



# **CARIBOU and the CREE**

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## INTRODUCTION

After many thousand years of living among the caribou and depending on them for sustenance, shelter and clothing, many indigenous groups, among them the Cree of Northern Quebec, have accumulated a wealth of traditional knowledge of the habits and habitat of those and other animals and they have passed their knowledge down from one generation to the next. Some of what has been transmitted is related to the cyclical increase and decline of caribou populations in northern Quebec.

In the 1930s, 1940s and even 1950s when many Cree starved to death because the caribou had disappeared, Cree Elders foretold the return and the subsequent decline of caribou in Eeyou Istchee. According to the Cree hunters who related the caribou stories told by their grandparents, each cycle lasts about 50 years; that is, 50 years to rebound and 50 years to decline. In a Wikipedia site, "Migratory woodland caribou", a statement is made that "*In Nunavik, northern Quebec and Labrador the caribou population varies considerably with their numbers peaking in the later decades of each of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries*". This statement confirms the traditional knowledge of the 50-year cycles that had been passed down from generation to generation centuries before computers and the internet or Wikipedia.

In Northern Quebec, caribou reached their peak numbers in the 1990s but currently both herds, the Leaf River and George River herds, are declining, the George River Herd in particular. Even though they knew of the eventual decline of the caribou populations, the Cree are very concerned about the current state of both herds, not just the declining numbers but also the health of the animals because there are now additional and multiple pressures besides overpopulation that are affecting the state of the caribou, additional pressures that could possibly negatively affect the recovery of the herds in the future.

To address these concerns as well as the impacts of sports hunting in Eeyou Istchee, a "mini-conference" on caribou took place in Chisasibi over a 5-day period from January 12 to January 16, 2015. The invited participants to the conference were hunters from Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui who were recognized as caribou experts, hunters who held multi-generational and millennia-long traditional knowledge of caribou, hunters who personally had extensive knowledge of and experience with caribou themselves and included the following:

Chisasibi: Samuel and Margaret Bearskin  
Clifford and Juliet Bearskin  
Harry and Connie Bearskin  
Eddie Pashagumskum and Bobby Pashagumskum

Whapmagoostui: Abraham Mamianskum  
James Kawapit and Andrew Kawapit

Other participants were:

Robbie Matthew, Robbie and Elizabeth Dick, Moses Snowboy  
John and Beulah Crowe, Richard Pepabano, Stephen Pepabano  
William and Mina Fireman, and Roderick and Janie Pachano

A report of the gathering and the topics discussed follows. The purpose of this report is four-fold: 1) to document certain traditional knowledge of caribou; 2) to document the impacts of the commercial

caribou hunt in Eeyou Istchee; 3) to document the infractions of non-native sports hunters against legal regulations or traditional practices; and 4) to document Cree Elders' recommendations on potential tourist activities in Eeyou Istchee.

### WHAT IS TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE?

A definition of Traditional Knowledge, as defined by Native People, was found on the Alaska Native Scientific Commission website ([www.nativescience.org](http://www.nativescience.org)) and it is as follows:

- ⇒ *It is practical common sense based on teachings and experiences passed on from generation to generation.*
- ⇒ *It is knowing the country. It covers knowledge of the environment, snow, ice, weather, resources and the relationships between things.*
- ⇒ *It is holistic. It cannot be compartmentalized and cannot be separated from the people who hold it. It is rooted in the spiritual health, culture and language of the people. It is a way of life.*
- ⇒ *Traditional knowledge is an authority system. It sets out the rules governing the use of resources - respect, an obligation to share. It is dynamic, cumulative and stable. It is truth.*
- ⇒ *Traditional knowledge is a way of life -wisdom is using traditional knowledge in good ways. It is using the heart and the head together. It comes from the spirit in order to survive.*
- ⇒ *It gives credibility to the people.*

One might add that Traditional Knowledge is gained from centuries or many millennia of living in harmony with the land and all that it provides and having a deep understanding of and an intimate spiritual, mental and emotional connection with it and all living beings. Traditional Knowledge is adhering to Natural Law.

On the same site is this definition stated by the Director General of UNESCO (Mayor, 1994): *"The indigenous people of the world possess an immense knowledge of their environment, based on centuries of living close to nature. Living in and from the richness and variety of complex ecosystems, they have an understanding of the properties of plant and animals, the functioning of ecosystems and the techniques for using and managing them that is particular and often detailed... Equally, people's knowledge and perceptions of the environment and their relationships with it, are often important elements of cultural identity."*

There was a time when Traditional Knowledge was trivialized and to a certain extent it still is. In the 1990s, the writer of this report attended an international meeting of scientists from all over the world. The meeting took place in Budapest, Hungary. One Cree Elder from James Bay had been invited to present one of the topics—"How Traditional Knowledge is Transferred". At the end of his presentation a young scientist from the States got up and said, "Traditional Knowledge is all hoꝛus pocus. I do not believe any of it." Fortunately it has gained more respect since those days as evidenced by the following quote taken from an Assembly of First Nations web page:

*The Species at Risk Act (SARA) is the first piece of Canadian legislation that recognizes Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and states in the preamble that "the traditional knowledge of Aboriginal peoples of Canada should be considered in the assessment of which species may be at risk and in developing and implementing recovery measures."* But here in Eeyou Istchee, it is evident that Cree traditional knowledge of the caribou does not have much influence on the government when it comes

to developing or implementing recovery measures for the declining caribou herds of the north, even though this traditional knowledge has sustained the Cree way of life since time immemorial.

Many thanks to the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) for making the meeting with the Cree Elders possible. Many thanks to our ancestors for having passed on their knowledge about the caribou and to our present-day Elders for sharing some of their traditional knowledge. As Robbie Matthew, Elder from Chisasibi said, *"The knowledge we are talking about now has been around long before European contact and our ancestors are still talking to and teaching us through their stories that are passed down from one generation to the next"*. On one of the websites on the internet is this saying: *"When an Elder dies, a library burns"*. How true.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF CARIBOU

According to a Glossopedia web site, *“Caribou have been around for a long time! Fossils of caribou date the species to more than 1.5 million years ago in the Yukon. They even survived the last Ice Age, which lasted from 100,000 to 10,000 years ago. During that time, it was so cold for so long that many other species, such as the woolly mammoth, became extinct.”*

One Cree legend refers to an ice age, so it is safe to say that Cree have lived among the caribou for thousands of years. For a Cree, that would be sufficient evidence to support the statement that they have had a long history with the caribou. For those who don't set much store in oral history, remember that archaeological findings at some of the sites that caribou frequent during the winter months have placed the Cree in the area some 5,000 years ago.

In those many millennia of living among the caribou, the Cree (and other native people who live among the caribou) have acquired a vast store of knowledge about the animal's habitat and habits. On one of the websites on the internet is this saying: *“When an Elder dies, a library burns”*. How true. The following observations and knowledge of the caribou were noted at the meeting in Chisasibi. Andrew Kawapit of Whapmagoostui talked about the 3 herds found in Northern Quebec: George River Herd, Leaf River Herd and Woodland Caribou. He said, *“In the past, the barren caribou or “muushuuwauuidihkw” never went near the forests. As soon as they saw trees, they would change direction and head somewhere else where there were no trees. That is what the Elders taught us, the ones who hunted caribou the last time they were plentiful. Because the caribou only travelled around in the barren lands, the Cree called them “muushuuwauuidihkw”.*

*“The caribou that came further south were called “beesumauuidihkw” [literal translation: southern caribou] or “minaaskauuidihkw” [woodland caribou] and they were larger than the barren caribou. My father told us that the barren caribou had huge antlers because there were no trees where they were while the woodland caribou had smaller antlers so they wouldn't snag or get caught in the trees when they had to travel through the forests. In the wintertime they stayed in the forests because the snow was softer there and it was easier for them to dig through it to get at the lichen that they fed on. “In the spring, they will come out of the forests and sit around on the ice all day until evening when they will go back into the woods. When the days are long, they will run out onto the ice when they hear or sense danger nearby but they don't do that in the winter. It is said that the reason they do this in the spring is that being out on the ice gives them a better view of the land so they can see where the danger is. That is what the woodland caribou do. We have observed as well that not all the caribou return to their summer calving grounds anymore. Some hang around in more southern areas.”* Robbie Dick of Whapmagoostui went on to say that Woodland Caribou do not migrate while the other two herds do.

Andrew also said there were many names for the caribou. Some of them referred to the animal at different stages of its life; others during its different phases throughout the year. Among the Cree names he provided for caribou that related to their age were:

- Fetus—jamdaashiish
- Newborn under a year old—idihkuush
- Male—wiidikaadihkw
- Female—nuushaadihkw

- Young caribou born the year before—buunaashkijihkush (spring)
- One-year-olds in summer—bihshaadihkush for female and uushchibiyaabaashiish for males (singular)
- One and half-year-olds in winter—judikunyaabaashish for male
- 2-year-olds—yaabaashish for male (singular) and nuushaadihkuushich for female (plural)
- 3-year-olds—yaabihduudihkw (male, now with big antlers), kudikun nuushaadihkuush for female

Among the names related to different characteristics or phases were the following:

- When the antlers and velvet are growing—iiaabaauudihkw
- When the antlers finish growing and harden—maaskuukinidsiudauu
- When caribou is scraping velvet off the antlers—nimidihaamu
- While male caribou is searching for a mate—jiiuhdaau
- While it is mating—wiishaakw
- When it is finished mating—miinuustinaau
- When they shed their antlers—pihnuuwich (plural)
- Female caribou that never grow antlers— jishibihshkauudihkw,
- Caribou whose antlers never grow to any size—maasduushaabawkin

Andrew also related in detail the some of the behaviours of the caribou during different phases of its life. He said , *“When the velvet starts peeling off the ends of the antlers, the caribou starts scraping off the velvet and when all the velvet is gone, he is ready to mate. The male will stay in one place during this phase. Both male and female caribou will go down to the water when there is no wind to look at their antlers and when all the blood has disappeared and the antlers turn dark and the male is satisfied with their look, then he goes in search of a wife or wives. While he is walking along searching he will attack tree stumps or fallen trees along the way; it is said that he is practicing to fight because that is what he will do when he finds a female caribou, he will fight for her, or them because he will try and get however many he can attract.. During the mating season the male caribou does not eat; he will only eat the lichen that the female caribou has peed on and that is why his meat is not very tasty during that time. After it has finished mating he will start to eat normally again and his meat returns to its natural flavour. In the winter time they subsist mainly on lichen and rock tripe and the hairy moss on the dead branches of trees. He will eat grasses as well and I have seen caribou eat blueberries during the summer.*

*“Male caribou once they finished mating start gathering in herds, as do the females once the mating season is over. Two year old females can get pregnant – it is only the first year that they don’t bear young. Some women can never have children; it is the same with caribou. Some female caribou never grow antlers and those are the ones who are usually sterile. When the time is near for the calves to be born, the female offspring of the pregnant females stay close to their mother and when the calf is born, the older siblings run and play with the new calves. The male offspring of the pregnant female, however, leave their mother in the spring. Most calves are born in June, sometimes in May. They stay with the mother over the winter.*

*“When it is born, the calf is able to stand and walk almost right away and the mother caribou does not stop encouraging her baby to stand up and walk; when she knows the baby is strong enough to keep standing, she will run off so the baby will follow her and get stronger. As the baby is able to run and*

*keep up with its mother, she will run away faster and faster from her baby and that is how the baby develops the strength, the speed and the stamina to keep up with the herd.*

*“Caribou are different now than they were in the past. They drop their antlers earlier than they used to. They did not drop their antlers until around the 10<sup>th</sup> of December in the past; that is what my father told me. Now at the beginning of November many of them have dropped their antlers already. They used to lose the velvet from their antlers at the beginning of September but now that happens in the middle of September, so the mating season is also delayed by the same time and caribou don’t mate until the end of end of October when they used to mate at the beginning or middle of that month. Nowadays if there is going to be a long spring, the fetuses are very small around this time of the year and just beginning to be recognizable. They have the same appearance as they would have had in November right after the mating season but they used to be so much bigger in the past around the same time.*

*“Caribou that have dropped their antlers have better hearing than those who haven’t shed theirs yet. Danger, whether it is human hunters or other predators, always comes to animals down-wind from where they are so when caribou are sitting together in a group, the ones without antlers always sit facing away from the wind so they can hear anything approaching the herd before the others are aware of the danger. That is what I was taught anyway and I have observed it when I hunted caribou. Some women are sterile; they can never have children and animals are like that too. Most female caribou that never grow antlers are like that; they are sterile but they have the most acute hearing of all caribou.*

*“When a caribou is injured, it feeds on Labrador Tea plants. It does not eat those when it is healthy, only when it is injured. I went caribou hunting with my brother one time and I wounded a caribou but I could not go after it right away. I set out the following morning to look for it following its trail of blood and saw where it had sat during the night in the middle of a big growth of Labrador Tea. I could see it had sat in one place and ate the plants all around before crawling to another spot. I could see that it had bled profusely at first but the flow of blood had gradually stopped. When I saw the wounded caribou, it started to run off but I was able to shoot it again and kill it. Just that one night of eating the Labrador Tea plants, the wound from my first shot was already clean and healing and I had shot it in the heart. I have heard other people talk about caribou healing themselves by eating the Labrador Tea even when they had been seriously wounded or injured.”*

Eddie Pashagumskum made this observation: *“...when the “muushuwaau” caribou [Leaf River Herd] start migrating, they just keep walking until they get to where they wanted to go. The other caribou [George River Herd] used to come all the way over here where we are; the 2 herds used to meet here and there would be so many of them all together briefly. I noticed that the George River Herd did not stay around long; they would be here briefly and then they would start migrating north again. I also noticed that they did not come as far south as they had in the past; their route seemed to get shorter and shorter. After a while, they did not even reach the Naskapi lands.”*

## **THE DECLINE OF CARIBOU POPULATIONS**

All of the participants of the meeting on caribou said they were born during the time when there were no caribou in Eeyou Istchee. Many of them remembered stories their grandfathers or grandmothers had told them about the eventual return of the caribou and they told of the 50-year cycles—50 years from the time of the return to Eeyou Istchee to reach the peak numbers and 50 years from then to



when they disappeared again from the territory. All species of animals have these cycles, they said, some like the rabbit have shorter cycles. According to the traditional knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation, it has always been like that. Animal populations crash and rebound over and over again.

Samuel Bearskin, an 80-year-old Chisasibi hunter who has spent all his life out on the wintering grounds of the caribou, stated that the caribou were at their peak during his grandfather's hunting days but had disappeared completely during his father's generation and that he himself was around 16 years of age in the early 1950s when he saw his first caribou. And even though he had never seen a caribou while he was growing up, his grandfather assured him they would return because that is what they had done for thousands of years. He said they hunted all winter but never saw more than the three that he and his uncle had come across that winter.

His grandfather by then could no longer go out on the land to hunt and lived at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Kaniapiscaw but they saved some caribou meat for him and cooked it and served it to him when they returned to the post that summer. Mr. Bearskin said his grandfather took one bite of it and said, "What did you do? You left it overnight without gutting it." Mr. Bearskin said that is exactly what he and his uncle had done because they really did not know what to do with the caribou once they had killed it as they had never seen one in their lives. That is how extensive the old hunter's knowledge was of the caribou; after 50 years he could still detect the difference in taste of caribou that had been left overnight without having been gutted and about four or five months after it had been killed at that.

Cree who live among the caribou say that they started returning to Eeyou Istchee in the 1950s. According to some government or biologists' estimates, there were less than 10,000 caribou in Northern Quebec during the 1950s, some say as few as 5,000, with a high of over 1 million in the 1990s. According to government statistics, the George River herd which numbered around 700,000 to 800,000 in the 1990s was down to 14,200 in 2014 and the Leaf River herd which numbered 608,000 in 2001 was down to 430,000 in 2011. some reports say 380,000.

As Andrew Kawapit of Whapmagoostui stated, the methods of counting animal populations are not reliable. *"They count only the ones that they can see from planes or helicopters. Planes and helicopters scare animals and chase them away so they hide,"* is how he put it. Although the summer range of the caribou is barren, there are also steep and rocky areas where they can hide. He cautioned against giving too much credence to numbers released by governments and biologists because they are just "guesstimates" at best, but he does agree that there is a serious decline in caribou populations.

## **REASONS FOR DECLINE**

In searching for biologists' or scientists' opinions on how military overflights in Labrador might affect caribou, especially the sharp decline in the George River herd, as the Innu have been claiming for years, two studies were found: One was an American article on military overflights in Alaska, "Short-Term Impacts of Military Overflights on Caribou During Calving Season"; it stated that *"No studies have definitively documented longterm population effects on caribou from military jet overflights. Harrington and Veitch (1992) reported that calf survival in woodland caribou was negatively correlated with level of exposure to military jets near Goose Bay, Labrador, and they suggested that jet overflights may compromise herd growth."* In a Canadian study of effects of military overflights on woodland

caribou in Labrador, the authors Fred H. Harrington and Alasdair M. Veitch conclude: *Together, the impacts of predators and disturbance from low-level training activity may be preventing the recovery of the Red Wine Mountain population, despite over 15 years of protection from human hunting. The most conservative conclusion from the results presented here is that calf survival is affected by frequency of exposure to low-level overflights during and immediately after calving.*

Earlier biologists' reports (1960s) attributed the decline mainly to the destruction of the caribou habitat to anthropogenic pressures, such as logging and the increase in the number of roads to support this activity, which opened up access to the territory. Recent reports attribute the causes to resource development – mining, forestry, hydro-electric activities – and changing climate or global warming, and, to a lesser degree, hunting activities. In a September 23, 2010 report, Ed Struzik, a Canadian writer, wrote: *“Across the Far North, populations of caribou—an indispensable source of food and clothing for indigenous people—are in steep decline. Scientists point to rising temperatures and a resource-development boom as the prime culprits.”*

The Cree agree that resource development is a factor but contend that blaming everything on global warming is convenient since no one alive has lived through a global warming before. Cree traditional knowledge attributes part of the decline to the natural cycles of all animal populations but state that this is not the only factor in the current decline. The holders of this traditional knowledge point to other leading causes in the decline both in numbers and the health of caribou, among them: the disturbance of caribou habitat from forestry, mining and hydro-electric projects; the numbers and practices of sports hunters; the impacts of some development projects; forest fires; overpopulation; and other observed and unexplained behaviours of the animals.

Much of the recent decline is blamed on sports hunting and resource development, especially the James Bay Hydro-electric project. The impacts of this project, are many. According to an article on the internet, the Project flooded an area about the size of Belgium (30,528 square kilometres) and all of that land was the habitat of the caribou. In September of 1994, 10,000 caribou of the George River Herd drowned during their fall crossing of the Caniapiscaw River during the flooding operations of the project. The Native people believed the release of the water during the caribou migration caused the drownings. That must have had an impact on the caribou population.

Participants of the meeting held in Chisasibi in February 2015 expressed concerns about other impacts of the project, among them the following:

- Roads, necessary to access resource development sites, criss-cross the wintering grounds of the caribou and destroy the habitat of the caribou as well as providing easier access for humans; and disrupting the natural cycles of the caribou. Jean-Pierre Tremblay, a Laval University biology professor, wrote, *“If you build a road, caribou won't come within 10 kilometres of it. Deer and other wildlife will adapt but caribou are really easily startled. So the north gets developed, the caribou's migration patterns and its ecosystem are affected.”* While the first part of his statement may have been correct at one time, it has since been proven wrong because the roads are now a permanent part of the caribou migration routes. As Andrew Kawapit said, *“In the past, caribou were cautious, not like the caribou nowadays. You never saw them near roads or settlements. Now they don't seem to be afraid of anything. They were very plentiful but now they are declining again. It has always been like that.”* Anyone who lives in the north and travels

the roads winter after winter can attest to that. The last part of Professor Tremblay's statement, however, is correct.

- Road salt is used during the winters to prevent icing. Robbie Matthew, a Cree from Chisasibi, said, *"I just wanted to tell you about my experience with the road salt. When I worked in Whapmagoostui; that is what we used to put on the roads there when they were icy. I had a brand new pair of leather gloves I had bought at the store so I wouldn't have to handle the salt directly. Soon after I started working with it, my gloves appeared to be shrinking, getting tighter and tighter. My work mates were having the same problem and we realized that it was the salt that was causing the leather to shrink. When I see caribou eating the salt on the road, I am very concerned and wonder if it is destroying their insides."*
- Transmission lines cover the winter range of the caribou. Eddie Pashagumskum, a Chisasibi Cree, said *"We say the caribou "arrived" when we talk about them increasing in numbers and returning to Eeyou Istchee. When caribou first arrived this last time, everything that they came across or ate was the same as it was when they were here before in past centuries; it was all natural just as it had been from the beginning. But now things have changed. There are roads all over the place, huge reservoirs and resource development projects that were not there when caribou visited Eeyou Istchee before. Now they use the roads to travel and their fear of human trails has disappeared. Their environment is not natural anymore."* He went on to say that the discharge from the transmission lines causes cancer. Robbie Matthew said, *"I agree too that the transmission lines are harmful. They are all over Eeyou Istchee. The health of many people is affected by being around those lines. Animals like to graze under them because everything grows so well under transmission lines – moose, caribou, ptarmigan, rabbits, spruce grouse, they all feed under them."*
- Reservoirs have altered the migration routes of the caribou. They are unable to cross the huge bodies of water that are the result of the project and they use the roads to travel, making it easier for predators, both man and wolves, to hunt them.
- Disturbance of caribou habitat from development projects was a major concern amongst the participants. All of the land that has been flooded as a result of the James Bay Hydro-electric Project was part of the wintering grounds of both the George and Leaf River herds. When caribou populations peak, there is tremendous pressure on the food source just from the sheer numbers of the caribou but when there is also added pressure from flooding, any decline in that food source has a major impact on the well-being of the herd. Traditional knowledge argues that caribou subsist mainly on lichens, an extremely slow-growing plant, and do not often turn to other plants to assuage their hunger. Thus any development that threatens the food source of caribou also threatens the health and viability of the herds.

There were reports of abnormalities being found recently in the meat and the organs. One of those reports was made at the meeting by Moses Snowboy, a Chisasibi Cree, who said, *"Last winter my son killed a caribou. We brought it home and skinned it. The meat looked like it had worms in it and when we boiled it they were floating on top of the broth. There was also something wrong with the liver. We couldn't eat the caribou; we just buried it along with the caribou hide."* Others in the community had reported finding abnormalities in the organs of caribou that were killed, especially in the livers of those animals.

A change in the taste of the animals was also mentioned. Roderick Pachano from Chisasibi said, *"It is obvious that the caribou cannot stay in one place to rest and feed during the winters. The situation seems to be getting worse. They are constantly being chased by ski-doo's, planes and helicopters...I often wonder what that does to the caribou after being chased around all winter. We know that a caribou that has been chased for long periods does not taste the same as one that has not been chased at all. I heard some Inuit say that in recent years, caribou have a different taste when they return from their wintering grounds in the south. Is that because they have been chased around all winter? And is the meat the same quality as it used to be when the animals were allowed to roam where they wanted without any interference from man?"*

James Kawapit of Whapmagoostui said, *"We do not know about everything that kills caribou; there are many things that kill them. For example, the Inuit say that caribou like to hang around at the bottom of cliffs and high hills because they can dig through the soft snow there to get at their food but when there are heavy snowfalls and the weather turns warmer, snow that has piled on the ledges of the hills falls and kills many caribou at the bottom. My father also told me the caribou would just die."*

Andrew Kawapit of Whapmagoostui said, *"We know for certain that the development has changed their habitat and they are not as healthy as they used to be. It is not just the caribou that has been affected by development but all plant life as well has been affected so that all game, big and small, that feed off the land to sustain them have suffered. Not just the animals, but fish as well, have been affected because of the diversions and dams. And when our source of food is affected, so are we."*

As to the unexplained behaviours of the caribou, Harry Bearskin of Chisasibi told this story, *"I went to Kawawachikimach in 2011 and the old Naskapi man we stayed with told me a caribou story. He said caribou in their area are very scarce now and he said it was the same up north in Inuit land; there are very few caribou around. He said he was told a story by the Inuit of a group of hunters who saw a very large numbers of caribou out on the sea ice far from land where there was no food for them to eat. The Inuit knew they would starve to death out there so they tried to herd them back to land but were not completely successful. Most caribou continued to stay out on the ice and when the ice broke up they saw caribou frozen to the ice floes. They think the caribou just did not want to live. They said they noticed the caribou population started crashing after that."* [The story is similar to stories about whales and dolphins beaching themselves and dying.]

Another major factor that was attributed to the decline in the caribou population was sports hunting, not just the sports hunting itself but the way it is being conducted without controls or management. This topic is discussed in the following section.

## **SPORTS HUNTING AND ITS IMPACTS**

Eddie Pashagumskum, a Chisasibi Cree, was a partner of an outfitting camp called Nouchimii in the LG-4 area and he explained the process of starting such a business in northern Quebec. *"I was involved in outfitting myself and I learned a lot from that. The government set up hunting zones and these are marked on the roads. In our area there are 22, 22A, 22B zones. I only learned this after I got involved in outfitting and I only learned about government hunting regulations then. We (Cree) did not know anything about this when these zones were being created."*

*"An outfitter needs a license to operate and he must first buy the land from the government on which*

he wants to establish his business. Only after he has bought the land will he get a government license to operate. Whatever zone your outfitting business was situated in was where your clients could hunt;



this was Zone 22B and the outfitters' clients purchased permits restricted to that zone. Each outfitter sold the permits but the money went to the government. Even if you are on your own trap line, you still have to buy that land even though your family has been there for centuries. How did that happen? It is all about money; the government makes money from this business.

"Zone 22A was governed strictly by the government and the permits for this zone were drawn and all the money went to the government. The hunters in this area do not need a guide and they can go wherever they want within that zone and do whatever they want. That is why we have the situation we are talking about, such as hunters killing more than their quota, body parts all over the place, and other abuses. There is no control over these hunters. There is no one to watch over them. Some hunters respect the land and the animals, but there are those who don't care about anything and these are the ones who give all hunters a bad reputation.

"When a hunter killed a caribou, we had to make sure it was tagged and we registered it. We had to charge the hunter \$5 or \$10 for this service but a check point was set up somewhere else so we did not have to handle the registering of caribou ourselves. That summer following the first caribou hunt we did not have to register those animals, I saw the head game warden and he told me we had to pay over \$6,000 for the number of caribou that were killed by our clients. He said that was what it had cost to register those animals. I asked him if they did not charge the hunters for registering their caribou. He appeared confused and he admitted that they had collected the money. He then told me he was just bluffing. If we had paid the money, would he have kept it for himself?

"I think we should at least be consulted whenever plans and regulations are being considered for our land. We have to fight those that are detrimental to our way of life or our hunting activities. We have our own hunting regulations."

Caribou reached their peak population of over 1 million in the 1990s. Sports hunting was eventually allowed by the Quebec government in an attempt to control the herds and sports hunters were limited to 2 caribou per permit, a limit which is maintained to this day (2015). An estimated 20,000 caribou are killed each year in northern Quebec by non-native sports hunters, but according to the Cree, the number is higher because many sports hunters kill more than their limit of 2. When the decline in caribou populations became evident to the government, the duration of the hunting season in Zones 22, 22A and 22B was reduced from November 15 to February 15 to December 1 to January 31 and a 5-year moratorium on the George River herd was implemented in 2013 by the Newfoundland and Labrador government; however, the government has no control over the caribou once they cross into Quebec, anymore than Quebec had on caribou crossing into Labrador when it imposed a 5-year

moratorium in 2011. The implementation of the moratorium by the Labrador and Newfoundland government included subsistence hunting by native people.

One concern that was expressed about the moratorium was that since the two herds do come together in one area during the winter, sports hunters might not know or bother or care to determine which herd the caribou actually belongs to; they are unable to differentiate between the George River and Leaf River caribou and kill them anyway despite the moratorium.

Andrew Kawapit of Whapmagoostui had this to say about the two herds. *"Animals are like us. We communicate to each through various means and even though the animals do not have the communication tools we have, they still communicate with each other. They know exactly where the other animals are and where to go to join them when it is time to migrate. I know this for a fact. We know there are two herds in the far north, one from the Muushuuwaa Sibi (George River) and the other from the Leaf River area. When they start migrating south, it is as if they have communicated to each other and both herds start out at the same time and they meet briefly east of here (Chisasibi). Yes, animals do communicate with each other."*

#### **PRACTICES OF NON-NATIVE SPORTS HUNTERS**

There are regulations (visit [www.mrnf.qc.ca](http://www.mrnf.qc.ca) for details) in place for the caribou sports hunt in James Bay but Cree who live in the area where the main hunting activities take place have reported many infractions. Some of the regulations being ignored are:

- *As with all other game, it is strictly prohibited to pursue, mutilate or kill deliberately a caribou using a vehicle (including a snowmobile), an aircraft or to fire at an animal from any motorized vehicle, aircraft or trailer being pulled by a vehicle;*
- *Eviscerating, placing or dumping animal viscera, carcasses or carcass parts on the pavement and/or within a 10-metre strip of the pavement of a country road and/or road. This constitutes a nuisance and is prohibited.*

The above website also states: *"A high level of ethics is required when practicing sport hunting. There is no room for excuses or waste, and the regulations must be adhered to."* The following are complaints made by Cree people about the infractions or unethical practices of sport hunters:

1. **While it is prohibited to gut, leave, place or dump animal viscera, carcasses or carcass parts on a federate snowmobile trail or in the Hydro-Quebec dump at LG-4, no such regulation exists for Cree camps and most cabins and all roads in the hunting areas are littered with the legs, heads, hides, stomachs and guts of caribou that sport hunters leave behind.**

The majority of the sports hunters do not take the legs, heads, the hides and the stomachs or internal organs with them when they leave the territory and leave those parts strewn all over the territory, often right outside some Cree camp, even though they could just as easily dump them in the numerous garbage bins all along the highway and side roads. In the spring when the snow melts, those parts also melt and start to rot, which creates a horrible stench and results in the breeding of millions of flies and crawling masses of maggots.

Samuel Bearskin: *"I too grew up inland and I never saw non-native people out there, but when they started coming inland to work or hunt, I was surprised at all the wasted meat and hides that those hunters left behind. They left it all over the place. I heard that they were each allowed to kill 2 caribou and my first thought was why not just give them one caribou each because they waste so much food?"*



*What they leave behind is equivalent to one caribou. I always thought of the lessons I was taught on how to hunt and not to waste a thing. Another time I was crossing a lake and I saw lumps of something on the lake so I went over to check them out and they turned out to be caribou heads; I counted 15 of them. They were almost buried under the snow by then; of course, there were other body parts and guts lying around. Another time I was crossing a long narrow lake when I came to a widening of the lake and saw things standing up in the lake. Of course I went to check them out and they were the legs of caribou that were lined up in a row all the way to the other side of the lake. You could tell that they had been put there in the early winter but you could not see a ski-doo trail by then, if there had been one there before. Why did they do that and what was the purpose of lining them all up like that? The road is full of flies and maggots in the summer. I am sure there are regulations against leaving animal parts and guts on the road and if such regulations do indeed exist, they are not being followed."*

*Roderick Pachano: "Our lake is huge and now you can see the stomach and guts lying on the ice all over the place, even dead caribou. We used to clean up in the springtime when the snow had melted and before the body parts had started to smell or before the flies had gotten to them. During one of our cleanups we filled almost 20 of those large garbage bags, the orange ones, just with caribou legs; there were other parts lying around such as heads, hides and hearts, etc. that we cleaned up as well. As we bagged the legs we counted them, and counting four legs per animal, we calculated that 96 caribou had been gutted and butchered in that one area, a very small area at that."*

Caribou legs on side of road near Cree cabins (2011) Credit: Janie Pachano



*Stephen Pepabano: "A long time ago many of our grandparents and ancestors frequently starved to death so it is very disturbing to see whole caribou and parts just lying around where many of our people starved. I never saw caribou when I was growing up so it has not been that long ago that the caribou returned to our territory. We will go through a period again when all game will be scarce and that is what I remember when I see caribou and body parts lying around all over the place. We have lost respect for all animal life because we think there are so many of them it doesn't matter if we waste some."*

Janie Pachano: *"There was a blue tarp sitting right outside the door of our cabin and when I lifted it up, there were caribou legs and writhing masses of maggots wrapped in the tarp. We had not left the tarp there because when we leave our camp we always make certain that everything is put away and there is no garbage left lying around to attract animals."*



Margaret Bearskin: *"There are parking areas along the road but one time we drove by one of them and there were so many carcasses that had been dumped there, only the hind and front quarters had been removed. Why does the government allow them to take 2 caribou when they leave most of the animal behind when they leave the territory to return down south? One hunter was observed removing only the antlers and dumping the whole caribou by the side of the road. A Cree saw the hunter kill a caribou with huge antlers, drag it to the road, cut off the antlers and drag it to the side and dump it over the snowbank. The Cree approached him and asked him why he was not taking the whole caribou; the hunter replied he wanted only the antlers and offered the caribou to the Cree but was told that he had to take the whole caribou and put it in his vehicle but I am certain that the hunter got rid of it somewhere else when no one else was around. How many times does that happen when no one is around to observe the hunters removing only the antlers and leaving the rest of the animal behind? You know that happens because you see so many caribou carcasses lying around during and after the caribou hunting season. The game wardens cannot be everywhere to catch all those who break the regulations."*

James Kawapit: *"We have hunters that come up to Whapmagoostui and who take a smaller plane, the one with 2 props, to hunt further north. I watched them once when they returned from their hunt and I did not see any caribou being unloaded or any containers that might contain meat; all I saw were lots of antlers being unloaded from their plane. What did they do with the meat? I am certain that all they took were the antlers and they left the rest of the caribou behind to rot."*

Connie Bearskin: *"I also have witnessed the same things that others have about caribou carcasses lying around, as well as heads, feet and guts. There is so much waste. I do not like to see things like that and even though I was not raised by people who hunted caribou, I was still taught respect for all animal life."*



*Sports hunters even throw the meat away; they just keep the tender parts and leave the rest. I used to cook for non-native hunters when they hunted on our trap line and I would cook all the parts that they discarded and they always raved about the food even though I did not add any seasonings or anything else to alter the flavour."*



Caribou heads by side of road (2011)

Credit: Janie Pachano

*Bobby Pashagumskum: "I remember clearly my grandfather telling me when the caribou arrived again in my time that it would take 50 years for them to start disappearing again... He told me we still had to take great care in hunting that we not waste anything. Even the uumaajii (stomach contents) were eaten and all the bloody snow where the caribou had been gutted was saved and used to cook the meat. He told me if we treated the animals and the hunt with great respect and we did not waste anything, we could prolong the length of time that the caribou were around in our territory. But non-native hunters do not hunt like that. They waste so much leaving body parts all over the place... North of there we have another camp. There is a spring near there where the water is crystal clear and we get our drinking water from there. In the spring I went there to get water and there was a dead caribou in the spring; it had been gutted but the only thing missing from it was the head. The water was contaminated and we could not drink it."*

*Clifford Bearskin: "Since the sport hunters started coming up here, all I see are the intestines, the stomachs, the hearts, the heads and the hides lying around all over the place. Only the meat is taken from the animal. When the season ends and the sport hunters are gone, you don't see any additional parts being left behind so we can safely say that the mess we see is what the sport hunters have left behind... My father said once the bones had been boiled over and over again until they no longer provided a nutritious broth, they were piled on a platform high off the ground [cache] so animals could not get at them and scatter them all over the place. Now you see caribou legs all over the place. You would never have seen that in the past. Even heads are left behind. Once I saw 10 heads lying by the side of the road. A Cree would take the hide off and cook the head right away. It was a delicacy... One*

*time we saw a caribou upside down lying near the road; we stopped and discovered only half of one of the hind quarters had been taken. It had not been hit by a vehicle because you could tell it had been shot and a knife or saw had been used to remove the hind quarter."*



Carcass by side of road (2013)

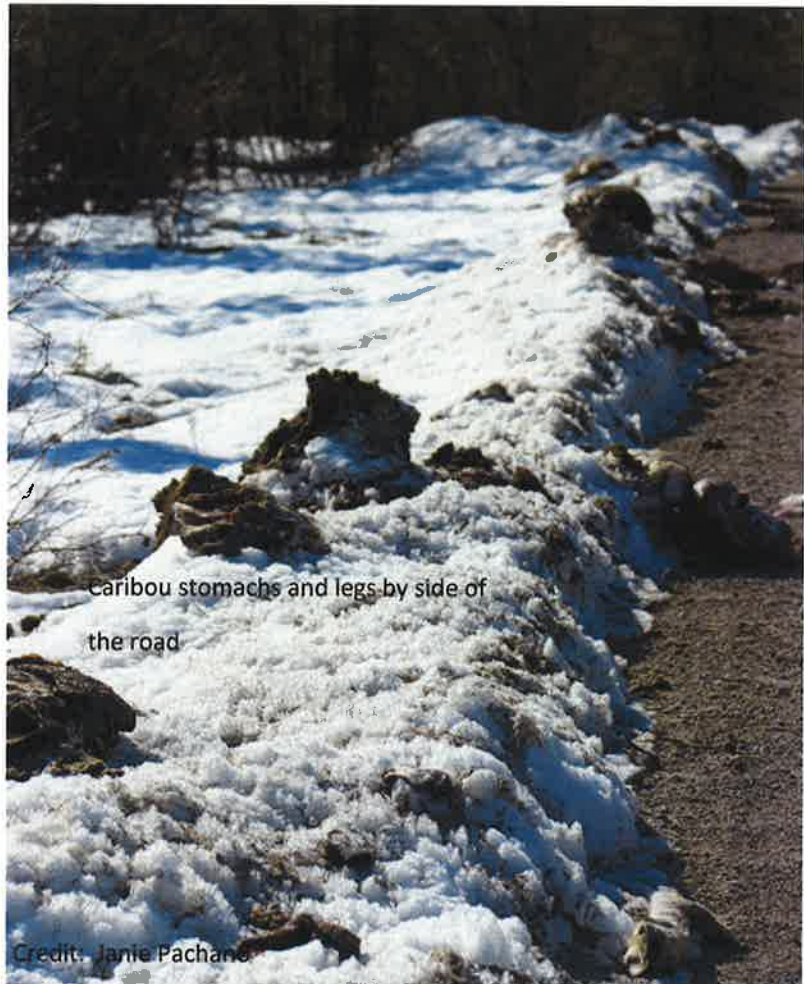
Credit: Janie Pachano

**2. Caribou hunters kill more than their quota because they are not satisfied with the size of the animal or the antlers.**

*Harry Bearskin: "Many times I have seen the total lack of respect shown by non-native sport hunters for the land where they hunt and the animals that they hunt. A few years ago a Cree outfitter asked permission to use my trap line to bring his clients and I agreed to that, but when a non-native outfitter asked the same thing, I refused. With this experience of having non-native sport hunters on my land I can honestly say that I know how they hunt. Many times I have seen them ask permission to kill more caribou after they have reached their quota of 2 caribou but we never allowed them to keep shooting just for the thrill of it or to get a bigger trophy (antlers) or animal...One winter we were living and hunting at our camp north of the LG-3 dam. I had set one of my otter traps in a little creek right inside a culvert under a gravel road that runs through that land. We were still out there when the caribou hunting season opened and one day when I went to check my trap, I noticed human footprints going down to the creek and all around the culvert. When I went into the culvert, there was a caribou lying there besides my trap, which had been sprung. I examined the caribou and it had been gutted so I knew immediately that someone had dragged it into the culvert to hide it because it was impossible for a dead and gutted caribou to crawl down the bank and into the culvert by itself. I left it there thinking someone might come back and retrieve it and I checked on it periodically to see if it was gone but it was still there at the end of the hunting season. What did the hunter want to do with it anyway? I have seen other caribou that had been shot and just left there because the hunter was not satisfied with the size of it or its antlers."*



Samuel Bearskin: *“One spring I saw some geese off the road and I was going to sneak up on them to kill them and while I was making my way through the trees, I caught a glimpse of something that made me curious so I went over to get a closer look. It was a caribou hanging from a tree. It had been killed that winter but when I found it, the hunting season was over. There were no guts/intestines nearby so I knew it had been gutted somewhere else and transported there to be strung up by a rope to the tree. I could not figure out why that hunter had done that. When I checked on it again, the flies had already found it and laid their eggs on it and two years later, I checked again but there was nothing left but bones lying around. The first time I immediately thought of my grandfather and knew he would have been horrified to see that because he even used the bones to make fat and broth that he continued to live on long after all the meat had been eaten.”*



Bobby Pashagumskum: *“Several times I have come across caribou that had been shot and killed but not even gutted. That is what they do when there is no one around to regulate their hunting.”*

Janie Pachano: *“I took some Cree youth hunting in the LG-4 area. There were non-native hunters all over the place and one of them offered me a caribou he had just shot. When I told him that was illegal, he said he knew but he wanted one with bigger antlers.”*

**3. In spite of the regulations prohibiting chasing or killing animals by motorized vehicles, including airplanes, this is a common practice of some caribou sport hunters and outfitters in Eeyou Istchee.**

Roderick Pachano: *“It is obvious that the caribou cannot stay in one place to rest and feed during the winters. The situation seems to be getting worse. They are constantly being chased by ski-dos, planes and helicopters. We cannot say it is all the fault of non-native hunters because when they are on the roads, we ourselves drive by so they are forced to get off the road... In the past there weren't too many people around to bother them. I often wonder what that does to the caribou after being chased around all winter. We know that caribou who have been chased for long periods do not taste the same as one who has not been chased at all. I heard some Inuit say that in recent years, caribou have a different*

taste when they return from their wintering grounds in the south... And is the meat the same quality as it used to be when the animals were allowed to roam where they wanted without any interference from man?

*"One time I watched about 10 hunters, clients of another outfitter, standing around in the distance. Then I heard and saw a ski-doo racing towards them chasing a large group of caribou towards his friends. When the caribou got near the group, guns started blasting but I didn't see any caribou falling. There is a way to shoot at a group of running caribou to make them stop dead in their tracks, but I guess they didn't know about that. The caribou just kept running. When the caribou driver got to the others in the group, they all took off and didn't even bother checking to see if they had wounded any animals. I guess they just liked to hear the sound of their guns blasting away."*

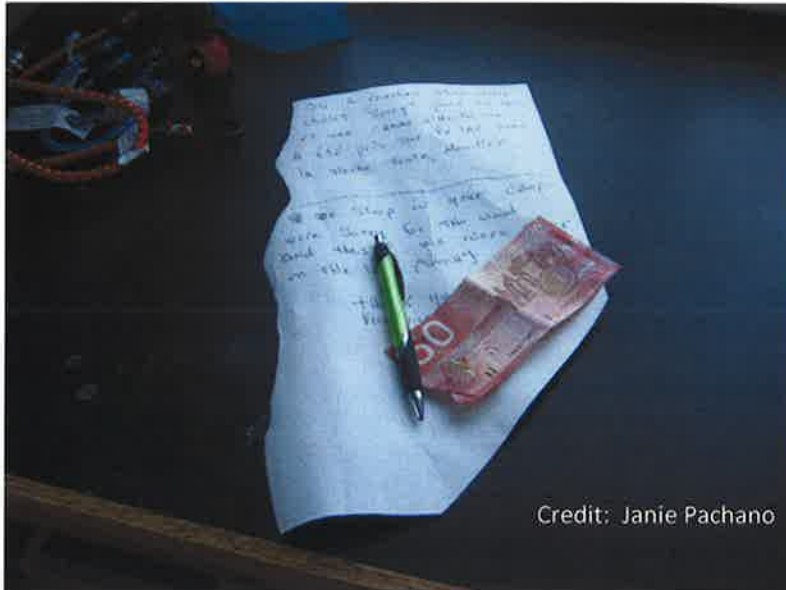
Clifford Bearskin: *"One winter in December we had a helicopter pick us up from our camp and we were flown to Nouchimii Camp. While we were waiting for our driver to pick us up, a helicopter came in from the north slinging a load of caribou. After he took off again, I went over to look; there were 7 caribou and all were gutted. One of them was lying face down and I saw that it had been shot from above right through the spine. It had to have been shot from a plane or helicopter with a high caliber rifle unless the hunter had been standing and shooting down from a very high mountain."*

**4. Non-native sport hunters break into Cree cabins and sometimes damage the contents or the cabins themselves or help themselves to whatever they can take.**

Juliet Bearskin: *"We know our camp, which can only be reached by plane in the summer or by ski-doo in the winter, has been used on numerous occasions by non-natives. This is one of the things we have experienced since the territory was opened up to sports hunters."*

Samuel Bearskin: *"One time when I went out to my camp to hunt caribou, I was working at the time, but when I got to my camp my ski-doo was gone. There were some Cree working at the hydro-camp near our camp who told me they had seen some non-native hunters drive by with what appeared to be my ski-doo. He checked out their truck that evening but the ski-doo was gone. That following fall, we had stopped by the road to build a fire and to go after a caribou I had killed off the road. While I was gutting it, the same person who had seen my ski-doo the previous winter came by and asked if I had seen my ski-doo. I told him I hadn't and he said it was nearby and he had happened upon it when he came to check up on me. After we had dragged the caribou back to the road, he showed me where it was and sure enough, there was my ski-doo hidden among the trees, quite a distance from where it had been taken from my camp. I guess they didn't have room to take it back wherever they came from. Other things, like a generator, have been taken from our camp as well."*

Janie Pachano: *"Another time we went out there to see if we needed anything special for goose break. Our cabin had been broken into, through the window and the glass was broken. All our firewood which we had readied for the goose break had been burned and the propane for our stove had been left on. A note had been left on the table apologizing for the use of our firewood and propane and a \$50 bill had been placed on top of the note for the use of our firewood and propane I guess and the broken window. The explanation offered for the unauthorized use of our cabin was that their ski-doos had gotten stuck in the slush on the lake. They had to have been there for a long time because they had used up all the firewood; we had split enough to last us for the 2 weeks we were to be out there during the goose break..."*



*“One spring after all the snow had melted, we went out to one of our other camps near the road... Inside the cabin there was blood on the walls and floor. I guess the hunters had gutted their caribou inside because they thought it was too cold outside. We had some brand new plywood that we had planned to use for something and that was also covered in blood. One of our single mattress pads had been used for hauling caribou... They never stop to think that people who live in Eeyou Istchee have to drive over 1,000 kilometres to get windows and doors replaced. The territory is not like the*

*south where there is a hardware store every few blocks.”*

#### **5. Caribou sports hunters kill other species of animals**

It is not only caribou that are being shot and killed from airplanes as Bobby Pashagumskum pointed out. *“Near the road at Uujikawjikaanaan is a small lake where I usually sit and hunt. I had seen something nearby that was buried under the snow but I had not gone over to see what it was. When most of the snow was gone and the ice was melting I went there and found a moose lying there. It had been shot in the spine so it looked like it had been shot from the air but it had not been gutted.”*

Samuel Bearskin: *“Another time I was driving by near that same area when I saw non-native hunters acting suspiciously; they appeared to be trying to hide something but it was already evening when I drove by so I waited until morning to go back and see what they had been doing. I saw something had been buried where I had seen them and when I dug around I found a wolf that they had shot, killed and buried. Why?”*

#### **6. Transport truck drivers and others do not slow down for caribou but deliberately drive over them and injure or kill them**

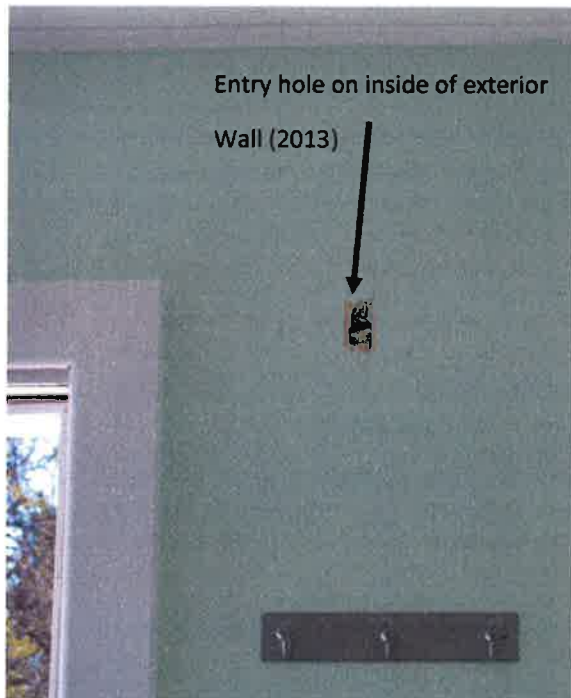
James Kawapit: *“I was in Montreal at a meeting on caribou about four years ago. Caribou hunters, Cree and Inuit were there as well. One Chisasibi Cree talked about seeing 17 caribou that had been injured and just left there to die on the James Bay highway and he said he believed it was a transport truck that had hit the caribou. He said he could not do anything to put them out of their misery because he did not have a gun with him. My feeling is that those are not the only caribou that have been injured and left to die since the highway was built. I don't think it is the Cree who are doing that because they have been taught to care for and respect wildlife.*

*“One Cree Elder told me he was on his way to Wemindji following a herd of caribou waiting for them to get off the road when a truck came up behind him, passed him without slowing down at all and drove*

*into the lone caribou that had not run off the road yet and hit the caribou so hard that it fell on the other side of the snowbank. The driver was non-native."*

**7. Caribou sports hunters shoot wherever they want and endanger human as well as animal lives and damage hunters' cabins.**

Roderick Pachano: *"We have another camp nearby and after the caribou hunting season ended we found some hunter with a high-powered rifle had shot through the outer wall of our cabin and we found the bullet lodged on the opposite wall. What if we had been there at the time?"*



Credit: Janie Pachano



Bullet lodged on opposite wall of cabin

Margaret Bearskin: *"When we returned to our camp, there hanging on our gate was a target and it was obvious people had been target shooting. Our cabin was right behind the gate and they were shooting in the direction of our cabin. I did not see the game wardens around to show them but we did take it down and show it to the boss at Camp Mirage. I told him the target was not there when we left in the morning and I told him the target shooters were probably his clients. There is a marker on the road showing there is a camp nearby and not to shoot in that direction, but they hadn't paid any attention to that sign.*

*"I think the non-native hunters are too careless while hunting caribou and I will say they do not follow their own regulations. My oldest son went out one day and saw non-native hunters coming down the road; there were 2 hunters supporting a third one. He noticed the one in the middle was all bloody and when he stopped to help, one of them told him the other hunter had accidentally shot their mate in the arm. They had tied a tourniquet around the arm but the blood was still flowing. He brought the hunters to their truck near our camp but they were unable to start their truck so they asked my son to drive the wounded hunter to Camp Mirage. Mirage is not that close to our camp so my son was driving as fast as he could before the hunter had lost too much blood since there was nothing he could do for*



him. The wounded hunter told him to slow down but my son did not pay attention; he did not want him bleeding out before he got him medical help. When they got to Mirage, the man was able to get out of the vehicle but he appeared to be barely conscious.”

Juliet Bearskin: “We arrived at our camp one time and I had to go to our storage shed to get something. As I walked in I saw a hole on the opposite wall right at eye level. Some hunter had either shot it intentionally or he had shot at a caribou and missed. If I had been in there at the time, I would not be talking to you right now.”

Harry Bearskin: “Not only was there a lot of damage outside but there was some damage even inside cabins, fortunately when nobody was inside at the time. One cabin was shot at and the bullet went right through the teapot on the stove. If those people had been inside the cabin, they might have been killed. We cannot hide these things and not talk about them. Cree who do live on the land return to the community as soon as the season opens and the government says we do not use the land anymore. It is not that we don’t want to; it is that we cannot. It is the government’s fault that we cannot live on the land by opening up the territory to sports hunting. As soon as the season closes, the Cree move back to the land. Of course they can say we don’t use the land or live on it anymore because we cannot be there when the hunters are around. It is too dangerous.”

## **8. Other issues**

Some participants spoke about other issues that did not fall easily into the categories already mentioned and they are as follows:

### **Fights over Ski-doo Trails**

Roderick Pachano: “On our trap line, there have always been caribou there ever since they returned this time around. We had a native outfitter operating out of our territory and I would say that every one of his clients used to get their full quota of 2 caribou each and when other hunters who weren’t quite as successful knew about it, they wanted to know where they hunted. Once the game wardens told them where the caribou were, the hunters came in droves and started to fight over the ski-doo trails.

“Clients of Mirage started coming there and tried to stop other hunters from using the ski-doo trails claiming that Mirage had established and maintained those trails, which was not true. While we were clearing the land where the ski-doo trails were to go and preparing them each fall for the hunters to come, we never once saw a person from Mirage come to our area to help out with our ski-doo trails. We had a sports hunter come to our camp one time to ask which trails belonged to Mirage and I told them none of them did... There was another incident where a sports hunter threatened another with a knife over the ski-doo trails.”

### **Clients of non-native outfitters hunting outside their designated zones**

Roderick Pachano: “A group of hunters from Mirage arrived at our camp one time and when I told them they should be hunting there instead of coming to our territory, they said they had permission from the government to hunt wherever they wanted. I told them my parents and grandparents before them had lived in that area all their lives and I had never heard them talk about living with government

*officials out there on the land so how can the government give them the right to hunt there? Besides, I told them, the government does not own the caribou."*

### **Fall hunt**

**Harry Bearskin:** *"There is something else I disagree with and that is the fall hunt. In September airplanes take off from LG-4 to fly non-native hunters way up north to hunt caribou. Cree do not hunt caribou at that time of year because they haven't mated yet. How can caribou thrive under those conditions, being hunted so early in the season?"*

### **Illegal hunting**

**Margaret Bearskin:** *Our camp is near Camp Mirage and one morning, very early, we left to check our traps before the non-native hunters could get to them. We used to have a gate there but it didn't prevent anyone from breaking and entering. On the way out we saw game wardens getting their ski-doods ready to go somewhere. I asked them if they were caribou hunting and they said they weren't. They said they were looking for a non-native who had "borrowed" a caribou permit to hunt. I wondered how that person could have made it that far without a permit.*

*"The following morning, we saw the game wardens again and they had found the man who had borrowed the permit and he told us that that person was not the only one who used someone else's permit to hunt caribou; he said that they had caught many others who had hunted illegally. The government workers who oversee the caribou hunt probably do not know about these illegal activities and if they did, they probably do not care because the government makes a lot of money from the caribou hunt."*

**Jimmy Neacappo:** *"There is a non-native living near the airport (LG-2) who has many photographs. He says when the caribou hunting season is finished and the game wardens are gone, non-natives continue to come into the territory at night and hunt illegally. He took pictures of that. Someone said he had about 6 hours of evidence. The hunters sensed he was watching and one night they entered his house and held a gun to him. You should call him and he could tell his story and show his pictures."*

### **Cree unable to hunt and stay at their camps during the caribou sport hunting season**

**Moses Snowboy:** *"Our young people are being ticketed and fined for hunting on the road and some of them are reacting strongly to what they consider to be harassment. We have to be concerned and careful about that. We have to talk to our young people so they do not do anything rash that will get them in serious trouble and bring them up in front of the courts."*

**Robbie Matthew:** *"In the past before the trap lines were created, the land was open to all but there were designated caretakers for different areas and they managed the land so there would be no over-harvesting. There were no Category I, II or III lands. Those were created under JBNQA... When anything happens on our land, such as resource development, we are told only the good things that might happen and I have lived long enough with the development all around me to know most of those things were not true. We never hear about the possible negative impacts of that development."*



*"I often wonder if we can leave our grandchildren something that will guarantee they will be free from all the impacts of sports hunting and development that we ourselves are being subjected to right now. Everything I have heard here has helped me considerably. The knowledge we are talking about now has been around long before European contact and our ancestors are still talking to and teaching us through their stories that are passed down from one generation to the next."*

Roderick Pachano: *"The government likes to say that we do not live out on the land anymore, and he is right when the caribou hunting season is open to non-native hunters because it is not safe out there when they are around."*

*"The government has always tried to get us off the land whenever it finds a money-making use for it. When the hydro-project was first announced, the government said it was a waste to let the waters just flow naturally because money could not be made from them if left in their natural state. They also said during the court case that there was nobody living on the land; they were talking about themselves because they were not living up here but Cree were still living on and off the land. It shows you how insignificant they thought we were and I guess they still do."*

*"I think the Agreement (JBNQA) saved whatever land was not flooded; it saved it for a while anyway so that we could continue to use it and live on it before we were forced off as had been done to other native groups throughout this continent."*

**9. A regulation exists against shooting within 2000 metres of a hydro installation, but there is no such regulation for the shooting distance from a Cree cabin although there are signs indicating where Cree camps are along the Transtaiga Road.**

Even if in most cases there are no witnesses, it is obvious from all the caribou parts left outside and the bullet holes through some cabins that hunters are shooting too close to Cree camps. With the cut in the number of game wardens patrolling Eeyou Istchee during the caribou hunting season, the situation will only get worse.

Janie Pachano: *"We used to stay out there in the winter during the caribou hunting season because a friend of ours used our cabin as his base for his outfitting business but after all the other outfitters' clients started to take over, we could not stay out there anymore. It was too stressful. One time there were 2 ski-doos parked a few meters from our cabin down by the lake and 2 hunters were eating their lunch. When my husband told them to go hunt somewhere else, they told him, "Don't worry. We are not going to shoot towards your cabin." If we were to hunt that close to residences in the south, we would probably be thrown in jail; we would definitely be ticketed and fined."*

**10. Policies against provisions of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.**

Roderick Pachano: *"If you remember when we signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the government and we agreed that we had a choice to continue living the traditional life and surviving off the land or to enter the job market to support ourselves. We were told when we signed the Agreement (JBNQA) that nothing would change, that Cree could continue to practice their traditional activities as they had in the past. Protecting the land and traditional ways and activities was a priority with the Cree when the Agreement was being negotiated. After the Agreement was signed, it*

was soon obvious that the government was not respecting these provisions of the JBNQA that had been agreed to by all parties who signed it.

*“We were also told that of the 3 categories of land that were set up – I, II and III – only Category III lands could be used jointly by native and non-natives but I do not remember anything written or said that stated non-natives could do anything or use that land anyway they wanted or that native people would be hindered or stopped from practicing their traditional ways on Category III lands. We understood from that agreement that we could continue to use that land and practice those activities that our grandfathers and ancestors had. The government did not get permission from the Cree to do whatever it wanted on Category III lands and to destroy it as much as it wanted; it was for universal use, for Cree and non-native alike.*

*“It still has not been resolved satisfactorily that non-natives as well have to use that land in a way that does not destroy it or the environment or the wildlife.*

*“The Agreement says that non-native hunters have to go through outfitters to hunt in the territory. Allowing hunters to hunt without guides and to hunt wherever or however they wanted in Zone 22 is a decision that was made **after** the Agreement was signed. There was a meeting in Waswanipi in 1995 with the chiefs and they were asked at that meeting if they would agree to a trial arrangement of allowing non-native hunters to come in to the territory to hunt. They were told it would be a trial period; nobody told them that it would become a permanent thing. Now it is 20 years since then and I don’t know if they have said anything to the contrary and have agreed to a permanent policy. I think many times we are at fault too for not paying attention to what we are told; we do not do anything when the trial period ends and because we have not done or said anything, we realize too late that the policies or arrangements have become long-term or even permanent.*

*“There were rules governing everything as well. The Creator who made this land had laws concerning how the land and everything on it could be used; this is what the non-natives refer to as “Natural Law”. If you do anything to harm the land or anything on it, there will be the consequences, not just where you committed the wrong-doing, but it will impact other things and areas. This is what the Cree understood and used. Natural Law is what native people respected and followed. They wanted to live in harmony with those Laws. Government laws are not more powerful than or have precedence over Natural Laws, no matter how many laws or regulations are passed by governments.”*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOURISM**

Andrew Kawapit: *“I thought one of the things we could include when it comes to tourism is to inform and teach people how developments affect us and the land. The Elders definitely need to be involved in the discussions and planning of tourism activities so that our Youth can benefit from them. There needs to be more consultation with the Elders so they can have their input into the planning.”*

Abraham Mamkianskum: *“I do not want to see catch and release fishing in our lakes and rivers. I am sure you have all seen non-natives fishing and releasing their catches. My son has an Inuit friend and his friend told him he had been hired to go inland with some non-native fishermen and that is what they were doing, catching and releasing the fish. He said they were at a beautiful lake not far from Whapmagoostui. A few days later, his friend said, there were fish all over the place where they had*

washed ashore on the lake. They believed that those were the fish that had been caught and released and I am sure that they were too."

James Kawapit: "We have to give it careful consideration first and discuss it amongst ourselves before we bring more tourists into the territory. One thing I am certain of, tourists cannot be allowed to roam all over the place on their own. They have to go with guides to go anywhere... We have to make sure we teach our children about Cree culture and teach them how their ancestors lived. We do not know what is going to happen in the future, but if it does happen that there are food shortages all over the world, it will help them survive if they have traditional survival skills. Every effort must be made to protect and showcase our culture and traditional knowledge and to pass them on to future generations."

Eddie Pashagumskum: "We need to talk about tourism amongst ourselves first; we have to include everyone before the decision is made whether to allow tourism in our territory. There will always be disagreements whenever you want to start something new. When something does not go the way you planned, you cannot stop. That is how we learn. There is nothing wrong with disagreements because that is how you find solutions by discussing them openly. We also have to look at other native groups and learn from their experiences to know what the possible impacts might be. We have to be certain that whatever we allow into the territory is for the best for all.

"We are trying to attract non-native tourists by showing them or teaching them about our culture. We can only say this might help us get back to our ways; we cannot say with certainty that we will get them back, but if we doubt that it will lead us back to where we came from, we will never do anything that might help us find ourselves again. When our Elders told us and taught us about our culture they were thinking of keeping that culture alive in the future. The only way they could ensure that the Cree way of life continued to survive in the future was to pass on their knowledge to younger generations. When we think about tourism and getting our Youth involved in that industry, we will be concerned about what our Youth will do to earn their living if they do not know about the culture or if they do not have the traditional survival skills. And if we concern ourselves too much with that, we will do nothing. "If you consider offering fishing packages to attract tourists, you have to weigh all the factors carefully. How will it impact our own traditional activities? Maybe we end up in the same situation we are in now with the caribou mess. Maybe that will be something else that will prevent us from going out on our trap lines and practicing our traditional ways. We have to plan what we ourselves are going to do. Our Elders told us a long time ago what our future would be.

"Are we going to agree to tourism or are we going to open up only some parts of the land for certain activities to help our Youth? Right now we are comfortable living in a community; we do not have to do anything. Long ago, our people worked hard and travelled far to find food but they were satisfied and happy with that way of life. Even if they did not kill anything, they didn't give up; they kept trying until they got something. Nowadays some Youth do not want to go out on the land if they know there will be a scarcity of game or fowl. They do not consider the peace and comfort you get from being on the land."

Moses Snowboy: "On the committee I am on (eel grass), we are talking about tourism, nothing to do with hunting but just to show tourists around. We are just talking about it at this stage. We cannot go further with it until everyone has had an opportunity to have their input. We have people who are against tourism of any sort, whether it is to come and hunt or just to sightsee. We have some conflicts

*within our trap lines so, to avoid or lessen these conflicts, everybody who uses and shares the same trap line should have a say on whether tourism should be allowed on that trap line. We should also consult with other people in each of our communities because the trails cross other trap lines and the users of those lands need to be on board as well. Tourism needs to be planned carefully and requires a lot of consultation with many individuals and parties. It has to be mandatory that tourists cannot just travel at will on their own; they have to be accompanied by native guides.*

*There have to be some regulations in place so we don't end up with the same situation we are facing now with the caribou hunters where the land and waters are being polluted with refuse and rotting flesh and hides.*

*Robbie Matthew: "I wanted to mention briefly the fishing derbies that are becoming a major sport in Eeyou Istchee. There is nothing traditional about that. It is a competition to see who gets the biggest fish and the winner gets money or even a boat and motor. Many non-native people come up to pay money to register and participate in these derbies. Is there anybody watching those non-native people to make sure they do not release their fish back into the waters? I do not agree with making a game out of catching fish because it was what kept me alive when I was growing up. Anyone who grew up depending on fish for their survival would feel the same way if they saw such disrespect because that is what it is, disrespect, when you turn fishing into a game."*

*Robbie Dick: "When you talk about tourism, whether it is fishing, caribou hunting, goose hunting or any other kind of hunting activity that brings tourists in, there is not much involved that Cree can be proud of because non-natives refer to it as "sport fishing or sport hunting" and to many of them it is just that, a game. That is why they take only parts of the animals or fowl or throw the fish back in the water. Cree never looked at hunting as a sport. Our way of hunting is called "subsistence hunting" because that is how we survived, by hunting. It was vital to their survival.*

*"I want to talk about maintaining and preserving Cree Culture. That is something we could showcase in our tourist activities. Nowadays most Cree want jobs to earn a living. There are many jobs that can be created through showing off our culture to tourists. We have to think of ways to do that, how to promote Cree knowledge and Cree Culture to those who want to learn about it. There are many people who just want to observe things; for example, the Japanese. It must be very expensive for them to fly to Canada but many of them fly north just to see the Northern Lights. Once they have seen them, they fly back home. We don't know how they use what they have seen.*

*"There are also non-native people who want to see what Cree Culture is like. For example, in Germany there are people who dress and live like Indians of old and they wear feathers and hide clothing. They invited native people from the States or Canada to Germany and this was shown on TV; even the little German children were wearing feathers and native clothing. It was their way of showing respect to our native culture.*

*"Eco-tourism is better suited for us where no hunting is involved, just showing tourists different activities involving our culture, traditions and customs. It is not only the non-native people that are interested in learning what Cree Culture was like in the past, but other native groups as well are curious about different native cultures.*

*"We can promote tourism in several ways. One of the ways is to bring tourists in to observe different*

activities; for example, take them out on the land to see Crees snowshoeing or paddling or portaging; take them for rides on the land or the water to sightsee; take them out on the land to observe Crees hunting and how they hunt and teach them about respect for the land and animal life.

*“Another way is to involve them in the various activities. If they want to hunt with the Cree, they would have to do it the way the Cree or Inuit hunt. Why can’t the government recognize the value of this way of hunting and preserving the land and animal life and make this part of the hunting regulations to ensure that **all** hunters, including non-native, adhere to the principles of traditional hunting so there is no waste lying around? Even if the non-native hunters do not want every part of whatever they kill, they should dispose of it in a respectful manner or they should not kill more than their quota. I heard someone say a non-native hunter over-celebrated after getting his quota and had to be taken back to the outfitting camp so alcohol should not be allowed during hunting. It is too easy to be careless when someone is inebriated and accidents can happen or getting such a kick out of shooting and killing more animals than allowed under the quota system or intentional vandalism can occur, such as shooting up cabins.*

*“The Elders have so much knowledge, experience and understanding of animal life and the land. Why can’t they use all that to plan and regulate tourist activities so other people can benefit once they understand what it is, be it hunting, culture or any other thing that is Cree. We have to sit down and find out how we are going to do this instead of just bringing tourists in and setting them free to continue destroying the land and the animals. They must leave here with valuable knowledge about our culture that will help them and us. We also have to learn more about our culture and our past so we can pass on that knowledge. Everything we have been given comes from the Creator; it is the Creator’s garden that is being destroyed. Cree are outraged about all the destruction and disrespect. Non-native people will understand because they brought religion to us in the first place.*

*There are many things we can do with tourism and there are different levels of it. One way is taking tourists out to sightsee or observe traditional activities. Another is to involve the tourists in the activities. And another is to have them experience living that life.*

*There was a man from France who spent time in Canada and he used to take Stephen Sheshamush, a Cree from Whapmagoostui who did soapstone carvings, back to Europe just to show people over there how soapstone was carved; Stephen and some Inuit also did ice sculptures for people in Europe. Before that person died, he told us he wanted to be buried in Whapmagoostui even though he had never lived there. He told me he lived in France in a small town with a population of 5,000. He said the tourist activity there was sliding (tobogganning down a hill) in the winter and everyone who was old enough to work made their living from serving the tourists that visited their little town. I forget what he said the summer activity was. He said there were 42,000 beds for tourists in that town and he said many times all 42,000 beds were in use.*

*Tourism can also help us preserve the land because we will be using it all the time. And our presence on the land will ensure that it is not destroyed. We will also be the bearers of our culture and knowledge so future generations will still know about and benefit from their heritage. If we don’t do that we will end up like other native groups who have lost their cultures and languages.”*

Roderick Pachano: *“Tourism can get people out on the land and involving Youth in those activities would help them not only by learning about and practicing their own culture but financially as well even*

*if they don't survive off hunting while they are out there. This way there would be Cree presence out on the land again. The government likes to say that we do not live out on the land anymore, and he is right when the caribou hunting season is open to non-native hunters because it is not safe out there when they are around... If we really accept tourism into our territory, we cannot allow the government to regulate, for example, the types of dwellings we put up for tourists. I heard the government said tepees were not acceptable because they did not conform to standards; a tepee did not have two doors so people should not stay there. Tourists want to see the real Cree way of life, not what the government thinks they should see. I would be grateful if we can prevent the government or any other agency from regulating whatever we can or want to show tourists... Before any tourism activity is approved, it must first be ascertained that it is compatible with the Cree way of life and that it will not harm or destroy the land, the Cree, the wildlife or the environment. The impacts of tourism should be considered carefully before approval. Another requirement should be that the employees of COTA must also learn all they can about the Cree Culture as well because they will not always have ready access to information they need to assess tourism proposals. The Elders will not hesitate to help when asked but they will not be involved in the day-to-day administration of COTA."*

Elizabeth Dick: *"Showing tourists what our culture is and teaching them our ways can help us strengthen our own culture."*

## **CONCLUSION**

It is obvious from the meeting with the Cree caribou experts that their traditional knowledge of the animals rivals that of any biologist and that they are greatly concerned about the current state of the Woodland Caribou and the George and Leaf River herds. They state that the current decline of the caribou is not only due to the natural 50-year cycles but also as a result of human activities such as caribou sports hunting and resource development. According to oral history, the 50-year cycles were a gradual process, not like the current crash of the George River Herd.

When the caribou returned to Eeyou Istchee in the last century, their habitat was the same as it had been for many millennia; they were able to thrive and multiply with little interference from humans because there were no roads yet or motorized vehicles, including planes and helicopters. Cree hunters had to walk for days, even weeks, just to get one or two caribou. The land had not been flooded yet so there were no large bodies of water (reservoirs) to hinder them or to destroy their source of food and there were no transmission lines or electro-magnetic fields endangering their health. This is the type of depleted or toxic environment they will be returning to the next time around and, therefore, the Cree are worried that even when the caribou populations rebound, they might not be as numerous or as healthy and hardy as they had been in the past since many animals are already showing signs of diseases.

According to scientists, *"In the 1.6 million years that caribou have roamed the northern hemisphere, their populations have risen and fallen with cycles of glaciation and deglaciation. In more recent millennia, populations have ebbed and flowed on a regional basis. But what concerns many caribou experts now is the rapid, global decline of caribou and reindeer... in the face of precipitous warming."* One article states that global warming results in ice buildup from freezing rain and that prevents caribou from getting at their food and thus starving to death, yet another article states that the caribou survived the ice age when the ice was so much thicker then. Confusing, to say the least. Cree experience shows that ice buildup occurs mainly on ski-doo trails where the wet snow has been

impacted but ski-doo trails do not cover the whole caribou habitat; freezing rain does not occur every year nor does it fall in the whole territory; and, caribou do not stay around in one place if they cannot find or access their food source.

The Cree are also saying that one of the reasons for the decline is that trophy hunters who are interested only in the antlers are killing mainly the males, which endangers the herds because the large males are the ones that ensure a healthy rate of reproduction and a healthy herd. The Inuit are saying basically the same thing. Thomas Shea, president of the Hunters and Trappers Organization in Kuujuaq, is quoted as saying, *"The bulls are gone and they're not reproducing anymore... an end to the sport hunt might be the only way to bring the George River herd back from the brink."* The Cree also say that sports hunters are unable to differentiate between the George River and the Leaf River herds so they could be killing caribou from the George River herd anyway in spite of the moratorium as they usually look for caribou with the largest antlers, and, as Andrew Kawapit has stated, the George River herd has larger antlers than the Leaf River herd. They also say that illegal hunting and sports hunters killing more than their quota of two caribou are contributing to the decline in the caribou populations.

In 2014-2015 the government tried to reduce the number of caribou each hunter could kill from two to one animal per hunter but the Quebec Outfitters Federation, which appears to have great influence on the government, lobbied and managed to get the government to reverse its position. In 2013-2014, the quotas were: 500 permits in Zone 22A or 1000 caribou; 1722 in 22B through outfitters, or 3444 caribou; and 804 in 23 West through outfitters or 1608 caribou. For 2014-2015, the quotas were supposed to be: 500 permits in 22A or 500 caribou; 3053 in 22B through outfitters or 3053 caribou; and 1998 in 23 West through outfitters, or 1998 caribou, for a total reduction of 501 caribou, but just before the season opened, the decision was reversed and the 2013-2014 quotas remained in effect.

The Cree are concerned as well about caribou sports hunting for reasons other than the decline. The traditional methods of hunting ensured there would be no waste; every part of the animal was used for food, clothing, rope, lacings for snowshoes, bags, mattresses, blankets, tepee coverings and including medicinal uses. Now body parts and hides litter Eeyou Istchee when the season is closed and no one assumes the responsibility for cleaning up after the sports hunters. There are no government programs in place to clean up the territory. Traditional hunting was conducted with the greatest respect for all wildlife and the land. Now animals are being chased around by helicopters and shot from the air and sometimes left wherever they fall to rot. Cree cabins are being shot at or broken into and damaged.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement ensured that the native people could continue to practice their traditional ways and have access to their traditional lands in the James Bay area but now they are being displaced because they are afraid to go out on the land when the caribou hunting season is open. On November 5, 1975, prior to the signing of the Agreement, Mr. John Ciaccia, MNA and special representative of Premier Robert Bourassa in the James Bay negotiations, made the opening remarks before the standing Parliamentary Committee of the National Assembly of Quebec on Natural Resources Lands and Forests and he said, *"Land is the very basis of the Cree and Inuit cultures. And it is not just a matter of sustaining themselves with the harvest of the land, which of course they do. They have a mystique about the land and what it contains. They have a special relationship with the land that their ancestors inhabited, a link, something indefinable but real and*

*genuine nevertheless... They are living, if I may say so, a wholesome life in harmony with the land. They are at peace with nature."*

The government and developers claim the land is empty in an attempt to justify opening it up to development. They do not realize how dangerous it is at certain times of the year when the caribou or moose hunting season is open to everyone. Even the fishing season can be dangerous as one Cree discovered when some non-natives snuck into his cabin in the middle of the night and set fire to his porch while he and his family were sleeping inside the main cabin.

Section 24 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement deals with Hunting, Fishing and Trapping. This section is subject to the principle of conservation (24.2.1) and this principle applies in Category I, II, and III lands (24.3.32). Section 24.8.7 stipulates that "*use of outfitting facilities shall be considered as a principal means of controlling non-native hunting and fishing activity*" and Section 24.8.8 further states that "*...to the extent deemed feasible, that non-Native hunters and fishermen be accompanied by Native guides.*" Some 5 years ago when the non-Native outfitters in the LG-2 and LG-4 areas discovered that most of the caribou were in the LG-3 area, they sent their clients there WITHOUT any guides whatsoever. Where was the control? Not only was this in direct contradiction of Section 24.8.8, but it also resulted in fighting over ski-doo trails. It has been pointed out by the Cree that when the moose hunting season opens, non-Native hunters do not even bother using the services of the outfitters or guides. They go all over the territory doing what they please.

Section 24 of the JBNQA established the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping *Coordinating Committee* as an advisory and recommending body to the government with respect to hunting, fishing and trapping. It is composed of representatives from Quebec, Canada, the Inuit and the Cree but it has been ineffective as far as the Cree are concerned. According to the Agreement, when matters relating to the Cree are discussed, each representative gets 2 votes but the Inuit cannot vote and visa versa; it is the same with the governments, when a matter falling under Quebec's jurisdiction is decided on, Canada representatives have no votes but Quebec gets 2 votes each and the reverse is true for Canada. So, in splitting up the Native votes in that manner, it seems highly unlikely that what either Native group wants stands much chance of being passed.

Complaints were expressed as well that the government never provided sufficient conservation officers or sufficient resources to the conservation officers to allow them to do their jobs. For example, when most of the hunters were hunting in the LG-3 areas, the officers were stationed in Radisson, a 3-hour drive away from all the hunting activities. Many infractions can take place in that time period. In addition to not providing the resources or the manpower to effectively patrol and manage the sports hunt, budget cuts in 2014-2015 reduced the numbers of officers from six to two, two people to cover the whole territory!

Section 24 has been a total failure because the Ministry and/or government have not listened to the Native parties' concerns about the declining caribou populations and have allowed themselves to be influenced by the Quebec Outfitters Federation instead, as evidenced by the crash of the George River herd. The Quebec Court of Appeals declared on August 4, 2014 that "*the provincial government had violated their treaty rights when it set caribou sport hunting levels and dates in Northern Québec for the sports hunting season for the Leaf River caribou herd and set the level for the George River herd in JBNQA territory without waiting for the advice of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee*". (See Appendix A for a joint press release of the native organizations in northern Quebec.)



In spite of this ruling by the Quebec Court of Appeals, the following announcement was posted on the internet, "On February 6, 2015, the Laurent Lessard, Québec's Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, has announced the migratory caribou sport hunting measures that will apply in Northern Québec for the 2015-2016 season. The number of sport hunting licences will therefore be reduced by 20% from 2014-2015 levels. This means that, for 2015-2016, a total of 2,421 licences will be made available, and the harvest limit of two caribou per hunter will be maintained. Licences will be allocated as follows:

**Zone 22A**

- 250 licenses issued
- licenses allocated by means of a random draw (125 winners and 125 guides)
- no obligation to use the services of an outfitter:

**Zone 22B**

- 1,422 licences issued

**Zones 22A and 22B**

- Hunting season will begin on December 1 and end on January 31

**Zone 23 West**

- 749 permits issued
- Hunting season will begin on August 15 and end on October 4

**All zones**

- Province-wide harvest limit of two caribou per hunter per year

"As for the George River herd, sport hunting in Québec was suspended in 2012 for an undetermined period," said Minister Lessard. "Zones 23 East, 23 South and 24 will remain closed to sport hunting until the biological data show that the herd has recovered."

This announcement, coming so soon after the Court of Appeals decision, does not appear to have been discussed and agreed to by the Native parties. Section 24.4.30 of the JBNQA clearly states: "The Coordinating Committee may establish the upper limit of kill for moose and caribou for Native people and non-Natives and, with respect to black bear in the buffer area, make decisions relating to the non-Native hunting, the harvesting and the management of populations thereof. Subject to the principle of conservation, decisions of the Coordinating Committee shall bind the responsible Minister or government, who shall make such regulations as are necessary to give effect thereto and shall bind local and regional governments."

Furthermore, Mr. John Ciaccia stated on November 5, 1975 with respect to studying the effects of resource development, "...this will not be a unilateral decision. The native peoples will have a part in deciding and establishing environmental regulations that directly affect them and their way of life. They will be able to make their position known through advisory bodies and study groups that the Government will be obligated to consult." Caribou are an important resource to the native people of the north and concerns about their current status are legitimate and must be taken seriously by the government.

## **APPENDIX A**

**Joint Press Release of Makivik Corporation,**

**Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)**

**and**

**Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikimach**

**Regarding**

**Ruling of Quebec Court of Appeals Upholding Native Treaty Rights**

**in Northern Quebec**

**Joint Press Release of Makivik Corporation, Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach**

**QUÉBEC COURT OF APPEAL UPHOLDS CREE, INUIT AND NASKAPI TREATY RIGHTS**

The Cree, Inuit and Naskapi scored an important victory on August 4, 2014, when the Québec Court of Appeal declared the provincial government had violated their treaty rights when it set caribou sport hunting levels and dates in Northern Québec for the sports hunting season for the Leaf River caribou herd and set the level for the George River herd in JBNQA territory without waiting for the advice of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee, an advisory body created under the JBNQA with equal representation by the Native parties and the federal and provincial governments.

Caribou are a very important wildlife resource in the JBNQA territory and the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi all rely on it. Both the Leaf River and the George River herds are in decline and the Native parties wanted Québec to close or reduce the sports hunt.

The Court of Appeal held that the Minister's decision to flout the process set out in the JBNQA stemmed from administrative priorities and a desire to accommodate the outfitters that serve the non-Native sports hunters. But the Court held that, under the JBNQA treaty, the traditional way of life of the Aboriginal peoples takes clear precedence over sports hunting.

"Makivik is very pleased that the appeal court strongly reiterated the obligations of the federal and provincial governments in regards to hunting, fishing and trapping provisions," said Makivik Corporation's Vice-President for Renewable Resources, Adamie Delisle Alaku. "Hunting caribou forms an integral part of traditional and current Inuit livelihood and must be protected."

"The Cree Nation welcomes this clear affirmation by the Court of Appeal of the primacy of the treaty rights of the Cree, Inuit and Naskapis. It shows that Government must respect its treaty promises. It recognizes the priority of the Aboriginal peoples' treaty rights to hunt, fish and trap over non-Native sports hunting and to co-manage the wildlife resources in Northern Québec. This judgment charts a clear course for the respect of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* in the years to come", states the Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), Dr. Matthew Coon Come.

"The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach welcomes the Court of Appeal's judgment as the unequivocal recognition of the constitutional nature of the rights of the Naskapi under the *Northeastern Québec Agreement*. The George and Leaf River caribou herds are of paramount importance to our culture and traditions and we will always strive to ensure their protection", says Noah Swappie, Chief of the Naskapi Nation.

**APPENDIX B**  
**STORIES OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**OF**  
**MEETING ON CARIBOU**  
**IN CHISASIBI**  
**FEBRUARY 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14, 2015**

## **ANDREW KAWAPIT**

Those of you who hunt know that nothing stays the same, the animals and even the land itself. We have been told by our Elders that everything is changing constantly and we have seen for ourselves that the changes they told us about have already happened. The Elders always warned us to treat all game with respect and to immediately take care of what we hunted because if we were careless or mistreated the land and the animals, the impacts of our actions would affect us. Our hunts would not be as successful; we might find fewer animals to hunt or we might not be able to kill what we needed to keep us alive.

Everything we are given is pure. We as Cree were given everything that moves – the animals, birds and fish – to live on and to keep us alive. That is how it was from the beginning when our ancestors lived on this land. That is how they learned how Nature, the land, and the animals functioned and how to act with respect while hunting to preserve the delicate balance of Nature.

I have heard about some of the things the sport hunters do when they are up here hunting caribou and I do not like what I hear. I attended a meeting on caribou once, it was held in Montreal, and I listened to the caribou hunters who attended. The experienced ones who have hunted for many years in our area talked about how they asked the Cree and the Inuit to teach them about the land and how to hunt properly and they said they tried to conduct their hunts in the traditional manner with respect for the animals and the land. They said they tried to pass on that knowledge to the younger and newer hunters but they did not want to listen.

One time an Inuk took us up north to the mouth of one of their rivers and told us how some sport hunters set up a trap for the caribou. They hired a helicopter to fly around to find the caribou and when he found the caribou he was to chase them to the mouth of the river where the hunters lay in wait. The Inuk told us the caribou were chased a great distance and herded into the enclosure that the hunters had set up. The caribou were kept there for some time until they became skinny and then they were released. The Inuk did not say if some of the caribou were killed or if they were just kept there for observation. Since that happened, the Inuk said, we have never seen another caribou in this area. I told him it was that experience that has kept caribou away from that place; they remember the places where they have been tortured or mistreated and stay away from them.

Animals are like us. We communicate with each through various means and even though the animals do not have the communication tools we have, they still communicate with each other. They know exactly where the other animals are and where to go to join them when it is time to migrate. I know this for a fact. We know there are two herds in this part of the country, one at Muushuuwaaui Sibi (George River) and the other where the George River runs into the Leaf River. When they start migrating south, it is as if they have communicated with each other and both herds start migrating at the same time. One travels southeast and the other travels southwest and they meet briefly east of here (Chisasibi). Yes, animals do communicate with each other.

In the past, caribou were cautious, not like the caribou nowadays. You would never see them near roads or settlements. Now they don't seem to be afraid of anything. A few decades ago they were very plentiful but now they are declining again. It has always been like that. That is what our grandfathers

told us. They were able to see into the future and tell me how things would be in the future and everything they have told me has come to pass.

Caribou act differently now than they did in the past. There were no caribou around when my brother here [James Kawapit] and I started hunting. I remember only once we had to go real far beyond the height of land to Mistiseebee near Kuujuaq before we saw any caribou. That was the first time I saw caribou. In the past, the barren caribou or “muushuuwauuidihkw” never went near the forests. As soon as they saw trees, they would change direction and head somewhere else where there were no trees. That is what the Elders taught us, the ones who hunted caribou the last time they were plentiful.

The caribou that came further south were called “beesuumauuidihkw” [southern caribou] or “minaaskauuidihkw” [woodland caribou] and they were larger than the barren caribou. My father told us that the barren caribou had huge antlers because there were no trees where they were while the woodland caribou had smaller antlers so they wouldn't snag or get caught in the trees when they had to travel through the forests. In the wintertime they stayed in the forests because the snow was softer there and it was easier for them to dig through it to get at the lichen that they fed on.

In the spring, they will come out of the forests and sit around on the ice all day until evening when they will go back into the woods. When the days are long, they will run out onto the ice when they hear or sense danger nearby but they don't do that in the winter. It is said that the reason they do this in the spring is that being out on the ice gives them a better view of the land so they can see where the danger is. That is what the woodland caribou do. We have observed as well that now not all the caribou return to their summer calving grounds. Some hang around in more southern areas.

We know in the past people starved but sometimes it was a result of the lack of respect they showed when hunting or they lacked the knowledge to find the animals. Cree got their traditional knowledge about the animals from living closely to them and observing their habits and habitat. They knew where to find the animals when they were scarce because they knew their habits, what to do to be successful in their hunt and how to read the signs left behind by the animals. They knew that if they were respectful, took only what they needed and ate or used everything they killed, the land would provide for them.

Sometimes animals change their habits or habitat because of development. For example, the geese and snow geese used to fly low over our community when they were migrating but they don't do that anymore because of all the lights in the community or along the coast. Now they fly really high. The old goose hunters did not want any light at all when the geese were flying because the geese were wary of it and would avoid flying over areas that were all lit up.

As for the decreasing numbers of caribou, I hope someone or some organization will make hunting a priority and do something to prevent further destruction of that way of life or the animals and I wish youth who are still interested in that way of life would attend meetings such as this so they can hear and learn how to hunt properly, the traditional way. That is the life that was given to us, to live off the land. The land is our garden; that is why we do not like it when it is being destroyed and why we want everyone to know how to care for it properly so the caribou and other animals will continue to thrive.

I did not hear too much about overhunting when I was growing up but I did hear of certain cases of it on the George River where hunters would wait for the caribou to cross at a certain section of the river and when they did, the people would kill as many as they could. John Mamianskum, who passed away a long time ago, said his family lived with the Naskapi one winter when he was still a young man and he told of taking part in the mass killing of the caribou while they were crossing that section of the river. He said an older hunter told them to just keep shooting the caribou but when it was all over, they didn't even gather up the carcasses of those that had been killed. They were allowed to just float away with the current. That is not how we were taught though. We were taught to respect all animal life and not to kill it for the sport of it.

We know non-native sport hunters use planes or helicopters to hunt the caribou and kill them from the helicopters. They are interested only in those with the big antlers. I wish someone would tell them not to chase and scare the animals like that. We know also that they often do not take all the meat from the caribou. I wish we could have a meeting to plan, to decide how we can educate the non-natives on how to hunt in a more respectful manner and not to waste so much.

The Inuit are buying up outfitting camps and are stopping sport hunting of caribou by non-native hunters. The Inuit north of us are now asking for caribou meat because they have no caribou left for them to hunt. I guess the whole herd moved south. We should help them because I know they hunt the same way we do; they don't take more than they need. That is why I think it is important for us to sit down together, Cree, Inuit and non-natives to discuss the situation and to reduce the number of caribou being killed by sports hunters. The Inuit have never prevented us from going into their territory to hunt and we have to treat them with the same respect.

The caribou is known by many names depending on what it does or its age, such as one name while the antlers and velvet are growing, another name when the antlers finish growing and harden; another while it is mating and another after it finishes mating. When the velvet starts peeling off the ends, the caribou starts scraping off the velvet; when all the velvet is gone, he is ready to mate and he will go down to the water when there is no wind to look at his antlers. He stays in one place during this process; he does not travel far during this time. When all the blood has disappeared and the antlers turn dark and he is satisfied with their look, then he goes in search of a wife or wives. While he is walking along searching he will attack tree stumps or fallen trees along the way; it is said that he is practicing to fight because that is what he will do when he finds a female caribou, he will fight for her.

A long time ago caribou used to mate in late October and during the mating season, the male caribou does not eat; he only eats the lichen that the female caribou has urinated on and that is why his meat is not very tasty during that time. After he finishes mating he starts eating again and his meat returns to its normal flavour. He will eat grasses as well and I have seen caribou eat blueberries during the summer.

As I said before, caribou are different now than they were in the past. They drop their antlers earlier than they used to. They did not drop their antlers until around the 10<sup>th</sup> of December in the past; that is

what my father told me. Now at the beginning of November many of them have dropped their antlers already.

Male caribou once they have mated start gathering in herds, as do the females once the mating season is over. In the winter time they subsist mainly on lichen and rock tripe and the hairy moss on the dead branches of trees.

When a caribou is injured, it feeds on Labrador Tea plants. It does not eat those when it is healthy, only when it is injured. I went caribou hunting with my brother one time and I wounded a caribou but I could not go after it right away. I set out the following morning to look for it following its trail of blood and saw where it had sat during the night in the middle of a big growth of Labrador Tea. I could see it had sat in one place and eaten the plants all around before crawling to another spot. I could see that it had bled profusely at first but the flow of blood had gradually stopped. When I saw the wounded caribou, it started to run off but I was able to shoot it again and kill it. Just that one night of eating the Labrador Tea plants, the wound from my first shot was already clean and healing and I had shot it in the heart. I have heard other people talk about caribou healing themselves by eating the Labrador Tea even when they had been seriously wounded or injured.

Caribou also lose the velvet from their antlers and mate later than they used to in the season. In the past, they used to lose their velvet at the beginning of September but now that happens in the middle of September, so the mating season is also delayed by the same time and now caribou don't mate until the end of end of October. Nowadays if there is going to be a long spring, the fetuses are very small and just beginning to be recognizable. They have the same appearance as they would have had in November right after the mating season. In the past, by February the unborn caribou were quite big and by March you could no longer roast them on a stick over an open fire; they were too big and heavy by then.

When it is born, the calf is able to stand and walk almost right away and the mother caribou does not stop encouraging her baby to stand up and walk; when she knows the baby is strong enough to keep standing, she will run off so the baby will follow her and get stronger. As the baby is able to run and keep up with its mother, she will run faster away from her baby and that is how the baby develops the strength, the speed and the stamina to keep up with the herd. Most calves are born in June, some as early as May. They stay with the mother over the winter.

When the time is near for the calves to be born, the female offspring of the pregnant females stay close to their mother and when the calf is born, the older siblings run and play with the new calf. The male offspring of the pregnant female, however, leave their mother in the spring. By the time they are 3 years of age, caribou are quite big and they have antlers. Two year old females can get pregnant – it is only in the first year that they don't bear young.

Caribou that have dropped their antlers have better hearing than those who haven't shed theirs yet. Human hunters or other predators always approach their prey from down-wind from so when caribou are sitting together in a group, the ones without antlers always sit facing away from the wind so they can hear anything approaching the herd before the others are aware of the danger.



Some female caribou never grow antlers. Some women are sterile; they can never have children and animals are like that too. Most female caribou that never grow antlers are like that; they are sterile but they have the most acute hearing of all caribou.

Everything changes, including caribou. I know its habits have changed since development came to our land and they look different too. They used to have a lot of fat on them but now they are very lean and their meat has no fat on it. We know for certain that the development has changed their habitat and they are not as healthy as they used to be. It is not just the caribou that has been affected by development but all plant life as well has been affected so that all game, big and small, that feed off the land to sustain them have suffered. Not just the animals, but fish as well, have been affected because of the diversions and dams.

**TOURISM:** I have heard hydro say the fresh water coming out of Chisasibistuuk (Fort George River) does not go far out into James Bay but I have also heard the Inuit of Sanikilliuuaq say that since the land was flooded, it took 25 hours for the fresh water leaving the mouth of Chisasibistuuk to reach their islands (Belcher Islands). I believe the Inuit more than I believe hydro. I thought this was one of the things we could include when it comes to tourism, inform and teach people how developments affect us and the land. The Elders definitely need to be involved in the discussions and planning of tourism activities so that our Youth can benefit from them. There needs to be more consultation with the Elders so they can have their input into the planning.

## **ABRAHAM MAMIANSKUM**

I am not a caribou hunter, but my brother is. I never saw caribou when I was still hunting; I was around four years of age the last time I saw a caribou. We lived in Fort Chimo at the time but by the time we moved to Whapmagoostui, the caribou had disappeared. There were still some around Fort Chimo but not on this side of the country.

When the caribou "arrived" an old man from Whapmagoostui, he is no longer with us, told us that it had been exactly 50 years since they had disappeared from that area. When they first returned to our area, they used to travel along the coast and out on the ice in the Bay. Of course everyone was happy to see the caribou again and kill them for food. The Elders warned us not to kill more than we needed and to treat all game that we killed with the utmost respect. This is what they had been taught by their Elders and they tried to teach us the same thing, but when the caribou first arrived, people, the young people, did not listen to the old teachings. Some of them just killed them for sport and left the bodies there without taking the meat or anything else from them. It was probably both Cree and Inuit who did that. The Elders said the caribou probably would not use that migration route again because people had been so disrespectful and abusive. And it was true, the following winter the caribou used the inland route and never again did we see them on the coast.

I guess you all know the Naskapi have not seen any caribou for years now. My wife and I went there one year for a visit while the caribou were migrating and when the sport hunting season was open to non-natives. There were so many non-native hunters there at the time. We went to the garbage dump one day and you should have seen all the carcasses and hides that had been dumped there. I don't know if the Naskapi reported what the non-native hunters were doing with their kills. The Naskapi did not see very many caribou after that. Even though the caribou were still around, they just changed their migration route and avoided that area. That is why the Naskapi don't see caribou in their area anymore because that is what caribou do. They change migration routes when people do not treat them with respect.

My grandfather always taught us to treat all game, big or small, even fish, with the greatest respect and not to kill for sport. He told me a story of young Naskapi hunters who were checking their traps and they saw a marten caught in a trap but still moving around. They decided to skin it while it was still alive and let it go so it ran off. The marten stopped, turned around and looked at the young hunters. They said it looked like it had something in its mouth; it looked like a human hand. The following winter, there was a great shortage of game all over the land and many, many people starved to death. That is why the Elders wanted every hunter to treat everything respectfully.

Even now I always teach my grandchildren not to get involved if they see their friends abusing animals and other game. I always tell them the stories my grandfather told me. I was always taught too if I could not eat everything to either bury it or burn it. It was not to be thrown out and left lying around.

I am sure you have all seen non-natives fishing and releasing their catches. My son has an Inuit friend and his friend told him he had been hired to go inland with some non-native fishermen and that is what they were doing, catching and releasing the fish. He said they were at a beautiful lake not far from

Whapmagoostui. A few days later, his friend said, there were fish all over the place where they had washed ashore on the lake. They believed that those were the fish that had been caught and released and I am sure that they were too.

## **JAMES KAWAPIT**

Our ancestors and Elders knew everything about the game and they knew what was going to happen to the land and the animals before it happened. Our ancestors lived in harmony with the animals and the land and they knew both intimately. They treated everything with respect. Long before any of us in this room were even born, our grandfathers and ancestors communicated with the animals and it was the other living beings that told our people how they wanted to be treated. All game, no matter what it is, wants to be treated with respect and if it is it will give its life willingly to the hunter. This is what our Elders and ancestors knew, practiced and taught us.

My father told me that caribou were very plentiful during our grandfather's time but they foretold that, in the future, caribou would disappear completely but return again to the territory. When I was a young child there were no caribou to be found anywhere where we are living today. But as our grandfathers foretold, we are living in a time when the caribou are once again very plentiful. Yes, they are declining in numbers again but our Elders, our ancestors already knew what would happen and passed on that knowledge to us.

My father told me this story to illustrate what happens when you abuse the game you depend on for life. A long time ago some people from Kuujiuuaq decided to intentionally steer the caribou towards a part of the river where there were waterfalls and chase them into the river just above the falls. The caribou could not escape once they were in the swift water of the rapids and were drowned; numerous caribou were drowned and the carcasses were swept out to the bay. The following winter, many, many people starved to death because they could not find any other game to hunt. The Elders said starvation was rampant because people had broken one of the sacred laws of hunting; those people who had chased the caribou into the rapids to drown had shown total disrespect for the animals. That is what my father told us.

When I was growing up and while I was still hunting, there was no marten anywhere, but our ancestors had already foretold that the marten would return again in great numbers. This has happened as well. It is very important that we teach our young people how to hunt properly and to treat all animal life and the land with respect. There are some young people today who think the old ways and the teachings of our ancestors should be left in the past because they are no longer relevant. They think that what is happening now and in the future is more important for how we should live our lives. I do not agree with that. Our old ways and our teachings are very important and we should hang on to them, practice them and teach them to our young people.

When you look at the Bible, there are two parts to it, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The teachings contained in the Old Testament are still relevant today and are important to the well-being of a person and they help a person to be strong so he can become a good individual. Even though much has changed from the past to the present, it is still important to know about the past, what people did and how they lived. Did the way they lived help or hinder them? There is still so much to learn from the past to help us in our daily lives.

I have waited a long time for a meeting like this to take place so we could talk about the caribou situation. I expected the Cree Trappers Association to take the initiative and to seek our support in doing something to address the problem. Our grandfathers passed on the responsibility to care for the land and the animals to us. They did their best and now it is our turn to care for the land and all that is on it. They treated everything with respect.

I was in Montreal at a meeting on caribou about four years ago. Caribou hunters, Cree and Inuit were there as well. One Chisasibi Cree talked about seeing 17 caribou that had been injured and just left there to die on the James Bay highway and he said he believed it was a transport truck that had hit the caribou. He said he could not do anything to put them out of their misery because he did not have a gun with him. My feeling is that those are not the only caribou that have been injured and left to die since the highway was built. I don't think it is the Cree who are doing that because they have been taught to care for and respect wildlife.

One Cree Elder told me he was on his way to Wemindji following a herd of caribou waiting for them to get off the road when a truck came up behind him, passed him without slowing down at all and drove into the lone caribou that had not run off the road yet and hit the caribou so hard that it fell on the other side of the snowbank.

We should ask the Cree Trappers Association and game wardens to arrange a meeting so we can talk about the caribou problem and come up with ideas or solutions to prevent the useless killing of the animals.

During extreme cold weather, the Muushuuwaaudihkw, stays close to the edges of high cliffs, rocky areas, because of the soft snow where it can feed easier; the snow is not packed hard there, just like the Minaaskauudihkw stays in the forest during the cold winter days where the snow is soft and easier to dig through for the lichen.

Our grandfathers knew just by looking at a caribou which ones were the best ones to eat. My father told me that the grandfathers could tell that just from looking at the antlers; the caribou with antlers that grew to the front instead of growing upwards were the ones that were good to eat. When there were many caribou around, those were the ones they killed for food. They could also tell by the colour of the nubs or bases of the antlers (before the antlers emerge); if the top of the nub was very dark, the meat of the caribou was the best; if it was gray or white, then the caribou did not have much fat on it and the meat was not as good.

Those of us who grew up during the hard times when there was no caribou and who saw or knew of many people who starved to death because of that, we try to treat all game the way our grandfathers taught us, with respect and great care. We try to teach the young hunters the traditional ways of hunting but some do not listen or practice those ways. I heard of someone taking a dead caribou from the side of the road and standing it up in the snow so it looked as if it was standing there. That is very disrespectful and it hurts to see game being treated like that. Last winter in our community I heard of two incidents where moose were killed and just left there.

We do not know about everything that kills caribou; there are many things that kill them. For example, the Inuit say that caribou like to hang around at the bottom of cliffs and high hills because they can dig through the soft snow there to get at their food but when there are heavy snowfalls and the weather turns warmer, snow that has piled on the ledges of the hills falls and kills many caribou below.

My father told me many things about the caribou and he told me many of the changes that were to come with respect to the caribou. He told me the day would come when the caribou would not come near the community and he was right, they never come near our community anymore. He also told me that caribou are very sensitive to everything that goes on around them no matter where they are on the land because their hearing is so acute and they hide. They used to be very wary of any strange noise they heard.

Predators, like wolves, kill caribou. They separate one from the group, surround it so it has no place to run for safety and then they kill it. My father also told me that caribou would also just die from natural causes. One man told me he found there were 5 caribou lying dead on the shore of a lake. He didn't know what had killed them; he said it looked like they just fell down and died.

#### Impacts of Sports Hunting

I'm certain that none of us like what we hear or what we see is happening in our territory with respect to the caribou sport hunting but if we do not do something about it, then we have wasted our time and nothing is going to change. I think the waste that you have talked about and the mess left behind after the hunt is happening all over Eeyou Istchee.

There is a lake north of our community called Weeyaashaakimee where many caribou were seen lying dead on the ice. I have never heard of caribou drowning where there is no current. I am pretty certain they were killed and left there. I have seen them fall through the ice and the others have stayed and helped save the ones that had fallen through the ice and that is why I believe it was non-native hunters that left them there. When Cree went there after the ice was all gone, they said they could not tell what killed those caribou because the carcasses were all rotten by then.

I think we need to document all this and take pictures as evidence of all the abuses we see or find. I was at a meeting on caribou in Montreal one time; there was a native person there from out East and he told us he was hunting in the George River area when he came across some caribou carcasses that had been piled in an area that was quite inaccessible as if someone had tried to hide them.

There was an outfitting camp run by the Inuit north of Whapmagoostui and Cree were working as guides there. There was also a separate crew to gut and butcher the caribou that the non-native hunters had killed but they killed so many that the gutting crew could not keep up with them. What happened was that the following morning any caribou that had not been cut up the day before were thrown out whole. This is what the Cree guides reported about that particular outfitting operation. How much meat and hides were thrown out?

We need our own regulations so this kind of abuse can be eliminated. I'm sure if we sit around and discuss this, we can come up with some that maybe non-native hunters would honour.

#### Tourism

We have to give it careful consideration first and discuss it amongst ourselves before we bring more tourists into the territory. One thing I am certain of, tourist cannot be allowed to roam all over the place on their own. They have to go with guides to go anywhere.

When it comes to hunting though I do not believe that the government owns the wildlife, no matter what the species is. We should have more say in what happens in that area because that has been the major activity in our lives from the very beginning. That was the life that was given to us, to survive off the land and the animals. When you consider how long we have been here and compare it to the length of time that non-native people landed on our shores, it is only right that the government should recognize us and our rights. It is only right that our concerns should be heard.

Consider our experience with the Hudson's Bay Company. Our people gave them everything to keep them in business; without the furs they would not have been able to survive on our land and yet Cree people were allowed to starve if they had nothing to trade in exchange for food. It should have been evident then that native people meant nothing to the Europeans just as it is evident now that the government does not consider us as important.

We have to make sure we teach our children about Cree culture and teach them how their ancestors lived. We do not know what is going to happen in the future, but if it does happen that there are food shortages all over the world, it will help them survive if they have traditional survival skills. Every effort must be made to protect and showcase our culture and traditional knowledge and to pass them on to future generations.

## **SAMUEL BEARSKIN**

The three speakers that spoke before me were told the same things by their grandfathers that my grandfather told me. I was 15 or 16 years old the first time I saw caribou (around 1950). After my parents died I lived with my uncle, Job Bearskin, and I was hunting with him when we saw the caribou. There were 3 of them and they were the only caribou we saw all winter. My uncle killed 2 of them and he said he could barely remember his father killing caribou and that he didn't really know what to do with them, how to gut and clean them. Of course I had never seen a caribou in my life so I knew absolutely nothing about what you did with the animal once you had killed it.

It was another two or three years before I saw tracks of caribou again; there were two of them. We spent about a week tracking the caribou; this was towards the end of February. This was back in the days when we travelled everywhere on snowshoes. The caribou were wandering all over the place so we were not travelling in a straight line. One night we heard a plane fly by. There weren't that many planes around back then. The next day around noon I saw by their tracks that the caribou had started running but we kept following the tracks. As the sun was setting, we could see that they had not stopped running at that point. My partner said he believed that the caribou would continue on to their calving grounds and we believed that the plane had scared them. We never saw them because they never stopped walking. When he realized that the caribou would not return my partner finally gave up the hunt and we returned to camp travelling day and night. He told me to lead for a change and told me which star to follow; he said the star would move and he would show me another star to follow when the first star no longer served its purpose. We arrived at our camp at dawn and our camp mates were already up when we got there.

Caribou were plentiful during the time my grandfather hunted but their numbers were declining, so he could not show his sons how to hunt the caribou or how to clean them afterwards but he taught them the skills required through story-telling. My uncle had remembered his father's stories about how to care for caribou once it had been killed and he was able to carry through with the gutting and cleaning with my aunt's help. My uncle told us we could not waste or throw away anything and we ate or used everything from the caribou we killed. We even drank the broth from the bones that had been boiled and crushed once all the meat had been eaten or cut away from them. He even saved all the bloody snow where the caribou had been gutted and skinned and my aunt used that for cooking. Both my uncle and my aunt were young children the last time the caribou had come around and barely remembered observing the hunts or the methods of cleaning and preparing the meat but they remembered the stories and said they tried to do everything the way their parents had described the killing and cleaning of caribou .

We covered a lot of ground that winter walking all over the land looking for more caribou but we never found any more other than the three we saw. My grandfather was still alive at the time but we had left him at a small HBC inland post while we travelled around. My uncle made some caribou fat (made from boiling the bones and the marrow inside the bones) but you cannot make too much fat from the 2 caribou we had killed. He said we had to save some of the fat and dried meat for my grandfather to taste.



We saw my grandfather again in the summer time and when he was given his meal of caribou meat after it had been cooked, he took one bite and said, "What did you do? You left it overnight without gutting it". I wondered how he knew that because we did indeed leave one of them overnight without gutting it. He then taught us what to do the next time we killed a caribou and were not able to gut it right away.

I told you I was about 15 years of age when I saw my first caribou and I am 80 years old now and I know that the caribou are declining in numbers again. My grandfather told us at the time we saw the first three caribou that they would return in great numbers but it would start disappearing again but I do not remember how many years he said the cycles were.

If what we are doing here today recording these caribou stories ends up in a report or book, then future generations can learn about the same things that our grandfathers taught us through their stories.

### Impacts of Sports Hunting

I too grew up inland and I never saw non-native people out there, but when they started coming inland to work or hunt, I was surprised at all the wasted meat and hides that those hunters left behind. They left it all over the place. I heard that they were each allowed to kill 2 caribou and my first thought was why not just give them one caribou each because they waste so much food? What they leave behind is equivalent to one caribou. I always thought of the lessons I was taught on how to hunt and not to waste a thing.

It isn't just the caribou that they treat like that. I saw a non-native hunter hunting ptarmigan one time and he tore just the breasts off and threw the rest away. There is still a lot of meat on the rest of the body so he was throwing away food.

One time it was springtime when I saw some geese off the road and I was going to sneak up on them to kill them and while I was making my way through the trees, I saw a glimpse of something that made me curious so I went over to see a closer look. It was a caribou hanging from a tree. It had been killed that winter but when I found it, the hunting season was over. There were no guts/intestines nearby so I knew it had been gutted somewhere else and transported there to be strung up by a rope to the tree. I could not figure out why that hunter had done that. When I checked on it again, the flies had already found it and laid their eggs on it and two years later, I checked again but there was nothing left but bones lying around. The first time I immediately thought of my grandfather and knew he would have been horrified to see that because he even used the bones to make fat and broth that he continued to live on long after all the meat had been eaten.

Another time I was driving by near that same area when I saw non-native hunters acting suspiciously; they appeared to be trying to hide something but it was already evening when I drove by so I waited until morning to go back and see what they had been doing. I saw something had been buried where I had seen them and when I dug around I found a wolf that they had shot, killed and buried. Why?

My grandfather always taught us that we needed the game to survive because that was what the Creator put on this earth for us. I always wondered exactly how a non-native sport hunter viewed the game.

Another time I was crossing a lake and I saw lumps of something on the lake so I went over to check them out and they turned out to be caribou heads; I counted 15 of them. They were almost buried under the snow by then; of course, there were other body parts and guts lying around. My grandfather said the heads and other parts of the body were dried and saved so they would have something to take back to the community to share with everyone there. These were served at a feast that everyone in the community could share in and celebrate.

Another time I was crossing a long narrow lake when I came to a widening of the lake and saw things standing up in the lake. Of course I went to check them out and they were the legs of caribou that were lined up in a row all the way to the other side of the lake. You could tell that they had been put there in the early winter but you could not see a ski-doo trail by then, if there had been one there before. Why did they do that and what was the purpose of lining them all up like that?

One time when I went out to my camp to hunt caribou, I was working at the time, but when I got to my camp my ski-doo was gone. There were some Cree working at the hydro-camp near our camp who told me they had seen some non-native hunters drive by with what appeared to be my ski-doo. He checked out their truck that evening but the ski-doo was gone. That following fall, we had stopped by the road to build a fire and to go after a caribou I had killed off the road. While I was gutting it, the same person who had seen my ski-doo the previous winter came by and asked if I had seen my ski-doo. I told him I hadn't and he said it was nearby and he had happened upon it when he came to check up on me. After we had dragged the caribou back to the road, he showed me where it was and sure enough, there was my ski-doo hidden among the trees, quite a distance from where it had been taken from my camp. I guess they didn't have room to take it back wherever they came from. Other things, like a generator, have been taken from our camp as well.

The road is full of flies and maggots in the summer. I am sure there are regulations against leaving animal parts and guts on the road and if such regulations do indeed exist, they are not being followed.

It was about 60 years ago that I first saw a person drunk in our community. Did we not say at the time that we would do what we could to stop the spread of alcohol abuse in our society? How many days have gone by in those 60 years? How many tears have we shed over the impacts of the introduction of alcohol into our society, something else that was given to us by the non-native society? How many lives have been lost because of alcohol? But we cannot sit by and allow our ways to be destroyed in other ways such as sports hunting. We have to fight to ensure that our traditional ways are preserved for the benefit of future generations. We have to be heard.

Of course the government will not believe these stories because he has not seen what is happening out here.

## HARRY BEARSKIN

I think that all of us here in this room were born during the time there were no caribou. I can only tell you about the things my father passed on to me through the stories his father had told him. My paternal grandfather died before I was born but my father passed down his father's hunting stories to us. Caribou were abundant during my grandfather's prime as a hunter and it was through the stories he had shared with my father that I learned about the caribou and how they had disappeared. I had no other way of learning about caribou because they were not around when I was growing up. I never heard of anybody killing one, and I never heard anyone talk about seeing the tracks of caribou. All I knew was there had been caribou in the past but there weren't any during my childhood.

My family lived all winter and hunted north of where the LG-4 dam is now when I was growing up but we never saw any caribou around there. The first time I heard about anyone killing a caribou was when Samuel's uncle (Job Bearskin) killed 2 caribou and the second person to kill one was Tommy Neacappo. Stories of those kills passed quickly all over the land wherever people lived. That was how it was; people saw or killed one caribou here and there, but never more than that. Those who lived furthest east were the ones who first saw a caribou here and there and they were the first to get a chance to kill them. Gradually, very gradually, their numbers increased.

Just before the James Bay Hydroelectric Project, there were quite a lot of caribou but they had not reached their peak numbers. During the James Bay Hydroelectric Project, non-natives saw the numbers of caribou and thought the caribou were always plentiful and would be in the future. But that was not true. They did not live in the north like we did and they did not know that the caribou had disappeared for many years and had not been around at all when we were growing up.

Many caribou were killed but not as many as presently. Caribou were very cautious and easily scared when they first appeared and ran great distances whenever they sensed danger nearby. You could not catch up with them when you were hunting them once they had sensed you. They just kept going. I went on the hunts when I could keep pace with the adults but we never caught up with the caribou once they started running. They did not rest once they got going. It was not until there were thousands of them that they seemed to lose their fear of humans. Today the caribou like travelling on the roads and highways; they did not do that in the past. They never followed the roads or paths of humans.

We know now the numbers of caribou are declining. My father told us he was not old enough to hunt or to be allowed to use a gun the last time the caribou had disappeared and he had never killed a caribou when he was a youth. I remember very clearly the first time my father killed a caribou during the fall; I was 17 years old at the time (1958). By keeping track of his age when he last saw the caribou and his age when he saw the caribou again and killed it, he knew and told us the caribou had been gone for 50 years. I don't know what the non-natives use to determine the cycles but that is how Crees kept track of them.

I believe what my father said about the 50-year cycles because he lived most of the year out on the land every year of his hunting life; we never lived in the community. He did not just go there for a short visit of four days to hunt or study the animals like the non-natives do and then claim to be an expert to know

everything about everything. We used to go out there in the early fall and return in the summer for a few weeks. That is why I trust my father's word and teachings more than I do the claims of people who have never lived out on the land.

It isn't just the caribou that go through cycles like that; all animals, big and small game alike, go through cycles. No matter how carefully you try to manage the resources, populations will still decline even if you don't do anything. Look at the rabbits, for example; some years you see tracks all over the place; a few years later you will not see any. Whose fault is that? Ptarmigan are the same way; they are all over the place some years and a few years later you won't see a single one. Lakes are the same way; some years you get all the fish you need from one lake and then you go a few years without catching anything.

That is what we (people who live and hunt out on the land for lengthy periods) know because we have observed it for ourselves and we have been taught that from our grandfathers. We accept it; we do not try to put the blame on others. And we do not travel to other people's lands to find the animal life that has disappeared from our land. That is what other people do. We were put on this land here and this is where we will stay.

Look at the land we live on; nothing grows during the winter and nothing can grow here during that time but we do not move away from it to someplace else where things can grow. We stay here all winter. That is what I hope the non-natives would do. Instead of travelling all over the place and infringing on other people's resources, they should stay where they have put down roots and be content with what they have and stop destroying the land.

I said we cannot blame anyone for the population cycles but we do find fault with the way the sport hunt is conducted. It should be conducted the way we were taught by our ancestors, with respect and nothing wasted. Hunting grounds today are not given a chance to recuperate. There is hunting year round; there is hunting on Sundays. This happened when goose hunters came to our territory to hunt and it is happening all over again with the caribou. The land and the animals are not allowed to rest and recover at all. There is a lot of food wasted.

I heard about a report that put part of the blame of the caribou's decline on our subsistence hunting. I do not like that. We have to think of how to correct that perception. We fought when our river was dammed and we have to fight this as well. Every time something happens up here, we always seem to be blamed for it and non-natives who come up and sometimes cause the problems are never blamed. Why is that? We have to do something to correct that. Why should we just sit back and accept the blame without trying to correct the situation and the perceptions of others. If we just sit back and do nothing, we might find someday we are being fined and taken to court for hunting. We have already seen that happening to other native groups. They came here to Chisasibi and told their stories.

Nobody wanted to listen to us when we fought against the project. The same thing will happen with this situation. Do not be surprised if the government or someone else takes away our right to hunt because the caribou are disappearing. Who among us will accept that? Do not expect the government to help us. It does not want to stop the sport hunting because it makes a lot of money from it but when we

hunt, the government does not get any income from it, so it will not help us. The government is concerned only with money, not Cree lives.

There are things we can do and say to fight this problem. We hunt differently from the sport hunters; we waste nothing and eat or use everything. That is one of the ways we can fight this by showing all the different things we make from caribou.

I am not a caribou hunter; my sons killed caribou before I did. I have noticed for a while now that the caribou are not as plentiful as they used to be and I do not think it is all from being overhunted. I think it is meant to be because that is what our ancestors had experienced many times in the past and our Elders told us when there was no caribou in our area that their numbers would increase again but would also disappear again. They come back gradually and their decreasing numbers is also a gradual process but there is still no reason to kill what we want when we want.

I went to Kawawachikimach in 2011 and the old Naskapi man we stayed with told me a caribou story. He said caribou in their area are very scarce now and he said it was the same up north in Inuit land; there are very few caribou around. He said he was told a story by the Inuit of a group of hunters who saw a very large numbers of caribou out on the sea ice, far from the land, where there was no food for them to eat. The Inuit knew they would starve to death out there so they tried to herd them back to land but were not completely successful. Most caribou continued to stay out on the ice and when the ice broke up they saw caribou frozen to the ice floes. They think the caribou just did not want to live. They said they noticed the caribou population started crashing after that.

There is something else I disagree with and that is the fall hunt. In September airplanes take off from LG-4 to fly non-native hunters way up north to hunt caribou. Cree do not hunt caribou at that time of year because they haven't mated yet. How can caribou thrive under those conditions, being hunted so early in the season?

I just wanted to bring up something else that has concerned me. Those of us who live where the caribou are know that the caribou like to eat the salt that is put down to melt the ice on the roads. What is that doing to the caribou? Also, you can see oil mixed in with the snow that has been cleared from the roads and I have seen them eat that snow because it is mixed with the salt from the road. I think they are being poisoned by the oil and the salt. Before there were roads, you never saw sick caribou where the meat is tainted with something and the liver is not normal, but now many people report they cannot eat the caribou that they kill because there is something wrong with the meat and the organs. It is not the only animal that eats on the road; the ptarmigan as well are always eating the gravel off the roads.

### Impacts of Sports Hunting

As soon as the caribou hunt was opened up to non-natives, Cree felt the impacts right away. They could not carry on their traditional activities out on the land because it was too dangerous with trigger-happy and careless hunters running around all over the place. They could not even go out there to spend some time at their camps to relax during the caribou hunting season. The body parts and hides left to rot all

over the place by the hunters were disturbing. Not only was there a lot of damage outside but there was some damage even inside cabins, fortunately when nobody was inside at the time.

One cabin was shot at and the bullet went right through the teapot on the stove. If those people had been inside the cabin, they might have been killed. We cannot hide these things and not talk about it. Cree who do live on the land return to the community as soon as the season opens and the government says we do not use the land anymore. It is not that we don't want to; it is that we cannot. It is the government's fault that we cannot live on the land by opening up the territory to sports hunting. As soon as the season closes, the Cree move back to the land. Of course they can say we don't use the land or live on it anymore because we cannot be there when the hunters are around.

I have been involved with different committees to help people, not to prevent them from carrying out their traditional activities and not by using non-native rules and regulations or methods, but using traditional perspectives or ways of doing things, helping each other the way we used to and treating all equally. The reason those committees exist is to ensure that we continue to use the traditional ways of hunting, treating each other and all game with respect, not overkilling any species of game, taking only what we need to survive and not wasting any part of what we kill. I do not get involved in non-native hunting activities; I am here to help Cree people.

I never saw non-native people inland where I grew up but eventually I did and eventually I saw them hunting where I grew up. I observed right away that they hunted differently than we did. I could see that there was very little respect for any game that they hunted, not just the caribou but other species as well. I saw, too, those non-natives who hunt illegally, hunting out of season or hunting species they are not supposed to kill; they try to hide their illegal activities but I have seen them with my own eyes. I could go on and on about all the things I have seen that are wrong with the way they hunt.

Many times I have seen the total lack of respect shown by non-native sport hunters for the land where they hunt and the animals that they hunt. A few years ago a Cree outfitter asked permission to use my trap line to bring his clients and I agreed to that, but when a non-native outfitter asked the same thing, I refused. With this experience of having non-native sport hunters on my land I can honestly say that I know how they hunt. Many times I have seen them ask permission to kill more caribou after they have reached their quota of 2 caribou but we never allowed them to keep shooting just for the thrill of it or to get a bigger trophy (antlers) or animal.

I know some caribou hunters do not like going with native guides because they cannot get away with things like that. One of the caribou hunters told us it used to be mandatory that non-native hunters have a native guide but there were some who fought and argued that they should be allowed to hunt wherever they wanted without native guides and that was why the government set aside a special zone (Zone 22) where hunters can hunt without guides.

One winter we were living and hunting at our camp north of the LG-3 dam. I had set one of my otter traps in a little creek right inside a culvert under a gravel road that runs through that land. We were still out there when the caribou hunting season opened and one day when I went to check my trap, I noticed human footprints going down to the creek and all around the culvert. When I went into the culvert,

there was a caribou lying there besides my trap, which had been sprung. I examined the caribou and it had been gutted so I knew immediately that someone had dragged it into the culvert to hide it because it was impossible for a dead and gutted caribou to crawl down the bank and into the culvert by itself. I left it there thinking someone might come back and retrieve it and I checked on it periodically to see if it was gone but it was still there at the end of the hunting season. What did the hunter want to do with it anyway? I have seen other caribou that had been shot and just left there because the hunter was not satisfied with the size of it or its antlers.

Even though I did not write down all the promises that were made to us at the time of the Agreement, I still remember them and I am still frustrated that many of those promises were ignored and broken. Maybe they thought we would forget because we do not know how to write. At the time of the negotiations, preserving the land and hunting were a priority. There were no arguments from the other side on this; they responded immediately that the way or where we hunted would not be affected and we could still continue to hunt whenever we wanted. Nothing will prevent you from continuing to practice your traditional ways is what they told us. We were also told that the number of non-natives in our territory would be down to five or ten once the project was completed. Now you count the numbers working at the various hydro camps and I am certain you will find more than what we were told.

I am still concerned about caribou. We have to continue speaking out about the problem because we won't be able to resolve any problems if we keep quiet about it. We had the same problem with not being heard at the beginning of the hydro-project and nobody believed us when we talked about how important the land was to us. I think we will face the same problem when we take a stand this time, not sometime in the future but immediately and we have to document what we are talking about. We have to look for support in other places. One meeting is not going to do it. We need to be involved. It was only when photographs were shown of Cree living on the land that the government started to believe some of the things they were told.

Look at the snowshoes we make and use today, it is caribou hide that is used to make the lacings for the snowshoes and it is the snowshoe that enables a person to walk all over the place in the winter and it is caribou hide that we use for footwear and to cover our hands with mittens or gloves, not to mention the meat that we get from it to feed ourselves. And we are told that is what people of old used to cover their tepees. They even made fish nets from hides; I have one that was made for me and I use it only to show people what our grandparents used. They used it to make bags to carry their things and they used the hides as blankets. These are things we can use to convince people that we depended on the caribou in every part of our lives, not just for food. Every part of the caribou was used for something.

If we are prevented from hunting caribou, we are going to be affected in more ways than one. Even people who have never killed a caribou still use it and even those people who don't know how to clean hides can still buy them cleaned and tanned.

If our grandfathers and ancestors had not benefited and thrived from the Cree way of life, probably none of us would be here today.



When I was growing up I never saw what we see now body parts lying around. We probably would have welcomed the sight of food just lying there for us to take without having to work for it. I spent all my life living off the land and that is what me strong and I honour that life and I will do what I can to fight to preserve it. Consider the white race, how it works; when other people try to move onto its land, it will not hesitate to wage a war to defend that land. It will continue to fight until those people are defeated or it itself is defeated. Why is our will, our fight, any different from those of other races? We are not preparing ourselves for a war; we want to use words to fight for our land and our way of life, to hang onto what made us what we are today.

Since the caribou arrived, we have never charged any native person for the privilege of hunting caribou on our trap line, but the government wants payment in advance before allowing people to hunt and if they don't have enough money to pay the fees, they cannot hunt. I have never been charged either for hunting on other trap lines. Paying to hunt is a new concept for us; we never experienced that before.

When the trap line system was created, the tallymen were not told to forbid others from hunting on that land; they were there to take care of and manage the trap line. We cannot allow non-natives to take over our land and do what they want with it.

Cree respect all game because it was all important to their survival, not just the caribou. We have to start fighting to preserve our ways and maybe our leaders will fight with us. When we let things go too long, the government tends to do what it wants and before we know it whatever it has decided to put in place has become permanent and it is next to impossible to change things when we react after plans for development or, in this case caribou hunting, have been finalized. We do not agree with everything that happens to us or our land. Government officials do not live on our land so they cannot know the impacts of their decisions and it is imperative that they consult with and listen to the people who do.

Cree consider the area their garden because they get their sustenance from the land. Non-natives have their own gardens where they grow their own food. We do not go down and destroy their gardens nor do we regulate the use of them. But the government does what it wants with our garden. Look at the fight non-natives put up when transmission lines went through their areas but they are all over Eeyou Istchee. How much of our garden is flooded, under water permanently? When will it end?

I have experienced hunger but when I get involved in trying to bring back our old ways those are not the things I want others to experience. Those periods of my life were not pleasant.

Our young hunters are starting to copy the ways of non-natives so it is necessary for us to speak out and help them and convince them to practice the traditional ways when hunting. Even though we cannot hunt the way we used to in the past, we can still teach our young people the importance of respecting all animal life and the land.

Our grandfathers and ancestors did not allow the practice of cutting off a piece of meat from an animal and eating it before the whole animal had been cut up properly. Only then could it be eaten. Even the bones were saved and boiled repeatedly to make fat and broth. When the bones no longer produced a nutritious drink, they were not thrown out. They were put up on a cache or were buried in a hole in the

ground and buried. They were not allowed to just lie around all over the place like we see now. Of course all the meat was eaten except the buukutisii which was very bitter and could not be eaten; it was the only part of the caribou that was thrown out. We were also taught to remove the eyes from the animal before cooking.

## **BOBBY PASHAGUMSKUM**

I heard we have received part of the blame for the decline of the caribou because we overkill. I just want to relate a story told by my grandfather, my mother's father [Jimmy Bearskin, who died in 1965 around 100 years of age. At the time of his death, the numbers of caribou had started to increase but were nowhere near the peak numbers they reached in the 1990s]. I heard him say that in the future, the numbers of caribou would start declining again.

I was 15 years old when my father first killed caribou (about 1955); he killed 3 of them. Today I am 73 years of age and I know there aren't as many caribou as there used to be; that is approximately 50 years [from the time they returned to the territory to when their numbers started declining again]. We lived out there all winter (LG-4) area before the Hydroelectric Project when caribou were still increasing.

I went hunting one day, I was with him [indicating Eddie Pashagumskum], and I killed 2 caribou. I gutted it and found this thing near its neck that looked like an egg but only flatter. We didn't know what it was but it was shown to my grandfather and he told me finding that thing meant I would kill and gut many caribou during my hunting days and I was to keep it. He told me that in 50 years the caribou numbers would start declining again until they disappeared completely from our area. He told me we could not blame anybody; it was just the way it was with the game, all game. During that time the marten were starting to come back again but now they also are declining in numbers, approximately a 50-year cycle as well.

My grandfather cautioned me to treat all animal life with respect; he told me the animals knew us and if we treated them with great respect, they would lay down their lives for us and we would be very lucky when we hunted.

He told me also that even if it appeared that the caribou were gone completely, they would return again in 50 years, if non-natives did not destroy the land. I remember what he said about the destruction of the land so clearly.

I remember clearly my grandfather telling me when the caribou arrived again in my time that it would take 50 years for them to start disappearing again. He also told me that when they disappeared again as they are doing now, I would not see them reappear yet again but future generations would. This is how it has always been and we cannot blame any one thing on their disappearance. He told me we still had to take great care in hunting that we not waste anything. Even the uumaajii (stomach contents) were eaten and all the bloody snow where the caribou had been gutted was saved and used to cook the meat. He told me if we treated the animals and the hunt with great respect and we did not waste anything, we could prolong the length of time that the caribou were around in our territory. But non-native hunters do not hunt like that. They waste so much leaving body parts all over the place.

My grandfather told me I could cook with the "uubischuuwinii" (part of the intestine) so one time I decided to try it even though I had never seen it done before. I turned it inside out and filled it with water and food and held it to the fire. It kept shrinking as it was heated and just when it started to boil, the whole thing broke open and all my food spilled out. My grandfather was gone by then but there

was someone who had seen it done and he told me it was rubbed with blood first and held to the fire until the blood was crusted over; this process was repeated at least three times until the blood had formed a thick crust on the outside of the uubichuuwinii and then it was used for cooking. It could only be used twice before the "pot" was cooked as well; I guess they ate the "pot" the second time they used it because they could not use it after that.

### Impacts of Sports Hunting

There is a lake far from the road on my trap line that is full of fish. I went there one summer and found a ski-doo in the lake but we were able to get it out that fall when the water levels had gone down. How much oil, grease and gasoline leaked into that lake in the meantime and how many fish were poisoned?

One winter just before the caribou hunting season opened, I killed a caribou with a beautiful set of antlers. I didn't kill it for that reason. A non-native person stopped while I was gutting and carving up the caribou and on one of my trips back and forth to my vehicle with the meat and other parts, I found him holding the caribou head. He said he was taking it but I didn't want give it to him. I guess he just wanted the antlers.

Near the road at Uujikawjikaanaan is a small lake where I usually sit and hunt. I had seen something nearby that was buried under the snow but I had not gone over to see what it was. When most of the snow was gone and the ice was melting I went there and found a moose lying there. It looked like it had been shot from the air but it had not been gutted.

North of there we have another camp. There is a spring near there where the water is crystal clear and we get our drinking water from there. In the spring I went there to get water and there was a dead caribou in the spring; it had been gutted but the only thing missing from it was the head. The water was contaminated and we could not drink it.

Several times my traps have been taken along with the animals I had caught in them. I knew they were taken by non-natives because there were no other Cree around there. In fact, I almost caught one in the act one time. He was already standing by my trap when I stopped and got out of my truck and when he saw me he turned around and took off. That was a hydro employee because he was driving a hydro vehicle.

Several times I have come across caribou that had been shot and killed but not even gutted. That is what they do when there is no one around to regulate their hunting.

## CLIFFORD BEARSKIN

Both of my grandfathers were almost blind when they were gone but they continued to tell stories to the end. We still see some of the things they talked about from the past and what they foretold with their stories. They told us everything we depend on for food goes in cycles. I have observed that myself. When I was growing up and while I was hunting, I spent all my time out on the land inland from here. I never spent any time at all at the post or in the community on the coast. I never went to school; all my life was spent on the land.

I never saw caribou when I was growing up. My father was the first to kill caribou in our family. Even though he was young the last time the caribou had been around, he never lost the teachings or what he had observed about how to treat and clean caribou. He taught us to save and use everything, including the snow where the blood had spilled from the gutting and skinning.

He told us that when many caribou were killed, that is where the adults would make camp and they would not move from there until every single caribou had been gutted, skinned and cut up. He said the children were in charge of gathering the bloody snow and hauling it to the camp where it was melted down and used for cooking the meat or the contents of the stomach.

My father killed 4 caribou that time and he showed us all the ways they used to prepare different parts of the animal. He even dried the contents of the stomach and saved it for future eating. When I started killing caribou, I always used the methods taught by my father. I did not do what hunters are doing now, leaving body parts all over the place.

One year, when the caribou were plentiful, I made snowshoe lacings (babiche) from the hides. I did not go caribou hunting; I killed one now and then when they went by our camp. You can tell by looking at the caribou which ones will make good lacings and those were the ones I killed. I saved and used every part of the caribou I killed even though there were only 2 of us living out there. What my father taught me in the hunting and care of the animal is what I practiced.

Since the sport hunters started coming up here, all I see are the intestines, the stomachs, the hearts and the hides lying around all over the place. Only the meat is taken from the animal. When the season ends and the sport hunters are gone, you don't see any additional parts being left behind so we can safely say that the mess we see is what the sport hunters have left behind.

My father said once the bones had been boiled over and over again until they no longer provided a nutritious broth, they were dumped on a platform high off the ground [cache] so animals could not get at them and scatter them all over the place. Now you see caribou legs all over the place. You would never have seen that in the past. Even heads are left behind. Once I saw 10 heads lying by the side of the road. A Cree would take the hide off and cook the head right away. It was a delicacy.

My father talked about the consequences of treating the game with disrespect. He said that was the reason why some hunters were not successful in getting anything even if the game was plentiful,

because they had not shown the proper respect for the animals they had killed in the past. He said these teachings were passed down by his father and grandfather as well.

Our camp at Kukimaau Saakihikin (Trout Lake) can only be accessed by plane but we see traces of non-natives there all the time. We know they are non-natives because it is very expensive to charter a plane to fly there and no Cree would spend that kind of money to fly to someone else's trap line. One time my wife, grandchild and I were about to land at our camp when my grandchild pointed below to a Kodiak boat driving away from our camp. I told my wife we would check it out the following morning as I had an idea where they might be staying. Early the next morning while we were putting the outboard motor on before leaving, a float plane flew in from the south and landed where I thought they might be and while we were pushing the canoe out into the water to leave, we heard it take off again. I guess they wanted to get out of there before we found them.

Another time we landed there in July and there was a flag flying over our camp. I know a non-native had been there, erected a pole and put the flag up because Cree do not travel around with flags and we don't own a flag. We never keep our cabin locked but we do keep our sheds locked up where we store our winter things such as snowshoes and ski-doo's. If you lock up your cabin, they break in and damage your doors and windows.

Hides were used for clothing, bedding, blanket, tenting, fish lines, gloves, footwear, and even nets. I was told my grandmother, Caroline, still had a tent covering when she died.

When my cousin Daniel was still unmarried and I was still young, we spent the fall at Mistinibii. We found many caribou antlers hanging in one spot. Since this was a period when there were no caribou, the antlers must have been from the last time the caribou were numerous. There were no non-native sports hunters around back then so the Cree must have put them there. They had gathered up all the antlers and put them in one place so there must have been a special reason why they did it, just like we do not leave bones lying around out of respect for the animals.

#### Impacts of Sports hunting

We were at Caniapiscau one time where non-native hunters from the south used to fly from using a four-prop float plane to fly up north to hunt. It can hold many hunters. We were there one time when the same plane came in full of caribou. I guess the hunters gutted the caribou there because there were high piles of body parts and hides that were full of flies and maggots at the garbage dump there.

One time we saw a caribou upside down lying near the road; we stopped and discovered only half of one of the hind quarters had been taken. It had not been hit by a vehicle because you could tell it had been shot and a knife or saw had been used to remove the hind quarter.

One winter in December we had a helicopter pick us up from our camp and we were flown to Nouchimii Camp. While we were waiting for our driver to pick us up, a helicopter came in from the north slinging a load of caribou. After he took off again, I went over to look; there were 7 caribou and all were gutted. One of them was lying face down and I saw that it had been shot from above right through the spine. It

had to have been shot from a plane or helicopter with a high caliber rifle unless the hunter had been standing and shooting down from a high mountain.

We have to understand what "Chiiwaadaau" ("let us go home") means. We have to find a way to look at things from a Cree perspective, only then will it be possible to find our way. It is not that we do not accept southern regulations; some can help us if we use them; other things we can do our way as it had been done before. We say we have a Cree Nation Government. Why can't we ask for its help to decide which regulations we do not want or need to do to ensure our ways are integrated into what happens in our territory.



## **EDDIE PASHAGUMSKUM**

I was always taught to show respect for the game and how to treat it. Our ancestors, our grandfathers walked with the game; they lived with it. That is how they knew it so intimately and how they knew how to take care of it and how to treat it. One Elder said today that even when the caribou herds are far from each other, they seem to know and communicate with each other even though they have nothing visible to communicate with. Our ancestors were the same way; they had to communicate with the animals to know so much about them and how to treat them.

It is difficult sometimes to provide answers to the questions we are asked when we don't know how things will affect us and why certain things happen the way they do. That is because we have let go of the teachings. We seem to be getting further and further away from what we were taught and how we were meant to live.

Our ancestors knew the things they did because they lived with them and understood them. Sometimes a person has more trust, more faith in what he is doing because he has experience with it personally. Some of the things we heard about already are those things our people learned would help improve their conditions or lives because they lived that life and learned through experience.

Some of the problems or negative things we are experiencing are a result of letting go too much of the way of life we were given to live. We lost it because we let it go. I believe the Elder who talked about the comparison between the Old Testament and our old ways. The Old Testament contains prophecies of future events; it was the same with the teachings of our people long ago, they are prophecies.

I believe the Elder too when he talked about the caribou seeming to communicate with each other over long distances. Sometimes they walk short distances; other times they travel great distances without stopping. I think they know exactly where the best route is to get to where they want to go. There are signs that they follow to know where to go and our ancestors learned the ways and habits of the caribou through walking and living among them and their keen observation of their surroundings and habitat.

I have heard that beaver know exactly when to lay in its supply of food for the winter. If it delays gathering its food, the Cree know it will be a long summer or fall; the beaver seems to know how much time it has before it has to lay in his supply of winter food. How does it know that? That is how our ancestors got their knowledge of everything by observing and living with the animals. We don't know these things now because we don't walk and live with the animals anymore.

When you talk about the Cree way of life, the Cree culture, you are talking about hunting as well. Cree learned by observing and remembering everything that happened while they were hunting. That is how you accumulate traditional knowledge by keeping and protecting what you learn while hunting. Also, how you act while you are hunting is what you can expect in the way of rewards from your efforts. That is what I tried to do, to hunt with great care.

Caribou today don't seem to be scared of much. I don't like to hear myself say that it seems to be our fault why this is so. When you ask an Elder a question, sometimes the answer is very short but if you

consider the answer very carefully, you will learn a lot from it. Once I heard an Elder say when asked the question why a certain thing was happening, his response was, "You did it to yourselves". That is all he said. If you were to take his answer apart and tried to understand why certain things were happening, you would know why he gave that answer. His answer would tell you that we have given up too much of how we were taught to live. Our lives were good when we practiced the teachings. As we ignore the teachings, we seem to have more problems in life, more worries about what the future holds for us.

I have observed the caribou and I have seen films about them. What I have observed is that when the "muushuwaau" caribou [Leaf River Herd] start migrating, they just keep walking until they get to where they wanted to go. The other caribou [George River Herd] used to come all the way over here where we are; the 2 herds used to meet here and there would be so many of them all together briefly. I noticed that the George River Herd did not stay around long; they would be here briefly and then they would start migrating north again. I also noticed that they did not come as far south as they had in the past; their route seemed to get shorter and shorter. After a while, they did not even reach the Naskapi lands.

One thing I have learned, the last time the caribou were plentiful, the territory had not been touched yet; it was undeveloped; it was the same land the caribou were familiar with and had been since they walked this land. The caribou we are familiar with, the last to arrive and to be among us, do not have the same landscape as their ancestors did. The land has changed; some of what they are seeking is gone. Couldn't this be why their behaviour seems to be different today or why there have been other changes in their migration? For example, look at all the land that has been flooded and all the destruction to the habitat from that and then there are the transmission lines. You know plant life and berries thrives under them and animals eat those plants and berries, but what are the effects on the animals and on us as well?

The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee is composed of Cree, Inuit and non-native representatives. They do not have any powers; they cannot make decision, all they can do is make recommendations. Their recommendations are ignored by the government.

Our Elders have told us the caribou will disappear again and we know that to be true. We have been told that we need to care for what we have received and if we do that, we can slow down the speed of its decline in numbers. We know caribou have changed their habits. I saw how caribou were when they returned to our territory again. They would not go near a human trail; it was like they were afraid of it.

Nishiiyuu was us before European contact. When we talk about a drunk passing out, we say "nishibaau" and that is the same way with the word Nishiiyuu, the person is filled with the pure spirit of Eeyou; Daabeeyou was us after contact when we had started to adopt some European ways and tools and now we are Eeyou from Chisasibi or other community. We have split ourselves up into different groups.

Some Cree say they cannot eat certain traditional foods because it does not agree with their systems. That is because their systems cannot tolerate the food. Traditional food is very strong and sometimes if you add other ingredients to it, it is like you have killed the nutritional value of the food.

There are some things that cannot be revealed such as the connection some people had with the game or nature in general. If they were to talk about it or transfer the gift to someone else, the receiver might abuse the gift and use it for the wrong and harmful purposes.

We say the caribou “arrived” when we talk about them increasing in numbers and returning to Eeyou Istchee. When it first arrived this last time, everything that it came across or ate was the same as it was when it was here before in past centuries; it was all natural just as it had been from the beginning. But now things have changed. There are roads all over the place, huge reservoirs and resource development projects that were not there before when it visited Eeyou Istchee before. Now it uses the roads to travel and its fear of human trails has disappeared. Its environment is not natural anymore.

That is happening to us as well. We are not as healthy as we used to be anymore because we are living in a different environment now. The air we breathe is not the same anymore. I’ll use Chisasibi as an example. In the past we used to experience really cold temperatures during the winters because the air was very dry; now there is something (ice crystals) hanging over the community during the winter because of the humidity. I will not come right out and say it is from the hydro-project but there are other features of the project that are affecting us as well as the animals. The discharge from the transmission lines, for example, can cause cancer. We have all kinds of diseases now that we didn’t have before.

Our Elders of the past knew everything; they did not need books or things to write with. They kept everything in their heads. They knew in advance what was going to happen; sometimes they were told of future events through their dreams.

#### Impacts of Caribou Hunting

I was involved in outfitting myself and I learned a lot from that. The government set up hunting zones and these are marked on the roads. In our area there are 22, 22A, 22B zones. I only learned this after I got involved in outfitting and I only learned about government hunting regulations then. We (Cree) did not know anything about this when these zones were being created.

An outfitter needs a license to operate and he must first buy the land from the government on which he wants to establish his business. Only after he has bought the land will he get a government license to operate. Whatever zone your outfitting business was situated in was where your clients could hunt; this was Zone 22B and the outfitters’ clients purchased permits restricted to that zone. Each outfitter sold the permits but the money went to the government. Even if you are on your own trap line, you still have to buy that land even though your family has been there for centuries. How did that happen? It is all about money; the government makes money from this business.

Zone 22A was governed strictly by the government and the permits for this zone were drawn and all the money went to the government. The hunters in this area do not need a guide and they can go wherever they want within that zone and do whatever they want. That is why we have the situation we are talking about, such as hunters killing more than their quota, body parts all over the place, and other abuses. There is no control over these hunters. There is no one to watch over them. Some hunters

respect the land and the animals, but there are those who don't care about anything and these are the ones who give all hunters a bad reputation.

When a hunter killed a caribou, we had to make sure it was tagged and we registered it. We had to charge the hunter \$5 or \$10 for this service but a check point was set up somewhere else so we did not have to handle the registering of caribou ourselves. That summer following the first caribou hunt we did not have to register those animals, I saw the head game warden and he told me we had to pay over \$6,000 for the number of caribou that were killed by our clients. He said that was what it had cost to register those animals. I asked him if they did not charge the hunters for registering their caribou. He appeared confused and he admitted that they had collected the money. He then told me he was just bluffing. If we had paid the money, would he have kept it for himself?

I think we should at least be consulted whenever plans and regulations are being considered for our land. We have to fight those that are detrimental to our way of life or our hunting activities. We have our own hunting regulations. We have to look at other activities in our territory, such as fishing. There are lakes and other areas that were very important to our ancestors; when there was no game anywhere else they went to these places because they knew they would be able to catch enough fish there or other game to survive. These areas have to be protected and controlled by us; we cannot allow anything or anyone to destroy them.

One time I was parked in front of my nephew's cabin; he had asked me to remove his brand new ski-doo from his camp before it got stolen. On my way back from his cabin to my truck, there was a police car behind it with its lights flashing. There was a curve in the road quite a distance from where I was parked and he told me I should not be parked there near a curve. He told me he had received a complaint from a hydro employee who had come around that curve and almost went off the road when he had seen my vehicle parked there. I got a ticket for that. I told him I was not going to pay for it and he took off; he came back later and asked for the ticket back and said he was cancelling it. I knew he was lying when he said the hydro driver almost went off the road because he had to have been going at a great speed around that curve which was way off in the distance. The driver should have gotten a ticket for speeding, not me for parking by the road.

I agree some of our problems result from keeping quiet when we should be fighting to protect our lands and way of life. I think the situation is getting worse because there is no more consultation with the people and decisions have already been made at the top level (political level) when we are told or we hear about decisions that have been made that will affect our daily lives or our traditional activities. We are told many times that we do not attend meetings but many people think nothing will change because they are not listened to even if they do attend the meetings and express their ideas or feelings.

#### Tourism

We need to talk about tourism amongst ourselves first; we have to include everyone before the decision is made whether to allow tourism in our territory. There will always be disagreements whenever you want to start something new. When something does not go the way you planned, you cannot stop. That is how we learn. There is nothing wrong with disagreements because that is how you find solutions

by discussing them openly. We also have to look at other native groups and learn from their experiences to know what the possible impacts might be. We have to be certain that whatever we allow into the territory is for the best for all.

Our outfitting license was not restricted to caribou hunting; we could also cater to fishermen but I could not agree to open up the area to sports fishermen because I wanted to preserve the lakes like our ancestors had; the lakes saved many of our ancestors from starvation and I did not want to be involved in any activity that might destroy the fish and the waters. I was taught not to dip any kind of metal pail into a lake or river to get drinking water because the metal would contaminate the water and the fish. That is how careful our ancestors were about the land, the waters, the animals, fish and the environment. A fish is very sensitive to any changes in the water and the people took every precaution to avoid destroying the source of their livelihood. I respect and honour those teachings. There were other concerns I had about the land and I could not bring myself to agree to expand the operations to cater to other types of tourists.

We are told there are 3 categories of land – I, II and III. What does that mean? Category I lands are also called reserves and the land area is small. We are told if we do not have a number that is registered on a reserve, we are not recognized. Putting people onto a reserve is like putting animals in a cage so they cannot roam around; they are restricted to one area. That is the way I look at it. How does that affect us? If we leave the reserve for 10 years for any reason, we are told we are no longer counted as a member of that reserve. We got our identification from our ancestors in the past and we were recognized anywhere. Our ancestors were given a place to live and it was passed down from one generation to another but now that land is divided up into categories and zones by a government that claims ownership of it.

We are told that life is easier now because we have a road. We no longer have to travel for weeks or months to get to where we want to go, but not having a road did not stop our ancestors from travelling the same distances we do now. It is true the road gets us places faster but it still does not help us achieve miiyuupimaatisiun (mental, spiritual and physical health or well-being); in fact, we are getting further and further away from it. Many of us have all kinds of diseases and some are still very young when they come down with illnesses. We thought it was hard getting places when we had to walk or paddle there but we did not realize how much that helped us to stay strong and healthy. Today, everything is so easy and we worry so much when we run out of something.

We appear to be losing our culture and one way we can find part of it again is to talk about it. I don't think we will find it through the education system. Some of our Youth are not interested in learning about our culture because they say our ways were too old fashioned.

We are trying to attract non-native tourists by showing them or teaching them about our culture. We can only say this this might help us get back to our ways; we cannot say with certainty that we will get them back, but if we doubt that it will lead us back to where we came from, we will never do anything that might help us find ourselves again. When our Elders told us and taught us about our culture they were thinking of keeping that culture alive in the future. The only way they could ensure that the Cree

way of life continued to survive in the future was to pass on their knowledge to younger generations. Our Elders did not teach us everything about certain things because they wanted to protect us. Some of the things we were taught we cannot practice anymore; some we cannot speak of openly. Today we are more attracted to another way of life than the old ways because we believe it is easier to get what we need or want and that is why we are getting further and further away from our own ways.

When we think about tourism and getting our Youth involved in that industry, we will be concerned about what our Youth will do to earn their living if they do not know about the culture or if they do not have the traditional survival skills. And if we concern ourselves too much with that, we will do nothing. If you consider offering fishing packages to attract tourists, you have to weigh all the factors carefully. How will it impact our own traditional activities? Maybe we end up in the same situation we are in now with the caribou mess. Maybe that will be something else that will prevent us from going out on our trap lines and practicing our traditional ways. We have to plan what we ourselves are going to do. Our Elders told us a long time ago what our future would be.

Are we going to agree to tourism or are we going to open up only some parts of the land for certain activities to help our Youth? Right now we are comfortable living in a community; we do not have to do anything. Long ago, our people worked hard and travelled far to find food but they were satisfied and happy with that way of life. Even if they did not kill anything, they didn't give up; they kept trying until they got something. Nowadays some Youth do not want to go out on the land if they know there will be a scarcity of game or fowl. They do not consider the peace and comfort you get from being on the land.

## MOSES SNOWBOY

I was raised on the coast so I led a different life from others here. There were no caribou where I lived along the coast north of here. My grandfather told stories about the caribou and he heard stories from a man who used to hunt the caribou in the barren lands, stories about the last time the caribou disappeared. There were no trees around so the man could see great distances. He came upon the tracks of caribou and followed them. He saw a long, long line of caribou heading directly north and even though they were far away he decided to shoot anyway. The first time he shot, he shot at the end of the line but all that did was disperse the herd a bit, so he took another shot, this time to the front of the herd. They stopped immediately, turned around and ran towards him and he was able to kill many caribou for everyone. That is the story my grandfather told.

I heard of only two times the caribou were on the coast where my grandfathers lived at the time. It was not until the caribou arrived again that I heard anything about caribou again.

My father was my main teacher when it came to hunting. He always told me that whenever I killed anything the food was not meant for me alone, that the food was meant to be shared by everyone in the camp. I hunted geese and when I killed many geese, I always gave some of them to those who had not killed as many as I had. This is what my father taught me as well. These teachings are what we have to pass on to our children.

My grandfather always told me to never kill anything that I was not going to eat. He told me also that game was going to be scarce in the future and I see that happening. I think the poorest goose hunt we ever had was this fall. There were no geese around. I always teach my children what my father and grandfather taught me. I tell them even if the game they kill is not fit to be eaten, they still have to bring it home and that is what they do; they bring everything back to be buried or burned.

I was taught how to collect the blood from a seal my father had killed. During the winter, I was taught to clear as much snow away as possible to make a depression or hole in the snow before gutting the seal. When the seal is gutted and cut up, the blood collects in the depression and when it freezes, the block of blood ice was pried up and stored in a bag. When I wondered what would be done with it my grandmother told me we were going to go very fast with it. I didn't know what she meant, but one day we had to cook food for our husky dogs and the block of blood ice was cooked with their food and when we travelled by dogsled, the dogs went like the wind and didn't tire. That is what my grandmother had meant when she said we were going to go very fast with the seal blood that had been saved.

### Impacts of Sports Hunting

If we were to tell the government everything we are talking about here, he wouldn't believe it. Even though we know more about our land than he does, he still would not believe us. I have seen many non-native hunters kill caribou and just leave them because they want a bigger or better one. They are probably still doing the same thing. It seems that hunting is just a game to them.



Last winter my son killed a caribou. We brought it home and skinned it. The meat looked like it had worms in it and when we boiled it they were floating on top of the gravy. We couldn't eat the caribou; we just buried it along with the caribou hide.

Last fall we were travelling north in our canoe and we saw something floating in the water. We went to look at the thing and it was a huge caribou, the biggest one I had ever seen, and from the looks of it, it had been in the water for a long time. I saved the antlers because I was so surprised at the size of them and I wanted people to see how huge they were.

Our young people are being ticketed and fined for hunting on the road and some of them are reacting strongly to what they consider to be harassment. We have to be concerned and careful about that. We have to talk to our young people so they do not do anything rash that will get them in serious trouble and bring them up in front of the courts.

If you park your vehicle near the transmission lines when it is raining, even in the light rain, you will get a shock when you go to open your door. So how much game is being destroyed by those transmission lines?

#### Tourism

On the committee I am on (eel grass), we are talking about tourism, nothing to do with hunting but just to show tourists around. We are just talking about it at this stage. We cannot go further with it until everyone has had an opportunity to have their input. We have people who are against tourism of any sort, whether it is to come and hunt or just to sightsee. We have some conflicts within our trap lines so, to avoid or lessen these conflicts, everybody who uses and shares the same trap line should have a say on whether tourism should be allowed on that trap line. We should also consult with other people in each of our communities because the trails cross other trap lines and the users of those lands need to be on board as well. Tourism needs to be planned carefully and requires a lot of consultation with many individuals and parties. It has to be mandatory that tourists cannot just travel at will on their own; they have to be accompanied by native guides.

There have to be some regulations in place so we don't end up with the same situation we are facing now with the caribou hunters where the land and waters are being polluted with refuse and rotting flesh and hides.

## **ROBBIE MATTHEW**

First I want to say that I know and understand what has been shared here today. Both my grandfathers were gone by the time I was born so all the stories I heard were from my maternal grandmother and my mother. They experienced and observed the same things your grandfathers did because that is where they lived. My mother also told about her life out on the land and living among the Whapmagoostui people.

My mother said it was their [the women] job to get the caribou that had been killed and gutted and bring them back to the camp. That is how strong women were in those days. There were apparently many teachings related to hunting. My mother said they were taught how to care for every part of the animal that had been killed. They had to treat it with great respect. The most important lesson a woman was taught was to take care of any game that had been killed as soon as it was brought into the camp. It had to be tended to immediately. My grandmother told me many stories but I didn't always understand what she told me.

She took about the different uses of the caribou; for example, they used the hides to cover their lodges. She told me also that the caribou would disappear and return again. Those are the same things that have been talked about already. Our Elders all understood the animals and their teachings were all the same concerning the caribou.

We are unable to pass on these teachings to our young people today when there are still people alive who hold these teachings. Hunting is teaching. Just by listening to my grandmother's stories, she taught me a lot. She told me hunting was suspended until after all the game had been taken care of, including the hides. There was nothing of the sport hunting we see today where people kill as much as they can and waste a lot of it. Hunting was our way of life but we don't fight for it or say anything when something happens to interfere with our hunting.

It is said that long ago the caribou were everywhere, including the coast. There is a place south of here called Shiwaabuunaan on the Sam trap line. It is a high place. That was where people used to sit to watch and wait for the caribou when they came down the coast line. They would walk on the ice but turn towards the mainland when they got to Shiwaabuunaan and that was why the people waited there.

I never saw caribou when I was growing up and I was already married when I saw my first one. I used to fly around with Lindy Louttit and we were flying up north to deliver supplies to the inland camps of the Whapmagoostui people. John Petagumskum was the chief of Whapmagoostui at the time and he had invited me along. Every time we landed at a camp to deliver supplies, people would give us food for their relatives in the community. While we were flying over the land we saw many groups of caribou in the swamps. I told Lindy I was going to borrow a gun from an Inuk friend of mine so we could fly back and kill some caribou of our own.

We were flying around the next day when the chief spotted a group of males on one of the lakes and when we landed, the caribou stayed on the ice. I was told they were not go anywhere because the snow was very deep and they would get stuck in the snow if they tried to go ashore. Anyway, I got my very

first caribou; we managed to kill 5 of them. One of the caribou we killed was huge and it was the last one to be loaded when we put them on the plane. Lindy told me if we were unable to take off, I was to push the big one out of the plane. Well, I wasn't too happy about that because it seemed it would be such a waste but fortunately we managed to take off.

I brought my caribou back to Fort George and told my mother about it. She was so happy. She told me to make a gift of it to my uncle Johnny Bearskin. "Chiskuudimuu" is how she put it. I had not heard that word used in that way before and I asked, "What am I going to be able to teach my uncle?" [The word "Chiskudimuu" nowadays has only one meaning, "teach him or her"]. I didn't understand she was telling me to make a gift of it to someone else. That is what you did in the past. You gave the whole animal to someone you honoured without asking or expecting anything in return. Well, my uncle came over and took possession of his caribou and we all enjoyed a meal of caribou.

There are more than 40 Chisasibi trap lines. When development is going to take place on our land, our leaders do not even consult with us or tell us what is happening. The way I see it, we have never given up our trap lines or given permission to the Grand Chief or our leaders to allow others to do as they wished with our trap lines. If we were to get all the tallymen together to stand up and speak for our lands, they would have a very strong voice.

Even before there were trap lines when beaver preserves were set up, we had a land system. There were hunting territories and there was always somebody who was in charge, an overseer, of the land to ensure its proper use. It should be like that now and for always, but when we are not told what is happening with the land, we will lose that control, that management and caring for the land. When someone inherits the management of the land, that responsibility is sacred; it is very important. We who have inherited the stewardship of the land should be the first to be consulted when there are any plans for it and we should have a say in what can and cannot be done to the land.

When you count all the trap lines together, how many would there be? Some are underwater now; some are gone because of other development but there are still many of us that should fight to preserve the land. We cannot afford to be silent.

When it comes to the caribou, we should learn a lesson from the past. Look what happened to our fellow indigenous people out west. They depended on the buffalo for survival, but once all the buffalo were gone they lost their ways. Yes there are some on farms or small protected herds, but those people live differently now and do not roam and hunt the caribou like they used to. The same thing will happen to us if the caribou are killed off completely because we allowed others who are more concerned about other things to speak for us. Do we really want our children and grandchildren to enjoy the land as we have? If so, then we have to do something.

I just wanted to tell you about my experience with the road salt. When I worked in Whapmagoostui; that is what we used to put on the roads there when they were icy. I had a brand new pair of leather gloves I had bought at the store so I wouldn't have to handle the salt directly. Soon after I started working with it, my gloves appeared to be shrinking, getting tighter and tighter. My work mates were having the same problem and we realized that it was the salt that was causing the leather to shrink.

When I saw caribou eating the salt on the road, I was very concerned and wondered if it was destroying their insides.

I agree too that the transmission lines are harmful. They are all over Eeyou Istchee. The health of many people is affected by being around those lines. Animals like to graze under them because everything grows so well under transmission lines – moose, caribou, ptarmigan, rabbits, spruce grouse, they all feed under them.

The water too is no longer pure. How many turbines does the water go through before we get to drink it? Look at the shores of this river; all the trees and bushes are always covered with frost during the cold winter months. People did not live in places like that in the past. I saw a movie a few days ago about the people in Sanakiliuuaq, they feel the effects of the fresh water from our river and they can no longer hunt the way they used to because it is not safe to travel on the ice anymore.

I think we have to be the ones to bring up these health problems that result from development in our back yard to the chiefs and Grand Chief. No one else is interested enough to speak for us.

When caribou returned to the territory this time around, government agencies put collars on them to tag them. Before that they had done the same thing to geese, collars or rings on their feet. Then when SOTRAC was still operating, beaver were tagged on their tails. The government has not stopped doing that to wildlife. We depended on those animals for survival. That is what we were given by the Creator so we could survive on this land and it was all free and He is still providing for us. We have to go out and search for what we need to survive. We cannot just go to the store and buy it and it does not come into our homes so we have to continue caring for it.

We do not know exactly what those devices do to the animals. I was told that one of the collars was found under the snow where the caribou wearing it had died up somewhere up north. A tagged beaver was also found dead. We do not know if those animals died because of the devices they were wearing.

In the past before the trap lines were created, the land was open to all but there were designated caretakers for different areas and they managed the land so there would be no over-harvesting. There were no Category I, II or III lands. Those were created under JBNQA. On the island, we had the RC Mission, the Anglican Mission and the Hudson's Bay Company and each of them claimed sections of the island for their own. Where are they now? I guess we can reclaim the island as our own again.

#### Tourism

We were out at our camp one time when a Cessna plane landed. There was a single passenger on the plane, a female. She was from Germany but was living in England at the time and she said she would be there for 2 days, but the weather was not very cooperative and she ended up staying with us for a week. Everything we ate came from the land and she ate everything we did. She went back to England but returned to Chisasibi later to meet with hunters and trappers. She worked for some television network.

Another time we lived with a professor who was studying fish. I assumed he knew everything because a professor is supposed to know a lot to work in that profession, but he did not know anything about our culture, but our Elders know everything about the land, the animals and the environment.

In the past, our people would set up camp wherever a lot of game had been killed and all the game would be cleaned and cut up. It would be cooked and served at a celebratory feast. I was told people could not take that food out of the "feasting tent"; they had to return to the tent each time they wanted to eat until they had finished their portion.

I wanted to mention briefly the fishing derbies that are becoming a major sport in Eeyou Istchee. There is nothing traditional about that. It is a competition to see who gets the biggest fish and the winner gets money or even a boat and motor. Many non-native people come up to pay money to register and participate in these derbies. Is there anybody watching those non-native people to make sure they do not release their fish back into the waters? I do not agree with making a game out of catching fish because it was what kept me alive when I was growing up. Anyone who grew up depending on fish for their survival would feel the same way if they saw such disrespect because that is what it is, disrespect, when you turn fishing into a game.

All our parents raised us with food they got from the land. That is why the land is so important to us, no matter where it is, inland or along the coast. The Creator put food everywhere for us to survive. We know we treated each other equally with respect and we were happy to see each other after we had spent a year out on the land. That camaraderie is no longer there. We are tied to the communities and we are governed by all sorts of laws and regulations. I will be very upset if we cannot have a say in what happens on our land or in our society. Who are we going to take our concerns to, our concerns about the land and hunting? Who will listen to us and when will the time come when someone will listen to us? It is not because I want to disrespect our leaders, but the situation is getting worse where they talk with the governments and make decisions without consulting their people, without our input. Cree knowledge is needed before concrete plans are made concerning our land or sports hunting on our lands, Cree knowledge of those people who actually live on the land and still practice their traditional ways. It is not just non-native knowledge that is required when decisions are being made about the land and our lives.

When anything happens on our land, such as resource development, we are told only the good things that might happen and I have lived long enough with the development all around me to know most of those things were not true. We never hear about the possible negative impacts of that development.

I often wonder if we can leave our grandchildren something that will guarantee they will be free from all the impacts of sports hunting and development that we ourselves are being subjected to right now. Everything I have heard here has helped me considerably. The knowledge we are talking about now has been around long before European contact and our ancestors are still talking to and teaching us through their stories that are passed down from one generation to the next.

I hope the Youth will hear where we are with respect to hunting so they will know and learn about their heritage.

## **JULIET BEARSKIN**

I was always taught that you did not treat hunting like a game. I hunted as well before and after I was married so I was taught how to treat the game I was hunting, no matter how small, and to take care of the weapons I used in my hunting. This is what I try to teach my great-grandson because he likes to hunt. He is still very young but he does bring in rabbits and ptarmigan to feed us.

Both of my grandparents taught me to take everything I killed to eat or to use and not to waste any of it and this is what I am trying to pass on to my grandson. I told him when he becomes a real hunter he might find that the animals are communicating with him. They seem to read your thoughts as well. I told him that because it is what I have experienced. If you do not respect that gift of communicating with the animals, you will lose it.

I don't think there is much teaching nowadays. My grandmother taught me a lot of what she was taught when she was young and what young boys were taught. I don't think too many people do that anymore with their young people. I have great-grandsons now and I always hope they get the proper guidance to teach them how to respect game and hunting. I hope we find a way to pass on the proper teachings to help our young people. Some girls did everything that boys did; I was one of those. My older sister also told me that she received the same teachings that the boys did with respect to hunting. She said the woman often went on hunting trips as well; this was during the time when there were no caribou and game was scarce. She said everybody had to hunt, men, women, boys and girls, to survive. Young people were trusted to be able to provide food just like the adults did. She was like a mother to me after I lost my mother when I was very young.

### **Impacts of Sports Hunting**

We know our camp, which can only be reached by plane in the summer or by ski-doo in the winter, has been used on numerous occasions by non-natives. This is one of the things we have experienced since the territory was opened up to sports hunters.

We arrived at our camp one time and I had to go to our storage shed to get something. As I walked in I saw a hole on the opposite wall right at eye level. Some hunter had either shot it intentionally or he had shot at a caribou and missed. If I had been in there at the time, I would not be talking to you right now.

## ROBBIE DICK

There were no caribou around when I was young. My mother was from the north and so was her first husband so they hunted up north and they hunted the caribou, but when she married my father, who was from Whapmagoostui, she moved further south where there were no caribou. My father hunted the bear.

I was told a story of my sister Sophia who came home one day after checking nets in the springtime when the snow was starting to melt. She said she had seen the bones of an animal she did not know. She was very young at the time. When she was asked to describe the bones, she said they were very long and the hand and finger bones were still attached. When my father came home after hunting he went out to examine the bones and identified them as the antlers of a caribou. My sister had never seen a caribou in her life so she mistook the antlers for bones and the points on them for hands and fingers. I myself saw my first caribou when I was 30 years old.

We get blamed sometimes when animals disappear. Where I come from, there are inland seals and the lakes where they are found are called Seal Lakes. A study had been done in the past about the seal and more recently there was another study conducted by non-natives. They concluded that there were fewer seals than there should have been. We asked them what they thought was the reason for the dwindling numbers of freshwater seals. They immediately answered that the freshwater seals were being overhunted, but nobody ever hunts those seals. That is what researchers do; they assume they know the reason for something and that is what they write down in their report and the government accepts and believes their "findings". Sometimes the researchers do not have the stories to confirm or disprove their theories about why certain things happen or why they are the way they are.

What non-natives call the "woodland caribou", the Cree of Whapmagoostui call "minaaskauudihkw"; "barren caribou" are called "muushiwauuidihkw", which means the same thing in English or Cree. The "minaaskauudihkw" are the George River caribou. The woodland caribou that do not migrate but are always in the forested areas are known by the same name.

### Tourism

When you talk about tourism, whether it is fishing, caribou hunting, goose hunting or any other kind of hunting activity that brings tourists in, there is not much involved that Cree can be proud of because non-natives refer to it as "sport fishing or sport hunting" and to many of them it is just that, a game. That is why they take only parts of the animals or fowl or throw the fish back in the water. Cree never looked at hunting as a sport. Our way of hunting is called "subsistence hunting" because that is how we survived, by hunting. It was vital to their survival.

I want to talk about maintaining and preserving Cree Culture. That is something we could showcase in our tourist activities. Nowadays most Cree want jobs to earn a living. There are many jobs that can be created through showing off our culture to tourists. We have to think of ways to do that, how to promote Cree knowledge and Cree Culture to those who want to learn about it. There are many people who just want to observe things; for example, the Japanese. It must be very expensive for them to fly to

Canada but many of them fly north just to see the Northern Lights. Once they have seen them, they fly back home. We don't know how they use what they have seen.

There are also non-native people who want to see what Cree Culture is like. For example, in Germany there are people who dress and live like Indians of old and they wear feathers and hide clothing. They invited native people from the States or Canada to Germany and this was shown on TV; even the little German children were wearing feathers and native clothing. It was their way of showing respect to our native culture.

Eco-tourism is better suited for us where no hunting is involved, just showing tourists different activities involving our culture, traditions and customs. It is not only the non-native people that are interested in learning what Cree Culture was like in the past, but other native groups as well are curious about different native cultures.

We can promote tourism in several ways. One of the ways is to bring tourists in to observe different activities; for example, take them out on the land to see Crees snowshoeing or paddling or portaging; take them for rides on the land or the water to sightsee; take them out on the land to observe Crees hunting and how they hunt and teach them about respect for the land and animal life.

Another way is to involve them in the various activities. If they want to hunt with the Cree, they would have to do it the way the Cree or Inuit hunt. Why can't the government recognize the value of this way of hunting and preserving the land and animal life and make this part of the hunting regulations to ensure that all hunters, including non-native, adhere to the principles of traditional hunting so there is no waste lying around? Even if the non-native hunters do not want every part of whatever they kill, they should dispose of it in a respectful manner or they should not kill more than their quota. I heard someone say a non-native hunter over-celebrated after getting his quota and had to be taken back to the outfitting camp so alcohol should not be allowed during hunting. It is too easy to be careless when someone is inebriated and accidents can happen or getting such a kick out of shooting and killing more animals than allowed under the quota system or intentional vandalism can occur, such as shooting up cabins.

The Elders have so much knowledge, experience and understanding of animal life and the land. Why can't they use all that to plan and regulate tourist activities so other people can benefit once they understand what it is, be it hunting, culture or any other thing that is Cree. We have to sit down and find out how we are going to do this instead of just bringing tourists in and setting them free to continue destroying the land and the animals. They must leave here with valuable knowledge about our culture that will help them and us. We also have to learn more about our culture and our past so we can pass on that knowledge. Everything we have been given comes from the Creator; it is the Creator's garden that is being destroyed. Cree are outraged about all the destruction and disrespect. Non-native people will understand because they brought religion to us in the first place.

There are many things we can do with tourism and there are different levels of it. One way is taking tourists out to sightsee or observe traditional activities. Another is to involve the tourists in the activities. And another is to have them experience living that life.



There was a man from France who spent time in Canada and he used to take Stephen Sheshamush, a Cree from Whapmagoostui who did soapstone carvings, back to Europe just to show people over there how soapstone was carved; Stephen and some Inuit also did ice sculptures for people in Europe. Before that person died, he told us he wanted to be buried in Whapmagoostui even though he had never lived there. He told me he lived in France in a small town with a population of 5,000. He said the tourist activity there was sliding (tobogganning down a hill) in the winter and everyone who was old enough to work made their living from serving the tourists that visited their little town. I forget what he said the summer activity was. He said there were 42,000 beds for tourists in that town and he said many times all 42,000 beds were in use.

Tourism can also help us preserve the land because we will be using it all the time. And our presence on the land will ensure that it is not destroyed. We will also be the bearers of our culture and knowledge so future generations will still know about and benefit from their heritage. If we don't do that we will end up like other native groups who have lost their cultures and languages.

## **JIMMY NEACAPPO**

Nobody listens to us when we talk about these things. The HFTCC (Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee) does not have any power. They are a recommending body to the government. They merely talk about issues but many times they have been outvoted when it comes to making recommendations to the government. You have Inuit, Cree and government appointees sitting on the committee and whenever there is a tie in the vote, the chairperson gets to vote again and he has the deciding vote. Of course he is going to vote in favour of the party that appointed him.

There is a non-native living near the airport (LG-2) who has many photographs. He says when the caribou hunting season is finished and the game wardens are gone, non-natives continue to come into the territory at night and hunt illegally. He took pictures of that. Someone said he had about 6 hours of evidence. The hunters sensed he was watching and one night they entered his house and held a gun to him. You should call him and he could tell his story and show his pictures.

The Federation of Outfitting is a powerful organization. I think it has great influence on the government. Three falls ago, the government had already declared the conditions of the winter caribou hunt but it changed those conditions at the last minute just before the hunt started because of lobbying by the federation. I had my own outfitting business; I have a lot of papers that I have sent to the minister and to the Grand Chief but the only response I received to my concerns was a letter telling me every outfitter was treated equally, Cree and non-native outfitters alike. I had documented all the problems that Cree outfitters, including myself, faced. I know what I am doing but I do not think I will be able to keep my license for long and that is why I think we should make a more serious effort to resolve the problems surrounding the caribou hunt.

## **CONNIE BEARSKIN**

I never saw a caribou when I was growing up and my father never killed any caribou; neither did I. It was not until I was married and on my own that I saw a caribou. I used to think a caribou must look like a rabbit; that is how clueless I was. I did hear my grandmother and my father-in-law talk about them.

I was taught how to clean the hide and take care of it but I do it the way it is easiest for me. I used to gather up the hides that were left behind by the non-native hunters and scrape and clean them so I could use them but I can't scrape and clean hides anymore. My sons do it for me. There are so many uses for caribou hide: footwear, gloves, bags, rope, tent coverings and you can even take the hide of the legs of the animal and use them to make bags.

### **Impacts of Sports Hunting**

I also have witnessed the same things that others have about caribou carcasses lying around, as well as heads, feet and guts. There is so much waste. I do not like to see things like that and even though I was not raised by people who hunted caribou, I was still taught respect for all animal life.

Sports hunters even throw the meat away; they just keep the tender parts and leave the rest. I used to cook for non-native hunters when they hunted on our trap line and I would cook all the parts that they discarded and they always raved about the food even though I did not add any seasonings or anything else to alter the flavour.

**WILLIAM FIREMAN**

I am not a caribou hunter. There was a meeting in Ouje-Bougoumou in August last fall where there were some non-native caribou researchers and they told us they found 45 dead caribou in Eeyou Istchee and they had no idea why the caribou had died. I told them I thought the caribou had died from eating the plants under the transmission lines. I know you can get cancer from being around transmission lines and I told them that was my conclusion. They did not say they didn't believe me.

## **RODERICK PACHANO**

### **Impacts of the Sports Hunt**

Before the caribou hunting was opened up to non-natives, I saw and I killed caribou and it looked different then that it does now. It used to have a lot of fat then. You don't see that anymore. A doctor might not agree with me but it looked healthier then.

On our trap line, there have always been caribou there ever since they returned this time around. We had a native outfitter operating out of our territory and I would say that every one of his clients used to get their full quota of 2 caribou each and when other hunters who weren't quite as successful knew about it, they wanted to know where they hunted. Once the game wardens told them where the caribou were, the hunters came in droves and started to fight over the ski-doo trails.

Clients of Mirage started coming there and tried to stop other hunters from using the ski-doo trails claiming that Mirage had established and maintained those trails, which was not true. While we were clearing the land where the ski-doo trails were to go and preparing them each fall for the hunters to come, we never once saw a person from Mirage come to our area to help out with our ski-doo trails. We had a hunter come to our camp one time to ask which trails belonged to Mirage and I told them none of them did.

I went out one time with caribou hunters and I told them they could not gut their caribou on the lake and leave them there to sink when the ice melted. We did not see parts lying around like they did after other outfitters started sending their clients there because the Cree outfitter we lived with taught his clients the Cree way of hunting.

One time I watched about 10 hunters, clients of another outfitter, standing around in the distance. Then I heard and saw a ski-doo racing towards them chasing a large group of caribou towards his friends. When the caribou got near the group, guns started blasting but I didn't see any caribou falling. There is a way to shoot at a group of running caribou to make them stop dead in their tracks, but I guess they didn't know about that. The caribou just kept running. When the caribou driver got to the others in the group, they all took off and didn't even bother checking to see if they had wounded any animals. I guess they just liked to hear the sound of their guns blasting away.

Our lake is huge and now you can see the stomach and guts lying on the ice all over the place, even dead caribou. We used to clean up in the springtime when the snow had melted and before the body parts had started to smell or before the flies had gotten to them. During one of our cleanups we filled almost 20 of those large garbage bags, the orange ones, just with caribou legs; there were other parts lying around such as heads, hides and hearts, etc. that we cleaned up as well. As we bagged the legs we counted them, and counting four legs per animal, we calculated that 96 caribou had been gutted and butchered in that one area, a very small area at that.

The clients of our outfitter friend claimed they preferred to hunt with Cree guides because they learned a lot. They wanted to conduct their hunts in the traditional manner. They were also taught how to

pluck and clean the ptarmigan they killed. One of them almost had his ptarmigan confiscated by the game wardens at the Km 381 check point on the James Bay because they thought he had purchased them from the Cree. He had to convince them that he had learned from the Cree the proper way of cleaning the birds.

There are non-native hunters who are very respectful of the land, the environment and the animals and they get annoyed as well when they see how some hunters act and conduct the hunt. They don't like to see those types of hunters around. For example, there used to be a group of farmers from around Amos that used to come up there to hunt and they used to take everything with them; they even brought their own buckets or other containers to put the organs; they even took the stomachs and intestines with them. They did not waste anything.

A group of hunters from Mirage arrived at our camp one time and when I told them they should be hunting there instead of coming to our territory, they said they had permission from the government to hunt wherever they wanted. I told them my parents and grandparents before them had lived in that area all their lives and I had never heard them talk about living with government officials out there on the land so how can the government give them the right to hunt there. Besides, I told them, the government does not own the caribou.

We have another camp nearby and after the caribou hunting season ended we found some hunter with a high-powered rifle had shot through the outer wall of our cabin and we found the bullet lodged on the opposite wall. What if we had been there at the time?

It is not just the caribou hunting that is impacted by sport hunting, but fishing as well. If you remember when we signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the government and we agreed that we had a choice to continue living the traditional life and surviving off the land or to enter the job market to support ourselves.

We were also told that we could continue to fish at the first rapids, Uupichuun, as our people had for centuries. There were other things we were promised that we have yet to see. We were also told that of the 3 categories of land that were set up – I, II and III – only Category III lands could be used jointly by native and non-natives but I do not remember anything written or said that stated non-natives could do anything or use that land anyway they wanted or that native people would be hindered or stopped from practicing their traditional ways on Category III lands. We understood from that agreement that we could continue to use that land and practice those activities that our grandfathers and ancestors had.

It still has not been resolved satisfactorily that non-natives as well have to use that land in a way that does not destroy it or the environment or the wildlife.

Non-native hunting is referred to as "sports hunting" and it sounds like killing is a sport. This is not the way native people looked at it. They did not consider it as a sport. It was a means of survival.

This year there have been budget cuts at the government level and one of the cuts was a reduction in the number of game wardens that will be trying to control the hunting activities in our area. There used to be 6 of them at the height of the caribou hunting season but this winter I heard there are only 3.

The Agreement says that non-native hunters have to go through outfitters to hunt in the territory. Allowing hunters to hunt without guides and to hunt wherever or however they wanted in Zone 22 is a decision that was made **after** the Agreement was signed. They have always been able to fish wherever they wanted. There was a meeting in Waswanipi with the chiefs and they were asked at that meeting if they would agree to a trial arrangement of allowing non-native hunters to come in to the territory to hunt. They were told it would be a trial period; nobody told them that it would become a permanent thing. Now it is probably over 15 years since then and I don't know if they have said anything to the contrary and have agreed to a permanent policy. I think many times we are at fault too for not paying attention to what we are told; we do not do anything when the trial period ends and because we have not done or said anything, we realize too late that the policies or arrangements have become long-term or even permanent.

The leadership seems to put money first and it is always the first thing talked about when agreements are signed and nobody seems to talk about where we as native people came from and how we survived off the land. They don't seem to understand that we still remember what we were told and the promises that were made; I should say what we also told you because I was involved in the negotiations.

It is obvious that the caribou cannot stay in one place to rest and feed during the winters. The situation seems to be getting worse. They are constantly being chased by ski-doo's, planes and helicopters. We cannot say it is all the fault of non-native hunters because when they are on the roads, we ourselves drive by so they are forced to get off the road.

In the past there weren't too many people around to bother them. I often wonder what that does to the caribou after being chased around all winter. We know that caribou who have been chased for long periods do not taste the same as one who has not been chased at all. I heard some Inuit say that in recent years, caribou have a different taste when they return from their wintering grounds in the south. Those of us who are not all that familiar with caribou cannot tell how it is supposed to taste normally.

And is the meat the same quality as it used to be when the animals were allowed to roam where they wanted without any interference from man? All of us here were probably raised on traditional food, not store-bought food. As we get older our bodies seem to need the food that we were first introduced to and raised on.

We are losing our culture, our ways and I think this is partly due to our hesitation to talk about or teach others about our culture unless payment is offered but our parents and grandparents never asked for anything in return when we wanted to know something. They simply passed on what they knew and I think they did it out of love to ensure that their children and grandchildren learned about the life that they loved so much. We were not a money-based society; we learned that from the non-native society. Non-native researchers expect free information from their sources, yet that information may help them professionally and they earn their living using that information that they gathered from native people.

I often wonder what we can do to hang onto the land now that there are so few Elders living out on the land, sometimes because there is no one to live with and help them out there or their relatives worry about them living out there by themselves. How can we get more people back out on the land?

### Tourism

Tourism can get people out on the land and involving Youth in those activities would help them not only by learning about and practicing their own culture but financially as well even if they don't survive off hunting while they are out there. This way there would be Cree presence out on the land again. The government likes to say that we do not live out on the land anymore, and he is right when the caribou hunting season is open to non-native hunters because it is not safe out there when they are around.

The government has always tried to get us off the land whenever it finds a money-making use for it. When the hydro-project was first announced, the government said it was a waste to let the waters just flow naturally because money could not be made from them if left in their natural state. They also said during the court case that there was nobody living on the land; they were talking about themselves because they were not living up here but Cree were still living on and off the land. It shows you how insignificant they thought we were and I guess they still do.

I think the Agreement (JBNQA) saved whatever land was not flooded; it saved it for a while anyway so that we could continue to use it and live on it before we were forced off as had been done to other native groups throughout this continent. I often wonder too what would have happened to us if we had not been able to rise up and speak for ourselves. We should start from where we are now and try to progress to what we want to achieve with respect to the land and our culture. The government has stated that when development is contemplated in Eeyou Istchee, the inhabitants, including the Cree, have to be consulted and if they agree, then development will take place.

I am not saying that we can live exactly like our ancestors did; theirs was a hard life. There is so much some of us don't know about our own ways.

If we really accept tourism into our territory, we cannot allow the government to regulate, for example, the types of dwellings we put up for tourists. I heard the government said tepees were not acceptable because they did not conform to standards; a tepee did not have two doors so people should not stay there. Tourists want to see the real Cree way of life, not what the government thinks they should see. I would be grateful if we can prevent the government or any other agency from regulating whatever we can or want to show tourists.

The government is involved in and regulates the caribou hunt. I was at a meeting on caribou some time back and there were government officials in attendance. I told them Cree and Inuit Elders knew more about caribou than the government did because they lived with them and the government should not regulate something it has no knowledge of. I told them the government did not own the caribou.

When mercury became a problem after the hydro project, one government official stated that it was not a major problem if Cree could not eat fish anymore, that they would send us chickens to replace the



fish. I don't think we've ever received one shipment of chickens. We have told them many times that sometimes the activities involved in fishing contributed more to the health of the Cree than eating the fish itself, especially the strenuous exercise involved when chopping through thick ice in the winter.

Before any tourism activity is approved, it must first be ascertained that it is compatible with the Cree way of life and that it will not harm or destroy the land, the Cree, the wildlife or the environment. The impacts of tourism should be considered carefully before approval. Another requirement should be that the employees of COTA must also learn all they can about the Cree Culture as well because they will not always have ready access to information they need to assess tourism proposals. The Elders will not hesitate to help when asked but they will not be involved in the day-to-day administration of COTA.

## **MARGARET BEARSKIN**

My father told me when caribou were plentiful that the Naskapi used to kill as many caribou as they could just for the hides. (According to the HBC Post Journals, the Hudson's Bay Company used to purchase hides from the Naskapi and sell them to the Cree. This is probably why the Naskapi indulged in this practice.) Once they skinned them they pushed the carcasses into the river and let them float away to rot downriver. The following year, many Naskapi starved to death and the Cree blamed those actions as the cause of the mass starvation that took place in Naskapi country. My aunt said her mother used to sew 10 caribou hides together to make a tepee covering.

I brought something along to show you (an object about the size of an egg and shaped like one that was encased in a decorated hide bag). I found this growing in the neck area of a caribou I was skinning. I have found 2 of them since I have been skinning caribou. The first time I saw one I didn't know what it was so I saved it to show my grandfather when we returned to the island. When I showed it to him he was so happy and asked for it. It is called Beehduudihkawn and it is very significant. He told me to make a little bag to put it in and to decorate the bag. He said a person wore it around his neck whenever he went hunting the same species of animal where it had been found to ensure a good hunt. (It was used as an amulet.) He said not all animals had that growing in their bodies. Before it is dried it is very soft and my grandfather told me it was filled with caribou hair. When my husband killed another caribou like that, I cut it open, I guess I was somewhat skeptical about what my grandfather had told me and sure enough, the cyst or sac was full of hair coiled around and around.

The disappearance of the caribou cannot be blamed solely on subsistence hunting. Part of the blame can be placed on the actions of sports hunters who kill more than their quota.

### **Impacts of Sports Hunting**

Our camp is near Camp Mirage and one morning, very early, we left to check our traps before the non-native hunters could get to them. We used to have a gate there but it didn't prevent anyone from breaking and entering. On the way out we saw game wardens getting their ski-doo's ready to go somewhere. I asked them if they were caribou hunting and they said they weren't. They said they were looking for a non-native who had "borrowed" a caribou permit to hunt. I wondered how that person could have made it that far without a permit.

When we returned to our camp, there hanging on our gate was a target and it was obvious people had been target shooting. Our cabin was right behind the gate and they were shooting in the direction of our cabin. I did not see the game wardens around to show them but we did take it down and show it to the boss at Camp Mirage. I told him the target was not there when we left in the morning and I told him the target shooters were probably his clients. There is a marker on the road showing there is a camp nearby and not to shoot in that direction, but they hadn't paid any attention to that sign.

The following morning, we saw the game wardens again and they had found the man who had borrowed the permit and he told us that that person was not the only one who used someone else's permit to hunt caribou; he said that they had caught many others who had hunted illegally. The

government workers who oversee the caribou hunt probably do not know about these illegal activities and if they did, they probably do not care because the government makes a lot of money from the caribou hunt.

One time one of my sons was guiding at Nouchimi Camp. He was guiding a hunter who had killed his two caribou immediately. He was so ecstatic about getting his quota right away he decided to celebrate right away by drinking the beer he had brought along. My son said the hunter got so drunk he couldn't even drive so they had to drive him back to the camp safely.

I think the non-native hunters are too careless while hunting caribou and I will say they do not follow their own regulations. My oldest sons went out one day and saw non-native hunters coming down the road; there were 2 hunters supporting a third one. He noticed the one in the middle was all bloody and when he stopped to help, one of them told him the other hunter had accidentally shot their mate in the arm. They had tied a tourniquet around the arm but the blood was still flowing. He brought the hunters to their truck near our camp but they were unable to start their truck so they asked my son to drive the wounded hunter to Camp Mirage. Mirage is not that close to our camp so my son was driving as fast as he could before the hunter had lost too much blood since there was nothing he could do for him. The wounded hunter told him to slow down but my son did not pay attention. When they got to Mirage, the man was able to get out of the vehicle but he appeared to be barely conscious.

There are parking areas along the road but one time we drove by one of them and there were so many carcasses that had been dumped there, only the hind and front quarters had been removed. Why does the government allow them to take 2 caribou when they leave most of the animal behind when they leave the territory to return down south?

One hunter was observed removing only the antlers and dumping the whole caribou by the side of the road. A Cree saw the hunter kill a caribou with huge antlers, drag it to the road, cut off the antlers and drag it to the side and dump it over the snowbank. The Cree approached him and asked him why he was not taking the whole caribou; the hunter replied he wanted only the antlers and offered the caribou to the Cree but was told that he had to take the whole caribou and put it in his vehicle but I am certain that the hunter got rid of it somewhere else when no one else was around. How many times does that happen when no one is around to observe the hunters removing only the antlers and leaving the rest of the animal behind? You know that happens because you see so many caribou carcasses lying around during and after the caribou hunting season. The game wardens cannot be everywhere and catch all those who break the regulations.

We had some visitors at our camp one time, an older man and his son. The caribou had already started their migration back north so there weren't too many around by then. He told us they were hunting caribou and ptarmigan and his son had killed ptarmigan but they had not seen any caribou yet. He went on to say he did not care whether he killed one or not because being out on the land was such a wonderful experience that he could go home satisfied.

My grandfather told us in advance that the caribou would be returning to our land again but he warned us that they would disappear again just as they had in the past. Everything he told us has come true.

We have seen the caribou return and now they are starting to disappear again. He said the same thing about the porcupine. The porcupine is starting to disappear again as well.

## **ELIZABETH DICK**

I remember Daniel Bearskin say 20 years ago we have to do everything we could to help the children and to turn them around. He had tears in his eyes when he said that. I think we need to do the same thing with our leaders so they can help us set the right direction for our children. We need to wake them up and make them listen to us so they will understand what we are trying to do when it comes to preserving and maintaining our culture.

We think we own our various organizations, such as the Cree School Board, Cree Health Board and the Cree Trappers Association but we do not own them and they do not serve us. They are all governed by government regulations and they follow these instead of making serving the people a priority. It used to be the government that told us what we had do because of certain laws and regulations, but now it is our own people who are using government rules and regulations to stop or hinder us from accessing services that should be available to us.

Showing tourists what our culture is and teaching them our ways can help us strengthen our own culture.

**RICHARD PEPABANO**

Teaching and knowledge are very important. I like seeing the Elders passing on their skills to the Youth; I think it is very important to pass on our traditional skills to our young people. They are being taught to make things that they need when they go out on the land. Some of them are very quick to learn and they are picking up the skill of making snowshoes, for example, so it will help them personally and they will be able to pass on that knowledge to their children.

For three years now I have been involved in teaching Youth to paddle the rivers and lakes during the summer and to walk great distances on snowshoes during the winters. I know the Youth I have been involved with really like being out there and seeing the land and I believe it helps them deal issues in their lives. In the three years I have been involved with them, I have never known any of them to get into serious trouble and they always come up to me to talk whenever and wherever I see them.

I want to say to you, those of you who are still physically fit, do not quit trying to educate the younger people about our culture. We will help you in any way we can.

## **BEULAH CROWE**

Our Chief of Police, Reggie Bobbish, was on the air talking about people complaining about being given tickets by the SQ for hunting on the road. He explained the tickets were not being given out for hunting; it was for shooting near a hydro installation or the airport. He said the regulation stipulates that no one is allowed to shoot within 2000 metres from an installation.

Caribou returned to the territory in the 1950s. That is when I first knew about and tasted caribou. It was 1969 when John (her husband) killed his first caribou; we were living with Daniel Bearskin at the time. It was the first time I saw the process of gutting, butchering and cleaning the hides. Daniel and Mary taught us everything. Mary told us the most important thing to own was the hide because we could use it for everything. Daniel and John killed 9 caribou that time and when we finished gutting and butchering it, there was nothing but the bloody snow left. When we got back to camp, my stepfather asked me if I had collected the bloody snow as well and when I told him I hadn't, he told me I should have brought it all back to melt it down and to use it to boil the meat.

## **STEPHEN PEPABANO**

A long time ago many of our grandparents and ancestors frequently starved to death so it is very disturbing to see whole caribou and parts just lying around where many of our people starved. Our Elders told us not to treat hunting as a game but to treat it with respect and I remember the care they took with everything they killed. Even though they did not have freezers back then, they dried the meat so they could keep it for long periods and eat it during those times they could not find anything to kill.

I never saw caribou when I was growing up so it has not been that long ago that the caribou returned to our territory. We will go through a period again when all game will be scarce and that is what I remember when I see caribou and body parts lying around all over the place. We have lost respect for all animal life because we think there are so many of them it doesn't matter if we waste some.

My father said he did see caribou in his youth but they had disappeared shortly after that. I was told when you waste the animals you kill and start treating hunting as a game, you will see it disappear. We are starting to sport hunt as well, not hunting for survival. We no longer follow the teachings of our Elders.

One time I saw a little boy being given a gun to hunt. I did not agree with that. In the past, a boy was not allowed to hunt with a gun until he knew everything he had to do to cut, butcher and clean his kill. The little boy I saw was not old enough yet to know what to do with the game he killed.



## **JOHN CROWE**

When I went hunting with Daniel Bearskin in 1969, it was the first time I saw a caribou and the first time I saw any signs of one. On that trip Daniel and I came across about 50 caribou. Daniel told me not to shoot too many times; he must have been thinking of the plane that was to pick us up so we would not overload it. He taught me a lot about gutting and cutting up the meat and cleaning up the hide. Even though I didn't kill any caribou again for a long time, we remembered the lessons given to us by Daniel and his wife and I had no hesitation about doing everything myself when I killed a caribou again. We also saw different ways or methods of doing the same thing in Eastmain and those are the methods we use now. I don't just keep what I have learned to myself; I pass on that knowledge to others and show them how to do things.

People do not seem to want to learn about Cree Culture now. They think it has no relevance now. I was the same way. I used to wonder why others were so serious about preserving it when it was no longer useful or needed. But I came around to their way of thinking. What turned me around? At one time we were told there was going to be a war here and it was that that convinced me of the importance of our culture. It isn't just the Youth but there are many adults as well who think our culture is no longer relevant.

It is not for the Youth of today that we are committed to preserving the culture but for the generations to come. We want them to know and learn about their heritage and their culture. Some Youth are very interested in learning about their culture; others are not. We cannot just talk about culture amongst ourselves without involving the Youth. If we do that, we are just going to leave this world with that knowledge without ever having transferred it to future generations.

There is so much we can teach the Youth about hunting. We do not hunt just for the meat and hides. We are also given lessons from hunting, what is going to happen in the future, what is going to happen to us. These are the things we can teach our Youth, how to read nature and the animals, how to learn from them.

## **JANIE PACHANO**

### **Impacts of Sports Hunting**

Up to the early 2000s, the migration route of the caribou went through our trap line north of the LG-3 dam. One goose break we were at our camp at UUpischiscaau (Pine Mountain Lake) when the caribou were migrating back to their summer calving grounds. During the 2 weeks we were there, they travelled day and night for the 2 weeks we were there. You could hear their hooves click clacking away on the ice as they travelled throughout the night as well. They came from 3 different directions and went right by our camps to get down to the lake where they congregated and sat around for hours at a time before going on their way, breaking off in 2 different groups, some heading straight east; others heading to the north.

One day I decided to count them and I counted up to 10,000 before I had to get back to work. This was just in 1 day! My in-laws stayed another week after we returned to Chisasibi and when they came back, my mother-in-law told me they were still travelling. A few years after the other outfitters started sending their clients to hunt on our trap line, we were lucky to see any caribou at all.

I know sport hunters kill more than their quota of 2 caribou because I had a personal experience one time. One winter I took some Cree youth hunting in the LG-4 area. There were non-native hunters all over the place and one of them offered me a caribou he had just shot. When I told him that was illegal, he said he knew but he wanted one with bigger antlers.

We used to stay out there in the winter during the caribou hunting season because a friend of ours used our cabin as his base for his outfitting business but after all the other outfitters' clients started to take over, we could not stay out there anymore. It was too stressful. One time there were 2 ski-doo's parked a few meters from our cabin down by the lake and 2 hunters were eating their lunch. When my husband told them to go hunt somewhere else, they told him, "Don't worry. We are not going to shoot towards your cabin." If we were to hunt that close to residences in the south, we would probably be thrown in jail; we would definitely be ticketed and fined.

Another time we went out there to see if we needed anything special for goose break. Our cabin had been broken into, through the window and the glass was broken. All our firewood which we had readied for the goose break had been burned and the propane for our stove had been left on. A note had been left on the table apologizing for the use of our firewood and propane and a \$50 bill had been placed on top of the note for the use of our firewood and propane I guess and the broken window. The explanation offered for the unauthorized use of our cabin was that their ski-doo's had gotten stuck in the slush on the lake. They had to have been there for a long time because they had used up all the firewood; we had split enough to last us for the 2 weeks we were to be out there during the goose break.

One spring after all the snow had melted, we went out to one of our other camps near the road. I felt like burning the cabin down when I saw the condition it was in. Inside the cabin it looked like a murder had taken place; there was blood on the walls and floor. I guess the hunters had gutted their caribou

inside because they thought it was too cold outside. We had some brand new plywood that we had planned to use for something and that was also covered in blood. One of our single mattress pads had been used for hauling caribou. There was a blue tarp sitting right outside the door and when I lifted it up, there were caribou legs and writhing masses of maggots wrapped in the tarp. We had not left the tarp there because when we leave our camp we always make certain that everything is put away and there is no garbage left lying around to attract animals. They never stop to think that people who live in Eeyou Istchee have to drive over 1,000 kilometres to get windows and doors replaced. The territory is not like the south where there is a hardware store every few blocks.

## **SUMMARY (Roderick Pachano)**

We were asked some questions and I think you provided many answers to what you think is important and the most important ones seem to be how to treat hunting and the game with respect and the teachings regarding these values of hunting.

My hope is that I will have a better understanding of what is being discussed here. Some of what I have heard here I already heard when I was growing up. When you talk about respecting big game and hunting, those rules, if you will, applied to the hunting of all species, big and small, fish and fowl.

We were told when we signed the Agreement (JBNQA) that nothing would change, that Cree could continue to practice their traditional activities as they had in the past. Protecting the land and traditional ways and activities was a priority with the Cree when the Agreement was being negotiated. After the Agreement was signed, it was soon obvious that the government was not respecting these provisions of the JBNQA that had been agreed to by all parties who signed it. Those provisions that required money to be implemented were the ones that became a priority to our leaders and it took about 30 years before those issues could be settled. Those provisions that did not require money to be implemented were ignored and many are still outstanding issues.

The government did not get permission from the Cree to do whatever it wanted on Category III lands and to destroy it as much as it wanted; it was for universal use, for Cree and non-native alike. Our leaders must be aware of this even if they were not involved in the negotiations and they should look into this thoroughly. The values that are important to us, for example in hunting, are what we should use in all aspects of our lives. I do not believe the government when it says native people did not have regulations. I was at a meeting one time where representatives of the Cree Trappers Association and the Cree Nation Government were present when discussions took place concerning the fact that Cree did not have written laws and regulations regarding land use and it was decided that is what was needed. I told them they could not say Cree did not have a plan on how to use the land. All hunters knew what they were going to do on their own land and how others were going to use it, even how to preserve it for the use of future generations. They knew they could not overharvest the land and thus diminish its use for themselves and future generations.

There were rules governing everything as well. The Creator who made this land had laws concerning how the land and everything on it could be used; this is what the non-natives refer to as "Natural Law". If you do anything to harm the land or anything on it, there will be the consequences, not just where you committed the wrong-doing, but it will impact other things and areas. This is what the Cree understood and used. Natural Law is what native people respected and followed. They wanted to live in harmony with those Laws. Government laws are not more powerful than or have precedence over Natural Laws, no matter how many laws or regulations are passed by governments.

You have expressed your hopes that these discussions do not stop here, that they continue until solutions are found to the problems that have been discussed here. This meeting was the result of one organization, COTA, making it possible to hold such a gathering. There are other organizations that can ensure that these discussions continue to take place; for example, the local Elders Council here in

Chisasibi can arrange their own meetings on this topic. Other forums are the Cree Trappers Association and the Annual Cree Elders Meeting.

We were asked at the band council level to support a movement to stop sports hunting altogether and we have already passed a resolution to that effect.

It is up to us to teach our young people about our culture and our ways. I told the chiefs at their December meeting that the non-native view of society is shaped like a tepee. At the top is the government and towards the bottom are other groups and at the very bottom are native people, if we are there at all. Non-natives put everything in boxes, taking something apart that should be kept whole and putting it in different boxes, or placing more importance on different parts instead of looking at it holistically. If they are dealing with a problem they do this because it is easier to discuss one thing at time instead of dealing with all the issues contributing to that problem. Sometimes the solutions arrived at for one issue of the problem do not mesh with others agreed to for other issues related to the same problem.

Cree had a different perspective. The impact of an action or a decision on the future and on future generations was always foremost in the minds of those taking those actions or making those decisions. Society was looked at as a circle; in the middle were the children, all around them were the parents and grandparents to protect them and to help them. We did not want anything negative coming into the circle to harm the children or future generations. On the outer edges of the circle were the extended family members and community members.

When I attended that meeting of the chiefs, an issue was brought up that affected some of our young people. I spoke at that meeting and told them what I have just mentioned. When it came time to make a decision, there was nobody to propose the resolution that the Cree Nation Government wanted passed. A lunch break was called and when we returned from the break, we were sent out of the room and the meeting was declared in camera session with only the chiefs and community representatives being present. The meeting was being broadcast live to Eeyou Istchee. The broadcast was shut down as well so the general public did not have an opportunity to listen to the discussions either. Council/Board meetings are supposed to be public and I don't know what is going to happen to us in the future if we are going to be excluded from all discussions and decisions are going to be made in secret; these are discussions and decisions that affect our lives and our society.

I was in Whapmagoostui at a meeting one time when someone got up and said it is necessary to involve the people and consult with them before decisions that will affect them are made. Then whoever is making the decision can say with certainty that he has the support of the public and the people can also say they support the decision. If they are not consulted they cannot say that they support anything that they were not aware of and that was sprung on them. When there are negative impacts from a decision that had been made without consultation or input from the people, whoever approved that plan should not be surprised if people refuse to support it after the fact. I have also heard people say to our leaders, "Why bother asking us? You have already made a decision."

When you talk about hunting, those who lived that life know more about it than the leaders or their consultants. You should be the ones to be consulted. You should be the ones to lead the discussions. And we have to be the ones to do what we can to pass on our knowledge about hunting, the game, the culture and all our traditional ways. We cannot change what we are. We are Cree and we will always be Cree.