



Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association
2011 - 2012 Annual Report

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As COTA's new President, I would like to introduce myself and take this opportunity to say a few words about what I believe has been a very positive year for the Association. My involvement with COTA began in 2005 when I joined the Board of Directors as the representative for Waswanipi. That same year, I was elected Vice-President and have served in that capacity every since. Acting in the role of President, however, is a new and challenging experience. I plan to contribute practical know-how gained through several years of experience as Vice-President as well as new ideas and a fresh perspective. I am honoured to have the support and confidence of the Board of Directors and our members and will continue to guide the Association and the tourism industry we represent, towards a strong and sustainable future.

On November 23, 2011, after years of build-up and months of preparation, the much-anticipated tourism strategy component of Plan Nord was officially launched. I feel privileged to be at the forefront of this important initiative that provides a thorough and robust strategy for developing and marketing tourism regions above the 49th parallel. It is COTA's view that a strong tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee depends in large part on ongoing improvements to infrastructure and services, increasingly diversified activities, the availability of market-ready products, consolidation of training, and adoption of best practices. All of the above considerations are echoed in Plan Nord's strategic plan for tourism development. To ensure that Cree tourism operators benefit in a meaningful and substantial way from the project, COTA and Cree individuals involved in the development of the tourism industry participated in the Cree Tourism Strategy Conference, held in February 2012. The Conference provided a key opportunity for developing a joint, comprehensive, and collaborative action plan for Cree tourism development that will serve as the foundation for securing funding under Plan Nord.

COTA will continue to work closely with the Québec government to ensure that its evolving tourism strategy addresses and responds to the specific needs and realities of the Cree tourism industry.

On a final note, I would like to thank our former president, Mr. Sherman Herodier, for his many years of dedication and commitment to COTA. He has been a tireless champion of our members' interests and our tourism industry. I am pleased to note that Sherman was honoured in the tourism personality category at this year's regional Grand Prix du tourisme québécois gala. It was both a pleasure and a privilege to work with him over the last six years and I wish him well in all his future endeavours.

"Agoodah Wachiya! God Bless Eeyou Istchee!"

Julie-Ann Cooper
President



As in previous years, this annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and share some of the highlights that played a role—big or small—in the advancement of our mandate. It was a significant year. We entered into a stronger and more focused working relationship with our regional partners, including Tourism Baie James (TBJ) and Escapade Boréale, a tour operator specializing in the creation of northern tour packages. The strength of our partnerships is reflected in the advancement of Projet ACCORD and our own Tourism Action Plan. Our increasingly collaborative rapport with TBJ and Escapade Boréale will be beneficial both in terms of developing stronger regional marketing campaigns and streamlining human-resource requirements. By working together, we are in a better position to create a shared and unified identity for the tourism regions of Eeyou Istchee/Baie James, thereby facilitating and enhancing visitor experience.

We have undertaken to establish partnerships with Quebec-based tour operators with the intended goal of reaching out to larger and more diverse international markets and visitors. To that end, the Familiarization (FAM) Tour of August 2011 was an important first step. The tour provided an opportunity to assist selected Cree tourism businesses in the development of packages and provide them with a better understanding of the inner workings of the travel trade. These businesses now have a solid set of recommendations to help them devise market-ready products designed to meet travellers' expectations.

A comprehensive membership study was initiated in efforts to help us better understand the issues facing tourism providers in Cree communities and identify respondents' views and perceptions with regard to COTA. This information will be used to establish a strategy to enable COTA to increase membership and build on its role.

I would like to close by thanking the outgoing Board of Directors and extending a warm welcome to our new board members. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to COTA staff for all of their hard work and commitment over the past year. With the support of our members and industry partners, we will continue to build a stronger and more unified tourism industry. As a result, I look forward to the year ahead with confidence and enthusiasm.

Robin McGinley
Executive Director

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ABOUT COTA

COTA was incorporated on December 7, 2000 as a non-profit corporation under Part II of the Canadian Corporations Act. The actual process that eventually led to the creation of COTA, however, began over 30 years ago during the negotiations for the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA).

history

The negotiations leading to the JBNQA provided the platform for gaining control over tourism development. With the signing of the Final Agreement in November 1975, the legal framework for this control became a reality and paved the way for the creation of COTA as a treaty obligation under sections 28.4 and 28.6 of the JBNQA.

28.4 Cree Associations

28.4.1 Subject to the positive conclusions of the necessary feasibility studies involving the Crees to the greatest extent possible and to the availability of funds, Canada and/or Québec will assist the Crees with funding and technical advice in establishing, as soon as possible, as described herein:

- a) a Cree Trappers' Association;
- b) a Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association;
- c) a Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association.

28.6 Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association

28.6.1 As soon as possible following the execution of the Agreement and subject to the results of the feasibility studies referred to in paragraph 28.4.1 there shall be established a Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association which shall inter alia:

- a) provide marketing, booking and promotion services for Cree outfitting operations;
- b) provide business, management, accounting and professional services for Cree outfitters;
- c) conduct feasibility studies related to establishment or siting of individual outfitting facilities or a network of outfitting facilities.

28.6.2 Subject to the results of the feasibility studies and in the event that a Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association is established, Canada, Québec and the Cree Regional Authority, in proportion to be mutually agreed upon shall assist the Association in its operation and objects.

COTA's mission is to develop and implement a collective vision for a world-class sustainable tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee in harmony with Cree culture and values and involving partnership among Cree communities, institutions and businesses.

Objectives

Implement Section 28.6 of the JBNQ

- Provide marketing, booking, and promotion services, where necessary, for Cree outfitting and tourist operations.
- Provide business, management, accounting and professional services, where necessary, for Cree outfitters and tourist businesses.
- Conduct feasibility studies related to the establishment of individual outfitting or tourism facilities or a network of outfitting or tourism facilities.

Community Awareness and Capacity Building

- Place a priority on increasing awareness of tourism as a sustainable economic development opportunity.
- Increase the capacity of local and regional institutions to provide services by improving access to information.
- Support and undertake training and skill development initiatives that recognize Cree skills and industry standards.
- Support and encourage human resource development related to tourism.

Communications

- Ensure effective communications with Cree stakeholders including Tallymen, governments, communities, and industry.
- Promote COTA's vision, objectives, activities, and accomplishments.
- Promote a positive image of the membership.
- Develop alliances and coordinate with other tourism and indigenous organizations to work toward common goals.

- Serve as a liaison between Cree tourism and outfitting operators, the tourism industry, and the markets they serve.
- Incorporate current technology to increase the ease and efficiency of communications and reduce the associated costs.

Industry Development

- Promote partnerships among Cree businesses, communities, and institutions.
- Represent the interests of COTA members at meetings with governments, commissions, other organizations, and non-native developers.
- Support the development of Cree tourist products that exceed market standards by creating quality standards and by recognizing success with awards.
- Ensure the participation of the Cree Nation in the development and promotion of tourism and outfitting activities.

Marketing

- Increase market share by researching the feasibility of regional projects that promote the communities.
- Conduct product development and market research that include visitor statistics and product inventories.

Financial Development

- Actively seek funding and other resources from governments, the private sector, and other sources.
- Develop, where appropriate, revenue-generating activities.

The COTA Board is comprised of ten members who serve a 3-year term. One Board member is appointed by the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority. The remaining nine are elected by the COTA membership.

2011-2012 Board of Directors

Contact information for each of our board members can be found at www.creetourism.ca under About



Julie-Ann Cooper
President
Waswanipi



Joshua Iserhoff
Vice-President
Nemaska



Titus Shecapio
Executive Board Member
Mistissini



Raymond Blackned
Board Member
Waskaganish



Anna Bosum
Board Member
Oujé-Bougoumou



Roberta Georgekish
Board Member
Wemindji



Redfern Mark-Stewart
Board Member
Eastmain



Roy Mamianskum
Board Member
Whapmagoostui



Karen St-Cyr
Treasurer



Fred Wapachee
Washaw Sibi

Not Pictured:

Joseph Fireman, Board Member from Chisasibi
Dianne Ottereys Reid, CRA Representative
Veronique Ranger, Corporate Secretary



PROJECT SUMMARIES

As a member-driven association, COTA develops and promotes projects designed to meet the needs of our members. We are committed to maximizing the tourism potential of Eeyou Istchee through attentive listening and effective action. We favour a flexible approach to tourism development so as to keep pace with our members' evolving needs and address the specific challenges they face.

Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association Projects and Initiatives

Following are brief summaries of the projects and initiatives that were undertaken and/or launched in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

1. Tourism Conference and Annual General Meeting

COTA's Annual Tourism Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) continues to be an important event at which members and others involved in the Cree tourism industry can share their viewpoints and insights. It also provides an important opportunity to work together to achieve our collective goal of creating a dynamic and unified tourism identity.

1. 1. Tourism Conference

Approximately 55 people attended this year's Tourism Conference which took place on August 30th and 31st, 2011 in the community of Wemindji.

The theme of the 2011 Tourism Conference was product development. Over the course of the two day conference, three interactive presentations, each covering an important aspect of product development

were offered. The first, titled "Working with the Travel Trade" was presented by Lucette Voyzelle, of Excursions Nouvelle France (ENF). ENF is a well established and successful tour operator that has been providing adventure and ecotourism packages to an



international clientele since 1991. The presentation clearly outlined the requirements for developing a mutually beneficial relationship with tour operators and stressed the importance of market readiness.

The second presentation, titled, “How to find funding? A step-by-step approach of how and where to find funding for your tourism project” was given by Jean-Sebastien Gagnon, the economic development officer for the Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ). His presentation provided important insight on the many funding opportunities available to develop new, or enhance existing, tourism products.

The third and final presentation, “Taking Care of Business – Learn to Develop your Authentic Aboriginal Tourism Business or Product” was given by Falcon Migwans and James Panamick from Great Spirit Circle Trail, a successful business in Northeastern Ontario that offers nature-based and cultural tourism from an Aboriginal perspective. Their presentation was particularly relevant since it touched on many of the issues and challenges faced by Cree tourism providers.

In addition, we were pleased that Eddie Pash who owns and operates Nouchimi Camp in Chisasibi, was

able to attend this year’s conference as our invited speaker. Eddie has been offering winter caribou hunting packages for many years. Nouchimi Camp caters to outdoor enthusiasts who represent an extremely important segment of tourists to the region.

Great Spirit Circle Trail Touring Company is a cooperative tourism marketing initiative involving eight First Nations and local Aboriginal business partners. This initiative has been successful in growing the tourism industry in the Manitoulin Island - Sagamok area of Northern Ontario.

1.2. Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the members of COTA and EIT took place on September 1, 2011

Sherman Herodier, President of both COTA and EIT and Chairman of the Corporation, chaired the meeting and Véronique Ranger acted as recording secretary.

Robin McGinley, Executive Director of COTA, presented the 2010-2011 Annual Report and Thomas Coon, co-chair of the ACCORD committee, made a brief presentation on the projet ACCORD.



Falcon Migwans from Great Spirit Circle Trail giving Randy Bosum a lesson on traditional Anishnaabe drums.

Marcel Lefebvre of the accounting firm Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton and Treasurer, Karen St Cyr presented the annual audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2011 for both COTA and EIT. Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton were appointed to conduct the audit for COTA and EIT for the financial year ending March 31, 2012.

Additional topics discussed included issues affecting the development of Cree tourism and an amendment to the membership policy which was approved.

As this was an election year, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new members of our Board of Directors including Roy Mamianskum of Whapmagoostui, Roberta Georgekish of Wemindji, Redfern Mark-Stuart of Eastmain and Joseph Fireman of Chisasibi. We would also like to congratulate Julie-Ann Cooper who was elected as COTA's new president and Raymond Blackned who was elected President of EIT. Randy Bosum was appointed as the representative from the CRA but shortly following his appointment, he was elected Deputy Chief of the Cree Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou. Dianne Ottereyes Reid has since taken his place. Fred Wapachee was also in attendance as an observer for Washaw Sibi.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to our former president Sherman Herodier for his hard work and commitment to COTA and EIT. Sherman served as President for two terms beginning in 2006.

We would like to thank the sponsors of this year's event including: Air Creebec, the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and Hydro-Quebec. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the community of Wemindji for hosting this year's event. Meeting snacks were provided by the Wemindji community store and lunch was provided by Michael Georgekish. Participants also enjoyed a delicious traditional feast provided by Linda Stewart, Elizabeth Fairies and Marion Maybee which included delicious Indian donuts provided by Ms. Iris Miniquaken. Entertainment was provided by Bradley A.J. Georgekish and Earle S. Danyluk. Participants were also treated

to a tour of the community which included a stop at the newly opened Tourism Information Office.

2. Plan Nord: Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel

Plan Nord, first introduced by Premier Jean Charest in September 2008, was officially launched in May 2011. In turn, on November 23, 2011, the Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel was officially unveiled. The tourism strategy envisions a strong future for northern Québec and outlines a robust strategy for developing and marketing tourism regions above the 49th parallel. From the outset, COTA, EIT, and other representatives took part in meetings and other information sessions regarding the implementation of the tourism strategy to ensure that Cree interests were addressed and issues of key importance for the development of Cree tourism were not overlooked.

As noted in the Cree Vision of Plan Nord, "The tourism industry has great potential to create employment for the Cree and to provide a venue to share Cree culture with the world; however, it will require resources and energy to develop the infrastructure and environment to help entrepreneurs flourish. The Cree require support from Québec for the implementation of tourism infrastructure (hotels, lodges) of appropriate type, number and quality in the Cree communities within the next ten years in order to be in a position to develop the full potential of the tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee."

The tourism strategy focuses primarily on infrastructure development, the establishment of tourist attractions and tourism products, training, and promotion and marketing. As noted on the Plan Nord website, its objectives include:

- supporting the development and structuring of northern tourism supply by relying on sustainable development;
- promoting and marketing northern destinations to position them on the world stage;

- focusing on human-resource training in the tourism sector;
- planning and implementing, in collaboration with local and regional communities, a reception, information and tourism development network.

Overall, the tourism strategy reflects many of COTA's own internal objectives with regard to the development of a sustainable tourism industry and supports our long-standing mandate to position Eeyou Istchee as a world-class tourism destination.

3. Cree Tourism Strategy Conference

The Cree Tourism Strategy Conference was organized by the Cree Regional Authority (CRA), COTA, and Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI). It was held over a three-day period from January 31 to February 2, 2012, in Val d'Or, Québec.

The primary purpose of the Cree Tourism Strategy Conference was to bring together individuals from the Cree communities and entities directly or indirectly involved in the development of the tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee to stimulate discussions on, and

develop a response to, the Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel. During the conference, participants were asked to work together in order to:

- develop a list of infrastructure projects for the next 10 years;
- create a list of product development projects for the next 10 years; and
- develop a comprehensive and collaborative marketing strategy.

The area north of the 49th parallel offers extensive potential for the creation and marketing of original products that will attract international clientele. Some examples are tourism focusing on nature, culture and the land, adventure tourism and ecotourism, observation activities, northern cruises and hunting and fishing.

The ultimate goal of the Tourism Strategy Conference was to initiate the development of a coherent action plan that encompasses all of the Cree projects of the Cree communities, entities, and individuals that will be submitted to Québec's Minister of Tourism, Nicole Ménard, by Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.



4. 2012-2014 Tourism Action Plan

The 2012-2014 Tourism Action Plan is a 3-step strategy that includes plans for product development, marketing, and the restructuring of human resources. The Plan was created in partnership with EIT, TBJ and Escapade Boréale and funded in part by the Quebec ministry of tourism.

The main objectives of the 2012-2014 Tourism Action Plan are to:

- inform potential visitors of the distinctive features of Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James through a shared and comprehensive marketing strategy;
- encourage travellers to seek out the extraordinary visitor experience that the region offers;
- promote the development of products and tour packages that meet the stated needs of travellers;
- maximize the often limited resources available;
- create a strong brand image for Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James.

Although each entity involved in this project has its own mandate, since we all share the same geographical region and since many of our service offerings and organizational responsibilities overlap, we recognize that there are distinct advantages to sharing resources and fostering a more collaborative approach to tourism development. EIT and TBJ already share a marketing coordinator and have successfully worked together on initiatives such as the regional tourism guide, advertising campaigns, and the annual regional tourism gala.

4.1 Product Development

In January 2012, a preliminary version of the Product Development Action Plan was completed. The Plan, which covers a 3-year period from 2012 to 2014, outlines priorities based on the potential of a particular service, activity or attraction to generate significant economic benefits for the tourism sector. As noted in the Plan, it is important to create, among all stakeholders, a shared vision of tourism

development in Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James in the first year of implementation. More tangibly, it addresses the reality that to be competitive, Cree cultural tourism businesses and lodgings in Cree communities must be upgraded.

4.2 Marketing

The actions outlined in the Marketing Action Plan are specifically designed to reflect tourism orientations contained in Plan Nord and the Accord/Nord-du-Québec niche.

With over 22 tourism regions in Quebec alone, there is a lot of competition for tourism dollars. To attract visitors to Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James, we must create a shared brand identity encompassing all marketing initiatives and create a cohesive tourism offering. In addition to the key players and partners involved in its development, the Marketing Action Plan also recognizes the role that other Cree organizations must play in creating a shared identity. These organizations include Aanischaukamikw, the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association (CNACA), and the Cree Trappers Association (CTA).

The four Baie-James municipalities and nine Cree communities must engage in concerted efforts to promote regional tourism and take full advantage of opportunities provided by Plan Nord tourism strategy. The 2012-2014 Tourism Action Plan provides an important opportunity to do just that.

4.3 Human Resource Restructuring

A restructuring plan is currently underway to review and evaluate human resource requirements for COTA, EIT, TBJ and Escapade Boréale.

To understand the implications and benefits of implementing a restructuring plan, a comprehensive diagnostics process was undertaken, leading to a series of recommendations. These recommendations are under review by the directors of the organizations involved. Following this review, we

will be in a better position to identify priorities and develop a more efficient organizational model. As part of this initiative, we are also looking for ways to define the roles and responsibilities of COTA and EIT more clearly.

These initiatives aim to create a more collaborative partnership with regional partners, which we believe will lead to the development of stronger regional marketing campaigns and more streamlined human resources requirements.

5. The Hospitality Industry in Northern Quebec: A Sectorial Labour Market Study

In January 2010, the Ministère du Tourisme and its partners Emploi Québec, Direction régionale Nord-du-Québec, TBJ, EIT, and La fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec mandated the Centre d'expertise et de recherche en hôtellerie et restauration (CER) at Institut du tourisme et hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ) to assess the hotel industry's labour force in northern Quebec, including Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James.



The primary objectives of the study were to:

- assess strengths and weaknesses with respect to human resources;
- recommend short- and long-term measures to develop managers' and workers' skills.

In July 2011, a report detailing the results of the study was submitted for review. The report focused on some of the main issues and challenges facing the hotel industry in northern Quebec and put forward priority measures to resolve specific regional issues, including workforce planning, skill profiling, recruitment, selection, training, coaching, and working conditions.

The recommendations in the report included the following:

- Promote skill acquisition and development.
- Foster entrepreneurship and support company leaders in implementing development strategies.
- Develop and implement recognition and appreciation strategies for jobs in the hotel/food and beverage services sector.
- Distribute and implement tools for effective human resources management.

On March 27, the first day of the Annual Tourism Week (highlights of which include the Tourism Symposium and Awards Gala), François Therrien, from the ITHQ presented some of the report's findings. A discussion period followed. The main point to emerge from discussions was that much work remains to be done to deal with existing human resources development and management problems in the regional restaurant and hotel industries. As a first step, an HR follow-up committee was created and it has been proposed that a number of organizations should be involved, including the Cree Human Resource Development Department (CHRD), COTA, EIT, and TBJ. The follow-up committee will study ways to manage and mitigate the human resources issues identified in the report.



6. FAM Tour

COTA's Familiarization (FAM) Tour for Québec tour operators took place from August 23 to 29, 2011. The FAM tour was a component of Footsteps and Paddle Strokes: Destination Eeyou Istchee that was initiated in 2007. An important goal of the FAM tour was to make inroads into larger markets by creating strategic alliances with well-established Quebec-based tour operators. The first step in making these inroads, however, is to provide our members with the tools and information they need to further develop their existing products so that they are market ready. The overall objectives of the FAM tour were to:

- define products and packages;
- allow Eeyou Istchee tourism businesses to better understand the challenges of offering tours to seasoned travellers with high expectations;
- provide insight and guidance to Eeyou Istchee tourism businesses about what it really means to have a market ready product;
- provide an understanding of how the travel trade works;
- begin forming strategic alliances between Cree tourism providers and the travel trade.

The tour provided an important opportunity for ARF-Québec (Association des Agences réceptives et forfaitistes du Québec) members to visit Cree-operated tourism businesses to evaluate their respective products. Some of the key areas considered when evaluating their tourism products were:

- Market Readiness
- Human Resources
- Site/Equipment: assessing basic infrastructure to support tourism
- Safety/Risk Management: implementing clear safety protocols

The FAM tour was a valuable learning experience for the operators involved and provided important feedback on areas that require further refinement.

The tour was funded by the Cree Regional Authority

The FAM Tour was a positive learning experience for tourism businesses and COTA. It served to reinforce the tourism potential of the region. With proper support, tourism businesses and COTA can continue to develop a world-class tourism destination.



7. Business Exchange Day

This year, COTA attended the 9th annual Business Exchange Day hosted by the Secretariat to the Cree Nation-Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance. The event, which was held on December 1, 2011 in Val d'Or, is designed to foster inter-regional strategic alliances, entrepreneurship, and business opportunities.

Since Business Exchange Day enables alliances and strategic partnerships with businesses and other organizations in the regions of Baie-James and Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the event is always very well attended. Once again, this year it attracted a great number of participants.

One of the highlights of the event was an afternoon conference at which Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come delivered a speech about Cree views and perspectives with regard to Plan Nord. An evening Gala and Awards presentation was another high point among the day's activities.

The COTA booth welcomed visitors throughout the day. We were pleased to have this opportunity to enhance the association's visibility and promote the Cree tourism industry.



Dr. Ted Moses, Former Grand Chief, and Pierre Ouellet, President of the Secretariat, captured the spirit of the event by stating at the Gala, "We are here to recognize the immense value of being entrepreneurs and to take advantage of the many opportunities to create profitable businesses together."



8. Membership Study

COTA strives to meet its members' evolving needs while remaining attentive to the challenges and realities confronting regional tourism operators. Accordingly, in 2011, COTA conducted a membership study designed to meet three key objectives.

The first objective was to discern and understand major issues facing Cree tourism providers. The second was to identify how members perceive and define COTA and other tourism agencies within the region. The third was to use the information above to enhance member services and increase membership.

Tourism operators from eight of the Cree communities (Mistissini was unable to attend) participated in the study. The issues raised included the lack of marketing and business-development skills, difficulty of obtaining support for community-wide initiatives, and fluctuating tourism trade (number of tourist visits and seasonal patterns). Additionally, we learned that some tourism providers lack a clear understanding of the role and scope of the services that COTA provides.

Given these findings, COTA will review and evaluate our current programs and services and where necessary, will make changes to better meet our members' stated needs. We will also examine our communications channels to ensure that members receive useful information and a consistent message in a timely manner.

With the recent implementation of Plan Nord's tourism strategy, Projet ACCORD, and our own Tourism Action Plan, there is reason to look forward to an increase in tourism activity in the region. We will continue to work with our members to ensure that they are aware of development opportunities and informed of new funding initiatives.

9. Organizational Review

An independent organizational review was conducted to examine COTA's organizational structure and work practices in depth. The review assessed overall efficiency and effectiveness with regard to our day-to-day

operations and ability to meet the needs of our members. On the basis of the review's findings, we are implementing an organizational structure that:

- allows us to provide our members and staff with the best services and support;
- enhances our capacity to meet current and future objectives;
- provides all staff members with a professional development plan and appropriate training to ensure they have all the skills needed to be productive;
- enables COTA staff to effectively communicate with all stakeholders in a clear, consistent, and timely manner.

10. Cree Heritage Rivers Program Working Group

The Hydro-Quebec – COTA – CNACA – Niskamoon Corporation Working Group on Tourism and Cultural Industries was formed in 2008. Our primary mandate is to develop new culture-based tourism products throughout Eeyou Istchee with particular emphasis in regions impacted by hydro-electric development. Since its formation, we have initiated two important projects. The first was a pre-feasibility study for developing river-based cultural tourism products along the Rupert River and the most recent is the production of a visitor guide for Cree culture-oriented tourism.

The Visitor Guide is a full colour magazine designed to showcase the beauty and culture of Eeyou Istchee as well as the tourism opportunities available in each Cree community. Cree photographers have submitted their photos for inclusion in the guide. Additionally, Cree historian Dr. Philip Awashish provided some of the written content. We hope to launch the guide this fall.

11. Coffee Table Book

Eeyou Istchee, Land of the Cree is a 250 page coffee table book commissioned by COTA and published in November of 2010. Due to continued demand, this year, an additional 1000 copies were printed for sale in bookstores throughout Quebec.