Istchee in a way that ensures that future generations will have as many opportunities to hunt and trap, and work and learn, as possible – that hasn't changed.

## **1.2 What is the Eeyou Planning Commission about?**

As mentioned above, the Eeyou Planning Commission was created as a result of the 2012 Cree-Quebec Governance Agreement. It is composed of a Commissioner from each of the ten Cree communities including Washaw Sibi, as well as a Chair from the Cree Nation Government – currently the Deputy Grand Chief. The Mistissini representatives to the Eeyou Planning Commission are:

- Hubert Petawabano, Commissioner
- Gerald Longchap, Alternate

The mandate of the Eeyou Planning Commission is to work towards building a collective Cree vision and the capacity to engage on land use planning related activities throughout all of Eeyou Istchee. The EPC will work collaboratively with regional planning partners in order to harmonize the various land use plans so that they work as best as possible with the collective vision, interests and aspirations of the Crees. This mandate includes:

- The drafting of a land use plan (Regional Land and Resource Use Plan) for Category II lands
- Collaborating with the EIJBRG in harmonizing Category II and III land use plans, and providing Cree content and information for Category III plans
- Collaborating with the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission in harmonizing terrestrial and offshore land use planning and implementation
- Any other responsibilities the Cree Nation Government assigns to it.

### 1.3 How does land use planning work?



There are seven main stages for land use planning in Eeyou Istchee.

The first is determining what the main goals of a Cree land use plan need to be (1. Pre-planning, goal setting). The Values, Issues and Vision we hear about in Mistissini and other Cree communities will help us understand and describe those goals. Each community will have its own unique goals, and still others will be common across many or all Cree communities.

Once these goals are established, the Eeyou Planning Commission and the Cree Nation Government will collect the background information related to these goals (2. Research, data collection).

Next, the Eeyou Planning Commission and the Cree Nation Government return to communities to ensure that the information they collected is accurate (3. Analysis, validation).

Using the information collected, the Eeyou Planning Commission and the Cree Nation Government will work with communities, planning partners and others on developing land use plans that move Crees closer to the goals they have named (4. Writing the plans).

These plans then need to be approved in public hearings held in the Cree communities (5. Public hearings, plan approval).

After this they are put into action (6. Implementation) and finally, once in action, they are assessed to check whether they are successfully helping to reach the goals established by Crees (7. Evaluation, monitoring).

Here is an example of what the land use planning process looks like using the goal of protecting culturally sensitive sites

Stage of Planning	Work Involved
1. Pre-planning, goal setting	Protect culturally sensitive sites
2. Research, data collection	Collect information from Elders and land users on where culturally sensitive sites are. Determine which, if any, are already protected.
3. Analysis, validation	Validate information on culturally sensitive sites with the communities, to make sure we know where many or all of them are.
4. Writing the plans	Develop plan for land use that gives a special status to valued culturally sensitive sites.
5. Public hearings, plan approval	Present plan to communities for approval, ensure it meets the goal they envisioned
6. Implementation	Put plan into action
7. Evaluation, monitoring.	Check to see if the culturally sensitive sites are being protected as envisioned by the community

**1.4 On the Values Issue Vision Exercise**

In order to understand more about Mistissini, and what issues and objectives matter most to Mistissini Crees, the Mistissini Commissioner for the Eeyou Planning Commission (EPC) worked with the EPC Secretariat to hold focus groups with community members. The objective of these focus groups was to gain a better understanding of what is valued by community members, what issues they see in relation to land use planning, and what is their vision for the future of their community. Different groups were targeted for input, including local government employees whose mandates touch land use planning (e.g. those who work in Environment, Economic Development, Cultural Development, etc.), as well as representatives of different demographic groups: women, Elders, youth, and land users. Members of these groups were invited to participate in focus groups, and the composition of these groups was mixed and determined mainly by the availability of participants. Several focus groups were held over three days in Mistissini.

In addition to the focus groups, the Commissioners and the Cree Nation Government held an Open House in Mistissini on October 18th 2017. At the Open House, community members had the opportunity to hear a presentation on land use planning, pick up pamphlets and information, and ask questions of the Commissioner and Cree Nation Government representatives. They also

had the opportunity to give their own feedback on the values, issues and vision that matter most to them in relation to land use planning.

Comments and perspectives from participants were grouped into a table and then sorted by theme pertaining to values, issues and vision, these themes being described below. Participants are described as Mistissini Crees or Mistissini community members in the text, but as only a limited number of community members participated in the exercise, it should be understood that the views they describe and the themes discussed here are indicative of broader public opinion in Mistissini but not a definitive take on it. This document and the land use planning goals that emerge from it will continue to evolve along with the development of and dialogue within the community.

## **2. What is Valued**

### **2.1 The land**

*“When my father-in-law or my father talked about the land they talked about it like it was a member of the family. You know when you talk to your brother or sister and you expect something from them you never take from them more than you what you are in need, so too is the land you don't take more than you need and they always take what they need not more.”*

*“The land is where our schooling came from. We lived with my husband's parents and my parents at times and that is where we learned to really live off the land, training my husband in hunting techniques and myself trained by my mother and mother inlaw what a woman does and responsibilities. When the time came we were able to go out on the land on our own, the things that we were taught were not written down but they told and showed us what to do.”*

*“If we look at what and how we lived, in harmony with the land...how we took care of the land and wildlife and so in return the land took care of us.”*

Mistissini's territory is vast – with the biggest north-south spread of all the Cree communities – and relatively intact compared to other inland southern communities like Ouje-Bougoumou and Waswanipi. The land has played and continues to play a central role for community members; in many sense, the built community itself is only a backdrop for the activities on the land, which are the focal point of traditional Cree cultural life. As one community member explained so beautifully above, the land is thought of and cared for as a part of the family, one on which Crees knowingly depend for subsistence. This gives the land a status and value above virtually all else.

## **2.2 Opportunities to practice Cree way of life**

*“It’s so easy for us to take our children out on a boat to travel to an area to teach your children our ways, even the simple stuff on how to make a fire and cook for yourself. In the more remote areas we are very blessed to see everything intact.”*

*“We have a beautiful community, it’s grown a whole lot since I was little. We’re able to do whatever we want to do, go blueberry picking or out on the land with our kids, our families. We’re still able to teach and show our kids how to pick blueberries, teach our daughters how to make blueberry jam. There are various teachings from mothers and grandmothers, it’s good to be able to pass on teachings to children, knowing that they want to learn more.”*

*“In our territory it’s along the Temiscamingue river and while my husband is driving the boat I’m just enjoying the view. We can dock anywhere and say ok let’s make a fire here. This is where we say we are rich, richness in money blows away and richness in Cree culture is forever and transferable.”*

*“Our community looks forward to annual gathering, where we have Elders and community go there, it’s close. The things they do there, the togetherness that happens during that time, it’s something that we’re beginning to lose as a community. It used to be one week, now it’s two weeks. We have our traditional activities there, walking out ceremony, traditional foods how to prepare it, that’s something the community enjoys.”*

In addition to valuing the land itself, Mistissini community member highly value the opportunities that their community and its location gives them to practice a traditional Cree activities on the land. With Mistissini lake providing relatively easy access to many traplines (not to mention excellent fishing grounds), and limited or no industrial development activities (mining, forestry, hydro) in much of the territory, it’s relatively easy for community members to leave town behind and go hunting, trapping and fishing on a fairly regular basis. (the exception is being the far northern traplines that are more difficult to access). This ease of access is highly valued and a cause of Mistissini’s strong cultural life.

## **2.3 Mistissini lake**

*“I can’t help but think about the big lake, many of us have been there numerous times, beauty of lake and surrounding lands. How good the fish is still, still not spoiled. Lots of good use for that lake, traditional camping, fishing.”*

*“I feel very fortunate to be in Mistissini, to have a big lake like that, bigger than Lac St Jean.”*

Mistissini lake is in some sense the heart of the Mistissini territory. Enormous and sprawling, and headwaters of the culturally significant Rupert river, it remains relatively intact and offers many opportunities to practice traditional activities. It plays a huge role in the history and culture of the community as well, as its shores are ancient gathering places, its waters have fed Cree families for generations, and it is an important travel route to many more remote locations on the Cree territory. For these and many more reasons, Mistissini community members place a high value on the lake.

## **2.4 Strong culture and language**

*“My cultural values are more important than any money.”*

*“Cree values hunting, trapping, protecting the land, the Cree values start with the language.”*

*“I think language is really important in a way because I have been to residential school and we were told we could not speak our language, so that is why language is really important to me. At times my aunt has told me when I would say something in Cree that I pronounced it wrong. That is why I try my best to speak and learn more about our language. We should be rich in our language and rich in our culture.”*

*“You know how David Suzuki knows a lot about the land, the true Iindoohoo Inuu knows more about the land.”*

Mistissini community members are rightfully proud of their strong Cree language and culture. While maintaining both is a challenge in these quickly changing times, the value placed on them is beyond measure and they are recognized as a significant source of wealth – as one community member points out, much more important than any money. Also the two are closely related – Cree cultural knowledge is best expressed in the Cree language, so maintaining one means maintaining the other.

## **2.5 Cultural sites**

*“Portages are linked to old gathering sites, people used to gather at the end of winter before thaw for fishing and goose hunting with other families.”*

*“All the territory is full of memories as well. My son had a hard time to go out into the trapline when he travelled into the area where him and his father travelled, he becomes emotional. That's is why I said it's full of memories and stories as well. Everyone that spends time out on the land have those memories and stories.”*

As in many other Cree communities, sites of cultural significance are highly valued by Mistissini community members. For people who have spent their lifetimes, or even significant periods on the traplines, the land is full of camps sites and stories, gathering places and grave sites. These

sites play an important role in the community's history, identity and culture; they are where teachings are passed on, where community members connect to each other and to those who came before them. Community members wish for these sites to stay intact so the connections they create can stay alive and vibrant.

## **2.6 Respectful harvesting**

*“With blueberry picking, I was always taught never to pick off the plant, to hold the plant carefully and pick off blueberries, always taught to be gentle. That's what I tell my kids, to respect every little thing.”*

*“The one important thing what was taught was how to take care of your kill and not to waste anything, because the one that watches over us will see us in how we use and waste what we were given. When someone harvested a lot of meat they had ways to preserve the meat, this goes to fish as well they would make a structure to hang and dry them and later they would smoke them, so that nothing went to waste.”*

Taking care in hunting, trapping, fishing, harvesting and all other activities on the land is very important to Mistissini community members, and is an extension of their strong feelings about the land. A big part of taking care during hunting and harvesting activities is showing respect to the animals, plants and landscape, to share, and not to waste anything. Traditional cultural practices that reflect careful hunting and harvesting reflect these important Cree values.

## **3. Issues that Mistissini faces**

### **3.1 Forestry**

*“I'll always be against forestry. My trapline is up north we've never really had forestry activities. When I go up for moose hunting I go up to my trapline, but one year I didn't and I went near the community, and that's when I really saw the impacts of forestry. That's when I saw the mountains and the way they're being cut, like a Mohawk haircut, I look at that and think that's terrible.”*

*“Another thing about forestry, the Baril Moses area, I'm not familiar with types of cuts but last one I saw was terrible, there was no clearing, no burning debris, and they were cutting tiny trees. I asked why are they cutting these trees? We didn't have anyone from the Cree side to monitor forestry. And here we are, about to sign another 5 year agreement, but it's going badly.”*

*“They [forestry companies] also don't respect the laws that are in place, they'll sign the agreements but when the work gets done it's never done according to code, they*

*get creeks full of oil, cut into buffer area. They'll always go beyond the boundary where they're supposed to cut if no one's looking."*

Among Mistissini community members there is a strong opposition to forestry, and a sense that the damage created by this industry is great whereas the benefits are few or non-existent. Forestry activities make traditional Cree activities of hunting, fishing and trapping more difficult, and forestry roads with their attendant truck traffic makes life at nearby camps really unpleasant and more stressful. In addition, the general impression is that the companies are uncooperative, greedy, and don't respect their legal obligations.

### **3.2 Declining Cree occupation**

*"What I have noticed too is we don't have elderly people who are of really old age. We don't see many people who truly live off the land and harvest what they need to survive. Like drying meat. When fall came around and we were waiting for freeze up to be able to walk on the ice, that's what people survived off was the dried fish, dried meat and all of the summer harvest foods and that's how people were surviving and fed their children."*

There is a deep concern among certain community members that Crees are not as present on the land as they used to be. As a result, they're not acquiring all the knowledge they would have acquired there, a point further explained below. Fewer people make their living full time from traditional Cree activities like hunting, fishing and trapping. Those who did so are elderly or passing away, and the younger generations have more difficulty spending time out on the land for many reasons: financial (the income security program is said to not represent enough money to provide for a family, many traplines are expensive to access, fur prices never recovered), educational (children are schooled in the community), cultural (not enough knowledge to live from these activities), etc. Cultural programs and community events out on the land are being developed and expanded in part to compensate for this absence.

### **3.3 Declining transmission of Cree culture and language**

*"That is what I noticed today youth and young people are not looking at how their parents are cleaning and cooking wild game and what they do around the camp area. That is how we learned in the past by watching and doing."*

*"Now we have community based programming, Murray's Lodge, but it's not working because it's in the community. In the community you can't teach young people, they're on electronics, you can't get their full attention. You need to get them out on the land, on the traplines where you have their full attention."*

*"I myself I speak Cree, I'm more fluent when out on the trapline. My language comes out there, that's the biggest classroom. We're losing our language at a fast pace, my*

*nieces speak more English than Cree. When I hear young parents speak to kids in English, I wonder why are they doing that?"*

As people spend less time on, and become less dependent on, hunting fishing and trapping in their traplines, so the language and knowledge that goes with those activities diminishes. The drive to learn these skills, once pre-requisites for survival, becomes less strong. Yet learning and passing on these skills remains central to Cree culture and identity, as does the land itself. Mistissini community members are concerned that cultural knowledge isn't being passed on, and are working in different ways to ensure that the next generations inherit the full richness of that knowledge.

### **3.4 Lack of control over development and its impacts**

*"What I see is very suddenly land and development is talked about and it feels like it's being discussed in such a rush or hurry. It sort of feels like everything is already in place and ready to go and these discussions are just a formality to get out of the way like they don't matter. Maybe that's why you don't have many people to talk to because that's how people are starting to feel."*

*"One time I remember when we were out on the land I seen a caribou coming towards camp and I noticed the caribou was thin and I killed it began to cut and clean it, we couldn't even eat it as it was unhealthy. The companies say when development happens they don't destroy the land but that is not the case. They destroy the habitat of wildlife and in doing so they destroy the area where we hunt the wildlife."*

*"We teach our children to respect the land and then forestry comes and uranium mines come and disrespects the land and our children see it."*

*"Hydro wants to double profits, now they're looking at Sakami river. We'll get ready for battle. We will not let this river be diverted. We're not going to put a dollar figure to our trapline."*

Many community members are alarmed at the rate of development and the way it's unfolding. There is a strong sentiment that Crees aren't getting the say that they deserve and need to have over the changes happening on the land, and that the impacts of much current and prospective developments go against Cree values and the Cree way of life. Mistissini does have a history of drawing a firm line, as they did at uranium mining, and some are more than ready to draw it again if there is a project or process or impact they object to.

### 3.5 Access

*“What I have noticed was when a company works in a trapline, the company doesn't try enough to help the family to offset costs in travel to other places if the development is happening in the area where the families prime hunting area. Also they should help them build cabins in a different area because everything changes when development happens in the area where we occupied.”*

*“One issue that we face is the cost to go out on the land is getting expensive and when your grandchildren want to spend time with you out on the land, they don't have money to pay for the flight to go out on the land. It's even harder if your family trapline is much farther.”*

Ease of access to each of the traplines varies a lot over the breadth of Mistissini territory. Some nearer to the community or along the lake can be accessed by road, boat or skidoo, while others such as those in the area of Nichicun are very distant and are primarily accessed by plane. Also development can transform access to good hunting areas by either destroying travel routes to access these (e.g. forestry) or by destroying the areas themselves, forcing Cree hunters and trappers towards other areas on their trapline. Access is a real factor in enabling the Cree way of life and ensuring effective access – logistically and financially – to the land is critical.

### 3.6 Non-Cree occupation

*“For Crees it's traplines, for non-natives it's public land. We went to Toronto, someone asked is it true there's snowmobile trail that goes through the territory, and we can use it without permits it's free land? I told him it's not a public road it's designed for land users to get access to their traplines.”*

*“Poaching, there's a lot of poaching, it's sad. Someone shot a moose from the air, took the head and left the rest of it. I told them to find the bullet [to try to track down poachers]. In the area when we found moose, there was a white chopper flying around. Poaching is a big problem, they shouldn't have ended Cree conservation officers.”*

With the extension of the 167 road, the forestry road network and other developments, Mistissini's territory is becoming more accessible to non-Crees. There is concern that this access will make it more difficult to practice traditional Cree activities, as conflicts and bad behavior become more prevalent. Already it's difficult to limit illegal harvesting, as there is very limited oversight of non-Cree harvesting and the territory can be readily accessed by air; the construction of the Trans-Eeyou trail risks aggravating this problem by expanding access overland to Crees and non-Crees alike. As one person mentioned, to the non-Crees, category 3 are Crown lands, whereas to the Crees it's the trapline, it's home.

## **4. Elements of a Mistissini Vision for the Future**

### **4.1 Environmental protection**

*“I want forestry to stay out of my lake at least 25km around. I was involved in the park, a few years ago forestry companies wanted to build road across brook trout spawning rivers. We said that's not going to happen, we got a biodiversity reserve applied to those rivers.”*

*“Plant forestry affected areas and then protect it. Crees can replant and then protect.”*

*“The park is for me the key. During the exercise we did in 2010 on protected areas, families began to see benefit of having land protected. A lot were turned down because of mining claims, but how old are they? Those stupid little squares mean nothing to me. It would be good to have a limit on those claims.”*

There is an interest in creating more protected areas in Mistissini, especially around the lake which is in some ways the heart of the community. Mistissini already has several areas that are in the process of becoming protected areas, but there is a feeling that still more can be done. Forestry-affected areas can be rehabilitated and subsequently protected, mining claims can perhaps be pushed back. The main goal is to protect the most productive and culturally sensitive areas in Mistissini territory.

### **4.2 Integrate land users into decision-making**

*“Before any development or preparation of a project takes place, that's where these true land users need to be considered. They should be interviewed and asked what their views are on the way development is done out on the land and where they think is a good potential to develop without leaving much of a footprint in the territory.”*

*“We need to keep in mind the true land users when we decide to have interviews and consultations, to avoid [these activities in] the time they are out on the land to harvest for themselves and their families. Their traditional calendar of events is disturbed, also the safety of the land users as well.”*

Land users are the experts on the territory they hunt and trap, and as such need to be integrated better and earlier into decision-making about the land. There's a sense that their expertise is overlooked when it comes to evaluating the prospective and actual impacts of development. Moreover, land users are solicited for consultations no matter what time of the year it is or where they happen to find themselves, sometimes calling for travel from and to the trapline that is dangerous and compromises their traditional activities.

### **4.3 More support for transmission of Cree knowledge**

*“That's what I want to see in the ISP program, youth or a young couple that love to spend time out on the land to be able to live with other experienced land users to learn from them. People my age we would love to live with youth out on the land to teach what we have been taught by our parents.”*

*“The winter journey that goes on, I don't have anything against it but it only shows them the journey part and not how to really survive out on the land. I would like to see that all 4 seasons be taught; there are a lot of things and skills that are needed to survive out on the land, even words that can only be found and expressed out on the land.”*

*“Reviving our way of life and our culture, so the next generations know how it is to live off the land, like our ancestors. I told the youth, when you go on the trails, think about our ancestors, you get a taste of their reality, of how it was in their generation. My Dad used to tell me, when they portaged from one end to the other end, the first person who made it to the other end would always come back to share the load. It's also important to keep people healthy, physical activity.”*

*“One thing I want to see is more programs to help the youth in teaching them the way of hunting, trapping, and setting fish nets and how to clean and prepare your kill. We had that one time and now some of the youth know what to do out on the land when were out on the land. We don't have to tell them what to do they already know what to do.”*

As community members worry about possible decline in Cree culture, so do they seek out and support efforts to keep that culture alive and pass it on intact to the next generation. Having the knowledge to survive off the land is key; not just a token understanding of certain activities, but the skills and language required to live the Cree way of life. The Income Security Program, winter walks and other cultural programs are all seen as important opportunities to teach and acquire Cree knowledge, and clearly a goal of community members is to build on and multiply these programs in order to ensure that this knowledge continues to be passed on.

### **4.4 Recognition of Cree governance**

*“We need government to formally recognize the trapline system and tallymen and their inherent rights to traditional territories. For us, where our camp is, we have 70 km prime hunting area, for us the whole trapline is good.”*

*“My father once told me you know you generation will be more vocal and be able to stand up more for Cree culture and tradition. If you can be successful in this and follow our ways and lead the next generation that is how our culture will survive.”*

*“What I want to see is the men speak on behalf of the land because they see our vast territory and knows the land in a much bigger way. Many of these meetings that take place need to be in Cree and so the true hunters who would be more comfortable in speaking and expressing themselves in Cree.”*

Another goal expressed by community members is that the Cree governance of the territory be recognized. This includes respecting the role of traditional Cree governance systems like the trapline system, recognition of the importance of the Cree way of life, a willingness to hear and integrate the views of land users on lands management, and the ability to work as much as possible in Cree so as to facilitate this integration of land users.

#### **4.5 Preparing the next generation for Cree governance**

*“A few years ago I was at a round table on capacity building...there a high school student said ‘I go to history class to hear about Jacques Cartier, etc., but at this round table we hear about JBNQA, what is that? It is time we have a Cree history class. Politicians always say the youth are our future, our future leaders, how can they expect us to lead in the future when we don't know our own history? If we don't know JBNQA how can we protect it in the future? We need to learn our own history from the days of the famine, before and after JBNQA, we need to know our history for us to lead in the future.’”*

*“What I would like to see is more grouped tallymen on different ages for the younger tallymen to learn from the older tallymen on how to speak for the land and also they will know how to monitor and address the land into meetings like this.”*

Achieving the vision that Mistissini community members and other Cree community members have laid out will require that the next generation be well prepared to take up the challenge of promoting and defending Cree rights and way of life. Whether we're talking about land users or administrators, the youth need to understand their Cree culture and history in order to continue moving Crees forward. Thus there is an interest in properly preparing the younger generation to work towards expanding Cree governance by ensuring they are well educated in their history, their culture, and the hard-fought agreements that help shape their lives and futures.

#### **4.6 Access**

*“We need open access trails, portages, safe access for Elders who want to use the land. The wildlife use those trails too. We need to revive those portages, for Crees and non-Cree people too.”*

*“Trans-Eeyou trail : we need to find a way to protect the trail from poaching because it will go through category 3 land. “*

Community members want to ensure better, cheaper, safer access to the land for Crees, and more restricted access to the land for non-Crees. A key aspect of improving access for Crees is keeping the portage trails open, as these are important for the Crees both culturally and logistically in terms of their travel on the land. Also people are seeking means to limit non-Cree access to roads and skidoo trails, especially new ones or those build for Cree access (Trans-Eeyou trail).

## 5. Conclusion

The values, issues and vision described by Mistissini Crees focused on a handful of main topics. These topics and related descriptions, as seen below, broadly describe some of the main goals and considerations for a Mistissini land use planning process:

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Description</b>
Cree occupation	Enhance the Cree presence on the land by creating more opportunities for community members to spend time there and learn from Elders
Cree 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
Forestry	Monitor forestry practices to ensure they adhere to agreements in place and respect Cree rights
Environmental protection	Protect Mistissini lake, advance existing protected areas proposals, and reclaim currently impacted areas for future protection
Mistissini lake	Protect the lake as a key resource for Crees with environmental, cultural and heritage value
Non-Cree occupation	Development measures to ensure non-Crees are aware of and respect hunting laws and Cree rights on Category 1, 2 and 3 lands
Access	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	Better educate community members and land users on, and integrate them into, rights and decision-making about the land
Industrial development (mining, hydroelectricity)	Ensure that community members are fully integrated into decision-making on these sectors, especially land users

