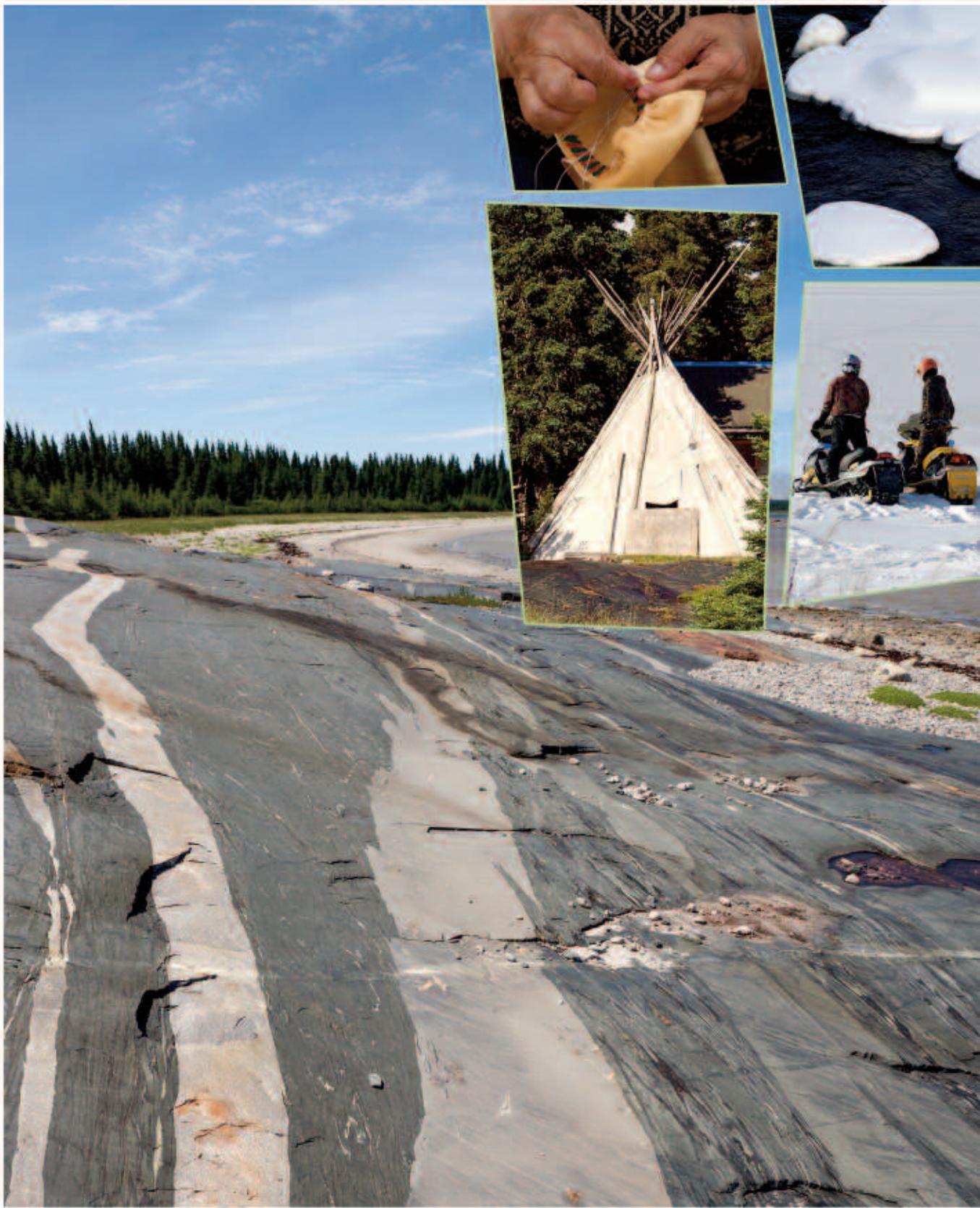


2013-2014



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Eyou Istchee Tourism Association
Annual Report

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A note from our President



More than ever, Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) is committed to realizing our region's potential as a one-of-a-kind destination. We're working actively to provide more than outdoor adventure; our goal is also to deliver a unique and memorable cultural experience. Our efforts are geared toward building a viable tourism industry that features our distinctive assets – natural surroundings, wildlife, and traditional culture – and meets the needs of travellers seeking something new and unavailable at mainstream destinations.

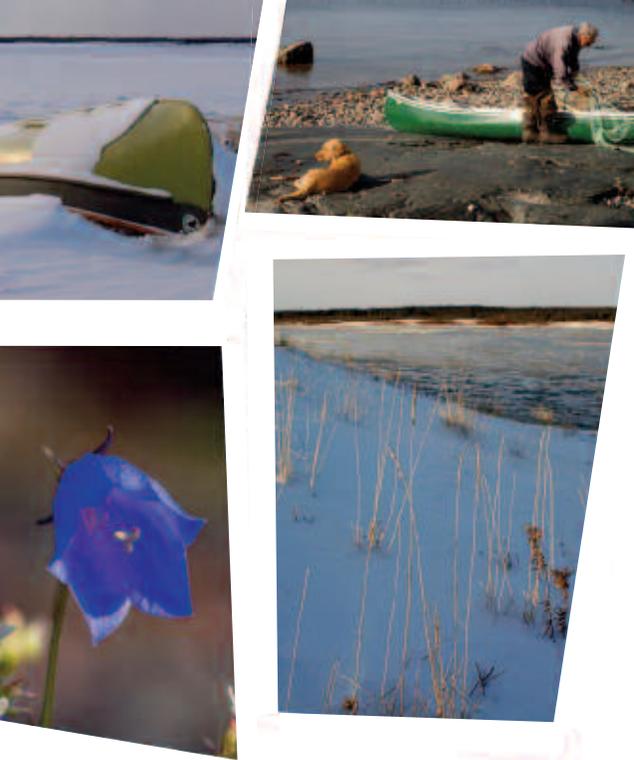
Over the course of the past year, our commitment to working jointly with Tourisme Baie-James (TBJ) has continued to grow. By pooling our resources and promoting Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a single brand, we aim to showcase the entire region as a truly desirable tourism destination. Our new brand image, launched last year, now appears on all promotional materials and is an integral part of the message that Eeyou Istchee Baie-James shares a unified tourism identity. Additionally, our International and Cooperative Marketing programs encourage members of EIT and TBJ to form strategic alliances and develop joint marketing initiatives. Such alliances allow members to promote regional tourism more effectively.

This year, we were pleased to once again have an opportunity to present the Tourism Symposium which was organized in conjunction with TBJ and held in Mistissini in November 2013. The roster of invited speakers was impressive and the topics they covered were both informative and highly relevant to our own local tourism industry. Participants at the Symposium learned about cooperative marketing programs, business partnerships, and other endeavours designed to help them create tourism packages and market them effectively. Feedback from attendees was very positive, and we look forward to future events.

I would also like to congratulate the winners at this year's Regional gala of *Grand Prix du tourisme québécois* that took place on March 27. Among the winners were the *Aanischaaukamikw* Cree Cultural Institute, the Maquatua Inn, the Waswanipi Old Post Fishing Derby, and two employees of the Mistissini Lodge, Gilbert Baribeau and Patrick Forward, who were honoured for their hard work and commitment as representatives of our local tourism industry. The gala, a joint effort by EIT and TBJ, provides a great opportunity for members of both associations to interact in a relaxed setting and celebrate our success.

It's initiatives like these that help make Eeyou Istchee Tourism a valuable resource for members. You can count on us to continue offering new learning and growing opportunities and providing support in developing your tourism businesses.

Raymond Blackned



About EIT

Eeyou Istchee Tourism is the 22nd Regional Tourism Association (RTA) to come into being in Québec and the 3rd to share the administrative region of Northern Québec. This new RTA is designated to represent the Cree communities of the Eeyou Istchee tourism region.

On August 15 2007, the Government of Québec granted RTA status to the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA).

Given the considerable difference between the RTA and COTA in terms of roles and responsibilities, a decision was made to create a separate organization, namely Eeyou Istchee Tourism to provide for proper fulfilment of the RTA's mandate.

As set out in the formal agreement between EIT and the Government of Québec, the role of the RTA is to promote tourism and regional operators, support the development of new products, make information more readily available to tourists, and cooperate with other RTAs in creating a Québec-wide tourism policy.

Objectives of EIT:

- Position and promote Eeyou Istchee as a key destination for First Nations tourism, outdoor and adventure tourism, and outfitter services.

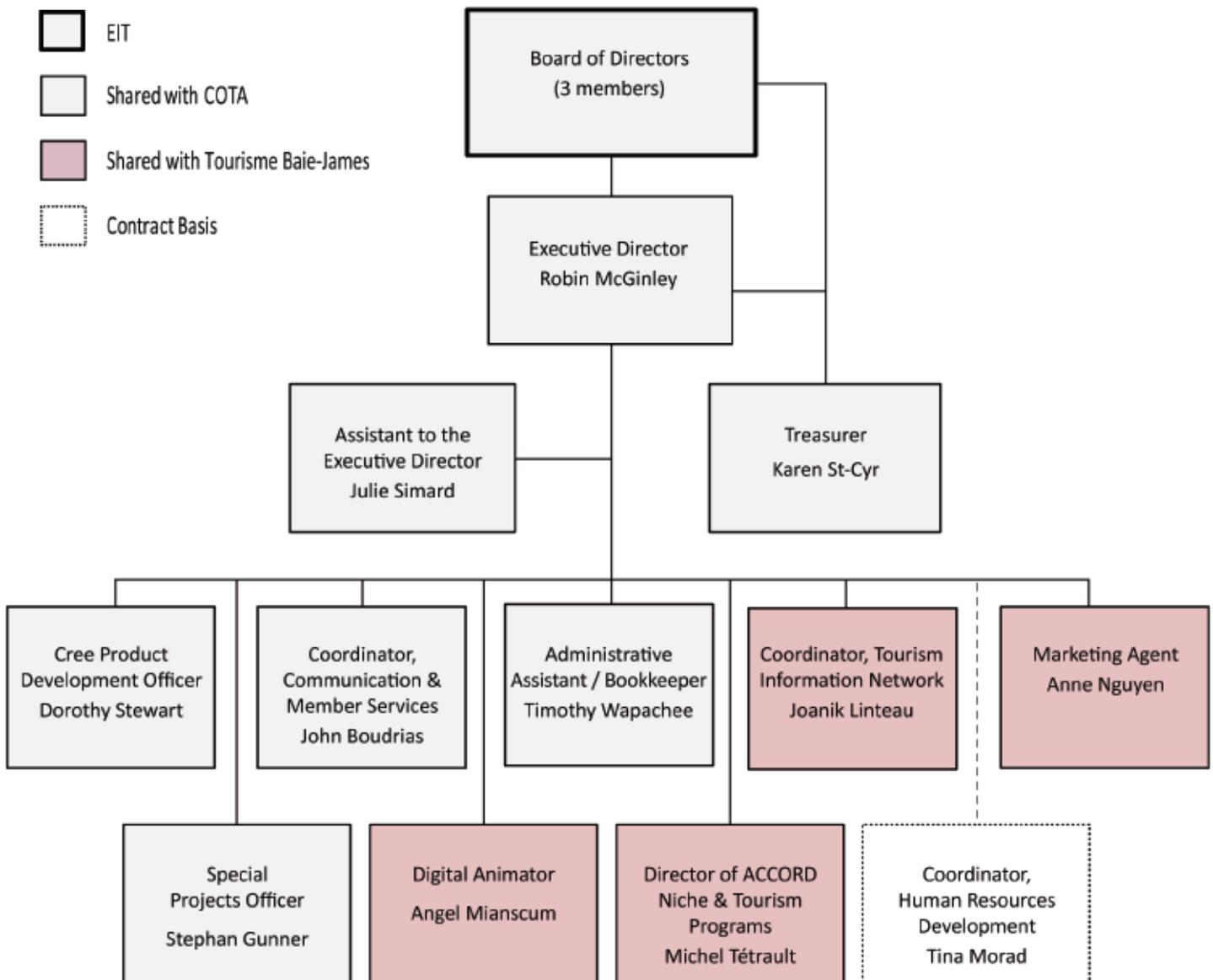
- Support the development of marketable tourism products and the upgrading of existing products with a view to contributing to regional economic growth and development of the tourism industry.
- Enhance regional tourism infrastructure by facilitating access to information relating to tourism products and services.
- Develop a tourism industry based on the principles of sustainable development and designed to have a positive impact on youth, elders and cultural life in the region.

Dues-paying COTA members are automatically members of EIT. Some of the additional benefits for our members include a listing in the Baie-James Eeyou Istchee Tourism Guide, access to targeted funding, eligibility for the international and cooperative marketing programs and the opportunity to have their tourism business included on the provincial blue road panels.

EIT is responsible for the planning and delivery of projects, initiatives and events such as the Grands Prix du Tourisme gala, the development of the Regional Tourism Guide and the Tourism Symposium.

EIT Organizational Chart

The chart below illustrates EIT's organizational structure to April 1, 2014





Project Summaries

EIT Projects and Initiatives

Following are brief summaries of the projects and initiatives that were undertaken and/or launched in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

1. 2013 Tourism Symposium

The 2013 Tourism Symposium, our third, was held on November 6 and 7 in Mistissini. This joint EIT-TBJ event brought together industry experts who specialize in various aspects of tourism development and promotion. Along with its focus on regional development, the Symposium explored more wide-ranging issues that affect tourism on a global scale.

The general objectives of the event were to:

- stimulate exchanges among local and regional communities and various renowned international experts on tourism development
- share good practices, innovations, and successful initiatives at the national and international levels
- foster a shared vision of regional tourism development
- present genuine success stories and winning practices in the field of northern tourism development

Some 105 participants attended this year's event, gaining valuable insight into the current state of local, national, and international tourism. The Symposium also provided an opportunity to share diverse viewpoints and insights and work jointly toward achieving our collective goal of creating a dynamic and unified tourism industry.

In addition, the Symposium represented a substantial revenue-generating opportunity for local businesses, most notably those in the hospitality and service industry.

1.1 Guest speakers

Kate Germain - In her presentation titled "New trends and good practices in northern tourism," discussed northern destinations' use of innovation to attract customers searching for new experiences. She explored issues such as marketing, customer behaviour, and product development and their impact on practices in cultural, adventure, and open-air tourism in northern destinations, including Canada.

Cyril Chauquet - In his presentation titled "Global tourism and international customer expectations," he focused on the economic viability of recreational fishing in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. He emphasized the need to create appealing packages that combine fishing with a unique and memorable cultural

experience. In his view, there is a critical need to assess the current state of recreational fishing products in the region and determine the expectations of international customers in this regard.

Serge Larivière - In his presentation titled "The importance of air access and understanding the various phases of the tourism experience," he noted that limited air access is a major obstacle to regional tourism development. He discussed ways of implementing a joint strategy for improving air access throughout the region. From his standpoint, such a strategy is a critical component of a successful tourism development plan.

Jean-Michel Perron - Following his attendance at the 22nd Symposium on Northern Tourism Research held in Norway in September 2013, he presented the most recent research on northern tourism and shared valuable lessons for the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James destination and its tourism businesses and organizations.

Patrick Bérubé - In his presentation titled "Key success factors and development projects," he highlighted the benefits of implementing a tourism niche of excellence. He explained how niches or clusters of excellence are powerful tools for regional development. His presentation focused on the recent redevelopment of the adventure and eco-tourism niche of excellence at Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. He concluded that a similar strategy can be successfully applied in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James.

Lennart Pittja gave a presentation titled "The Sami People: An example of the successful development of a sustainable Native tourism product." Focus was on the Sami's efforts to create a sustainable tourism industry based on respect for their cultural and traditional values.

1.2 Post-presentation discussion

Following the guest-speaker presentations, a roundtable discussion was held, enabling attendees to interact directly with the panel of experts and ask questions pertaining to their presentations. By all accounts, the Symposium was an enriching experience.

1.3 Eco-responsible event

In keeping with our commitment to hold eco-responsible events, FaunENord's Green Team was invited to attend this year's symposium. To ensure all possible measures were taken to minimize any negative environmental impacts, efforts were made to work with local suppliers and only the most essential materials were printed. Additionally, to offset the event's greenhouse gas emissions, 143 trees will be planted.

The success of this year's symposium would not have been possible without the support of our many sponsors. Thank you to all who helped make the event possible including the Ministère des Finances et de l'Économie under ACCORD niche for your generous financial contribution.



2. International and Cooperative Marketing Programs

The International Marketing Program (IMP) and Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) provide financial incentives to members of EIT and TBJ to form alliances for the purposes of advertising and developing tourism packages. Such alliances allow members to promote regional tourism – including the new Eeyou Istchee Baie-James brand image – more effectively. In fact, all initiatives supported by the Program must showcase the region’s new brand image. The goal of the IMP is to promote tourism outside of Quebec while the CMP applies to marketing initiatives within Quebec.

Both programs can be applied to:

- Print advertising
- Tourism-package development
- Television, online and radio advertisement
- Participation in tradeshows
- Familiarization and press tours



To be eligible for one or both of these programs, applicants must demonstrate that their project meets the following criteria:

- Will attract visitors from outside the region
- Is not part of an existing marketing program
- Contributes to an increase in tourism promotion since the previous year (applies to existing projects and to previously submitted projects)
- Applicants must be members of EIT or TBJ
- Products must be market-ready

Approved promotional strategies will receive up to 50% of applicable costs.

Advertisements supported under the IMP include placements in the following publications:

- Quebec Vacation Guide
- OSM Magazine
- Supertrax Magazine
- SnowGoer Magazine

Advertisements supported under the CMP include placements in the following publications:

- Magazine Aventure Chasse et Pêche
- Guide des vacances au Québec
- Magazine Motoneige Québec

3. Regional gala of Grand Prix du tourisme québécois

Every two years, EIT, in collaboration with TBJ, has the pleasure of organizing and promoting an annual awards event as part of the province of Québec's *Grands Prix du tourisme*. The *Grands Prix du tourisme québécois* were created to highlight businesses that have excelled in the tourism industry and increase public awareness of the important role tourism plays in Quebec's economy.

The Regional gala of Grand Prix du tourisme québécois was held on March 27th in Lebel-sur Quevillon.

We are pleased to share that representing Eeyou Istchee, the *Aanischaaukamikw* Cree Cultural Institute (Oujé-Bougoumou) received an award in the category *Tourist Attraction (less than 25,000 visitors)*, the Maquatua Inn (Wemindji) was recognized in the category *Lodging (less than 40 units)* and the Waswanipi Old Post Fishing Derby was honoured in

the category *Festival and Tourism Activities* (budget less than \$300,000) Additionally, Gilbert Baribeau and Patrick Forward, both of the Mistissini Lodge were gold prize winners in the categories of Human Resources (Tourism sector employee) and Human Resources (Tourism sector supervisor) respectively.

Other winners included the Festival Folifrets Chibougamau Baie-James, Festival en Août, Festival du doré Baie-James, Motel du lac and Gîte de la rivière a bed and breakfast located in Chibougamau.

On behalf of Raymond Blackned, president of EIT, and Luc Letendre, president of TBJ we would like to congratulate all the winners.

As always, the success of this year's gala would not have been possible without the support of our many sponsors and partners who share our commitment to further establish Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a tourism destination of choice. Thank you to all who helped make this evening such a tremendous success!



4. Regional Tourism Guide

As part of our partnership agreement with Ministère du Tourisme du Québec, EIT must undertake to develop an annual regional tourism guide in accordance with the guidelines and standards agreed upon by the Regional Tourism Associations and Québec's ministry of tourism. At a planning session held in Val d'Or in August 2007 and attended by the COTA/EIT Board of Directors, a decision was made to work jointly with TBJ to produce the regional tourism guide. As such, EIT in collaboration with TBJ recently completed our sixth edition of the guide. The guide includes a profile and photographs of each Cree community as well as a portrait of the region and Cree culture. The 2014-2015 edition is now available at tourism outlets throughout the province. Copies can also be ordered online at www.tourismebaiejames.com



5. Coordinator, Human Resources Development, Tourism Industry

In 2011, COTA/EIT conducted a membership study that was designed, in part, to identify and clarify major issues facing Cree tourism providers. Many of the study's participants pointed to the lack of human resources as a hindrance to their ability to operate a successful tourism business that delivers the level of quality travellers expect.

To address this issue, EIT and TBJ created a new position: Coordinator, Human Resources Development Tourism Industry (HRD). The Coordinator, HRD plays a key role in enhancing the quality of human resources to a level commensurate with a world-class tourism industry.

The responsibilities of the Coordinator, HRD are to:

- Work with the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Tourism Industry Human Resources Committee
- Develop a HRD plan for the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James tourism industry
- Evaluate the potential of establishing a human resources cooperative for the regional tourism industry
- Develop recruitment and retention strategies for tourism industry personnel
- Collaborate with regional and provincial teaching and training organizations to develop accredited programs in the tourism sector
- Develop, and implement strategies to make career opportunities in tourism more appealing

We would like to thank our funders, Grande Table Interordre, Tourisme Eeyou Istchee, Tourisme Baie-James and Emploi-Québec

6. Tax on Lodging in Eeyou Istchee: A fact sheet

EIT is reviewing the feasibility and financial implications and benefits of implementing a tax on lodging. Although a tax on lodging is not compulsory, currently, Eeyou Istchee is the only region that does

not charge this tax. Revenue generated from the lodging tax is used to finance the *Fonds de partenariat touristique* (tourism partnership fund), which was set up to support and promote Québec's tourism industry. Depending on the tourism region, the tax applies either as a fixed amount or at a given rate. Establishments subject to the tax include hotels, bed and breakfasts, tourist homes and outfitting operations.

To provide EIT with a more complete understanding of the implications of implementing this tax, Par Consulting was mandated to conduct a thorough review and submit their findings in the form of a fact sheet. The fact sheet takes into consideration issues such as collection and remittance requirements, applying the tax from an operator's perspective and rules regarding the use of these tax revenues by RTAs (including revenue scenarios for EIT specifically) and an analysis of how other comparable RTAs, including TBJ allocated the revenue collected from the lodging tax in the year 2012.

7. Cree Product Development Officer

To further our efforts to encourage and promote regional tourism development, in 2013 a new position, that of Cree Product Development Officer was created. The Product Development Officer plays an integral role in the development of regional tourism products by fostering partnerships with producers, small and medium businesses, development corporations, and other players in the tourism sector. Some of the key responsibilities include supporting the development of new tourism products while ensuring they meet quality standards and enhance the region's overall tourism offerings and providing product development support to businesses in the region wanting to pursue growing niche markets in the tourism sector. Additionally the Cree Product Development Officer will work in collaboration with TBJ product development officer on initiatives that pertain to both associations.

Thank you to Tourisme Québec for your generous support.

8. ACCORD Director

To support northern tourism development as it applies specifically to the ACCORD Niche of Excellence and in partnership with TBJ, a new position, that of ACCORD director was recently established. The ACCORD director provides project management expertise in support of promoters and businesses operating within the niche of excellence as well as projects designed to deploy the niche's strategy and action plan.

The ACCORD Director actively participates in the development of regional tourism in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James by carrying out all required studies, developing action plans and strategies, and implementing all potential means of fostering partnership and cooperation in collaboration with both EIT and TBJ. The ACCORD Director also fills the important function of working with tourism entrepreneurs and communities to help them find funding opportunities for tourism related projects and initiatives.

Funding generously provided by Tourisme Québec and Ministère des Finances et de l'Économie under ACCORD niche

9. Regional Tourism Partnership Agreement

The Regional Tourism Partnership Agreement (RTPA) is a 3-year initiative that reflects a shared willingness by Tourisme Québec, EIT, the Cree Regional Authority, and Société de Développement de la Baie-James to work together with other local partners and businesses to optimize tourism investment in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James in accordance with regional priorities.

The RTPA is overseen by a committee made up of one representative from each of the participating partner organizations. The program ends on March 31, 2015.

Each partner has agreed to provide financial support. Annual contributions are shown below:

- EIT: \$150,000
- Tourisme Québec: \$150,000
- Cree Regional Authority: \$150,000
- Société de Développement de la Baie-James: \$25,000