



**For immediate release**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **An outstanding summer tourism season in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James**

**Chibougamau, November 13, 2017 – Tourisme Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee Tourism have provided an extremely positive appraisal of the summer tourism season in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, which came to a close a few weeks ago.**

At lodging establishments, there was an impressive increase of **more than 7.3%** in the occupancy rate in the period from June 1 to September 30, 2017 as compared with the same period last year. July was the busiest month with a **9.6% increase in the occupancy rate**. August and September also recorded positive performances with respective increases of 7.2% and 6.3% as compared with the same periods last year.

At the region's various tourism reception centres, we noted a **31% increase in the number of visitors** as compared with summer 2016. The Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government's Tourism Information Office located in Matagami experienced the greatest increase in the number of visitors, which was up 35%. **Eighty-eight percent of visitors were from Quebec and 12% came from outside the province, including 3.4% from the United States**. The activities in greatest demand by visitors were fishing (29.3%), Native tourism (26.1%), camping and caravanning (25%), and hiking (23.9%).

With respect to the destination's web site, we are very pleased to report **explosive growth in the number of visitors, which was up 306.6%** in the period from May 1 to September 30, 2017 as compared with the same period last year. The number of sessions on the web site also shot up by **275.1% as compared with results from the previous summer**.

The number of "likes" on the destination's Facebook page rose from 5,254 on September 30, 2016 to 11,568 a year later, which is an **impressive 120.2% increase**. Eighty-three percent of "likes" were from Canada, 12.6% from the United States, and 4.2% from France. The number of people we reached with our publications also rose, achieving a **63.3%** increase over the previous summer season. The "Earn your badges by exploring our region" summer campaign on Facebook **reached as many as 2.2 million people** in markets in Quebec, Ontario, and the United States (**more than 41,200 clicks**). In addition, there was a **15.2% increase in the number of subscribers** on Instagram during the summer season. The following hashtags – #escapelikeneverbefore, #decrochezcommejamais, #eeyouistcheebaiejames, #eeyouistchee and #baiejames – have been **used in more than 10,000 publications** since they were recently created.

"We're very pleased to see that the efforts made by our three tourism associations and by the sector as a whole have been successful. In recent years, we've invested a great deal of energy in enhancing our strategies in terms of developing our tourism offer, reception services, and sales

and marketing. Performance indicators are telling us we're on the right path to making our region a world-class destination by the year 2020. We would like to thank our members and partners who have put their heart and soul into efforts to enhance the destination's positioning and increase its market share," added Mitchell Dion, Director General of Tourisme Baie-James, and Robin McGinley, Executive Director of Eeyou Istchee Tourism and the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA), in a joint statement.

The end of the summer season was also an opportunity to review the second-year results of our ongoing survey. While the number of survey subjects dropped from 771 in 2015-2016 to 704 last year, we're pleased with the **overall response rate, which rose from 23% to 26.7%**. Among the highlights, we note that 40% of visitors were business tourists, while 45% were vacationers, an **increase of 9% as compared with last year**. With regard to the length of stay, **30.2% of visitors spent one or two nights and 10.4% more than two nights**. In addition, 52.3% of visitors were first-time travellers to the region, which is an **increase of 26.6% in this regard as compared with results from 2015-2016**. In closing, we can report that **wildlife viewing (28.3%) and tours of museums, interpretation centres, and historical sites (28.3%)** were the most popular activities.

Two contest draws were held to promote interest in the project. The first was a provincial draw designed for visitors, and it was won by Ms. Deveau, a visitor to Eeyou Istchee Baie-James from the Lower Saint Lawrence region; her prize was a GoPro Hero 5 camera worth five hundred fifty dollars (\$550). The second draw was regional in scope and targeted participating businesses. **Hôtel Matagami and Motel Iris won the participation prize**, namely, two gift certificates, each valued at one hundred dollars (\$100).

We would like to thank all of our partners for their contribution. They will receive full results shortly. Please note that other businesses can still take part in this initiative.

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